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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE STORY OF TWO COOPERATING TEACHERS

BY

MARIE ANITA MULLER



A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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| Music | 0413 |
| Speech Communication | 0459 |
| Theater | 0465 |

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| General | 0515 |
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| Adult and Continuing | 0516 |
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| Business | 0688 |
| Community College | 0275 |
| Curriculum and Instruction | 0727 |
| Early Childhood | 0518 |
| Elementary | 0524 |
| Finance | 0277 |
| Guidance and Counseling | 0519 |
| Health | 0680 |
| Higher | 0745 |
| History of | 0520 |
| Home Economics | 0278 |
| Industrial | 0521 |
| Language and Literature | 0279 |
| Mathematics | 0280 |
| Music | 0522 |
| Philosophy of | 0998 |
| Physical | 0523 |
| Psychology | 0525 |
| Reading | 0535 |
| Religious | 0527 |
| Sciences | 0714 |
| Secondary | 0533 |
| Social Sciences | 0534 |
| Sociology of | 0340 |
| Special | 0529 |
| Teacher Training | 0530 |
| Technology | 0710 |
| Tests and Measurements | 0288 |
| Vocational | 0747 |

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|---|---|
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| General | 0679 |
| Ancient | 0289 |
| Linguistics | 0290 |
| Modern | 0291 |
| Literature | |
| General | 0401 |
| Classical | 0294 |
| Comparative | 0295 |
| Medieval | 0297 |
| Modern | 0298 |
| African | 0316 |
| American | 0591 |
| Asian | 0305 |
| Canadian (English) | 0352 |
| Canadian (French) | 0355 |
| English | 0593 |
| Germanic | 0311 |
| Latin American | 0312 |
| Middle Eastern | 0315 |
| Romance | 0313 |
| Slavic and East European | 0314 |

### PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

| | |
|---|---|
| Philosophy | 0422 |
| Religion | |
| General | 0318 |
| Biblical Studies | 0321 |
| Clergy | 0319 |
| History of | 0320 |
| Philosophy of | 0322 |
| Theology | 0469 |

### SOCIAL SCIENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| American Studies | 0323 |
| Anthropology | |
| Archaeology | 0324 |
| Cultural | 0326 |
| Physical | 0327 |
| Business Administration | |
| General | 0310 |
| Accounting | 0272 |
| Banking | 0770 |
| Management | 0454 |
| Marketing | 0338 |
| Canadian Studies | 0385 |
| Economics | |
| General | 0501 |
| Agricultural | 0503 |
| Commerce Business | 0505 |
| Finance | 0508 |
| History | 0509 |
| Labor | 0510 |
| Theory | 0511 |
| Folklore | 0358 |
| Geography | 0366 |
| Gerontology | 0351 |
| History | |
| General | 0578 |
| Ancient | 0579 |
| Medieval | 0581 |
| Modern | 0582 |
| Black | 0328 |
| African | 0331 |
| Asia, Australia and Oceania | 0332 |
| Canadian | 0334 |
| European | 0335 |
| Latin American | 0336 |
| Middle Eastern | 0333 |
| United States | 0337 |
| History of Science | 0585 |
| Law | 0398 |
| Political Science | |
| General | 0615 |
| International Law and Relations | 0616 |
| Public Administration | 0617 |
| Recreation | 0814 |
| Social Work | 0452 |
| Sociology | |
| General | 0626 |
| Criminology and Penology | 0627 |
| Demography | 0938 |
| Ethnic and Racial Studies | 0631 |
| Individual and Family Studies | 0628 |
| Industrial and Labor Relations | 0629 |
| Public and Social Welfare | 0630 |
| Social Structure and Development | 0700 |
| Theory and Methods | 0344 |
| Transportation | 0709 |
| Urban and Regional Planning | 0999 |
| Women's Studies | 0453 |

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| General | 0473 |
| Agronomy | 0285 |
| Animal Culture and Nutrition | 0475 |
| Animal Pathology | 0476 |
| Food Science and Technology | 0359 |
| Forestry and Wildlife | 0478 |
| Plant Culture | 0479 |
| Plant Pathology | 0480 |
| Plant Physiology | 0817 |
| Range Management | 0777 |
| Wood Technology | 0746 |
| Biology | |
| General | 0306 |
| Anatomy | 0287 |
| Biostatistics | 0308 |
| Botany | 0309 |
| Cell | 0379 |
| Ecology | 0329 |
| Entomology | 0353 |
| Genetics | 0369 |
| Limnology | 0793 |
| Microbiology | 0410 |
| Molecular | 0307 |
| Neuroscience | 0317 |
| Oceanography | 0416 |
| Physiology | 0433 |
| Radiation | 0821 |
| Veterinary Science | 0778 |
| Zoology | 0472 |
| Biophysics | |
| General | 0786 |
| Medical | 0760 |

### EARTH SCIENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Biogeochemistry | 0425 |
| Geochemistry | 0996 |
| Geodesy | 0370 |
| Geology | 0372 |
| Geophysics | 0373 |
| Hydrology | 0388 |
| Mineralogy | 0411 |
| Paleobotany | 0345 |
| Paleoecology | 0426 |
| Paleontology | 0418 |
| Paleozoology | 0985 |
| Palynology | 0427 |
| Physical Geography | 0368 |
| Physical Oceanography | 0415 |

### HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Environmental Sciences | 0768 |
| Health Sciences | |
| General | 0566 |
| Audiology | 0300 |
| Chemotherapy | 0992 |
| Dentistry | 0567 |
| Education | 0350 |
| Hospital Management | 0769 |
| Human Development | 0758 |
| Immunology | 0982 |
| Medicine and Surgery | 0564 |
| Mental Health | 0347 |
| Nursing | 0569 |
| Nutrition | 0570 |
| Obstetrics and Gynecology | 0380 |
| Occupational Health and Therapy | 0354 |
| Ophthalmology | 0381 |
| Pathology | 0571 |
| Pharmacology | 0419 |
| Pharmacy | 0572 |
| Physical Therapy | 0382 |
| Public Health | 0573 |
| Radiology | 0574 |
| Recreation | 0575 |
| Speech Pathology | 0460 |
| Toxicology | 0383 |
| Home Economics | 0386 |

### PHYSICAL SCIENCES

#### Pure Sciences

| | |
|---|---|
| Chemistry | |
| General | 0485 |
| Agricultural | 0749 |
| Analytical | 0486 |
| Biochemistry | 0487 |
| Inorganic | 0488 |
| Nuclear | 0738 |
| Organic | 0490 |
| Pharmaceutical | 0491 |
| Physical | 0494 |
| Polymer | 0495 |
| Radiation | 0754 |
| Mathematics | 0405 |
| Physics | |
| General | 0605 |
| Acoustics | 0986 |
| Astronomy and Astrophysics | 0606 |
| Atmospheric Science | 0608 |
| Atomic | 0748 |
| Electronics and Electricity | 0607 |
| Elementary Particles and High Energy | 0798 |
| Fluid and Plasma | 0759 |
| Molecular | 0609 |
| Nuclear | 0610 |
| Optics | 0752 |
| Radiation | 0756 |
| Solid State | 0611 |
| Statistics | 0463 |

#### Applied Sciences

| | |
|---|---|
| Applied Mechanics | 0346 |
| Computer Science | 0984 |
| Engineering | |
| General | 0537 |
| Aerospace | 0538 |
| Agricultural | 0539 |
| Automotive | 0540 |
| Biomedical | 0541 |
| Chemical | 0542 |
| Civil | 0543 |
| Electronics and Electrical | 0544 |
| Heat and Thermodynamics | 0348 |
| Hydraulic | 0545 |
| Industrial | 0546 |
| Marine | 0547 |
| Materials Science | 0794 |
| Mechanical | 0548 |
| Metallurgy | 0743 |
| Mining | 0551 |
| Nuclear | 0552 |
| Packaging | 0549 |
| Petroleum | 0765 |
| Sanitary and Municipal | 0554 |
| System Science | 0790 |
| Geotechnology | 0428 |
| Operations Research | 0796 |
| Plastics Technology | 0795 |
| Textile Technology | 0994 |

### PSYCHOLOGY

| | |
|---|---|
| General | 0621 |
| Behavioral | 0384 |
| Clinical | 0622 |
| Developmental | 0620 |
| Experimental | 0623 |
| Industrial | 0624 |
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| Physiological | 0989 |
| Psychobiology | 0349 |
| Psychometrics | 0632 |
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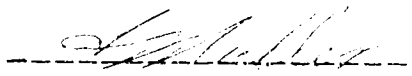

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THE STORY OF TWO COOPERATING TEACHERS

SUBMITTED BY MARIE ANITA MULLER IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

Linda LaRocque

L. LAROCQUE / (SUPERVISOR)

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W. MAYNES

K J Willson

K. WILLSON

Jean Clandinin

J. CLANDININ

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 1994

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all of the teachers
who appearred in my life as I needed them.
To all of them I owe a great debt of gratitude.

## ABSTRACT

This study was part of a larger study of the Partnership Schools Practicum Project (PSPP), an alternative practicum developed by the University of Alberta. This project was designed to encourage more meaningful relationships between the university and schools in the field that would be beneficial to both partners. It was postulated that within a collaborative and supportive environment student teachers could become risk takers and develop more reflective practices.

As part of a larger study, this research was undertaken in order to bring a better understanding of how cooperating teachers see their role within the practicum relationship. Two research sites were chosen, one within the PSPP and one without. The literature suggests that student teachers see the quality of the relationship with the cooperating teacher as an indicator of their success. The literature further suggest that the practicum is the most memorable experience of the four years of teacher education. The practicum is where theory and practice come together in a cooperating teacher's classroom, yet we know very little about how cooperating teachers live and understand this experience.

In order to better understand how cooperating teachers live this experience I chose to use a qualitative research methodology that was in part influenced by phenomonological approach as as well as an anthropological approach. In response to the nature of this research, the data were presented in a narrative form which allowed the full expression of the experience.

It was found that outside tinkering of structure no matter how well-intentioned the participants, did not always translate into success. The quality and the nature of the practicum relationship have many subtle and complex interrelated parts that affect the growth and learning of both student teacher and cooperating teacher. This study is an attempt to illuminate this relationship and its development as it was lived by two cooperating teachers with two student teachers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this nature is not possible to conduct without the willing participation, direct involvement, and support of many others.

My sincere thanks goes to Dr. Andrea Borys who was instrumental in the creation of the Partnership Schools Practicum Project and who was responsible for planting a seed of possibility in my mind.

A special word of thanks to Dr. Linda LaRocque my advisor who facilitated a collaborative research approach and helped create a community of learners in a research team.

The members of the PSPP research team deserve a special word of thanks for they helped me clarify my thoughts about what I was doing and how I wanted to do it. Their words of support and encouragement have helped me through some difficult moments.

To my committee, Dr. Katherine Willson, Dr. Bill Maynes, Dr. Jean Clandinin (who kindly accepted to add her presence) and Dr. Linda LaRocque, I extend my gratitude for your openness, patience, and support through these four years of my growth and learning.

To my friends, family and colleagues who have kept me honest and real through this experience, many thanks.

Finally to my husband who was everything to me and did all things for me, so that I may accomplish this task, thank you for the gift of your love.

## Table of Contents

# CHAPTER 1

# THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

## Background

*The only way to live fully in this life is to learn,*
*The only way to give fully to this life is to teach.*
*A Muller*

There is something I must do with my life, something important, something that will make a difference, if not to the world, at least to some people or to someone. This is the dream of many, to live in a purposeful meaningful way that will benefit humanity. It is why many of us have chosen teaching as a career. No one wishes to leave this world as if they had never been. I need to make sense of my journey in this world. What I accepted as my life's work at twenty is not enough at forty. I have been consumed by the desire to understand how adults learn, develop, change and grow. What better place to start this search than the field of education for the educator?

Education, teachers and schools, are maligned in the present, yet they are the hope of the future. There is hardly a day that passes that such sentiments do not appear in the media as society's lament and society's prayer. Here is a place to leave my mark, where there is need. Almost all of my life's experiences have taken place in schools; there must be a way of sharing what I have learned and what I still need to know.

I need to better understand the role that I have played as learner, teacher and administrator in my school so that I may yet achieve my dream.

If education is to save our world, the teachers of the world may be the new messiahs. Who are these saviors and how are they seen and understood? How and where did they learn to fulfil this role of teacher? Who teaches the teacher?

In the beginning, I came to teaching as an impassioned zealot. I believed I would be the teacher, who, with love and dedication, would help others raise themselves to the light. After more than twenty years, I am disappointed that I did not always live up to my dream; the weight of reality often slowed my pace. What happened along the way? I didn't change the world of schools as I once hoped. Many times, I felt as if I was in perpetual, circular motion, barely recognizing the sign post as I wandered past.

Despite the various disappointments in my ability to effect meaningful changes, I have continued to look for what is the essence of teaching. My sabbatical year was a prolonged opportunity for a more reflective look at teaching. I thought it best to begin with the beginning. For me it would be the days spent as a student teacher. The days I spent in lectures passed as a blur but the experiences as a student teacher earned a special place in my memory, like the time I lost a group of students while trying to teach orienteering or the time I fainted, the pressure of being observed by the faculty consultant being more than I could endure. I also remember the gentle humor and the warm support of my cooperating teachers as they helped me through what seemed an ordeal. They gave me a sense of purpose when I felt unsure and lost. With their help, my dream of making a difference seemed possible.

These were the experiences that made learning real, where my whole person was totally engaged. Until then I thought of learning as something you got from books, reading other peoples' thoughts and occasionally vicariously living other people's lives. I never believed I was important enough to make a contribution. It took me forty-two years to know that I was an active participant in my own learnings and that I have contributed to real ' . ning for others.

In this thesis I should like to pay tribute to the wisdom of all the practitioners whose dream never dimmed even when they were unsure that they were making a difference, teachers who gave their time to learners both young and not so young.

Since I could not go back to the days of my student teaching to learn what cooperating teachers did for me, I chose to give voice to two practitioners who shared themselves and their classroom with two student teachers and with me, a researcher on a quest. I wish to honor these two teachers who were also on a journey of their own. For a brief eight weeks we walked along the same path, trying to light each others' way. Given the usual literary recognition accompanying master's theses, I apologize to my two participants and others who might have seen themselves in them, for the whisper that is this voice.

Cooperating teachers are the cornerstone upon which the practicum experience rests. Without their continued support and cooperation there would be no practicum. Cooperating teachers are expected to open up their classrooms, to give up their students, to allow their teaching practices to be under close scrutiny, and to provide support and knowledge to beginning practitioners. What recognition do they receive for such gifts?

Many studies acknowledge the important and influential role played by cooperating teachers (Goodlad, 1984,1991; Henry, 1989; Kagan, 1992; McClelland & Varma, 1989; MacKinnon, & Erickson, 1988; Pathoff 1993; Tickle, 1987), yet few studies have dealt with them directly. Of those that have, findings often have been contradictory (Foster, 1989; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; MacKinnon, & Erickson, 1988). Usually cooperating teachers are thrust in the role of supporting cast. Sometimes they seem no more than props to the practicum program and not very effective ones at that (Shulman, 1987). Feinman-Nemser and Buchmann (1987) in their tudy found that cooperating teachers either had difficulty sharing their knowledge or focused on the wrong things such as classroom management and control. Occasionally cooperating teachers are vilified for this lack of expertise. Goodlad (1991) tells us student teachers are turned over to teachers

with poor teaching practices on the basis of convenience and not skill. He later wrote about practicums:

> Some of the most unacceptable shortcomings in the settings we studied were found in this part of the programs, although both students and faculty members rated student teaching highest among program components for impact. The chasm between what is and what should be is so great that it appears to have intimidated those who should be finding ways to cross it. (Goodlad, 1991, p. 280)

Grimmett and Ratzlaff (1986) found that cooperating teachers were selected on the basis of proximity, convenience and necessity and not for any particular abilities. This is another message of their low status. It is like winning second prize in a contest with only two contestants. Do we really believe that anyone can be a cooperating teacher? If we accept that some people make better elementary teachers, while others are more successful in the junior high or senior high, could it not also be true that some are better suited to be teachers of teaching than others?

Goodlad (1990) does not blame these teachers, for he sees them as victims of history and the situation of their time: "Teachers (as women) were to play the subservient roles already determined for them. The rapid growth and accompanying bureaucratization of schools in the second half of the 20th century contributed significantly to the impotence of teachers" (p. 185). It is no wonder they have difficulty fulfilling the roles set out for them, for they have little control over these roles (Maeroff, 1988). This is especially true of cooperating teachers, whose opinions rarely have been sought or considered. Their voices were rarely part of the conversation about how to teach teachers.

I believe that all those involved in teacher development are well-intentioned and wanting to create excellent preservice programs which would bring growth and learning to all those involved. This is impossible to do without the voices of the ordinary practitioner from the field. The ordinary practitioner must participate and be engaged in the professional conversation about what it means to be a good teacher if research is ever to go beyond what Barth calls "list logic" (1990, p. 38). It isn't that people do not wish to have

the conversations and share the stories. It is simply that conversation can't happen between institutions, they happen between people, one person to one person. Conversations that lead to learning are not easily organized or legislated through policy, and no one can make them happen. The best we can do in institutions, be they schools or universities, is to create the environment that will allow the conversations to begin and to be nurtured. The Partnership Schools Practicum Project (PSPP) was such an attempt.

> Several features of the Partnership Schools Practicum Project distinguishes it from past practicum programs. A cluster of student teachers was assigned to the school, with the school staff as a group accepting responsibility for them. The principal's role in the practicum experience was enhanced, as he or she assumed the role typically filled by the faculty consultant and provided leadership for staff development activities involving cooperating teachers and student teachers. Three members of the Faculty of Education worked with the school, as new working relationships between the University and the three project schools were explored. From this structure, the University sought to provide school-based experiences that would develop proficient and reflective teachers. (Tams, 1991, p. 2)

The Partnership Schools Practicum Project began with one teacher-principal talking to one university faculty member. Their conversation lasted some four years and grew each year, adding a few more voices to the circle throughout that time. I joined the conversation in the second year as a researcher. I enjoyed the learning so much, that when I got back to my school, I continued the conversation for another two years, inviting teachers from my school to join in the dialogue. The Partnership Schools Practicum Project was a sincere attempt to develop practicum programs that were responsive to both student teachers and teachers of the host school. It created opportunities for people to reflect, to talk and to share with each other. Now as I look back on this experience, I believe it is essential that we not lose the voice of the major player in any educational program, the teacher. It is important to understand the role of cooperating teachers from their point of view. The practicum is the bridge between the school and the university. It is where theory and practise become one. It is an exciting insight into learning and teaching. It is the place where strangers meet to share an experience together. It is the place where each comes with worries, concerns, dreams and hopes. It is with this desire to

understand the role of the cooperating teacher "from the inside out," that my problem statement came to be.

## Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to understand how cooperating teachers see themselves in the practicum experience.

### Significance

Practicum programs are programs that happen in classrooms, in the teachers' areas of expertise. Their knowledge and insight are important if we are ever to understand the successes and failures of practicum programs. Without cooperating teachers' meaningful and valued participation in the development of practicum programs we may never be as successful as we should be. Owens (1987) tells us that participatory decision making is an excellent way of garnering commitment and effort from a group. It is important that teachers exercise control over what happens in their classrooms (Lieberman, 1988; Rozenholtz, 1989) and that they see themselves as equal contributors in the development of student teachers. There is a wealth of experience and knowledge in the lives of teachers who share of themselves with their younger, inexperienced colleagues. We need to continue to ask them about that wherein they live and work. It may be up to individuals, in teacher education institutions, to take the first steps in opening conversations with classroom teachers and truly value and understand their contributions to education and to this world, for almost all of us have dreams of making this a better place to live and grow.

It is hoped that through this study we will come to a better understanding of the role of the cooperating teacher. This research should contribute to our understanding of how cooperating teachers construct and share working knowledge with student teachers. In talking about the experiences we were living, we tried to expose in oral and written word

what it meant to be a teacher of teaching, I as a researcher and university facilitator and they as cooperating teachers.

## Assumptions

1. The first assumption was that membership in a the the Partnership Schools Practicum Project would benefit the relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher since it was conceived as a structure that would create a supportive environment.

2. The second assumption was that the relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher was the most important factor in determining the success of the practicum.

## Limitations and Delimitations

1. The greatest limitation of the study related to time. I had but eight short weeks to share in the lives of Jean Luc and Lee, the two cooperating teachers. I tried to be with them as much as I could between being a full time student and full time human being with family and friends. Despite life's request upon my time, I spent hours with them talking, drinking coffee, eating, laughing, and sharing in the joys and pain of their lives.

2. A second limitation related to the uniqueness of the participants and the schools chosen. In other words the "sample" is very small and the circumstances unique to these two individuals. On the other hand these cooperating teachers are very real people presented in living color. Funny, it is what limits, but also gives it depth. Yes it is our story and no one else's, but it is a story that can enlighten a small piece of the human condition.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## WHO ARE THESE COOPERATING TEACHERS?

*Man can not stand a meaningless life.*
*Carl Jung*

Those who can, do, those who can't, teach. (axiom)

Rightly or wrongly, the general public sees a precipitous decline in the quality of teachers in our schools. (Hall, Hoffman, & Doyle, 1989, p. 19)

The best and the brightest are leaving public education. And a huge number of the educators who remain will serve their time only until something more lucrative, and socially valued, personally fulfilling, and less consuming comes along. (Barth, 1990, p. 14)

Student teacher weekly journal entry: "I changed this week, because [my supervisor] said I must appease [my teacher]. I'm acting like a dictator." (Hollingsworth, 1989, p. 183)

The closer one gets to working with future teachers in the field and classrooms, the less prestige and security one has in the institute of higher education. (Goodlad, 1991, p. 245)

They experience deprecation, put downs, and insults. They report being called crazy, fools and suckers. (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 70)

Millicent Rutherford wonders if women in educational leadership inspire restiveness in women teachers, making them less manageable than male educators prefer. (Clifford, 1989, pp. 327-328)

There are hundreds more quotes that could be made in just this vein. Words that tell of the lives of teachers. According to the popular press and many learned researchers, teachers, and by implication teacher educators, have failed miserably.

Where is the joy of teaching? Why so pessimistic? Are we caught up in the media hype? If it isn't horrible it isn't newsworthy? Or is it the last gasp of something about to die and the gurgles of something new to be born? More likely it is the noise made as an institutional giant shifts its weight and changes position, searching for greater comfort.

There are many inter-related and inter-dependent organisms that make up this institutional giant called the Educational System. If one part of the giant is ailing, so fairs the whole being. The practicum experience is often seen as a small irritant that lies uncomfortably between large school systems and universities; and each time a salve is applied there is a corresponding itch developed in the adjoining organisms.

The three major participants--student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor--have much at stake in the micro-organism of the practicum. And this organism is embedded in the realities of their personal lives, their work lives, and in the life of the society. University lecturers feel they have less credibility with students than teachers on the spot about what is and isn't effective in the classroom (Goodlad,1994, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Hughes, 1987; Kagan,1992). The role of the cooperating teacher is poorly defined and the teachers generally are unprepared for the task of student teacher supervision (Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; Guyton, & McIntyre, 1990). Student teachers feel they have the most at stake and don't know what to believe or whom to please (Hollinsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992; Tardiff, 1985). In fact, each member of the practicum triad--student, classroom teacher and university consultant--in turn has been held responsible for the practicum's lack of health (Cohn &Kottcamp, 1993; Goodlad, 1991; Johnson, 1989). Each member of the practicum triad decries the lamentable state of practicum programs, yet none of them feel they have the freedom to effect change that would nurture their development. It is often difficult when you are but part of a smaller

system within systems to understand the effects of your hard won and cherished solutions on other related systems. The brace you used to shore up one limb of the institutional giant may cause much stress in its other limbs as it tries desperately to compensate for the imbalance.

It is this awareness of systems within systems that I would like to maintain through this literature review. Try to picture a teacher at the center (we are all the center of our own universes) of the interdependent parts of the giant system, with all the veins of the various systems infusing the story of that teacher's life. It is a teacher in a classroom, in a school, within a bureaucracy, who accepts a student teacher from a university, who comes with a supervisor, who is the interest of my study. This cooperating teacher has a story; a story that is personal, institutional and cultural. This teacher watches and is being watched; this teacher could be me.

Much of what is written about school is written by those who would put us under a microscope with band-aids over our mouths, as they measure the length of our nasal hairs in comparison to student achievement on a prescribed multiple choice math test written simultaneously by Canadian, American and Japanese students.

A little cynical, yes, I'm angry, angry at myself for remaining quiet and angry at them for not asking. I want to scream "LET ME SPEAK, LET TEACHERS SPEAK, HEAR US, LISTEN ! ! !" I should be more forgiving; they too, the learned writers, just like we teachers, are doing the best they can. Like all humans they search to understand so that they and others can experience being fully alive. The call to reform and renewal is an expression of this desire. There is a hope that exists. If we had great educators, the educational system would be renewed,and we would have a better society: better doctors, better scientists, more creative and innovative entrepreneurs, better information and service workers and better politicians, who would have wonderful organizational and problem solving skills. If only we could teach teachers to teach better, then all the world's ills might disappear. (Again, only a little jaundiced.) It is the strangest thing, they are given the most

important work but very little regard (Cohn &Kottkamp, 1993; Clifford,1989; Goodlad 1984, 1990, 1991; Lieberman, 1988; Lortie, 1975, 1986; Maeroff, 1988).

## Images of the Cooperating Teacher

### Messages of Low Status

What do they do? Where do they work their magic? What do we think we know about cooperating teachers? What is being said about them? What are cooperating teachers saying about themselves, if anything?

As teachers we are called upon to work a very special magic to help others become fully realized human beings. Where do we work this magic? It is not in the straightening of a broken bone, nor in the design of a beautiful building, nor in the creation of a better mouse trap; no, our field of dreams is in the minds, hearts and souls of other human beings. Our work as teachers is life giving beyond the biological and it is life sustaining; it is the promise of tomorrow. Oh God, how frighteningly awesome! Yes, that is what cooperating teachers do, help student teachers learn who they are as teachers.

The research (Feinman-Nemser & Buchmann,1987; Goodlad, 1984; Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik,1990; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Henry, 1989; MacKinnon & Erickson, 1988; McClelland & Varma, 1989; Mead, 1991; Shulman, 1987; Tardif, 1984; Taylor, Borys & LaRocque, 1992; Tickle, 1987) shows that cooperating teachers play an important role in the practicum experience, yet very little has been written from their perspective (Foster, 1989; Sukhovieff,1992 ). I have not read everything on the topic of practicums and cooperating teachers but I have read enough to suggest that cooperating teachers are viewed no better and sometimes far worse than the average teacher. They have come under the scrutiny of learned university professors and they have been found wanting.

> The success of professional preparation, it seems to me, depends on the degree to which programs are able to separate beginners from *the primitive or outworn techniques* [italics added] of their predecessors. If we were to

> set out to provide the most advanced preparation for future doctors, surely we would not intern them with those whose solutions to every illness is blood-letting. (Goodlad, 1984 p. 316)

Goodlad's view of cooperating teachers is not a very flattering one; cooperating teachers are put on par with those who used blood-letting leeches in medieval Europe. In kinder yet no more complimentary words, many researchers (Fienman-Ne . ser & Buchman, 1987; Guyton, McIntyre, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holmes Group, 1986) have come to the same conclusion: that what cooperating teachers really do is to pass on the outmoded methods of the past to future practitioners, because most student teachers are learning through imitation (Galton, 1989; Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan,1992). The lack of perceived skill development in student teachers may have the same root causes as the many failed professional development and reform initiatives among teachers; much of what is done in schools and universities has been through a top-down approach with very little teacher input. I suspect the missing elements in the practicum are probably the same things that are absent from the educational system as a whole. Whenever one or more parts of an organism is ailing, it affects the whole organism. We can not take a narrow view of cooperating teachers as incompetent and inept, without looking at other factors that impinge on the practicum experience.

When beginning in a profession most novices are just learning to survive (Little, 1990; Wallace, 1986). When in a survival mode, we often act from fear and revert back to well known behaviors. This need for security is one of the first needs of the novice teacher (Grimmett,& Ratzlff, 1986; Little, 1990). Before taking any risk the novice teacher must "first make sense of the institution" (Little, 1990, p. 329). Because the norms of a school culture are usually understood and not spoken and often below the level of awareness, student teachers may wonder what is acceptable and not acceptable; more importantly, they worry if they, themselves, are acceptable. Many unintentional cultural "faux pas" have gotten a practicum relationship off to a shaky start.

Cooperating teachers are often selected on the basis of convenience, proximity and necessity, and not for any particular abilities (Goodlad, 1990; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986). This again is a message of low status for cooperating teachers; to be selected not because you measured up but because you are convenient. It is no wonder cooperating teachers are often hard to find; no one enjoys the feeling of being used.

Hoy and Woolfolk tell us that veteran teachers pressure "neophytes to emphasize controlling and instrumental behavior rather than supportive and autonomous behavior" (1990, p. 286). Student teachers often blame their overly controlling cooperating teachers for what they perceive to be their inability to do what they really want (Hollingsworth, 1989; Tardiff, 1984). This is one of the major criticisms of cooperating teachers, that they insist student teachers be more authoritarian (Feinman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Goodlad, 1984; Hollingsworth, 1989). Is this because most classrooms are controlling and authoritarian, maybe, or is this due to the fact that student teachers have little knowledge of classroom procedures (Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992) Feinman-Nemser and Buchmann explain that cooperating teachers do not want to "rock the boat" (1987, p.265).

Goodlad takes the pessimistic view that student teaching as it is presently conceived "has virtually guaranteed that the status quo be protected; tomorrow's teacher are being mentored by today's" (1990, p. 185). Of early teaching experiences Hughes writes:

> It seems that much of the impact of the Faculty of Education is frequently 'washed out' by teachers' everyday experiences in schools. Few of us are surprised that many beginning teachers abandon their original endeavors to emphasize student centered learning only to become more authoritarian; or that the progressive liberal and idealistic attitudes exhibit in training give way to a more traditional, conservative, and custodial views. (1987, pp. 148-149)

Kagan (1992) would argue that it is not a function of poor modelling on the cooperating teachers' part, though that is possible, but it is more a result of the program not attending to the developmental needs of the student teachers, who find themselves working at a basic survival level and learning by trial and error. She suggested that "teacher

educators oversimplify the reality of student teaching and ignore the many social and pedagogical variables that can affect a novice's instructional decisions" (p. 149), leaving the student teacher ill-prepared, and laying a heavy burden on the cooperating teacher and the school. Given the few specifics in the practicum program, cooperating teachers focused on procedural knowledge as a measure of success, while student teachers "viewed the experience in interpersonal terms, using the warmth of the relationship with their respective cooperating teachers as the primary criteria for their satisfaction" (Kagan 1992, p. 149). Although procedural knowledge and warmth in a relationship are important components of the practicum they do not, of themselves, get at the core of what it means to be a teacher and a learner.

Kagan (1992), in her review of forty studies, found that "blindly imitating a cooperating teacher did not cause a lasting acquisition of classroom skills" (p. 146), even when the student teacher was seemingly successful. The student teacher needs to have a relationship with the cooperating teacher that is strong enough to explore their cognitive dissonance when the belief of the student teacher do not match those of the cooperating teacher. She goes so far as to say that students who matched the beliefs of their cooperating teachers very closely made less progress than those who experienced cognitive dissonance and were able to explore it.

It is not only the example of the cooperating teacher that student teachers emulate, but the many teachers they have observed through their years as students. Lortie (1986) has called this the twelve year apprenticeship. More then twelve years of classroom experience can not be undone by a few weeks in a practicum program. There is a dynamic present that has less to do with the lack of training and skills of the cooperating teachers (though that is important), and more to do with the norms of the profession and society. Another factor may be that the knowledge gained from university courses, having not been informed by clinical practice, is quickly lost when put to the test of the real classroom. I

will speak further about the nature of knowledge as it applies to the practice of teaching under the section "Teacher Education Program."

**A Ray of Hope**

Although the literature's view of cooperating teachers is generally negative, I have found two studies that give hope for future success. Unfortunately, here again the role of the cooperating teacher is barely mentioned. In her study of how student teachers change their beliefs Hollingsworth (1989) describes the development of reflective practice in action, as it occurred for two of the fourteen student teachers studied. One of the first problems that a student teacher must face is that of classroom management. Hollingsworth describes how student teachers come to realize that in order to teach and learn, there first must be a climate conducive to these activities. Many inexperienced student teachers discover this to be a most difficult thing to create. The more afraid we are, and struggling for survival, and the more we feel a lack of control, the more we compensate by imposing even tighter controls. In Hollingsworth's study some student teachers learned to develop structures to accomplish their goals and they further learned that these structures need not be as heavy handed as those observed in the classroom of the cooperating teacher. (A sign of a good teacher is that the student should surpass the master.)

Hollingsworth suggests that these student teachers had changed their incoming beliefs about classroom control and "had developed cognitive 'scripts' for management (1989, p. 176). She attributes this growth to an ability to use knowledge flexibly and to the coaching of informed supervisors (p. 163). These student teachers had gone through an experience that transformed their thinking. Unfortunately she does not tell us what role the cooperating teacher played in the student teacher's learning, except to say that the cooperating teacher was asked to give the student teacher more freedom to teach. Freedom is what teachers have little of (Goodlad, 1991; Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Clifford, 1989) and what they want for themselves. Imagine if they also were given more "freedom to

teach" in a supportive environment, could they not also have similar transformational learning? Student teachers' sense of being powerless in the classroom is no different than that of cooperating teacher's powerlessness in their work life (Clifford, 1989; Cohn & Kottcamp, 1993; Johnson, W., 1989; Lortie, 1975).

In Hollingsworth's study, a cooperating teacher who had encouraged her student teacher to try a different approach "revised her own teaching to incorporate many of Lynda's [the student teacher] contributions" (1992, p. 180). Kagan tells us that it wasn't easy, and that the university supervisor helped both parties to clarify their differences. Unfortunately this experience was the exception. It seems that this particular cooperating teacher was open to learning and change. Unaware of the student teachers' developmental needs, cooperating teachers and university supervisors are generally unable to coach their student teachers, usually expecting a greater level of sophistication than the student teachers possess (Galton, 1989; Grimmett,& Ratzlaff, 1986; 1989; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992).

Both Hollingsworth and Kagan have glimpsed the potential in the practicum relationship, but unfortunately the role of the cooperating teacher for the most part continues to be mute. There is also an implied need for a third party who serves to clarify what is happening during the practicum experience and to mediate differences between cooperating teacher and student teacher. The literature tells us that most practicum triads do not arrive at such an understanding. "The members of a triad experience intra- and inter-personal role confusion during student teaching, uncertainty about their own and others' roles, and divergent role expectation of themselves and others. These phenomena contribute to the disappointing outcome of the student teacher experience" (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990, p. 523). This is why it is important to get inside the relationship, to try to bring a better understanding of the dynamics of the relationship. It is not enough to give simplistic advice that one should foster the development of better interpersonal skills.

Many researchers (Foster, 1989; Goodlad, 1991; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; Tickle, 1987) have suggested cooperating teachers must be given a real voice. I believe that voice must first be in the telling of their stories in their own words.

## Little Success and Small Failures, Why?

From whence comes this inability to achieve our stated dreams of better schools through better teaching?

We, teachers, when we look at ourselves, often deride what we see. Consider the maxim, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." If you can't be in the public sphere, the real world, where the action is, doing a real job, you can always teach in the silent world, the private world. We may not have created this maxim but it sure does smart. We have too often internalized society's beliefs about teaching and about ourselves, allowing others to shape our understanding of the teaching profession. This image of educators' lack of efficacy finds its roots in the socio-political and historical development of public education and teacher education.

### The Socio-political and Historical Context

Clifford tells us that "Socrates saw the teacher as midwife, Plato as a figure of authority; one invokes womanly and supportive imagery, the other patriarchal power. Seemingly contradictory qualities have contended in the image of teaching, including those of militants and mice in present day accounts" (1989, p. 311). This western way of thinking, in dichotomies of this or that, has often hampered us from experiencing and investigating the fullness of life or the wholeness of being. It has helped place teachers in categories of historical stereotypes such as "Ichobods or Schoolmarms" (Clifford, p. 311). This dichotomy in perception has contributed to the feminization of the teaching profession and the lowering of its status. No longer are those involved in the profession called

"school master" but "teacher," no longer the teaching of a classical curriculum to the elite, but women teaching the basics to the unwashed masses (Clifford, 1989 ).

