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BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR:
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IN AN UNDERGRADUATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE
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Gemette Ruth Reid

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Abstract

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Working with forty-five undergraduates in teacher education in a small rural liberal arts college in my first year as a teacher educator I addressed the intellectual problems of my practice. What did students know, what did they need to know to become teachers and how could my pedagogy help them secure that academic and professional knowledge? In this work, referring to classes in elementary social studies methods, secondary English methods, introduction to educational psychology and the education of the exceptional child, I explore, juxtaposing my journal record with student writings, our tensions and my dilemmas of practice. These tensions and puzzles centered on different interpretations of the nature and importance of knowledge in teaching. That difference had tenacious roots in the wider culture, in students' socio economic class and in high school learning, and haunted us in the college classroom, and in observation experiences associated with these

courses. I suggest my need to suspend judgement on student thinking offering authentic experiences for students to reconstruct the meaning of teaching and learning.

DEDICATION

This work is written for

Patricia Albjerg Graham

and

David K. Cohen

who kept believing in my dream,

and in loving memory of

Robert John Reid

(1905 - 1962).

My dad wanted to be a doctor.

He may have had the gift

of healing--

but no one dreamt him there.

Manning Hope Clark

inspiring my dream to be a writer

prompted my exile.

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Commitment to a project like this is by no means automatic and I am not short of people to thank. I announced in 1983 to Pat Graham and David Cohen I wanted to write a book. Once I admitted the obsession these teachers and friends never let me forget my commitment to myself and my commitment to their faith in me. I had much to learn. I needed to read in a new field in a new country. David K. Cohen helped me find my direction--the light that would educate me with John Dewey, William James, Cubberley, Waller, Cremin, and countless other lifetime friends. Sharry Floyd took me on many intellectual tours of America revealing in her conversational agility what might really matter. Teri Kuhs urged me to stop writing from time to time in the healing waters of South Carolina.

Inevitably, as I acknowledge my teachers I focus on that small group of hardy souls who gathered on May 5, 1992, for my defence as members of my committee. David K. Cohen, my thesis director and major professor, was joined now by Helen Featherstone, Henrietta Barnes and Bill McDiarmid and as invited guests two special helpers, Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Joseph Featherstone. I had been stubborn along the way not seeing what experience makes plain and all of them

knew my failings better than my strengths. They exacted from me all I could give and there is no finer teaching and friendship than that. Without conversation with Arnold Werner and Linda Tiezzi and support from Australians (Don Baker, Pat White, Joan Marsh, Bill Marsh, Christine Simmons, Annette Sainsbury, Roger More and John Lewis) I could have faltered.

Barbara Reeves helped make my work professional and taught me to be calm about matters beyond me.

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CHAPTER I

CHALK AND CHEESE

> If others cannot see the world as we do, or if we cannot enter their world to begin to help them see ours, then we cannot share experiences in a meaningful way. To recognize that understanding different worlds is possible is to be in a position to do something about it . . . to recognize it is to be in a position to seek ways to understand empathetically and work with another's world to build bridges of reasonableness between the two. (Soltis, 1981, p. 5)

Views of Knowledge

At Bunbury College's education department in my first year as teacher educator, my students and I were as alike as chalk and cheese. In all parts of teacher preparation, foundations and methods classes, observation and student teaching, we looked differently at the world, specifically the world of knowledge. Education majors saw knowledge to be contained by the unit of study, to be certain, and to be determined by external authorities such as the text, the syllabus, and the teacher. Dedicated to description, analysis, and reflection in making sense of teaching and learning, I was in love with the open curiosities of knowledge. I was excited by disciplinary and interdisciplinary subject matter knowledge and teaching strategies. While students were looking for certitudes, practical knowledge, and guides to action not reflection, I believed

in the power of reflective inquiry in exploring the problems of teaching and ways of coping with its dilemmas. For me, teaching was an intellectual affair. My students saw teaching as a matter of management.