Still today, "in education, men will on average, teach more older than younger students, teach more boys than girls, and teach the harder subjects" (Clifford, 1989, p. 300). Clifford (1989), quoting nineteenth century Friedrich Froebel, who saw "kindergarten teacher as the highest form of motherhood" (p. 315) explains that this domestic ideology and what others (Goodlad,1984, 1991; Ginsberg, 1990; Johnson, W., W. 1989; Lortie, 1975) have called the feminization of teaching was a major contributing factor in the lack of status as a profession. Spending time with children has never been considered high status. Women themselves have long been treated as children according to the law (Clifford, 1989, p. 318). The job of "character formation" was the task of mothers, teachers and ministers, therefore sacred, important and outside political and business life. A growing and increasingly more industrialized society needed a large comprehensive educational system that would reshape the population.

> Public schooling came out of the nineteenth-century efforts to eliminate grave social problems arising from demographic and economic changes which were altering the nations. To educate groups and individuals to know better what to do and how to behave(that is to fit in more easily into the larger society) would reduce poverty, and those seemingly intractable issues arising from the growth of factories, cities, and shifts in population. Schooling was viewed then as now as a major tool tc help make individuals competent members of the nation. (Cuban, 1990, p. 384)

This view of teachers Lortie calls "special but shadowed" (1975, p. 10). Although fulfilling an important role in society "teaching was the first profession to be seen as 'mother work' (Clifford, 1989, p. 313). Women of a growing middle class were seen to be of good moral character, perfect for the job, and certainly they would be more tractable and cheaper than men (Clifford, 1989). This was the beginning of the silence of the practitioner.

Hughes tells us that, "treating teachers as mere technicians, . . . the pedagogues of the day, makes of them dull functionaries, not creative and critical professionals" (1989,

p. 173). As early as 1946 in "A Final Report by the Commission on Teacher Education" it was recognized that there was a need for ordinary teachers be "given a voice and that unsuspected leadership emerge" (p. 138). It goes on to say, "The mechanical application of fixed administrative rules has strict limits of efficiency where personal relations are of the essence"(p. 143). Johnson explains, that unlike law and medicine, where clinical knowledge is important and is viewed as "a reality check on theory," in teaching, clinical knowledge is held in "low regard" and teachers were seen as "only listeners to the professional conversation" (1989, p. 185). Like the children they served, they were to be seen and not heard. Many authors, (Barth, 1990; Goodlad, 1984, 1991; Lieberman, 1988; Maeroff, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989) have since called for a stronger voice from the field of practice. Johnson, (1989), quoting Clifford's (1975) earlier work, tells us that teachers have been virtually invisible in the history of education, and despite the call for change, the recent focus on bureaucratic characteristics of schools has served to keep the voice mute (p. 237). "Thus teachers never did gain control of any area of practise where they were clearly in charge and most expert; day-to-day operations, pedagogical theory, and substantive expertise have been dominated by persons in other roles" (Lortie, 1975, p. 12). If input for practising teachers has held such little value, it would seem exceedingly strange that cooperating teachers would see themselves as capable of advising others on teaching practices.

This total lack of interest in teacher input has "meant at the very least that the research agenda would be fashioned without their participation" (Johnson, W., 1989, p. 251). Just because researchers were not interested in the voice of teachers does not mean they were not interested in increasing the body of knowledge that would improve teaching and increase professionalism. Much of the scientific research done gave rise to top-down reforms (Johnson, W., 1989). Desired lists of characteristics were developed for everything from leadership skills to good practicum programs. A conception of educational improvement that Barth called 'list logic' (1990, p. 38). The assumption of many outside

schools seems to be, that if they can create lists of desirable school characteristics, if they can only be clear enough about directives and regulations, then these things will happen in schools (Barth, 1990, p. 38). This type of research is not totally useless since it has given us the "whats" of education, but now we must concentrate on the "hows," and who better to do that then those who are responsible for the "how."

This type of research has also contributed to the increase of bureaucratization and the maintenance of the hierarchy. This is best demonstrated in the plethora of directives that come from on high. Take the example given by Johnson:

> The "Suggestions on the Course of Study for the Baltimore County Schools" (grades one through four) was issued in 1906 as a 107 page paper bound booklet. The revised 1909 version, an "Outline Course of Study for the Public Elementary Schools of Baltimore County" (grade one through eight) was bound in buckram and 345 pages in length. By 1915 the "Course of Study" was a cloth bound volume of 653 pages; in its final edition, the tome was 846 pages long. (Johnson, 1989, p. 253)

Things have not improved since 1915, for here in Alberta the prescribed Course of Study and its various curriculums fill two shelves in my office and, together are thousands of pages long. It can only be assumed that teachers could not teach without such detailed directives. Again this is another example of the kind of environment where practicum experiences abide; where teachers are told to be autonomous, reflective and creative, all the while abiding by the policies and directives of school districts and Departments of Education. These directives often define what, when, and how certain subjects will be taught and evaluated.

## The Context of Teaching and Learning

*The school context.* Cohn & Kottkamp (1993) who repeated Lortie's 1975 study in Dade County, Florida found that the work life of teachers has become even more difficult, more prescribed, and with even less esteem. Despite the lack of regard and true professionalism teachers continue to believe they are involved in very important work for the good of all of society. The following statements were made during interviews of

teachers involved in Cohn and Kottkamp's study; they are unequivocal about the state ofaffairs in schools. These are the words of shell-shocked victims, who live in a world outside of their control.

> I've almost given up. These last nine weeks I've closed the door in the morning. If they want to come, they come after school. (p. 89)
>
> You've got to do this, and you must have this. . . You've got to do more and more, its like the pressures of it all, the mounds and mounds of paperwork. (p. 129)
>
> When does my responsibility stop? When does my job stop? (p. 131)
>
> We have like Gestapo for [lesson plans]. We do a lot of lesson plans. It's almost like a recipe you find on the back of a Campbell's soup can: the objectives the activity, and the assessment. God forbid if we do not have all three of them. (p. 144)
>
> Good teaching is what I do in the classroom at the moment, not all this stuff, not all this grade book stuff, not all that, that is pure crap! (p. 139)
>
> I lie in my lesson plans . . . I do it quite a bit. . . . Sometimes I think I know better what the kids should be doing. (p. 148)

If anything has changed since Lortie first study in 1975, it is that there are tighter controls and increased bureaucracy; teachers feel overwhelmed by the increased demands of the job but they are also getting angry. These feelings of powerlessness have been outlined by many other researchers (Clifford,1989; Goodlad, 1991; Lortie 1986; Maeroff, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Teachers have fought an uphill battle not only for recognition but more importantly for self-esteem (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Lortie, 1986; Maeroff, 1988). Lortie, (1975) and later Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) wrote about the disappointment and difficulty teachers had when they realized the great difference between their professional expectations and the reality of the constraining environment in which they must work. Often these battles are fought in isolation where many teachers settle for mediocrity (Goodlad, 1991; Lieberman, 1988). Rosenholtz (1989) calls these experiences "long iron-gray histories" (p. 63), as if our lives as teachers are as circumscribed as that of prisoners.

Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) call these teachers disaffected. It is as if they have divested themselves of all feeling and passion for their lifes' work in order to survive. Lieberman (1988) states the following:

> Lacking a sense of power, teachers who care often end up acting in ways that are counter productive by "coping" -lowering their aspirations, disengaging from the setting, and framing their goals only in terms of getting through the day. Teaching is apt to become a job not a career. (p. 29)

There is one other role that can compare in its lack of prestige and recognition, that of parent and homemaker. No one would say making food, picking up dirty socks and reading bedtime stories is a career. As earlier stated, teaching, through history and particularly sincethe advent of public education, has become a feminized occupation. To be a life giver and sustainer is an awesome power that should be tightly controlled. Despite our claims to enlightenment, modernization and even post modernization, some of our fears are only slightly removed from that of our cave dwelling ancestors. To be a great teacher of teaching would be to hold powerful secrets. It is best if no one had such power. George Gerbner, cited by Cifford, writes: "All societies suspect what they need but cannot fully control. It becomes only reasonable and realistic to show teachers full of goodness but sapped of vitality and power" (Clifford, 1989, p. 319).

*Small Promise.* Schools and the people within them are more innovative and creative when these schools are characterized by collaboration and cooperation (Owens, 1987; Rosenholtz 1989; Poppleton, 1988). Teachers who have control over their working environment, a sense of capacity as Lieberman (1988) calls it, "pursue effectiveness, express commitment and report a high level of professional satisfaction" (p. 29). I believe that cooperating teachers working in this type of school environment would have a positive image of themselves as teachers, and would demonstrate a stronger commitment to student teachers.

There is a growing body of evidence linking collegiality as a positive attribute to the sharing of working knowledge (Coleman & LaRoque, 1990; Flanders, Bowyer, Ponzio,

Ingvarson, Tisher, Lowery, & Reynolds, 1986; Jordell, 1987; Lieberman, 1988; Rozenholtz 1989). Lieberman (1988) writes, "A collegial environment provides multiple opportunities for interaction and creates expectations of colleagues as regular sources of feedback, ideas and support" (p. 34). Ideally this is the role of the cooperating teacher vis-à-vis the student teacher. Risk-taking and growth oriented activities should be the norm in an environment of collegiality.

If we are to believe the mountain of research (Barth, 1990; Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Goodlad, 1984, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Warren,1989) such environments are the exception and not the norm. The bureaucratic Educational System still weighs heavily on most schools. Goodlad suggests that reforms should happen at the school level with teacher input. There is a small hope, that changing one school at a time will change the face of the giant.

## Teacher Education Programs

### The University Context

Many researchers (Alexander, 1990; Bercik, 1991; Feinman-Memser & Buchman, 1987; Goodlad, 1984, 1991; Grimmett & Ratzlaf, 1986; Kagan, 1992; Grimmett & Ratzlaf, 1986; Zeichner, 1992; Grimmett & Erickson, 1988; Holly, 1988; MacKinnon & Erickson 1989; Tickle 1987; Tripp, 1988) have found serious deficiencies in practicum programs as they are presently conceived. Goodlad goes as far as to say that there has been an unwillingness to change over the years. "The legacies of neglect and mindlessness hangs heavy over the necessary task of renewal" (Goodlad, 1991 p. 68). The lack of will and ability to change practicum programs may lie in the value accorded to them. "The closer one gets to working with future teachers in the field and school classrooms, the less prestige and security one has in the institute of higher education. In addition this decline of status appears to be almost proportional to a decrease in influence over the teacher

education program" (Goodlad, 1990, p. 245). Goodlad found that "the best schools study education and have little to do with pedagogy and teacher education" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 75). Education professors often are not modeling that which they expect from their students as teachers (Ginsberg & Clift, 1990). It seems to be a case of, "do as I say and not as I do," to quote an old axiom. Educational students are perceived as not being as able as their fellow students in other faculties. This perception was strongest in large institutions, where the focus was on research and graduate education (Goodlad, 1990, p. 200).

Education students, past and present, have been students of a hidden curriculum that has given them mixed messages about the value of teaching, their place in the instutional and social context and their self worth. "Until teacher educators explore more fully how to live their own models, they will have a limited effect on changing the current course of teacher education or of education in elementary and secondary schools" (Short & Burk, 1989, p. 194). Teachers at the universities must examine their acceptance of the prevailing view of education, and they must also examine their role in its perpetuation. As teachers they must also find their personal voices.

## View of Knowledge

Earlier I talked about researchers' earnest attempts to develop a body of knowledge that would define the teaching profession. "Like law professors who sought to establish academic careers at the turn of the century by promoting a science of law through the case study method of instruction, university professors of education have attempted to establish their credentials by creating a science of education, or at least a scientific approach to education" (Johnson, 1989, p. 242). This early metaphor borrowed from the science disciplines has lead to a too narrow technical view of teaching. Johnson also suggests that "performanced-based education" was embraced because "it represented a scientific and technical view point which promised control over American schools, much as it promised

(but never really delivered) control over American business. Most importantly, it fit the ethos of the twentieth-century university that has valued most highly scientific knowledge"(Johnson, 1989, p. 242).

The more traditional research method of observing and talking about what works has given us much information about what is effective teaching (Good & Brophy 1987), but little about how this is transformed and adapted in the individual realities of classrooms, schools, and districts. This type of knowledge can only be shared if teachers can have real and personal experiences in which they construct new knowledge, transform themselves, changing the way they understand things and the way they do things (Dewey, 1938; Clandinin, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Olson, 1993; Schon, 1983). "There has to be an experience to catch the message, some clue otherwise you are not hearing what is being said (Campbell, 1988, p. 73). There is a tradition among the Hindu teachers to wait until the student poses a question. Kagan (1992) would ask that cooperating teachers and university supervisors be aware and responsive to the developmental needs of student teachers. Questions are not always asked verbally and out loud. There is no point in answering the questions they have not asked. The flip side is that we can not answer when we ourselves have not had the experiences of the knowledge.

Tom and Valli object to using research based rules for linking knowledge to practice.

> On the one hand, specific and separable rules do not do justice either to the complexity of classroom phenomena or the judgement involved in teaching. On the other hand, the use of rules fosters top-down management of teachers, thereby limiting their ability to grow as professionals and implicitly encouraging their use of similar top down approaches with their students. (1990, p. 381)

Education students feel they must reflect to their instructors not their own knowing but the institutional knowing they received (Clandinin, 1993; Olson, 1993). I suggest much of what students learn at university is prescriptive in nature not transformational nor experientially based which is the kind of learning that will change someone for the rest of

their lives. Much of our institutional learning is the finest "calf leather briefcase" learning, we carry it around proudly, and trot out the contents when the occasion requires; very impressive but superficial when placed in the context of complex human relationships.

## University and School Partnership

Researchers (Alexander, 1990; Goodlad, 1994) recognize the potential of school university partnerships for teacher education reform. They suggest this will not happen without real and ongoing effort. True partnerships, although very desirable, are not easily developed and are maintained with difficulty. Alexander tells us that even satisfactory partnerships can "regress if the relationships between the partners are not nurtured" (1989, p. 59). Like Goodlad, Alexander found that there was a great deal of mistrust and misunderstanding between school and university personnel.

> Structures generate versions of reality. Equally, they generate solidarities, loyalties and sets of values. Attitudes are formed and consolidated; and one of the reasons they resist challenge and change is that institutional cohesion and individual equanimity may depend on their persistence. (Alexander, 1990, p. 63)

Goodlad (1994) writes, "The potential for success rest on effecting of symbiosis, and, ultimately, near organic fusion" (p. 163). He goes on to list four characteristics that are important to the success of such partnerships:

1. Distinctive differences between the two courting parties
2. The complementary of these differences, that is, the degree to which each side contributes to the other's lack
3. The degree to which the courting parties first envision and then comprehend through the experience the extent to which this complimentarity depends on commitments fully shared.
4. Powerful contextual contingencies. (p. 103)

Alexander argues, that even when a structure is in place, there is "little value unless it encourages person-to-person partnership at the action level in the classroom" (p. 63). "The teacher needs to be central to partnership discussions and decisions" (p. 66). This is

something difficult to do at the university and district level for these are quite remote from the classroom where the partnerships will be acted out. I believe conversations must be with the teachers directly involved. That means Education Faculty members have to speak directly with the teachers involved at the school level so that they can hammer out together the meaning of practicum experience. This is Alexander's action level of the partnership, where success for the student is dependent "on the quality of the relationships at the action level. Partnership at this level has a very personal aspect" (p.65). The institutions may enable this process but success is dependent on the interaction of the people involved.

### How Cooperating Teachers Share Knowledge: Reflective Practitioner

Cooperating teachers have acquired craft knowledge through their own experiences in the context of their classrooms and their schools (Lortie, 1975; Schon, 1983; Tom &Valli, 1990). This kind of construction of knowledge through experience was well described by Dewey (1938). As our lives unfold we learn and talk through all of our experiences in a social and physical context, and I would add the more personal context of emotion and spirituality, for these often determine our openness to new experiences. The apprenticeship model for practicums comes from this understanding of learning by doing in the real world, and the reflective model is learning by doing and dialoging in a virtual world (Schon, 1983, p. 170) . Despite the fact that student teaching encompasses only a small portion of a university career, it has been seen as the most memorable learning experience for student teachers (Foster, 1989; Henry, 1989; MacKinnon & Erickson, 1988; McClelland & Varma, 1989; Tickle, 1987).

Much of the literature calls for the development of reflective practitioners (Goodlad, 1991; Grimmett & Erickson, 1988; Holly, 1989; Schon, 1983; Tickle, 1987). Cooperating teachers are expected to model this skill and help student teachers to develop it. "Reflective practice should become an established part of initial teacher education. Quality induction

into the profession is also the key to the achievement of professional characteristics" (Tickle, 1987, p. 278).

Hollingsworth (1989) and Kagan (1992) suggest that student teachers must be put in a position where they must confront their earlier beliefs and transform them by using the new knowledge acquired in the classroom and through reflection. It is unfortunate that the conversations often remain at the procedural level (Foster, 1989), rarely rising to question values and beliefs. Even the new reflective practices remain at the "how-to level," often missing the mark of who am I as a teacher and what am I doing and why am I doing it. (Kagan, 1992) Kagan suggests that:

> The necessary and proper focus of the novice's attention and reflection may be inward: on the novices own behaviors, beliefs, and images of self as teacher. Novices who do not possess strong images of self as a teacher when they first enter the classroom may be doomed to flounder. Instead of expecting novices to reflect on the moral and ethical implications of classroom practices, teacher educators might be wiser to guide novices through their biographical histories: for example, helping them examine their prior experiences in classrooms, their prior experience with authority figures, and their tendencies to assume that other learners share their own problems and propensities. (Kagan, 1992, pp. 162-163)

Both Hollingsworth (1989) and Kagan (1992) cite research showing that student teachers' basic beliefs do not change because of the practicum experience despite the fact student teachers say the practicum was the most powerful learning experience in the teacher education program. For change of attitudes and beliefs to occur student teachers must feel enough cognitive dissonance and disequilibrium with their cooperating teachers' ways of doing things to question them and themselves. In a safe environment, both parties would be able *to reflect, to question* and *to discuss* the differences at a belief and value level. Cooperating teachers can encourage student teachers to risk, to experiment and to share, and in so doing invite them to deepen their understanding of themselves as teachers and learners. There are times where the presence of a student teacher was the catalyst for the cooperating teachers' growth (Foster, 1989; Sukhovieff, 1992).