I wanted to make a difference in the way my students looked at themselves and their life's work. Intuitively, I looked to build a bridge of reasonableness between us for I did not begin work as a teacher educator recognizing that distance. I gradually unearthed that insight, seeing by August 1988 (at the beginning of my second year as a teacher educator) that, indeed, distance between my students' and my own assumptions about teaching and learning to teach dominated my novice year. I hoped students would finally join me in assuming we had in common two main objectives in our work: to reestablish the importance of academic work in public school classrooms and reverse pupil disengagement with learning. Chapters II and III on teaching elementary and secondary methods reveal tension in my objectives. Prospective teachers' minds construed knowledge to be less significant than controlling pupils and fostering pupil engagement less important than their self identity as nervously emerging teachers.

In Australian National University undergraduate work in history and philosophy in the '60s, I learned from Manning Clark that knowledge was poetry where fact, compassion, thought, and emotion were interwoven. Harvard's Graduate School of Education in 1982 valued practicing teacher(s) and school teaching as a career no longer felt cause for apology. There, I studied John Dewey and

William James. I collected treasures from conversations with David K. Cohen, Patricia Graham, Frank Keppel, Chester Pierce, and Noel McGinn. So, with my head full of rich, undigested intellectual optimism, I passed through Bunbury College gates in 1986.

Bunbury, one of five, small residential work schools in the United States, attracted students from surrounding, depressed, rural areas who wanted an education with assured employment. All students labored on campus. In my first year there, I had 45 students aged between 19 and 26 years. This group included five male students, no minorities, no blacks. One student came from a suburb in Chicago and one from New Jersey. Seventy-five percent of these students were first-generation, working-class college entrants and almost all were markedly unassertive about their learning. I was overwhelmed with first-year teaching assignments including elementary social studies methods, secondary methods in English, social science, and mathematics; introduction to educational psychology; the education of the exceptional child; foundations in American education; supervision of independent research on teacher questioning; and student teaching supervision.

My preconceptions about fine teaching and responsive learning originated in my selective high school which creamed off, by intelligence and aptitude tests, the district's top elementary school pupils. We worked hard in English, mathematics, chemistry, physics, French, and Latin competing with each other, not necessarily for understanding, but for points in tests and top average scores announced in assembly. Curious, but pressured by

competition, I negotiated, at 15, to finish my final year in independent study but before that I learned analytical power and self-discipline from inspired teachers. It was hard to erase those images as a young school teacher in 1967 or in becoming a college professor in 1986.

Teaching in three Australian secondary schools, for over 15 years, I became more thoughtful about engaging pupils with content noticing in my preoccupation to be a responsible teacher that I sometimes ignored student learning. This thoughtfulness turned to what one headmaster called "unorthodox practice" (working with a keen eye on student participation and imagination) and I came to teacher education determined to foster my "unorthodox" interests.

Bunbury College students knew teachers should instill content without ambiguity. Teacher education would teach them to perpetuate classroom practices observed in their own schooling. I had been learning to rethink but my students would resist the discomfort. Rather than liberty, synthesis and poetry, knowledge was powerless, scattered, concrete. Students looked forward to action not reflection. But <u>outside</u> formal schooling, my students <u>were</u> on the hunt for personal independence, conversation, liberty, and synthesis. My insights about schooling derived from Wollongong High School's academic, competitive, elite beginnings and undergraduate work; rewarding, imaginative responses to human affairs; my teaching memories in Australian boarding schools; my richly ambiguous graduate school life. My tentative beginnings in foundations and methods teaching at Michigan State University's College of Education

in 1984 and 1985 were worlds apart from my challenges as a novice teacher educator at this college.

Despite my teaching experience, I felt unsure how learning to teach and teaching prospective teachers could be resolved. I responded tentatively, sometimes courageously, sometimes with pig-headed determination to change students' views. In elementary social studies methods, I felt troubled I had no elementary school teaching experience to capture the tensions and excitements of that work. Nor was I familiar with American social studies curriculum and when I unearthed it in local schools I felt disheartened. I felt more confident in secondary English methods, having insights to share from knowledge of literature and experience teaching teenagers but my confidence wavered as I talked with Penny, Judy and Dan. How could I share my insights? Hesitation redoubled with a sense of inadequacy about educational psychology theory but I stumbled on the idea that this course was about human development and the relationship between theory and practice for beginners.

My practice evolved from student constraints, my hesitations and paralysis. Often silent, I learned to intervene. My hesitation and my easy accessibility gave students the chance to fall into my silence, revealing themselves in journal letters, conversation, and class discussion. As I steadied, I could respond. Together we developed a style of continuous discourse in class, in letters and other writings which took me close to Dewey's injunction that education is the reconstruction of experience. Unconsciously,

direction in my novice year became the basis for more mature practice.

My Novice Ideals

Ideals of a novice teacher educator would hit hard against the much more practical expectations of teacher education students. Other writers predict such resistance (see, for example, Neufeld, 1988; Gomez, 1988). The same theme is intricately threaded through Zeichner and Tabachnick's work, (1979-1980) and underscores an insightful essay by Lasely, Applegate, and Elison (1986).

In my ideal view of teacher education, I wanted graduates to be inventive, self reliant, resourceful, and see the wider implications of their studies but students assumed no need to rethink teaching or be critical of their preparation. I intended my students would be working toward creating rigorous inquiry in classrooms while supporting weaker pupils' attempts to learn. I believed any student of mine would foster equal opportunity and equal access to knowledge. But I had not allowed for teaching candidates' experiences of schooling and the power of years of modeling teachers had performed for them, inhibiting my rhetoric and example.

Equally Entrenched Assumptions

More significantly my assumptions and students' assumptions were <u>equally</u> entrenched. Realizing, for example, that teacher authority can impede learning by intimidating students, I thought teacher authority was grounded in subject matter knowledge,

pedagogical expertise, and commitment to pupils. Moreover, I wanted to suggest in methods classes the value of sharing authority with pupils, recognizing the teacher's dependence on student commitment to school work. Sharing classroom leadership and encouraging more interaction among students would invite connections in knowledge and create a community of learners.

But my prospective teachers saw the teacher as the authority on content who would instruct pupils with the necessary facts. This view of authority heightened their anxiety about content. Without the facts (as they saw knowledge) they would lose control (as they saw teaching). My suggestions sounded alien. As an alert student in elementary social studies methods in my first term put it.

> This methods class is very different from any we have had before, or even what we expected, so some people might not be learning as much as they should, only because they aren't open to the new method yet. (Senior, Journal Letter, September 22, 1986)

In exploring these entrenched assumptions I draw on journal letters, observation reports, examination scripts, and informal conversation of 45 prospective elementary and secondary teachers ranging from sophomores to seniors. Seventy-five percent were first-generation college entrants. Few candidates were children of teachers. I do not claim that the student sample was representative of teacher education students across the nation, but my reading (Cohen, 1988) suggests many students do hold the key assumptions in my story. For these students, teaching was clearly telling and learning passive and unquestioning listening, devoted to accumulating the teacher's desirable facts. For my undergraduates,

knowledge itself was concrete, scattered, and relatively lifeless. Affording no intellectual power nor delight it was organized by teachers in courses and evaluated by credits. Content always given to them was accurate if the teacher or text determined it so. They had never initiated looking for it, and there was no reason to question the teacher's judgement of selection, organization, and evaluation.

Rarely intellectually engaged in content, students' concern was to amass propositional knowledge not puzzle over concepts and procedures. Nor was teaching rated as an intellectually demanding career. Rather than expecting teacher preparation to be an intellectual adventure, they approached their learning stolidly--seen for example in Chapter IV where educational theory held little appeal. As with liberal arts learning, students expected well-defined boundaries in the work, objective testing, little writing, and teacher talk (not teacher questioning) in class. Stitched into my undergraduates' expectations about their preparation and about learning generally were traditional notions of authority determining their interpretation of the knowledge and skills they needed to teach. Not thinking of teaching as the joint construction of work, where teacher and pupils might share agendas and the student voice be cultivated, they wanted to control students, to dictate activities, to be successful in teacher-centered ways.

The Problem

Tensions stemming from our disparate assumptions about knowledge crystallized. Those assumptions determined views of teaching and teacher preparation. Students' past experience of knowledge as accumulated facts led them to expect to learn to teach similarly. They saw knowing content to be critical. More facts would help (as indeed they would) but they anticipated pedagogy to be far less valuable than content, whereas I began by seeing pedagogy to be more essential. This imbalance caused problems in Chapter III in secondary English methods. Wanting to work with students on strategies and purpose in their teaching, I falsely presumed they would already know content in teachable ways.