Ginsberg and Clift (1990) suggest that the worth of reflective practice is undermined when evaluation is biased by a process-product orientation. The view of teacher as technician competes with the view of teacher as reflective practitioner.

This growth and change occurs at a personal, one to one relationship level, but how is this phenomena to be translated at the organizational level? Can success at the intra and interpersonal level be transmitted to the organization?

Unless we become more reflective as described by Schon (1983) about who we are, how we learn, and how this is expressed in our daily lives as teachers, I'm afraid, like Goodlad, I believe the old maxim will continue to hold true, "We parent as we were parented, we teach as we were taught." We will be stuck in the constructs of the past with little relevance for today.

Barth tells us that teachers and administrators have "muted voices and that they carry with them extraordinary insights about schools and about improving schools" (1990, p. 105). "The majority of proposals cite the central role of the teacher in improving our educational system, yet they continue to be written primarily by 'outside experts' looking inward" (Cohn &Kottkamp, 1993, p. 24). Cohn and Kottkamp go on to say "we must begin with the perceptions, feelings and viewpoints of the 'inside experts,' the classroom teachers. It is they who have intimate knowledge of the challenges of change and the constraints of stability" (p. 24). This would take a lot more trust than now presently exists, and it may mean the dismantling of a great hierarchy if we are to speak as equals. I am not sure any of us feel ready for this.

## Conclusion

We are despairing because teachers are discouraged, disaffected and frustrated and because the findings of much research is so very pessimistic and frightening. Given this level of disaffection, many believe that the Educational System is "going to hell in a

handbasket." I prefer to see it as teachers and researchers entering the dark soul of teaching to reemerge with a new identity.

Many in the field of education realize that our actions are not always congruent with stated beliefs, and that we must question what is it that we really value, and how is it expressed in the things we do. All of us who are involved in the educational system--classroom teacher, teacher educators, administrators--must examine our practices and beliefs, and we must use our own voices in the professional conversation.

We have become more and more uncomfortable with the fit of the old axiom, " do as I say, not as I do." As educators, we are called upon to make changes in the small worlds that we occupy one person at a time, one school at a time, one district at a time, one society at the time, and one world at a time. Those who call for large scale revolutionary changes in the organization and structure of educational systems may only be spitting into the wind. Often these are calls for others to change without changing oneself. Change happens at a person to person level; this is called teaching and learning, a vibrant, alive and interactive process.

*It might be best to risk our spirit in the winds of change and by so doing continue the process of growth.*

# CHAPTER 3

## METHODOLOGY

*"Me Explain it ?" said Pooh behind his paw.*

*"Well yes, I thought that might be nice."*

*"Why don't you explain it ?" asked Pooh.*

*"Well I thought it would be better if you did somehow."*

*"I don't think that is such a good idea ,"said Pooh.*

*"Why not?"*

*"Because when I explain things they get in the wrong places," he said*

*"That's Why." (Hoff, 1982)*

To choose a methodology and to understand how it allowed me to make better sense of the experiences I was living with Jean Luc and Lee was more agonizing than I had first thought. Methodology--even the word lulled me into the mistaken belief. Oh, simple enough, isn't it like following a recipe, step one, step two and step three, and voilà it is done, a neat packaged product of information bound in blue leather?

My university courses had laid out in short neat descriptions various methods with which one could approach research. I knew my sympathies lay with qualitative research as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), "The researcher is bent on understanding, in considerable detail, 'how people such as teachers, principals, and students think and how they came to develop the perspectives they hold" (p. 2). "They are concerned as well with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of reference" (p. 2). My own

experiences as teacher, principal, parent, wife and friend taught me that we all interpret our world in a fashion unique to ourselves. Our stories may not always seem different one from another, but each of us knows how they belong to us alone. This is often the source of our pride and our loneliness.

In searching for "the way, the method," I knew I must choose a method that would honor the participants and their lived experience. I also wished to share, reveal and come to understand my experiences as researcher. It would be only a partial truth, if I presented the data minus my presence in the experience, for I also had developed a relationship with the participants; they had become part of my life experience as I had become part of theirs. I felt a deep fondness for them and I admired and respected them for their willingness to open themselves and their classrooms to the student teachers and to myself, the neophyte researcher. In many ways they were not only teaching the student teachers, they were teaching me what it meant to be a researcher. It is in the doing that I came to know "the way." They had graciously made a place for me in their lives and for this I am grateful. I hoped they needed to talk as much as I, the seeker, needed to listen and to hear the truth of their experiences and the truth of my experiences as we created the truth of our stories.

Many authors in the educational field have described the essential isolation of the classroom (Barth, 1990; Goodlad, 1984, 1991, 1994; Maeroff, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989). Few teachers feel there is a place to share their knowing and fewer believe that their stories are important. I know the stories of these two teachers were important to me, for they were, like me, struggling to construct and tell a life that was worthy and meaningful. I think they knew it too.

I can not pretend I sat quietly on the sidelines listening and taking notes to be later reorganized and sanitized, wiping out all my fears, frustrations, worries, joys, laughter and elation. My life's experience as researcher and seeker are also part of this story; hence, the style of this thesis.

The parts of this thesis that are about how one does research are my story and the parts that are the content "on being cooperating teachers" are their stories, and from time to time, the stories mingle, three distinct voices becoming one.

I worried I would never be able to write as truthfully as I must, and I was afraid I was a lousy researcher unable to be detached and objective. This paralyzing fear led me to three more years of reading, and a morbid fear of my computer, where I occasionally spent a dutiful hour or two in front of a blank screen. The hated machine was relegated to the basement; I avoided this outward manifestation of my conscience. I knew I was far from my original goal of understanding my contribution to the world, but there seemed no help for it. Even my friendly, supportive advisor could not make me budge. Books, books, books and conversations, many conversations brought me to an understanding of methodology. So much, for so little, you may deride, but isn't a methodology freely chosen an expression of "the way." And each of us comes to methodology, making sense of the world, in our own time and in our own way and never without help. This understanding may end up as text on a page for others to read or better yet in actions in our lives as we weave our own stories through the threads of other people's lives.

In the three years that seemed so often dry and useless, I read. I read authors recognized in the field of educational research: Goodlad, Van Manen, Spindler, Sergiovanni, Barth, LaRocque, Clandinin and many others. Some I read because I was interested in their ideas and others because I was attracted by their stories. All the while I was looking for my reflection in their words. I also read books of philosophy and books that enlightened the human condition, authors such as Joseph Campbell, Matthew Fox, Scott Peck, Stephen Mitchell, Carl Jung, Sherry Anderson, Patricia Hopkins and Clarrissa Estée. Always, I was searching for the method, the way. My search started in the practicum experience of two cooperating teachers in 1991, but grew to have a reason and a life of its own. I couldn't tell Lee's and Jean Luc's story without first understanding my

own. It was the old cliché, know thyself. If their voices were to be clear, I had first to distinguish my own voice from all the others.

Early in my university studies I became fascinated by anthropology, cultural anthropology in particular, and I earned my first degree with a major in this area. It is not surprising that I should find Spindler (1982) and Wolcott (1982) compelling. Spindler (1982) suggests that "ethnography can provide a sensitizing experience of great significance" (p. 3). My own early studies in cultural anthropology had moved me out of the narrow confines of my own culture. It allowed me to accept that my culture was not the only true reality; that there were many ways that humans came to understand the world and organize their lives. Ethnographies from educational communities are written with a warm rich fullness of life that I recognize. People are not subjects in these studies; "they are the experts on what the ethnographer wants to find out about and accordingly are treated with great respect and always in good faith" (Spindler, p. 490). It is this richness and respect that I wished to capture in my own research.

Wolcott's (1982) questioning of the viability of an ethnographic approach, when a researcher is not able to attend to the anthropological prerequisites and to put in the time it demands caused me some personal concern. How good of a participant-observer could I be in just eight weeks? How could I make explicit what was implicit when I wasn't sure if my own views were coloring the interpretation of the data? Would that not limit the quality of the qualitative research? No matter how hard I tried, in such a short time, I could never pretend I had "gotten under the skin of my participants" and seen the world from their eyes. I have been studying my husband for more then twenty years and there are many days when I do not understand him at all. They say it is difficult to see the forest for the trees in your personal life, but it is much the same in our professional lives; this too is an intimate part of whom we are, difficult to step back and observe.

Wolcott says about his book "The Man in the Principal's Office," "I think the study would have been 'more ethnographic' if I had given more attention to the principal as a

human who happened to be an administrator" (p. 85). He admits if it had been a different cultural setting he would have spent more time and been more attentive to the human side. His book did not receive as much attention for its insights into the life of an elementary principal but as for its style and research methodology, the ethnography. He wanted to set up a mirror for practising principals but few were interested in this "sobering experience" of looking into this mirror (Wolcott, 1982, p. 77). I suppose we can't set mirrors for others, the best we can do is to look for our own reflection. Wolcott suggests that those who engage in ethnographically oriented studies "should agonize . . . about how best to define ethnography and to state its purposes. . . . Without such agonizing, there is a good likelihood of failing to realize that how we view culture cannot help but influence and guide what we look at and how we subsequently describe it" (p. 85). Again the message is that the choice of methodology is a difficult one, very much affected by who we are and where we are.

Wolcott's understanding of the centrality of "personality in culture" reinforces my belief that the person comes before the role or job description. I wanted to see Jean Luc and Lee as the people who were cooperating teachers.

I both watched and participated in the life of their classrooms trying "to accurately describe and interpret the nature of the social discourse" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 454). "One must be in a position both to observe behavior in its natural setting and to elicit from the people observed the structures of meaning which inform and texture behavior" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 454). Although this anthropological approach to my study was what I understood best, I also realized that eight weeks could never qualify as an ethnographic study. What remained was my personal criterion that it had to be alive and real.

I believe we live our lives to find meaning and that we live them through relationships. As a teacher and administrator I knew that the successes or failures I experienced were due mainly to the quality of my relationships as I lived them in the school community. Later, upon reflection, I would judge these experiences successful or not

successful and I would try to understand why one was not more like the other. Practicum experiences are pedagogical relationships that exist between student teachers and students, student teachers and other student teachers, student teachers and administrators, student teachers and faculty consultants, but most importantly between student teachers and cooperating teachers.

In trying to examine the essence of the relationship as it was lived by the cooperating teacher, I realized that I was doing hermeneutic phenomenology. I can hardly pronounce it, and I can't spell it without help. It is in reading Max van Manen's book, "Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy" (1990), that I found the name for how I best interpret the world. According to the Oxford dictionary, hermeneutic means belonging to or concerned with interpretation; especially as distinguished from exegesis or practical exposition ( 1889, p. 168). Phenomonology is defined as the study of phenomena as distinct from that of being (ontology). The Oxford dictionary goes on to explain Husserl's theory:

> that the pure and transcendental nature and meaning of phenomena, and hence their real and ultimate significance, can only be understood subjectively; the method of reduction based by Husserl on Descartes's method, whereby all factual knowledge and reasoned assumptions about the phenomena as object and the experiencing as "ego" are set aside so that pure intuition of the essence of the phenomena may be rigorously analysed and studied. (Vol. XI, p. 673)

This methodology was best suited to this study for it allowed me to focus on the cooperating teacher's lived experience in a very up close and personal way through their thoughts and their actions which I have collected in conversations and observations. Max van Manen tells us that phenomenological study is "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures of lived experience" (p. 10). If I am ever to understand the experience of what it is to be a cooperating teacher I must search for the fuller deeper meaning. What was it like for them as they did this or said that ? How did they understand the moment as it passed in space and time? "Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a search for the fullness of living," writes van Manen ( p.

12). And that is precisely what we know so little of, when we talk about what it means to be a cooperating teacher. It was apparent in the literature review that many of the past investigations into the practicum experience paid little heed to the fullness of the experience as lived by one of the major players, the cooperating teacher. It is not to say that the cooperating teachers are not guilty of all the things for which they stand accused; better say the evidence is not all in yet. Writers and researchers have not walked that proverbial mile in their shoes. Until this is done, their reflection (that of the cooperating teachers) is a shallow one, barely imprinting the surface of life's flow.

Max van Manen tells us,

> the method of phenomenology is more a 'carefully cultivated thoughtfulness than a technique'. . . . The procedures of this methodology have been recognized as a project of various kinds of questioning, oriented to allow rigorous interrogation of the phenomena as identified at the first and then cast in the reformulation of the question. The methodology of phenomenology requires a dialectical going back and forth among these various levels of questioning. To be able to do justice to the fullness of the ambiguity of the experience of the lifeworld, writing may turn into a complex process of rewriting, (re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognizing). (p. 131)

van Manen (1990) writes that "hermeneutic phenomenology is a human science which studies persons" (p. 6). It is "a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of the understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of other, the *whole*, the *communal*, or the *social*" (p. 7). It is "the study of lived experiences"(p. 9). This is exactly what I wished to understand, the living of the experience of being the cooperating teacher within the school context. What is it like, how does one experience the roles of guide and mentor, when you are the more experienced one in a teaching learning relationship between two adults?

Being deeply interested and curious about the personal and the human aspects of mine and other people's lives, I came to my research bent on knowing the deeper, and more personal aspects of the persons in the role. One of the things we do when we work and fulfil a role is that we play it out in relationships, relationships of all kinds, teacher,

learner, colleague, friend, mentor, rival, supervisor and supervised. It is within these relationships that we gain consciousness of ourselves and our actions. van Manen (1990) quotes Sartre's understanding of this consciousness. "I *see* myself because *somebody* sees me. I experience myself as an object for the other" (p. 25). It is this awareness that we hold of ourselves and of others that can best be felt when we are caught staring at someone who is involved in a very human activity or when we are aware of another looking at us in that same way. At times as a researcher I felt like I was eavesdropping or peeking through the peepholes into Jean Luc's and Lee's lives. I felt both humbled and honored. It is this conscious awareness that allows us to reflect on our lives and to write about it for the express purpose of capturing the "lived through quality of the lived experience, and on the other hand, description of the meaning *of the expressions* of the lived experience" (p. 25). van Manen states that "the aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviors, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the lifeworld" (p. 19). If done well, the reader has a sense of what it is like, a kind of empathetic understanding that may open the reader to a greater understanding of human experiences, what Spindler the anthropologist would call a native like understanding. In other words this is not me or my culture, but I have a sense of what it means to be there at that time in that place. If this empathy could be achieved it might be a learning, a knowing that is transformational within our own natures.

Another influence in understanding methodology was coming to recognize the power of story. Clandinin (1993) tells us that it is how we live our lives; it is what we tell and retell about ourselves and each other that expresses the meaning of our lives. We are both the major and minor characters in our own stories and in the stories of others. Jean Luc and Lee told me many stories about themselves, their classrooms and their student teachers. It is in the telling of our stories that we come to understand ourselves and the world in which we live.

## Gaining Access: Can I come in?

"Gaining access," two words that have a connotation that one needs some special password or a secret code to enter. I worried this was given only to the chosen few and that I may not be one of them. I felt I was on holidays in a foreign country. Everyone issmiling politely but you can't help wondering if they really want you to be there. There I am, standing at the threshold, reaching for my goal, trying to meet the criteria of some checklist, whose items are not all known to me. Some of the formal steps had been accomplished: proposal written, ethics review passed, permission sought and granted from the school district and membership in the PSPP--Partnership Schools Practicum Project research team. This team was composed of seven graduate students and a professor from the Faculty of Education. The team was charged with the task of studying this new approach to practicums. Preliminary meetings between university personnel and principals and teachers from the pilot schools in the PSPP helped smooth the way for my first encounter with participants in the field. Standing on my own merit, I hoped I was ready to meet the principal of Willow School.

After a few phone calls and unclear messages, I had secured a meeting with Rex, the principal of Willow School. Rex is not his real name; it is a pseudonym proposed by members of the PSPP research team and accepted by Rex. All the names in the text are pseudonyms that participants chose or acquired over the course of the eight weeks. Only my name is for real.

The day arrived. I woke up early that morning with only one thought in mind, to make a good impression on the school principal. Even the simplest decisions were fraught with many implications that could help or hinder the all important tasks of making a good first impression and creating rapport. With a last glance in the mirror, I left my room with its pile of discarded clothing on the bed. It wasn't easy to follow Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) precepts on attire. "People choose to wear clothes to communicate who they are.

We do not suggest you desert your personal style, but you be aware what dress means to subjects" (p. 130). A simple matter if your subjects are laboratory mice. Hearing my mother's voice in my head, "You can never go wrong with black." I chose a basic black and white suit. I hoped it would reflect an understated professional look.

I arrived at Willow School well in advance of the appointed time. For fear of taking someone else's parking spot, or to be in a school bus zone, I parked my car a block away and trudged through the snow of the un-shovelled sidewalks. Before entering the school and meeting Rex, I spent a few moments collecting my thoughts and composing myself.

A little girl entered the office just ahead of me. She said, "Good morning, Mr. Cameron." He did not notice me at first. He was joking with the little girl about his new haircut. In that very short exchange, my first impression was of a man who had a sense of humor but more importantly someone who liked children. I felt a tangible relief. "I think I will like him," I thought. He had passed my first impressions test; I wondered, would I pass his?

An hour later, I was back in the car, my head and arms on the steering wheel and and army of butterflies had returned full force. Whatever possessed me to talk about his cleaning lady. I knew more about this woman than many other people in my life. I couldn't believe our conversation had ranged far and wide from the challenges of being a principal to laminating and ironing. Although racked with doubt and dubious about my beginnings as a researcher, I was buoyed by the promise he made, to have a name for me the following week. I had suggested that I might talk to the whole staff, but he preferred to "put a bug in someone's ear" himself. I thanked him, left him with a brief sketch of my study and told him I would be in touch in a week.