Our conflict began, therefore, at the very beginning of our discussions. Nor was I always clear where I stood. Technically, I was wedded to the indivisibility of content and pedagogy which might make me seem equally concerned about both but, in fact, I assumed subject matter knowledge to be someone else's responsibility. This idea of the indivisibility of content and pedagogy possibly taken out of context from Dewey's writing throbbed in my mind like an infallible truth. In Chapter II I try to explain this truth to methods students, exemplifying the powerful pieces of rhetoric we take to teacher education our sincere, unquestioned beliefs muddying the waters. Meanwhile, for students the methods class was a chance to focus on knowing more content not on learning how to represent knowledge.

Ideals and Constraints

Our dissonant assumptions made us chew over significant issues in the teacher education literature. My interest in the relationship between content and pedagogy had been quickened by Dewey's (1916) thinking about the nature of method and subject matter. Dewey explained: "Method means that arrangement of subject matter which is most effective in use. Never is method something outside the material. . . . Method is not antithetical to subject matter; it is the effective direction of subject matter to desired results" (p. 165).

I took this to mean that content and pedagogy would make little sense, one without the other, but I was sure they needed to be separate for their effective analysis. I wondered if the relationship between the two was at the heart of the transformation of knowledge but I could not readily see how to teach such a thing. I felt warned by Dewey's prediction: "If content and method are separated, method itself will become cut and dried, a matter of routine" (p. 165).

Shulman (1987) illuminates the ideal about content and pedagogy.

> The key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching lies at the intersection of content and pedagogy, in the capacity of a teacher to transform the content knowledge . . . into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students. (p. 10)

I was attracted to the idea of the indivisibility of content and pedagogy without knowing exactly what that might mean for a teacher

educator's work. It seemed a wholesome, responsible way to think of a teacher's intellectual development. In my secondary school practice as a history teacher, I recognized my best teaching occurred when the depth of my knowledge united with exciting ways of representing knowledge for pupils. I imagined I could present that unity to education students without stopping to wonder what I really meant. I imagined I could translate these unprocessed wonderings into my daily practice.

So Much to Grasp

As a preliminary tactic in understanding teacher education, I interviewed six teacher educators, College of Education, Michigan State University, faculty members listening for insight into ideals, goals, and problems they experienced in their practice. I unearthed tension between idealism and realities of a teacher educator's practice but I also stumbled on a significant difference between the novice and the experienced player. These faculty members could insist on high standards of teacher preparation and commitment to students on the one hand and on the other accept the inevitable approximations of their work in creating teachers. These experts had discovered ways to sort out the tension between ideals and constraints but I found this lesson hard to make my own. I felt the power of Dewey's (1933) words: "To understand is to grasp meaning . . . and till we understand . . . we'll be baffled, curious and troubled" (p. 132). For soon I saw I would only understand slowly. As I puzzled over which tensions in creating teachers constituted

intellectual problems of practice, my research became closely allied to my teaching. I was looking to record and analyze incidents of practice that would help me understand my work. I felt baffled about what had happened and its meaning. How did students learn to teach? How did my experience as teacher and researcher make me a developing teacher educator? How did my experiences compare with other teacher educators?

My Experience with Data

Writing from the inside on my teacher education practice as novice seemed particularly daunting as Whyte (1943), a participant observer in other circumstances, summed up.

> Often we have the experience of being immersed in a mass of confusing data. We study the data carefully, bringing all our local powers of logical analysis to bear upon them. We come up with an idea or two. But still the data do not fall in any coherent pattern. Then we go on living with the data and the people until perhaps some chance occurrence casts a totally different light upon the data. This pattern is not purely an artistic creation. Once we see it, we must reexamine whether the pattern adequately represents the life we are observing or is simply a product of our imagination. (p. 279)

In my case, I wrote weekly Journal Letters based on a daily diary recording my professional activities and my analysis of them. I included work in classrooms, in field observation supervision, in private conferences with students, discussions with colleagues or practicing teachers, and records of teacher education departmental meetings. Several themes competed for my attention, including the professional identity of the emerging teacher educator and the emerging classroom teacher, differences between the expert and the

novice, and my place as a teacher educator in the wider institution. From 1987 to 1988, I focussed on the different assumptions my students and I made about knowledge and teaching having critical, dramatic impact on our work. I asked students to contribute to the research in significant ways. Every second Monday they handed in an ungraded confidential statement, "What I am learning and how I am learning that?" These rich statements simply became known as Journal Letters.

> I've never done anything like this before but it sounds like it will be beneficial to both you as a teacher and myself as student. Hopefully it'll help me in organizing my notes to better understand. (Junior, September 8, 1986)

I deliberately chose the informality of letter writing to help students become both freer and better at analyzing their progress. It was a novel experience for all of us. We were all writing Journal Letters because they were writing for me and I was writing for my professor. Student responses influenced how I taught and that teaching influenced the next response. My research was part of an evolving teaching process where students described and analyzed their reactions to class content and to my teaching. They explored their doubts and needs, other students' ideas and, less frequently, the literature's stance. To keep these missives alive and to use them to promote student learning as well as my research, I replied to them using that opportunity to provoke further thought and inquiry. Other pieces of important data include observation reports (written in response to classroom observations in methods and educational psychology), final examination scripts in all subjects,

and in-class pieces about issues or concepts in particular classes were helpful both in the immediate teaching and in understanding students' intellectual development. These data helped me tentatively squirrel my way into students' assumptions about teaching and learning to teach.

My stories for this work were selected gradually. Initially, I wrote up small case studies from the journal data speaking to a specific problem of practice or describing a student's reactions to my teaching. From this store of examples of practice, I made new selections based on pertinence to my theme or instances of practice where I was still puzzled. Once stitched into the theme, these case studies carried their weight or not and were reselected. Finally, I worked and reworked student experiences in observation trying to determine if similar intellectual problems of teacher education occurred with school pupils as well as in the college classroom. I use some of this material in Chapters II, III, and IV. My stories always touch our entrenched assumptions about the nature of knowledge as I write about subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, and dispositional knowledge.

Student Reactions to the Method

Some student concerns were far from either the literature or the teacher education program and Journal Letters gave me access to these distractions. Paula alerted me to some external pressures on newly-married teacher education candidates.

> I wish I could trade places with him for about a week and see how he would like it. Let him go to

> school, worry about getting time to study, do the laundry, cook the meals, do the dishes, clean the house, and feed the cat and fish. I wish I could go to a job for eight hours a day, come home and enjoy the rest of the day. (Senior, September 8, 1986)

Paula fell back in the class and seemed careless about the readings yet she remained definite that she wanted to manage the responsibilities of teaching. Her Journal Letter gave me the chance to talk with her about how she was organizing her time, her attitudes to her career, and her preparation for it. The conversation led me to think she was a bright student who had never been called to account for her talent. I became less compassionate and more exacting and her work and attitude improved. Other students were complimentary and thoughtful.

> As I look over the last two weeks, I feel as if I've learned a little that can be used now, and a lot that can be used when I actually teach. It's a good feeling to know that we aren't focusing on memorization, but instead focusing on skills that we will continue to use the rest of our lives. (Senior, October 6, 1986)

Others accepted my invitation to be critical.

> The activity where we divided into groups to make up unit plans was premature. Applying what we read was appropriate, but researching an actual unit takes a lot of thought, research and organizing. The time we were allotted was not enough for our best work. I felt underqualified to write a unit about local community without doing research on the topic and on the age group capabilities, likes and dislikes. (Senior, October 8, 1986)

As such letters became natural, students wrote unsolicited letters, taking me even closer to their concerns. In one of these Christopher expresses anxiety about student rights.

> I'm concerned that my teaching style might be too intense for some of the classes . . . is it right for

> me to want to influence my students with my opinions because I feel they are best? How can I work on being more open minded without giving up ground on issues I feel very strongly about? (Christopher, September 18, 1986)

I replied.

> You will care what your pupils think, feel, know and believe. You will not be able to arrogantly impose your opinions and values on students . . . Whenever in doubt check with your professional objectives. You are there to educate, to lead students from ignorance into knowledge. (GRR to Christopher, September 18, 1986)

I responded to his letter and together we discussed both documents. That became part of my method as a teacher educator as I grappled with students' different assumptions and as I tried to understand what learning to teach was like. As my research and teaching dovetailed, it became engrossing, difficult work.