### The Participants

This is not how I imagined a researcher did purposive sampling but I was ready to trust Rex. All I really wanted was to find a cooperating teacher who was willing to share

the practicum experience with me. I had gained access. Barring personality clashes, I felt sure that I would establish rapport and begin a meaningful researcher-participant relationship. Rex had given me the name of his kindergarten teacher, Lee Redburn.

I had arranged to meet Lee during a recess break. I had been escorted to the staffroom to wait. I remember thinking, "This is a small space, but fairly tidy." I liked the fact that there was a bowl of candy on the table.

Meeting Lee was like coming in contact with a compact package of electricity. At first I was startled, then I felt her warmth. She is a small woman with very large, expressive, dark eyes. She was forthright and came straight to the point. It took me a moment to adjust. She came up with the most startling things. One of the first question she asked me, "Have you had a Myers Briggs?" (a personality inventory test). I answered I had and that I was of a certain type. "I just wanted to make sure we are compatible," she said. This had been my worry as well, but I was not ready to admit it. She talked with great animation, jumping from topic to topic. She said that she did not have the time to entertain me, but that I was welcome to find where I fit in. In a few short sentences she gave a sketch of what life is like for her as a kindergarten teacher. She led me to her classroom where I spent my first hour watching her at work. She talked to children and parents, laughing with them and hugging them. Her openness and frankness I found disarming. I was well pleased with this choice of participant.

The second participant posed a bigger dilemma. It had to be someone outside the Partnership School Program. I wanted to be able to comprehend the part context played in the teacher's perception of role. I considered a few friends and acquaintances who had student teachers. Another possibility was to choose a cooperating teacher from Manitou School where I was faculty consultant. After a lengthy internal deliberation I decided to work with someone from Manitou School. I felt that between friends and acquaintances, I shared too much history and this might eventually get in the way of my research.

When I approached the principal of Manitou School, I explained to him the nature of my study. I told him I had no wish to evaluate teaching skills but only to discover the facets of a developing practicum relationship. Reassurance of confidentiality were given. I was given permission to approach the three cooperating teachers at Manitou School. During an after school meeting and before the student teachers had arrived, I explained the project to the three prospective cooperating teachers. I wanted them to know that I was interested in what it was like to be cooperating teachers. I told them that I was on sabbatical away from my regular job in a school much like Manitou. I told them that my university preparation was not all that it could have been and I hoped that their experiences might help bring a greater understanding of what really was needed. After answering a few of their questions and again explaining that this was to be voluntary and confidential, I left the question of participation open. There was time enough to decide once we got to know each other a little better. During the first week, I consciously listened, made mental notes of various situations. After a few individual conversations, I finally settled on Jean Luc Stewart, an experienced teacher who was teaching year two for the first time. I selected him because I felt he was someone with whom I felt comfortable talking, and there was something about the way he was with his student teacher. He had a gentle and protective manner that further endeared him to me.

## Data Collecting

Data were collected in two ways,interview and participant observation . The interview and conversations allowed me "to gather descriptive data, in the participants' own words so that I [word added] the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 135). My role as a faculty consultant in one setting and that of member of the PSPP research team in the other were well suited to the participant-observer technique. The position of faculty consultant produced added benefits. This first hand experience of observing and sharing feedback

with a student teacher allowed me to understand better the role of the cooperating teacher. We had the same goal, that of helping student teachers develop into the best beginning teachers they could be. We spent quite a bit of time over coffee in the staffroom and in the bubble (a small anteroom adjacent to his classroom) talking about how we were doing in our respective roles. I believe this brought us closer together. My work as a faculty consultant may have influenced Jean Luc to some degree, but in some ways, it was a more real experience. I was there for a reason; I did not come just to watch, listen and take away. I think this influence was outweighed by what I acknowledge as a deeper understanding of the practicum relationship.

Though I had planned a formal interview early in the first week of the practicum I decided to forgo this until I had built some rapport. It may be that I, too, needed the time to find my sea legs as a researcher. In the meantime we met informally, over coffee and made small talk. Lister Sinclair of the CBC radio series "Ideas" in a program called "Small Talk" said that "listening is a creative force. It makes us unfold and expand" (April 1991). It was my fervent wish that my listening skills would allow the cooperating teachers to unfold and reveal their world to me. I know that I must have listened for, after a while, Lee would call me at home to share her worries about the difficulties her student teacher was experiencing. Although I had also given my home number to Jean Luc, he did not initiate any calls. A couple of times I had reason to call him but these conversations were kept short and more businesslike.

I took part in various activities throughout the eight weeks both in and out of class: in formal teaching times, and in more relaxed staffroom banter, professional development workshops, staff meetings, school carnival days, lunches and even a supper. I felt very much at home in the two schools. I was given the opportunity to share and work with the children as well. I put on a puppet show with the kindergarten children and I taught a math class in grade two where the student teacher was invited to share her observations with me. I must say I have had greater successes in my teaching career. It was a lot of fun, and it

gave me a better understanding of the classroom context in which they worked. As a participant-observer I decided to leave my pencil and pad in my brief case. In many of the contexts in which I found myself they would have been obtrusive. I had to rely on my memory. I scribbled hasty notes when I was alone. What was lost in verbatim accuracy, hopefully has been compensated in the capturing of evidence in its natural setting. Occasionally, I had to remain in the field for longer periods of time than the one hour suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (1982, p. 134). This was due mainly to the duties of being faculty consultant. I know that on these days I suffered from information overload and was unable to make comprehensive fieldnotes. On such occasions I was left with general impressions rather than specific details.

I wanted the interviews to be more like conversations, sharing and talking about the things we wished to understand better. In the interviews I chose to use a non-directive format allowing the participants to take the lead and describe those things important to them. The interviews took place at the convenience of the participant and lasted about 45 minutes. There were three taped conversations for each cooperating teacher, happening near the beginning of the practicum, one near the middle and the last after it was over.

I also kept field notes and a journal of my experiences. They helped me keep track of times and places as well as fleeting thoughts and impressions as the experience evolved. My journal was a way to work through some of my worries and concerns about the research.

Again each time I mentioned that I would do my best to keep things confidential. Despite the use of pseudonyms, given that there were only two participants involved, there was a possibility that some people would recognize their involvement in this study.

I had asked early in the practicum if they were inclined to keep a journal that I would appreciate sharing it. After the initial invitation I did not mention it again, for I did not wish to impose or intrude on their time. They were already busy people and I didn't want to force a form of reflection that wasn't their own.

Through out the eight weeks I struggled not to jump to conclusions or to judge. I saw people trying hard to be the best that they could be. I know for me that isn't always an easy task and I guess it wasn't for them as well.

In spite of my beginning skills as an interviewer, they seemed to understand the questions posed and provided me with a great deal of data. I can only conclude that my nonverbal communication skills must be superior to my verbal skills.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness has been a major preoccupation of mine. I was determined despite my inexperience to do all I could to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and the analysis. In this section I explain how I have worked to enhance trusworthiness through purposive sampling, member check, triangulation, peer review and the establishment of an audit trail. The one technique that was not well described in the "How To" texts for research and upon which I relied as well was intuition and "gut feelings." Sometimes these feelings and thoughts sat for days and weeks as unformed and unspoken knowing just on the edge of consciousness. Through conversations with my colleagues on the research team and the cooperating teachers they solidified into words, but not always. I know there is much that has been left unsaid and unwritten, for we still lack words and possibly courage for their expression. I found it difficult to write about the unpopular, the hurt, the pain and the failures.

This research has been approached with an underlying thoughtfulness, returning over and over again to excavate and mine yet deeper meanings. This happened as I watched, talked to, and thought about these two cooperating teachers, who went about their daily lives before my eyes, my ears and my mind. Near the end of the practicum, one of the cooperating teacher presented me with a personal log he had kept through the experience and the other shared her written observations. The cooperating teachers also read the transcripts of our taped conversations and reflected about the meaning of their own

words. I drew word paintings of them as cooperating teachers. Again these color portraits added shades of meaning to the experience. The cooperating teachers reflected on these portraits in our final interview together. They had gone from subjects to participants and I hope they felt a little like collaborators. Questions came to me, as I wrote, read, reread and wrote yet again in my journal. I read and reread transcripts to look at their words. During my morning walks, I would play and replay the tapes of our conversations in order to hear the tone and inflection of their voices, and to relive the rich and complex nature of the experience. When my thoughts alone did not suffice to plumb the depth of meaning, I went to the other six members of the research team so that they could help me sharpen the vision of reflected thought with their questions and demands to tell them more. They were an ever so greedy bunch in their quest to know and make meaning of the experiences that we lived and watched. They played an important role in pushing me to be yet more carefully thoughtful so that I might reach a greater depth and breadth of knowing. Their counsel and insights were invaluable to my learning. Their friendship and counsel continue to enrich my life today.

### Confidentiality

After listening to Yvonna Lincoln (Feb 21, 1991) and later talking to David Townsend ( personal communication, January 19, 1991) about the researcher's responsibility vis-a-vis the participant, I became increasingly aware that confidentiality was more than a simple matter of a pat statement before each interview. Dr. Townsend underlined the participant's right not to be abused. I could not go into a school and take away a wealth of research treasures. I had to be concerned about how it would affect the participants. It is definitely a greater responsibility than providing pseudonyms and anonymity. Although I will do my best to protect their identity, in a study with only two participants, I could not guarantee total anonymity and I have made this clear to Jean Luc and Lee. I have been careful to remind them that their participation was totally voluntary

and that if they wished to withdraw some of their statements or to withdraw totally, they would be free to do so at anytime. It is more important to care for them as people with choices than it is for me to collect data. The ongoing concern and discussion about confidentiality among the members of the research team, has helped to keep this issue at the forefront of my work. It has been three years between the first writing and the final draft. The passing of time has contributed to increased confidentiality. I regret I could not give as much as I received. Developing an equal partnership with participants will have to be for another study when my skills will be more developed.

**Data Analysis**

In an attempt to analyze the data collected, I approached it from various angles, through several readings over a few years. To a great extent analysis began in the field. One can not see, hear and participate in another's life without thinking, wondering and probing for better understanding. Fieldnotes collected contained not only observations and excerpts of conversations, but also my comments about the meaning I was constructing of the things I saw and heard. I also asked the participants to read the transcripts to see if there was anything they wished to change or clarify. They made no changes to the original text, but did talk further about what they were trying to express, again adding more words as they reconstructed meaning. Working through the various categories as they arose I shared my thoughts with the cooperating teachers to check if my interpretations reflected their realities. Reading and rereading the material and making notes in the margins was my way of distilling the data until meaning began to appear and categories developed. Although I write that this is how it happened, I know the categories I created could not stand alone, for they belonged in the context of the story we were creating, as part of that whole experience we were living in that one moment in time. It was often difficult to discern how certain statements fit together. Deciding which of two statements was the better wording for what was meant was difficult. For instance Jean Luc sometimes made

self deprecating statements about his teaching, yet expressed in action and words a deep commitment to learning. It is in trying to integrate these categories into meaningful patterns that the themes began to emerge in our story. I then chose to present the data as a story with three main characters: the two cooperating teachers and the researcher. Their words and actions are woven into a story. We live our lives in stories that we construct and reconstruct. It was the only way to tell as fully as I could their reality and mine.

My understanding of why I found it so difficult to get it right was clarified in Rasberry and Leggo's words:

> As we seek to make sense out of the chaos of emotions and experiences and thoughts that swirl around in our heads without end, we are constantly reminded that our lives are inextricably intertwined with language and rhetoric and literary device whereby we disclose what we know about the world and our experience in it. We are caught up in language, in word-making, in meaning-making, constantly striving to create a world. At the same time we use words to word our worlds, the challenge and compulsion and the condemnation of wording is that we can never get it right because there is no 'it ' to get 'right.' . . . Writing does not enable the writer to hammer down secure truth; writing enables the writer to explore possibilities of meaning. (Rasberry & Leggo, 1994, p. 2)

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

## THE STORY OF TWO COOPERATING TEACHERS

*Listen, and I will tell you a story.*

### Finding Jean Luc

She is nervous and she knows it. She can always tell by the amount of preparation she has done to smooth the way. That morning, when she got up, she dressed more carefully than usual, not that she was ever careless about her dress. It was important to her that she look good, it helped prop up her self confidence. Today she wanted the three teachers she was about to meet to take her seriously. She even chose her briefcase deliberately. Her husband, Nat, always chuckled at the number of briefcases she had. He had even appropriated an older one, that he had given her, back in her university days. Its stained calf's leather no longer gave off the right message.

Today was a day for her slim black leather attaché; the kind you see downtown, under the arm of a man, in a Harry Rosen suit; the kind that says I made it. No purse, that says woman loudly, just her wallet and car keys and lipstick thrown in the case.

As she sat waiting in the staff-room she thought to herself, "Who do you think you're fooling? You are just a teacher who needed a break and has taken a year's sabbatical. You are not a learned 'university type', with a Ph.D hanging from your name."

She was, Anita Muller that was all, and most of the time she just thought of herself as Anita. Not bad looking, good hair, good teeth and with a little sparkle in her eye that held a promise. She always thought that these features made up for the twenty pounds she was planning to lose.

In her preparation she hadn't forgotten the cookies. She recalled the countless times the teachers at her school were happy to discover a plate of sweets at four o'clock. The teachers at Manitou School couldn't be very much different. In fact in many ways this school was very much like her own. The staffroom was cozy; it had a neglected lived in, taken for granted look. There were the usual tag boards of notices, a duty roaster for clean-up stuck to the fridge, a few cups in the sink and a couple of coffee stains on the counter. On the far table a couple of piles of notebooks that looked like someone's marking, a sweater hanging on a chair and a basket ball laying in a corner.

She had met the principal, Ted, and vice-principal, Nora, earlier that day to explain her research project and to ask permission to use Manitou school as a research site. Remembering her first impressions brought a smile to her face. She had come in at the appointed time and was greeted by a friendly secretary. Upon hearing voices the principal came out of his office and extended a hand and introduced himself. "Oh " she thought, "He looks just like a teddy bear with those suspenders and grey striped shirt--big and cuddly." He had offered her a cup of coffee and they had returned to his office where they met Nora the vice-principal, who would be responsible for the student teachers. Anita told them about her research project, reassuring them she had come to learn and not to judge and that everything would be kept in strictest confidence.

With a quick look to Nora, Ted had agreed. On the way out to the parking lot, some of his apprehension started to show, "You know they may not be the teachers I would have chosen. Don't get me wrong they are good teachers . . . but, I just want you to understand . . . ah . . ."

Sensing his discomfort, Anita interrupted and repeated her reassurances, " I'm not interested in judging school curriculum, just in seeing how a practicum relationship develops between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher. I am particularly interested in what the cooperating teacher has to say." She concluded, "He really doesn't quite understand my interest, but at least he is open to my being here," she thought. "I understand his reticence. After all it is difficult to open your school to scrutiny. What if you are found wanting."

"It's okay with me. You can ask them, and they can make up their minds if they would like to or not," Ted repeated.

She didn't want to be the kind of researcher who came in, took what she wanted and left them feeling exposed. She would find a way to give as well as receive.

"He let me in the door, but he is leaving the final decisions to them." she thought " I like that. They have a say in their own lives."

What a relief it had been. Now she was facing the second hurdle. She was waiting for the three cooperating teachers.

She watched them as they got their coffees and sat down. They seemed ordinary.

They were comfortable, after all this was their turf, and they could afford a few moments of quiet patience; it didn't cost much. Jean Luc was first to notice the guest and had offered the woman some coffee. Having spied cookies on the table, he sat down to enjoy a few. Things were about to begin and almost in unison they chimed, "Oh, thanks for the cookies, that was nice of you."

"You' re welcome," she replied, and began the conversation. "Hi, I'm Anita Muller. Thank you for coming to meet me this afternoon. I know you are busy people." She outlined her research project and the role she hoped they would play. She even shared one of her favorite poems with them. The poem that expressed how she felt about children. Before making any decisions, she wanted them to know who she was and what she believed. She took a last quick breath and said, "Sorry I sound a little nervous and I

talk too fast. This is the way I am when something is important to me." Then she sat down.

She knew her voice hadn't sounded nervous. In the past, others had told her that she was a good speaker, confident and impassioned. She marvelled, that few suspected the jelly inside. "Maybe" she thought , "that is where the passion comes from." She always felt, in such circumstances, that it was best to express her true feelings and wait to see the effect.

A few moments of silence. Their faces gave little away, then Molly said, "This is the only time a faculty consultant bothered to meet us first."

"And brought cookies," added Jean Luc with a grin.

They talked some more, asked a few questions, and agreed it would be okay The question as to who would participate was left in the air.

"I do not need an answer right away." Anita told them "Let's just see what happens." Molly seemed relieved and Peter and Jean Luc appeared unaffected.

Within a week Anita realized she already had a preference as to whom she would like as a participant. Walter, one of the student teachers, was a little too loud and a little too enthusiastic and already had rubbed his cooperating teacher the wrong way, and Susan was having some serious problems finding space in Molly's classroom. Like a coward she took the easy way out and chose Meg's cooperating teacher. There seemed to be no problem there. And to tell the truth she felt attracted to him, he was no Ichobod Crane. "No, Jean Luc was no wimp, he might even qualify as a man's man," she thought. (Being a woman she was not absolutely sure what that meant). He talked easily of sports in the staffroom with other male teachers and he coached school teams. Before becoming a teacher he had worked on construction sites. He also had an irreverent sense of humor that Anita soon discovered was a public persona overlaying the heart of a dedicated teacher. Jean Luc was very uncomfortable tooting his own horn. He once said, "Aren't Canadians suppose to be quiet and bland like milk toast?"

When Anita first asked why he had become a teacher he said, "A good indoor job." In his more serious moments he admitted, "Although people say I am always kidding, they know that I am serious." Anita came to realize there were many things that Jean Luc was serious about. He was a serious writer; he hoped to have one of his stories accepted for a television screen play. He was seriously committed to his young students. He talked of them with affection, and understanding for their individual circumstances. He tried to alleviate the hurts that clouded their lives, most often with gentleness and humor. He was angered when insensitive, bureaucratic directives were applied to all students without regard for the individual needs of students.

When Anita asked Jean Luc "Why did you choose to become a cooperating teacher?" his answer had been rather flippant, "For the money of course." He later qualified that response, "When I was student teaching it was the old sink or swim. I was placed with someone who team taught. One of the first experiences I remember is teaching social studies to sixty-six kids. I want Meg to have a better experience than that. I want to give her real life experience in the classroom, the kind of strategies she can use. The first year of teaching can be hell on the work front. I also think it is good for my kids; I can spend more time with the weaker ones. It makes you think a little more about some of the things you do and why you do them. Who knows I might learn a thing or two from these fresh young things." Definitely Anita was well pleased with Jean Luc as a participant.

Despite the auspicious beginning of her research project, Anita was not going to avoid the lesson life had prepared for her.

### Meeting Lee Redburn

Anita had been waiting to hear from the principal of Willow School. "It's been weeks, what is taking so long?" she asked herself. She recognized her own impatience to get started. "Rex is a busy man, he promised to let you know, so hang in there." She told

herself to be patient (a quality she did not possess). She was always so very excited when embarking on a new adventure and could never wait to get started.

The first day of the practicum rolled around and she was finally going to meet the cooperating teacher Rex had picked for her. Anita's mind was full of worry. As she sped along in her car, she went through her usual "what ifs" conversation in her head. "What if I don't like her? Worse yet, what if she doesn't like me, and decides not to participate? What if I can't get someone at the last minute?"

It was the first day of the practicum and the PSPP planning team (the three school principals) had decided to hold a mini-academy for the student teachers. It was to help prepare and orient them to the new concept of Partnership Schools. Anita arrived a little late. Rex introduced her to the group. He joked, "I think she got lost." He was right, she had taken a wrong turn, adding ten minutes to her trip. Anita spied a seat next to one of the members of the research team and quietly sat down to begin her observations. They were in the library loft. It looked as if it wasn't used very much. There were a few tattered books on the shelf and a few on the floor. In a corner of the room stood a table with framed photos shoved underneath it. "It wouldn't be a place I'd choose to make a good first impression," she decided. "But I must admit it has potential; with some tidying up and a few well chosen pieces of student art, it could look quite nice. Ah, such things men don't notice," she thought. She could hear her mother's voice in that statement. How sexist! She had noticed on her first visit that most of the displays in the school could have used a "plumb level."

She tuned into Rex's presentation. There was still quite a bit of apprehension among the student teachers, as to which teacher would be their cooperating teacher. Just loud enough for the others at the table to hear, John, one of the student teachers, said, "Is this on a need to know basis?" Anita could understand his apprehension; wasn't she feeling the same way about the participant she was about to meet? Like herself they had

little say in the decision. The student teachers left on a tour of the school and Anita headed for the staffroom where she was to meet Lee Redburn, the kindergarten teacher.

As Lee invited Anita to have coffee in the staffroom, she was thinking, "If this research thing is going to work, I'd better fly my colors, let her know who I am straight away. I don't have the energy to transform myself for a research project." "Anita," she said, "I feel this year that I am in the trenches, and I don't have time to entertain. You are welcomed to fit in where you can. Have you ever had a Myers Briggs personality test?"

A little taken aback, Anita answered "Yes, I am an ENFP. P for procrastination."

"Oh, that is very good" Lee said.

"What a strange introduction" Anita thought. And immediately decided she liked her. Anita knew that there was something that reminded her of herself.

Lee was a small woman dark hair with dark expressive eyes behind large glasses. She was straightforward, somewhat surprising and she had an electric quality about her. Sitting on a couch in the corner of the staff room, Anita sipped her coffee and listened to Lee explain what the school year was like for her and what she hoped to find in a student teacher. "I need someone that can move into the process," she said. "I don't need a bony finger pointed at me. For me, the children and their families come first. I want the children to feel good about themselves, it's just not the A B C s. I take a university course Monday nights in the Early Childhood Department. There is a bunch of us together. We support each other. It really saves my sanity. I'm telling you all of this, so you know me and if want to, you can get out now." Lee knows she is a little different and she is comfortable with this. She paused and wondered to herself, "Is this researcher comfortable with the way I am?"

Anita smiled and said, "Yes I think I'll like it here. I'll try to stay out of your way and try to be helpful if I can. And of course, you too, are not obliged to do this either, and you can change your mind at any time."

Lee smiles warmly. The bell rang and they walked back to the classroom, both thinking "We got off to a pretty good start."

As they arrived in the classroom, Anita paused to take in this kindergarten class. It was quite different for any classroom she had been in before. There were two levels. A large classroom space on the bottom with various centers that invited student creativity and exploration. Everything in the room was so child centered, and there were so many choices of things to do. The most impressive thing of all was the solid wall that was completely covered with shelves of large jars, the kind that restaurants have for relish and mustard. These jars were filled with a colorful array of good junk, better known as Lee's kindergarten treasures. The loft, complete with a rocking chair, was a cozy place for story telling and circle time.

Lee startled Anita out of her reverie, "Fit in where you would like." Anita much preferred being actively involved than being asked to sit quietly out of the way. So Anita, seeing a little boy struggling with a zipper, asked, "Do you need any help?" "No," he replied. "If you ask for help you're a baby."

Lee turned to him and told him, "If you ask for help it is because you need it. Grown-ups ask for help." With a sheepish grin, and a final successful tug at the zipper, off he went with the other children. Lee had told Anita about the values she hoped to impart to her students: that it was okay to need help, it was okay to make mistakes, and everyone had a right to make choices. She wanted children to understand and to respect differences. To this end she was preparing a celebration for a Muslim holy day, this in the midst of the gulf war. Lee told Anita, "I don't want anyone who would hurt the children or their families in this classroom." Lee saw the child's family as very much part of the kindergarten program. She was fiercely protective of the children and their families, and devoted much of her time and energy to them. When asked why she took on the added responsibility of a student teacher, she said, "I see it as adding one more instrument to my orchestra, giving the children more than I could give them on my own. I want to do for the

student teacher what I do for the children: give her choices and enough support that she feels able to take risks. I want her to learn the juicy bits you can't get out of books."

Anita stayed for a while getting a feel for the place. It smelled of wet mittens, paint pots, wax crayons and Aylmer glue. It was a busy place, with small bodies everywhere. Anita took it all in, enjoying being around small children again, realizing how much she had been missing the sound, sight and smell of a classroom. Conscious of not wanting to overstay her welcome on the first day, she decided to leave. She went to Lee and thanked her. Lee issued an open invitation, "Come back anytime, don't expect me to acknowledge you all the time; I might be very busy. Just come in. You don't have to call first."

"Thanks very much," Anita replied and left to rejoin the student teacher group in the library loft. Rex was just explaining the lunch arrangements. The organizing committee had made reservations at a local restaurant that Anita thought a little pricey. Anita overheard one student teacher saying to another that she had no money with her. Anita went over to Rex and told him, he smiled and replied, "Tough luck." She turned around, walked over to the student and gave her twenty dollars, saying, "You can pay me back tomorrow." She was disappointed that Rex hadn't realized how upsetting this had been for the student teacher, and also for the assumption he had made that everyone was ready and able to eat out. As it turned out, it was a very nice lunch and she had enjoyed her conversation with the two student teachers sitting next to her. On returning from lunch she popped into Lee's class. "Can I come back Friday?" she asked. "Sure anytime," replied Lee.

A few days had gone by and now Anita sat rereading her journal entries. She had talked about her first impressions at the PSPP research team meeting that week. The team had already noticed several differences in the three schools. Everyone had a theory about the "whys" and the "wherefores," but Dr. LaRoque had advised the team, "Do not make any hasty judgements, there is much we don't know yet."

in charge. "Besides," her inner voice admonished, "your job is to allow two cooperating teachers to share their experiences of the practicum as they lived them, and not to judge them good or bad."

All in all, despite a few oversights both Willow's and Manitou's practicum had started off with a little apprehension and much goodwill from everyone.

**Speaking a Different Language**

Friday found Lee and her student teacher Theresa finishing lunch at the corner table in the staff room. Anita joined them. This was the fifth day of the practicum. In Willow as in Manitou the student teachers seemed to stay close to their cooperating teachers; like chicks newly introduced to the barnyard, they were curious but still unsure. Lee told Theresa of a very special student in her class. In telling the student teacher about the students in her class she hoped to minimize the culture shock for Theresa, but she also wanted to see how Theresa would react. Theresa sat quietly, occasionally nodding her head, but never asking a question.

Acknowledging Anita's presence Lee turned and said, "Theresa is beginning to find her place. The kids are giving her lots of hugs." Anita turned and smiled at Theresa. "She seems so quiet" she thought, "give her time." Lee was also aware of this quietness and was searching for ways to bring Theresa out a little. "Theresa, there are things I know about you already. You're warm and caring," said Lee. For a brief moment Theresa seemed to bask in the warmth of the compliment. "But there are things that I don't know and you have to tell me. You have choices you know," Lee said, smiling at Theresa.

"Choices?" replied Theresa her voice rising slightly, as if to say "I don't know what you mean." It was as if they were speaking a different language.

'Yeah, Choices!" repeated Lee "They're not against the rules, you know."

The word choices meant so much to Lee. It gave the learner options and opportunities. She believed learners could decide for themselves about what they wanted

The word choices meant so much to Lee. It gave the learner options and opportunities. She believed learners could decide for themselves about what they wanted to learn and how they were going to learn. She wanted them to be in charge. She would say, "Let them teach me what to teach them next." The only thing she didn't accept from her five year olds was that there was nothing to do.

The conversation then moved on to just how hectic the week had been with the extensive parent-teacher interviews. Lee met with each family for a half hour or longer. "Theresa has had only one and a half normal days," said Lee.

Lee, Anita and Theresa got up to leave. Theresa headed for the bathroom and Lee called cheerily, "See you back at the classroom." Although classes hadn't resumed, the classroom was not quiet. Three boys and their mom were there, playing with the toys. Mom and the boys chatted for a while with Lee. There was genuine affection and interest expressed by Lee.

When Theresa returned, Lee suggested they go up to the loft where it would be quieter, so they could review that month's calendar of events together. She explained and Theresa listened, saying nothing, asking no questions. During this half hour together they were interrupted five times. Each new person had taken a little of Lee's time while Theresa waited.

Anita wondered what Theresa was thinking, how she was feeling. She gave little away. Did she understand that first and foremost Lee felt she had to be there for the children and their families? Did Theresa know that she herself was there for the same reason? Lee had told her that her presence would bring something new and different to the children. "When we add one more instrument to the orchestra," she would say, "there is a better chance that every child in there is going to find someone who is singing their song or playing their music." Lee thought of herself as an orchestra leader who encouraged others to be the best instrument they could be and when you put that wonderful variety of sound together there was a symphony of music.

A little later, Lee suggested Theresa set up a center and put a few choices out for the children. Theresa, looking perplexed, said, "It's difficult. I don't know what you want." Lee thought about this. "She doesn't seem like a person opting out of work, just kind of frozen, immobilized and she doesn't want to make a mistake. She's used to school as a place where you're given specific tasks-do this, do that." Lee gave her a hand setting up the materials for the day and thought to herself, "She just needs a little time, then she will start showing some spark. I won't worry yet." Lee had talked about how the class was child-centered and how important it was to listen and attend to the whole child, that everyone brought their whole person to the classroom, children and teachers alike. She had asked Theresa to focus on one or two children and to share some of her observations. Lee wanted to show her how these observations helped the teacher make choices about what to put out next on the center tables. She knew this was a harder thing to teach than the techniques of teaching. For Lee this was the art of teaching, "the juicy part," difficult to put down in a lesson plan. In her approach to Theresa she hoped that she would recognize Theresa's needs and put out choices from which Theresa could experiment. She wanted to create a climate that invited learning. But all the same Lee worried, "She's really afraid. And I don't want to force her because I think she is the kind of person who needs to be given a little more time to really learn what is happening before she has to try. I also want her to have time to make a few mistakes. And not to be evaluated on that basis, without having time to hone her skills." Lee wanted Theresa to feel that invitation, to become part of the classroom and to choose her instrument and be part of the orchestra. Anita thought that Theresa didn't even know there was music, let alone believe she could make music.

### Small Talk

That same week Anita had also visited Jean Luc and Meg at Manitou school. Jean Luc's class was empty. Meg was with the children during their music lesson. Anita looked around the room and thought, "The room is like Jean Luc, casual and

unpretentious, so unlike Lee's class with that solid wall of large jars containing all kinds of "good junques"(not ordinary junk). The displays in Jean Luc's room were a little tattered and the reading race track going around the room was coming down in various places. A few shoes laid abandoned under the children's desks. Jean Luc went to his desk, it looked like the depository for things without a place to be. He picked up a large piece of paper and put it in front of Anita. He said, "The girls (the girls were two other primary teachers who had been teaching for a number of years) let me have this unit plan since it is my first year in year two. I thought I would let Meg start with this. Kids like dinosaurs, there are some materials already, and Meg could add things of her own." No discussion of discovering who Meg was nor anything about choices, just that this could be interesting. Others had shared this unit plan with him and now he was going to share it with the student teacher.

A few days later, Jean Luc told Anita, "Meg started off quiet and shy but now she is asking all kinds of questions. Things I haven't thought about in a long time. Things you do naturally. It makes you think about why you do things. I answer her questions, I give her suggestions about what I would do. She has to find her own way, I don't want her to be my clone. I tell her too that I am no big expert, I'm just stumbling along like the rest." "She is so young. Was I ever that young," he mused out loud. Meg was young, just twenty-one and still living at home. At that point Meg returned with the children and asked, "Can I get them ready for recess now, Mr. Stewart?" "Sure Meg, that's a good idea," he replied. Meg busied herself tying scarves and Jean Luc joined her, assisting children with recalcitrant zippers. Anita thought there is an easiness about their conversation, it was about the everyday things in the life of a classroom. "You know Mr. Stewart the same two are always the stragglers," observed Meg. "Yeah," he answered "Billy is so immature he is always losing something, and Jenny, well, she just likes the attention." He didn't begrudge the extra time it took, just matter of factly responded to their needs. It was the same way with Meg; she asked questions, he answered them the best he

could. She called him Mr. Stewart, he didn't notice. For both of them things were as they should be. They had slipped into a relationship that suited them both.

When preparing for Anita's visits as faculty consultant he would do extra coaching for those lessons Anita would observe. He was protective of Meg and wanted her to do well. He was even proud of her. He once asked how Peter's student teacher had done in a lesson presentation. And when Anita answered, "Quite well," he boasted, "My student teacher will do even better." Jean Luc himself would have made the original 'Mentor' proud. He bit off little pieces at a time for her. He knew that she didn't have the experience to know what some of the consequences might be and often he would suggest a few alternatives. When she sometimes failed he would make light of it, asking her, "Did anyone die?" Meg would respond by letting go of her tension, exhaling and finally smiling. Jean Luc would say, "If it doesn't work this time, well then, we'll learn from that and we'll come around and do it again." When complimenting he would say "you," when talking about doing something he would say, "We."

Anita had become increasingly aware of the differences between the two practicum relationships and it bothered her. They had both started off with the best of intentions. Both cooperating teachers had told her about the advantages they hoped to engender for the student teacher, their classroom and themselves. Both Lee and Jean Luc saw it as an opportunity to give as well as receive. On one hand Meg and Jean Luc were making slow and steady progress, they seemed to have developed an easy relationship touched with gentle humor. "Nothing exciting," thought Anita "but definitely moving." Lee on the other hand, was still looking for ways to encourage her student teacher to get her feet wet. Anita wondered if her relationship with Lee may have somehow interfered. Maybe their closeness prevented Theresa from approaching. She hoped it wasn't so; after all, she was only there once a week. To tell the truth she was in Manitou more often than Willow. It couldn't be that. She knew she was a researcher just playing the role of participant observer. She told herself, "You shouldn't be getting so worked up. Just because you like

Lee and you really admire the way she is with children and parents, you can't make it happen for her and Theresa." There were nagging doubts; she wondered if there was something she should be doing to help. She decided all she could do was to listen and allow them to find their own way. If she was to be completely honest with herself, she had to admit, she didn't want the relationship to fail and later have to write about it. She would much rather write with exultant voices than those of unfulfilled hopes and disappointment. The practicum wasn't over yet, there still were four weeks for things to turn around.

### Outside the Classroom

At Willow School everyone was so busy doing things, attending to their students and to their families, that they seemed to have little time for each other. Anita witnessed only one meeting between Lee and a colleague. Lee and the resource teacher had talked about Lee's special needs student. Other than this one encounter, Anita couldn't remember Lee talking to or about any of her colleagues except for the principal, whom she said was someone who had heart and really cared for children and their families. She had shared an example of his support for her when she had been dealing with a case of child abuse.

Anita had expected that there would be cooperating teacher meetings and student teacher meetings. She thought that it had been in the plan to encourage this type of reflection, but she found little evidence of this. A couple of student teachers had complained that these meetings were always being cancelled for something more important. Lee felt that she and the student teacher were out of the classroom more often than she liked. She had even given herself permission to skip some of the math sessions offered by one of the university professors. She saw it as taking time away from the children.

During a research team meeting, one of the members had related that Rex's school was child-centered, with an important focus on families. Anita thought, "If Lee is an example of this, they sure are very successful." But there was another thing her team member said that helped explain things for Anita. For Rex, one of the important ways that

the school philosophy was communicated was through personal relationships with students, parents and teachers. Although there were staff meetings, committee meetings and goal setting activities, Rex emphasized the building of personal relationships in his leadership. Anita remembered her first encounter with Rex, they had talked for a long time on subjects that varied far and wide.

Anita hadn't seen Rex around much after the initial academy; he was always so busy. Of course she only came in once or twice a week; there were plenty of things she was missing that would never be included in her fieldnotes. She saw Rex but once with the entire staff and that was a staff meeting she had asked to attend. Prior to the meeting he had given her a short outline as to what to expect. "I don't like a lot of picking," he said "I structure it in terms of an outcome frame."

Anita looked puzzled, "What do you mean an outcome frame?"

"There is a procedure I know where I want to get to," replied Rex.

"I don't know if I could do that. I am such a random abstract," said Anita.

"So am I," said Rex. "That's why I have to do this. The concrete sequential really like it."

Anita could think of a number of teachers who would like it, but others who would be very uncomfortable, including herself. She liked surprises, she didn't always want to know where she was going to get before the journey began.

Anita couldn't say that she had seen a lot more of Ted, the principal at Manitou. She did remember a few occasions seeing him around the school. Once he was walking with a baby in his arms, and she had been introduced to his grandaughter of whom he was very fond. Another time he was attending the grade six penny carnival. Anita had commented, "The grade six students are very good with the little ones." He replied, "They are quite used to being together, we have family activities once a month." And the last time she saw him was at a staff meeting where the chair seemed to rotate depending who was on the agenda. The school report cards had been discussed at the staff meeting. Later Anita

had asked Jean Luc about this. "Let's just say they were introduced before Ted, and no one really wanted them. Those report cards caused a lot of bad feelings. I stayed in my room a lot that year. That was the year everyone was fighting to be in the portables. Things are getting better, but there is still a lot of fence mending to do."

"Being principal was a tough job in Willow, in Manitou, and in her own school," thought Anita. All the literature made principals responsible for the health of schools. It seems that the principal was always found to be the single most important factor. Anita didn't know if she wanted to be the single most important factor; she didn't know if she wanted to face that responsibility again. Her superintendent used to say to her, "That is why you get paid the big bucks." More and more often, she wondered, "was it worth it?" In the meantime the research work was providing a window on life in other schools.

**Small Moments of Crisis**

Anita arrived at Willow School one sunny lunch hour. She had been looking forward to spending a half-day in Lee's kindergarten class. The children's joy had the power to pick her up on the gloomiest days, and this day had started off with the promise of spring; nothing could be better than this. She found Lee in the laminating room alone. Theresa had gone out with the other student teachers for lunch. "Lee is not her usual sparkling self," thought Anita. "I wonder if things have gotten worse." Anita said nothing and waited. They walked back to the classroom with a roll of laminated dinosaur shapes. They sat down at a table together and Anita asked for a pair of scissors.

"You know," Lee said "that's it. I have to . . . You ask me for scissors as we sit and talk. You see it as something for the children. She sees it as **my doing my stuff**. That's what it feels like to her."

Lee had talked to Anita before about the disappointment she felt that she wasn't connecting with her student teacher, and her student teacher wasn't connecting with the children. In her heart she knew that Theresa hadn't found a place in her classroom to be

thebest that she could be. Lee had noticed that the children were giving Theresa fewer hugs, even the warm as toast melty butter extroverts in the class. "Truthfully she hardly shows her colors at all " thought Lee, "What else can I do? I have made time to support her, to encourage her. I've tried to make things safe enough for her to make mistakes. I just don't understand; I'm not the kind of person that usually has trouble bonding with someone. Just this week I got a letter from someone who had done a practicum in my classroom. She is still thanking me. " Lee sighed, the afternoon activities were about to begin.

Theresa was in charge of the afternoon. A college student named Pam was also in the classroom for the day. "What a contrast!" Anita thought. Pam seemed relaxed, smiling and talking to the children about what they were doing at the centers. Theresa seemed tense with her arms folded, talking to the children when she felt their behavior required it. "Does Theresa feel she is being scrutinized by the rest of us? She shouldn't. Things are going quite well today," thought Anita. Well at least they were going quite well until a pot of paint was spilled. No, there wasn't a big mess, and no, no one really got upset. It was just that no one really heard the other. It happened at the table where Anita was sitting with a few children. She didn't see how it happened, but Theresa was there in a flash to clean it up. Anita said, "Thanks for cleaning up, Theresa." And to the children she added "Isn't that a good job Theresa is doing." The children nodded assent. Lee looked over and asked, "What do we do, Brigid, when someone makes a mistake?" Theresa, concerned, said, "I don't think Brigid did it."

"I wasn't blaming Brigid" replied Lee. Theresa finished cleaning up and moved away to another part of the room. Lee continued her mini lesson on what to do when a mess is made and how it's okay to make mistakes, like accidently spilling the paint. The children were fine with this, but the adults were not. Theresa and Lee both went away feeling misunderstood. For Lee it had been a teachable moment, for Theresa it had been a management concern.

"They are definitely operating from two different points of view," thought Anita, "and it is becoming increasingly more difficult for them to communicate." Although Theresa often sounded like Lee when she talked to the children, she certainly didn't understand what the words meant to Lee, when Lee said them.

Back at Manitou, Meg was feeling more and more confident and Jean Luc felt he didn't have to be Mr. Reassurance as often anymore. When Anita had asked Meg what her cooperating teacher had given her to do, she said with a laugh, "Jean Luc comes to me now and asks what are we going to do today." Gone from her vocabulary was Mr. Stewart . Meg was feeling much more in control of things now. Jean Luc had given up his desk and was using only a small table on the side of the room. In contrast, earlier that day Lee had told Anita that in the past she had shared her classroom easily with various adults who had come to work, for they had always brought something extra to the children, but this time she felt differently. Jean Luc had said to Anita, "The more she feels in charge of things, the more confident Meg will be." Anita found him out of his room on the edge of the library. He had been there often in the last week, and he complained of being at loose ends. He told Anita, "I try to keep myself busy with other things, but I miss teaching my kids."

Jean Luc and Anita's conversation was interrupted by a disturbance coming from Jean Luc's class. "**You can't make me; You do it yourself**," screamed a little boy's voice. Jean Luc was instantly attentive. He waited and the words were repeated again. He got up, went into his classroom and was out in a moment with a little boy in tow. He sat the boy with notebook and pencil at a desk in the hallway and rejoined Anita. He picked up his conversation with Anita and watched the boy from the corner of his eye. The boy sat there doing nothing but Jean Luc was satisfied for the moment. He would have to deal with it later. Anita couldn't stay longer, she was due to visit Walter, another student teacher.

The next day at the morning recess during coffee Jean Luc got up and gave an imitation of Razor Ruddak fighting. He was dancing around and jabbing the air all the while explaining how Meg had really given Paul a good fight. A few people cheered and Meg was laughing as much as everyone else. Jean Luc said he was putting his money on Meg next time. Later Jean Luc explained to Anita that Meg had been taken aback and was quite shaken by her encounter with Paul. "I brought Paul in later and had him talk to Meg. Meg and I talked about it afterwards, and I think Meg has a better idea what to do when he gets that way. I told her, 'You can't be afraid to simply toss him out. Take him and put him in the hallway. Take his work with him, set him in the hallway and give him some time-out, out of the classroom situation, because that often brings him around.' When Paul first came he spent as much as 2/3 of his time in the office in the time-out room, because he simply couldn't interact with the other students - He screamed, kicked, carried on, was abusive and outright defiant. He's improved quite a bit. I called his mom last night. He had been up to all hours the night before. There is a houseful of people over there. The situation isn't very good," he explained. "Yeah, Paul is the kind of kid you would like to bounce out the door." Jean Luc's coaching was often specific and tied to immediate needs. Anita asked, "Didn't Meg see your actions as interference or you having to rescue her." "I think ultimately . . . maybe that's the bottom line in my role," Jean Luc replied "I guess she was confident that . . . even if things really went south on her . . . that I would step in and help her out . . . or straighten things out. It's like I said to her in the beginning 'There is nothing here that you can break that we can't fix.' Maybe . . . maybe . . . my role as sort of . . . I don't know . . . Mr. Fix, it gave her more confidence to do things."

### Commitment

Jean Luc baffled Anita. He never seemed serious yet as he said, "People think that I'm never serious, yet they know that I am." It wasn't seriousness about discipline, curriculum, board policy, or even educational philosophy; it was a seriousness in

commitment. Meg and the children knew he was seriously committed to them. He had a knack for reaching out to people without their being conscious of it. One of his favorite stories of past teaching success was about a grade nine class he had been given because he was the physical education teacher and maybe he could motivate them. "They hated reading and they hated writing," Jean Luc said. "I started reading to them about things they were interested in, like UFOs and para-normal psychology and other related topics. We started doing thematic units instead of textbook stuff. I read them stories. We had people from the local Mystic Society-readers stuff like that. We started reading some of the S.E. Hinton novels, "The Outsider" and "Rumblefish," and the kids identified with some of the rough and tumble characters. I shared with them my writing [Jean Luc was writing fiction in the hopes of finding an audience for his stories]. They saw the difficulties I had. In time they became more willing to read and write. I was proud of them. When the district results came out at the end of the year, I didn't hold any great hopes, but there they were, my kids, right in the middle of the pack." Anita asked why had he left that school. Jean Luc said, "I need to change every few years or I get bored."

Lee also had stories of success which she shared with Anita. A story about how a student teacher helped the children deal with the death of a class pet and how now she can't read "Freddy the Leaf" without having warm feelings and a tug at her heart as she remembers that special person. Or the countless little stories that happened in her daily life as a teacher. On the very first day that Anita had come to Lee's class, there had been a very special moment. A dad had come in all smiles, with his little boy by the hand. They both hugged Lee, and the dad said, "Thank you for caring about my family while my wife was in hospital."

Both Lee and Jean Luc were dedicated teachers. Lee was passionate and intense, while Luc laid-back and humorous. "If dedication and commitment were the criteria for good role models," wondered Anita , "why weren't the practicum relationships equally successful?"

**A Celebration and A Wake**

The practicum was over. Many were breathing sighs of relief.

Everything had finally had come to a head between Theresa and Lee. Not in a noisy way or even in talk. It was too late for that. they had never learned to speak the same language.

Over the last two weeks Lee's relationship to Theresa became more strained. The evaluation was looming and Lee didn't know what she would write or how she would put it. The hoped for turn-around had not materialized. She had called Anita just to share, "I make appointments to talk about the class and lessons, and she has something else or somewhere else she must be. She seems to have time to go out with the other student teachers. I have written her some formal observations but there is no real response. I have had to be more and more directive, but I don't know what good it is doing." Anita had no response. She too saw the relationship slip away. She saw Theresa when she visited Willow School, but they rarely talked except for a few niceties. "I think she sees me as Lee's friend and that I am here for Lee and not her. I guess she is right, but I still wish I could do something."

One afternoon Theresa had brought her child to school. She had had difficulty with some babysitting arrangements, and her mother did not want to take the child. She had told Lee that the baby had been sick at the mall and she didn't have a change of diapers. She said she couldn't afford a whole package of diapers, so she had bought a pair of training pants and plastic pants instead. Lee told her, "That was innovative." Theresa explained again that she hadn't been able to come to school the day before because her child was sick. "Yes there is a lot going on in Theresa' s life," Lee thought. "But no matter what I try, I am not connecting and I can't help."

Once Anita asked Lee if Theresa was connecting with someone else: "Who does she go to for support?"

"She talks to Dawn a lot, Mrs. Harris' student teacher. And the student teachers have a get together once a week somewhere after school. Mrs. Harris came to me and said, "It's too bad your student teacher is bad mouthing you to the other student teachers. I just thought you ought to know. I think the others are getting her up to something. They told her to go and see Rex." Lee went on, "I wasn't worried about that, Rex knows me and this isn't the first student teacher I've had."

"Why do you think this is all happening?" asked Anita.

"I think for a person who is quite disconnected, a person like me is quite scary stuff. And that may be the hub of the why. The more I try to encourage, connect, support, make eye contact, etc. etc. the more she has to pull in, avoid, skip meetings . . . I don't know. It is the best sense I can make out of what happened."

"What are you going to do about the evaluation," asked Anita.

"I just have to switch hats, and let myself be forced to a point in time where we have to evaluate," replied Lee.

"I know it's too late now, but had you ever thought to suggest that she withdraw?" Anita wondered.

"No, that would have to have been her choice. I would not have suggested it," replied Lee. "There again the word "choice,"' thought Anita. "Lee really believes in Theresa's freedom to choose, even if those choices cause her pain and disappointment."

It had come to the final moment. Theresa was sitting in the principal's office. She was crying. She couldn't believe her evaluation. "No one is ever going to hire me with an evaluation like this," she said. She had received a marginal pass. She was right; the possibilities of her getting a job were very limited. She sat with Lee and the principal and kept repeating that no one was ever going to hire her. She didn't hear much of what they said. And she certainly didn't hear them invite her to come back and try again. All Theresa could hear was her own voice in her head, "No one is ever going to hire you." You could hear her disappointment and her pain in every sob and see it in each tear.

Over a final cup of tea one evening at Lee's, a week after the practicum, Lee said to Anita, "I see Theresa as being wounded. I don't know in what ways, but I would bet the bank on the fact that there is a lot of emotional hurt in that woman. It is imperative that she be given some chances. She shouldn't be ground down by the system. To her we are the system, like it or not. That's just how it is."

While there were moments of pain at Willow School there had been a time of celebration at Manitou School. Funny how Lee and Theresa each had seemed very alone during the last week, while at Manitou there had been a gathering to celebrate. All the five--Anita, Meg, Walter, Jean Luc and Peter--had cheered together.

Walter, the other student teacher, had changed some, but he was still struggling with knowing whether people were serious or not. Anita thought, "It will take some time yet." Peter had almost given up on him a few times. He had talked to Jean Luc and to Molly about his difficulties. He had also talked to Anita, but she saw it more as a difference in personalities. Anita thought, "Both Jean Luc and his buddy Peter see Walter as an 'Ichobod,' and she had to admit if anyone put on the play, he might get the part. He was young, inexperienced and not too "with it" socially. Walter could never get the hang of the staffroom sport talk. He just didn't really fit in with the men on staff, although he really tried," thought Anita. "That was it; he always tried too hard," she concluded.

Meg had made the greatest changes. She saw herself differently. She understood teaching differently. About midway through the practicum she had commented to Anita, "I had expected the year two placements to be quite similar, but Jean Luc is very different. When I worked with the other teacher, it always felt like I was doing assignments for an instructor. It was very rigid, I used to hand in my lesson plans. In Jean Luc's class I can find my own way; he just gives me suggestions and support. I like this much better."

She had learned to question Jean Luc and herself. She had gone from using someone else's unit plan to creating a unit plan that was different from Jean Luc's approach to teaching. Jean Luc was impressed by one particular strategy Meg had chosen to

encourage writing. Earlier he had dismissed it thinking this strategy really wouldn't work all that well, but then he had told Anita, "But the way she used it worked out really well. I'm going to continue with that in my Japan unit."

During his last interview with Anita, Jean Luc talked about a development in Meg that distinguished her as a teacher and not a deliverer of curriculum. "Well, we have Jenny. Jenny is always whining and moaning about this, that and the other thing. At first Meg would say, 'That's nice' and then take off in the next direction, you know your standard thing. Meg has become more solicitous in her dealings with Jenny. Now she is having more of a conversation with the children."

Meg had also notice this change in herself, "You know the thing I really learned?" she said to Anita over lunch one day, "I learned to listen. The kids used to tell me things and I would shake my head and smile all the while I was planning what I was going to do next. Now I really listen and it is better. They have interesting things to say."

With Jean Luc, you knew you had hit his beliefs when he started talking facetiously about being in the service industry. "As soon as you start getting into claiming that we provide a service, then people are going to start looking for a product, and what are we going to look at . . . .as opposed to teaching children . . . we'll be teaching a curriculum." No he was glad Meg had learned to teach children and not only a curriculum. No, Meg in his mind would be the kind of teacher that " would do what it takes" to teach a child.

About being a cooperating teacher Jean Luc said, "I volunteered to be a cooperating teacher. I wanted to give something back. I tried to emulate the things that I felt good about . . . you know . . . being given a lot of latitude to do what I wanted, . . . being given more coaching and not, do this and do that. It was more get in there and here is what we can work on. Knowing it's alright to make mistakes Hey, I make lots of mistakes, no,(chuckle) they're mishaps." "The literature would call it autonomy, collaboration, a supportive environment where risk taking is safe," thought Anita. To herself she said, "I like it the way you put it, Jean Luc. It tastes of real life."

The story has now come to an end and I am tempted to write "and they lived happily ever after." As a child I liked the picture at the end of the book, where the prince and princess embrace and look so nice. As an adult I now know that if one really stayed absolutely still in someone's embrace even for the sake of having a life that's nice and as blissful as a fairy tale, you would end up crippled with the pain of cramped unused muscles.

So none of my characters lived happily ever after. Walter got married and moved to Japan. Peter is still teaching at Manitou. Meg was contemplating graduate school as a possible future direction. Anita and Jean Luc counseled teaching first. Knowing the new Meg, she would decide for herself. Jean Luc is looking for new challenges and is participating in the district's leadership training and he still hopes to be published. Lee is still teaching kindergarten and Theresa decided to "take a fail" and start again. Anita went back to being a principal in her school and took three years to mull over all of this learning.

# CHAPTER 5

# REFLECTIONS

*Through the glass darkly*

This chapter is the most difficult to write, for no matter how personally written are the first four chapters, I was never alone, my voice was hiding behind the words of the learned writers or appeared as part of the conversation with the others in the story, but now . . . I . . . SPEAK OUT on my own. I pause . . . *in fear of what I might write.* I recognize that I have long been a "received knower" (Clandinin, 1993), reflecting back to others further up in the hierarchy that which they wish to hear. It is how I have learned to succeed in this world, and it is frightening to begin a new way.

Even as I say I am speaking out on my own, I know there are within me the caring echoes of my family, my teachers, my mentors and my friends as well as the song of the old me, the me that is now and the me that is becoming. Truly there is a chorus of voices who have been and continue to be there to support me.

## Voice, Story and Truth

Through more than four years of struggling to write this story, I have been trying to come to terms with the issue of voice, for with it there is also the question of integrity, honesty and truth. It plagues me ceaselessly. It is a question that invades my consciousness right in the middle of conversations with different people. It often renders me silent. In conversations with my sixteen year old daughter, I struggle to hear her voice and not overlay it with what is right and correct. In the middle of a staff meeting I wonder are these their voices, or are they like me reflecting back up the hierarchy what is good and

acceptable? How can I nurture the voices of others when I have been so often afraid of using my own?

Who had a voice in this story? Was Meg successful because she spoke in the image of a good student teacher, going from a respectful Mr. Stewart to a thankful initiate. She had always called me Anita. Of course I think in the beginning I asked her to. Jean Luc didn't even notice the Mr. Stewart. Was Jean Luc more able because Meg and I heard a male voice? Anita saw Lee as the more innovative teacher, Lee encouraged each person's voice but yet could never get Theresa to speak or ask for anything she really wanted.

Theresa was ever silent with all representatives of authority in the system. She had no voice except for the underground voice of the student teachers' complaint sessions. Where were those of us who could have legitimized those voices? Could we have helped turn the anger to sharing and the telling of personal stories that would be transformed into knowing? Each of us are responsible for our own and separate voice, but we have a responsibility to hear the voices of others as well.

Lee spoke to few people in her school community, preferring to be heard in the circle of friends in the Early Childhood course she took on Monday nights. I had learned from others that in this circle her voice was a respected one. When we were alone, just the two of us, she and I talked and talked sometimes into the late hours, in the intimacy of her home or a late dinner in a cozy restaurant. We told each other stories from our childhood and teen years. We often talked of her difficult relationship with Theresa, always wondering "why." Neither she nor I could provide any satisfactory answer, for we were missing an important voice, Theresa's. I can't help wishing we had found a way to include her in the conversation. I must also admit that neither I, nor anyone else has the power to make someone speak in their true voice. Maybe it is, as Lee said, we represented the establishment and therefore could not be trusted. If whether this is a false or true assessment we shall never know.

Jean Luc and I talked only in the daytime and usually at school, never sharing as deeply or intimately. There was humor and the usual banter as well as professional talk but nothing too intimate and nothing too uncomfortable. Were our talks circumscribed because he was a man and I was a woman? I have found very few men with whom I could have intimate conversations. I do not say it is their fault, only that it rarely happens, and I have always felt my life the poorer for this.

Is it my voice you hear in Lee and Jean Luc? I made the choices of what to include and what to leave out. It is through my person that their experiences are distilled; no matter how hard I try to give them their own voices through the use of their words, I am still the author of this text. They read the story of their eight weeks. Did they accept and reflect back what I wanted to hear, or is there a piece of themselves that I truly did recognize and bring to life? Is all that I wrote lies written in sentences along a line, or is it truth I created in words? I want to call Lee and Jean Luc and be reassured. I would ask again, "Is this your truth" and they would answer, "Yes it is our truth too." But it has been more than three years since this eight week experience, won't their truths have changed by now just as mine did? It is the truth as I know it now. Later I might see different truths that I don't know now, and will I call up my past and reconstruct it and change the truth again? I guess, I will continue to adjust the truth, for that is how we story and restory, construct and reconstruct our lives as Clandinin (1993) and Rasberry and Leggo (1994) might say. (See how I still need to reflect my voice back to those who I see as bigger than me in the academic world.) Maybe in this case, they are from the echoes within. I'm still frightened, how could I have thought that I could convince others of the richness of their voices. Yet I dare to believe there is a whispered depth in the story if you only but listen carefully.

I tell you all of this for the sake of honesty. I must own my voice for I fear it would have too much power as a disembodied, unchallenged voice of the third person, commonly known as the researcher.

## As an Individual, in Pairs and in Community

At the beginning of this process I started with questions that I thought might guide my research--questions about reflective practice, questions about mentorship, and questions about what needs cooperating teachers might express. They were what I thought might be important. I am not as sure now.

### Reflective Practice

I believe that we all became more reflective in our learning. Maybe this happened because we had each other to talk to. Lee could not let go of the question; "Why didn't it work?' Once, on our way home from a math inservice for cooperating teachers, she said to me, "I learned something I don't like about myself. When I can't do something the way that I want, I'm not too happy." This was after having worked unsuccessfully on a math problem. Was that the cause of Lee's unhappiness in the practicum relationship, it hadn't turned out the way she wanted it? Did Lee need to be in control? Time and time again she told herself that Theresa had a right to be where she was even if it didn't meet the norm. Schon (1983) tells us that students' defensiveness in the beginning of a practicum is very possible, for they arrive with fear and no practical knowledge. If a student continues to feel threatened, this will block the possibility of learning. Theresa's and Lee's talk for some reason did not break down the defences, and they never got to the point of developing a real dialogue. Lee may not have changed her teaching practices in any visible way because of the practicum, but it did affect the way she thought about herself.

Jean Luc had more than a few questions posed that he found difficult to answer, like Lee and many other teachers his knowing is in his actions (Schon 1983). The way he shared this repertoire was to share how he would behave, and only after a need was expressed by Meg. He didn't see himself as anyone special, "I always feel . . . I don't

know . . . a little nervous. . . I don't like that word. . . I wonder about what I do. I just make suggestions. You get most teachers to answer honestly, very few feel that we're doing . . . maybe not a good job . . . but that we are not doing . . . everything we could be doing." He was open to discoveries and learning for himself, feeling that there was always more he could be doing. Many times, he was surprised by the discovery of his own success and when I commented on his success he said, "I guess that seems pretty much what I did. Which is good! It's always good to be uh . . . following along what you claim you are going to do." To the very last entry in his journal, he was reluctant to accept acclaim.

> You wonder what the experience was like for her. Obviously she's not going to say anything too negative, or at least not until she gets her evaluation. I remember my student teaching days quite vividly. Mostly struggling with not a lot of direction or input. I tried to give her as much help as I could without meddling or seeming directive. Oh well, she'll probably recover.

And what did I, the neophyte researcher, learn through my three years of reflection? You go out on a quest to tell someone else's story only to realize that yours must be told as well. Why did I tell this story? I suppose I identified with the small creatures in this giant organism. I felt empathy for them. I was trying to connect myself back to my own learning and my own teaching. I needed to discover the why of the unsatisfying parts of my work life. Like Jean Luc, inside I was never sure I was good enough, and outside like Lee, I didn't meet anyone I couldn't bond with. I held onto an outside image of a too perfect self and inside dialogue of insecurity. Somehow I had lost my way, and now I am just beginning to find the pathway to understanding.

### Mentorship

Mentorship is a way of being with others when you wish to nurture their growth and you are willing to share your wisdom. It is a delicate balance between knowing when to help and when to let go. It is realizing that you must be open to learning in the

relationship, recognizing the teacher in the student. It is wanting to do and to be the best for the sake of the other. It is wanting the end of your role as mentor. It is coming to the knowing that you are fellow searchers on the path.

The role of mentor and protégé seemed to suit Jean Luc and Meg. As I write this I think of Eliza Dolittle with Professor Higgins and the movie "Educating Rita." Both these women grew beyond their mentors and the ability of the relationship to sustain them, yet for a time they needed the relationship to grow and discover themselves. As the story unfolds, we realize that the protégé is teacher, teaching a new wisdom to the wise, a greater knowing of themselves. Maybe, for Meg, it was a little like this. She had looked to Jean Luc for answers and later shared with him her knowing.

Little (1990) describes the original role given to Mentor by Odesseus in Greek mythology. Mentor was entrusted

> with the care and guidance of his son Telemachus. The relationship required of Mentor a full measure of wisdom, integrity, and personal investment. It required of Telemachus as protégé, honor the differences in maturity and in circumstances that separate them. The relationship mentor-protégé was profoundly personal and mutually respectful, even though it was essentially asymmetrical. It exacted high demands and yielded substantial rewards. (Little, 1990, p. 298)

In considering the role of cooperating teacher it has a similar element of sacred trust. In a sense cooperating teachers are safeguarding the future of all children through their relationship with the teachers of tomorrow. Jean Luc and Meg seemed to have slipped into the mentor-protégé relationship rather naturally. Little suggests that mentor-protégé relationships must also have breadth, mutuality and informality (1990, p. 299). A similar relationship did not develop for Lee and Theresa, for there was a lack of mutuality; there was no common ground where it was safe for them. What makes mentor relationships very successful also makes them difficult to achieve within the confines of bureaucratic arrangements. It is a role with which teachers have little experience or comfort; it is in conflict with the norms of egalitarianism and noninterference (Little, 1990, p. 323). Jean Luc worried about not being the expert or the possibility of making Meg a clone of himself.

He was unsure what he was doing was the right thing for Meg. I believe this concern, worry and questioning he had throughout the relationship allowed an openness that both he and Meg wondered about and wandered through in the eight weeks they spent together. Kagan (1992) would call this a willingness to explore cognitive dissonance, and I would add a willingness to live with dissonance for the sake of the other.

Lee and Theresa never developed a relationship. There was much dissonance but no effective way of dealing with it. Should there have been a "show down"? Would a third party mediator have made a difference? Who could have played the role of mediator? Was it up to Rex, or could it have been me who saw and recorded the difficulties, or someone else from the university? In a school where there is awareness and talk about difficulties and struggles would the community support have helped Lee and Theresa over the impasse in their relationship? All I know is that there were no structures, no mechanisms or skills that suddenly appeared to save the day. "The teaching role is most problematic, most narrowly defined, and most constrained precisely in the area (collegial involvement and influence) where the mentor role places the greatest demands" (Little, 1990, p. 314). Maybe the forces of egalitarianism and non-interference were too strong to overcome in this case.

It is not cosmetic program changes--taylored to reflect a new buzz word in the research literature--that will enhance the mentoring role or help develop reflective practice but cultural changes within the norms of our profession. These changes happen when we-teachers of children and teachers of teachers-begin to think differently and begin to treat people differently. These changes happen at a person to person level within a vibrant, caring and growing community. There are many models and stories of both successes and difficulties that could help guide our beginnings (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard 1993; Goodlad, 1994; LaRocque, Boivin &Downie, 1993).

We should not fear to examine our mythology and our stories, for they can tell us who we are, far better than anyone on the outside telling us what to do. Who does the

story and myth of Mentor belong to, if not to teachers? Science has not given us all the answers we had hoped for, so we must again examine our myths, our beliefs and our stories for guidance on our journies as teachers. The story of Mentor is a very old one; is there a way of making it relevant today? Is there a place for the novice and the expert, or are we better to see them as two people in different places who can come together to help enlighten each others' learning.

**The Role of Leadership**

Why did Willow School annoy me at times. My father would tell me, "What is it saying about you that it has the power to irritate you? Look inside." With reluctance I could see aspects of my own administrative style and my school reflected in Willow, and I understood my incompleteness. These missing pieces revealed themselves over the next three years of reading, talking and thinking.

Like my own person, my school usually presents a neat and tidy exterior. I recognized part of my leadership style in Rex, an unconscious reliance on personal relationships. I felt if you take care of the individual you had done the most important. In my school I had left a void of unfulfilled and unrecognized need for community. I found pleasure and enjoyment in the company of most of my staff and couldn't understand when so many did not wish to play and celebrate together. I would harken back to the good old days when things were better and people were just more fun. I blamed the other teachers for their unwillingness to be committed to their colleagues. Oh, they worked together, and they did a good job of teaching, but I felt an emptiness. Maple, another school in the PSPP had a strong sense of community that I envied but didn't really understand, until I recognized the limits created by my personal leadership style. To have witnessed community in action in another school was not enough, nor were the materials and workshop presented by Rose, the principal of Maple School. I had to first know and own my own experiences as an administrator. For this learning I am deeply grateful to Rex and

Rose. Their sharing of their life as administrators, helped me explore unchartered areas in my leadership. This knowing came after many conversations with a variety of thoughtful people over time. The slow pace of my learning has taught me patience. Each of us comes to our knowing in our own time.

To answer my first question, do teachers, researcher-teachers become more reflective when they talk to each other about what they are living? **YES, and the lesson is don't rush it, don't force it, just trust it**. I believe if I could have had a few years with Jean Luc and Lee, we might have plumbed to a greater depth the soul of the giant that is within us. As it is we have exposed and maybe alleviated some of its symptoms.

## How Can We Come Together

Many authors (Barth, 1990; Clifford, 1989; Cohn & Kottcamp 1993; Goodlad 1984,1991 1994; Johnson, 1989; Lortie, 1975) are telling us that the old ways, based in the nineteenth century and shorn up by bureaucratization and the scientific model for research can no longer support the giant called the Educational System. The Educational System, like many of civilizations' other children, must look to its survival. It needs nurturing, not bolstering. This will not happen through more rhetoric in the form of new district policies, more government directives, more accountability, and tighter bureaucracies. These approaches only serve to subjugate and shackle the giant and all of those within.

Clandinin, et al (1993) have seen a middle ground where there is earth and soil, Coleman and LaRocque (1990) have placed a garden, Goodlad (1994) recognizes a need for an organic relationships and I have wept for a sorrowing giant; these are all metaphors for life and the need for care and succor.

Educators from the universities and from the schools must come together in new ways. Together, they must create a community of learners, and what better place to begin than where their paths join naturally during the practicum. Why is this a particularly good time and place for the first forays into creating a different way of being with each other? It is real enough to all the participants for true learning but virtual enough for real risk-taking in safety, and because it is created in the care for the development of the one who has most to risk, the student teacher. Here we could create communities of learners.

Community exists when all the right ingredients get together to bring about something workable and magical. I hear the complaints already--too airy-fairy, where's the accountability, who is in charge. For a few moments, let go of the way things are, and allow the community to be in your imagination. This description of community is borrowed from Scott Peck's "The Different Drum, Community Making and Peace." Communities are characterized by:

Inclusivity, Commitment and Consensus

The community includes rather than excludes and allows for the full range of human emotion. Members are characterised by commitment, a willingness to be together. Differences are celebrated as gifts and differences are transcended.

Realism

Because a community includes members with many different points of view and the freedom to express them, the community comes to appreciate the whole of the situation far better than an individual, couple, or ordinary group can. With so many frames of references it approaches reality more and more closely.

Contemplation (reflection)

A community is realistic because it is reflective. It examines itself. It is self aware. It knows itself. To be aware of others' gifts helps us see our own limitations as individuals and as a group. We become more realistic when we know our strengths and our weaknesses both as individuals and as a group.

A safe place

A place where all can be open and vunerable.

A laboratory for personal disarmament

> A place where people can transform themselves. Looking at ourselves and each other through "soft eyes," seeing through lenses of respect.
>
> A group that can fight gracefully
>
> A group of all leaders
>
> A community is a total decentralization of authority.
>
> A community of spirit.
>
> A place for listening and hearing, where people can struggle with themselves and each other in a way that is productive and not destructive.
>
> (Peck, 1987, pp. 59-75)

Goodlad says some similar things in his ten lessons for School University Partnerships (1994, pp. 109-113). I prefer Peck's description of community because he uses language that is inclusive of the whole human experience. Goodlad's model, with its emphasis on resources and organization, leaves us questioning how we change the values and norms of the profession so that we might build a new way of being. If we are to break down the barriers, this breaking down will not happen somewhere far away, it will happen inside each of us, in our beings as educators. When we feel this brokeness and vulnerability, we will need community to nurture us to growth. When I realized my leadership style had a particular flaw, I felt pain. As a response,"Heh, nobody is perfect" is not particularly helpful. Knowing something in generalities and intellectually is not the same as coming to terms with the real thing inside yourself. When I felt exposed, vunerable and defensive, I needed a community with an ethic of love.

Clandinin, Davies, Hoggan and Kennard's (1993) experiences in practicums were experiences of community creating, and of living in a different way as teacher-educators, cooperating teachers and student teachers. A story that resonated with me was Barbara Kennard's story where she learns from her student teacher that she did not have to be the expert.

> I was in turmoil realing from the shock of her statement: sitting side by side, looking on together, collaborating. I felt that I had made a mistake, or worse, I had been blind unable to see. I had no answer. I had not known what to do. I wasn't so smart after all. (Kennard, 1993, p. 162)

Barbara's change was not an easy one. In her story she tells of tears, doubt and fear. She eloquently describes her struggle for a new understanding and speaks simply of the community who supported her: "I found, however, that in the company of friends, Lynn and I could, and indeed had begun that night, to listen and to respond to each other with a new understanding" (pp. 172-173). To live as a community of learners, and to see ourselves in new ways, as teachers, requires courage.

The metaphor is no longer that of, are Educational System that is an ailing bureaucratic giant threatening to crush some of us as it searches for comfort, but of a living breathing organism made up of living breathing humans who are members of interdependent communities of learners.

Each must respect and appreciate the gifts the others bring. This implies a willingness to learn from many sources, not just from those above us in the hierarchy or those of like mind or those within the system. We must be willing to stretch our understanding of teacher and learner in the educational community.

## Epilog

### On Being a Graduate Student

*Working with a team.* I didn't know where to include these reflections, so here they are in the epilog.

My years as a graduate student trying to achieve a master's degree comes to an end. They have been years where I tried to follow my bliss. They have been [illegible] the most enjoyable, as well as the most painful times of my life.

I believe during the winter and spring of my sabbatical year I discovered and participated in a community of learners. The community members were a a number of graduate students and a few teachers on the seventh floor (once known as Educational Administration of the Faculty of Education). Within this community was the smaller

community of the PSPP research team. With this community I was able to laugh, to cry and to explore who I was as teacher and learner. I shared my story and I listened to the stories of others. We struggled with issues of ethics both as part of research and as members of a community brought together to accomplish a specific task. The leadership started with one person but was soon recognized within all of us and was called upon as was needed by circumstances. Everyone worked not only for themselves but for each other. We did not always agree with each other, nor were we always pleased with each other, but we did stick it out together. It is in this group that I felt the support of community and enjoyed the benefits of collaboration. I would not exchange the challenges and the learnings that I encountered with these friends, for what I had thought I wanted in the beginning, a quick straight "A" run through the halls of academia. (Truthfully it was only a *minor fantasy* of mine. I have yet to find out my grade on my last course. Now it has become a matter of principle not to know or care.) This special little community of learners still gets together every so often to share our stories. For me they serve as an example of how things can be, if we but try and believe.

*The role of the advisor.* Through this time I learned again what it meant to be the student of a good teacher and advisor. When I first met her I was looking for a Dr. LaRocque but I found Linda, a wise and gentle woman who has a great respect for others and shares with them in caring. She trusted me and she guided me on the path of self discovery. With her I have learned much. It is her wise questions and patient silences that have opened many doors to my field of dreams inside my mind. Her care extended to my whole person, listening to all the parts of me and supporting me through my struggles to be. There is no greater accolade than to say, **she was my teacher**.

I had a friend who died today, he is the only one of whom I can write, "and he lived happily ever after." As for me, my journey must go on. There is so much to learn.

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