My Contribution to Teacher Education Literature

The value of my writing to the teacher education literature is that it is a first-hand account of incidents of teacher education practice experienced in the novice year. It is a commentary on my daily struggles against new, puzzling odds, revealing my inadequacies and recognition that the uncertainties of teaching are doubly present in teaching teachers for teaching practice becomes the subject matter knowledge. My account mixes a researcher's personal discipline in recording her journey and compiling an account reliant on student voices. I raise more questions than I answer.

In trying to wring sense from my own experience with undergraduate teacher education, I was challenged to record a year's

teaching insights. I did not pose my research question before entering my site but collected my stories and worked on them not always knowing which would become significant. I grappled with dual uncertainty, that is, uncertainty in teaching and uncertainty in writing and I had to practice interrogating selected evidence.

I felt, nevertheless, I was slowly groping toward the truth just as Paley (1981) did in Wally's Stories. His stories have many similarities to mine. Paley and I were both constrained by approximate understandings of the way children or students learn. A clearer grasp of these approximations, without solutions, emerge from our stories of practice. I often wondered how Paley felt when Wally told her that "rulers are real" and people are not (p. 13). In similar circumstances, we grappled with rival ways of looking at the world and with our charges we had to determine our role, whether to confront and argue the truth as we saw it or nurture students with gradual challenges and respect for developing abilities. Battling with this distinction I erred on the nurturing side. I would learn the need to be relentless for prospective teachers similarly drift between two worlds. Paley's writing inspired me to press on. Cazden, appreciating Paley's power, wrote in her foreword to Wally's Stories, "Behind the lines of the revealing, sometimes poignant episodes, we catch glimpses of the teacher's complex role supporting the children in their imagined worlds and providing firm anchor points to a more stable reality as well" (Unnumbered foreword).

In gathering my data I tended to wring too hard on my experience, emphasizing misperceptions rather than understandings. At times I overlooked the obvious. Sometimes a bridge of reasonableness, to use Soltis' expression, was right in place. I found it hard to appraise a crisis for its research value and simultaneously deal with it as teacher. I was perturbed about the relationship between my research and my affections for particular students. How unbiased was I in collecting evidence and in choosing my focus both in teaching and writing? Inevitably, I came closer to some students than to others in the normal course of teaching and I wondered if those students did not figure predominantly in my findings at the expense of others. Certainly, some are major characters in this thesis. I tried to be careful and in the end realized affection helped me better understand these growing minds. All these difficulties had their trade-off. I was on the inside of undergraduate teacher education. Like Paley and Lampert I felt, thought, and acted in the story I wrote.

In placing my account in teacher education literature, my clearest literary affinity rests with Lampert (1985) in her examination of dilemmas springing from her work with grade school pupils. I took my model from her intricate weaving of subject matter, teacher, students, and classroom climate and her capacity to stitch incident and analysis together. Lampert's idea that we hold conflicting parts of the self in teaching provided a pocket of serenity for me, helping me live the life, see the story, and find courage to write it. Lampert suggests that "Figuring out who to be

in the classroom is part of my job; by holding conflicting parts of myself together, I find a way to manage the conflicts in my work" (p. 183), and later, "Even though the teacher may be influenced by many powerful sources outside herself, the responsibility to act lies within" (p. 180).

Lampert's account of the internal conversation about her teaching is an example of the internal dialogue at the heart of this sort of writing and is not easy. "She debates with herself about what to do, and instead of screening out responsibilities that contradict one another, she acknowledges them, embraces the conflict and finds a way to manage" (p. 190).

Puzzling over my role as teacher educator is implicit in this thesis and like Lampert I concede the necessity to frame that role in ways that respectfully embrace (not exclude) student needs and dispositions. My internal conversation debates the intellectual problems of practice. Why and how did I intervene? Why did I sometimes remain silent in bringing my students to understand they must think hard about teaching?

All teaching faces tension between nurturing and intellectually challenging students. It is a common thread in the literature on teaching from Waller's (1931) classic statement. Dennison (1970) explains that in the experience of First Street School in New York City--a small, low teacher/pupil ratio, low cost school and in which conventional structure was reversed. "We conceived of ourselves as an environment for growth, and accepted the relationships between

the children and ourselves as being the very heart of the school" (p. 4).

My account depicts students who are trapped by the disparate assumptions I describe and their limited intellectual background. Hawkins (1967), pondering the student/teacher/subject matter relationship, emphasizes respect for student potential and illuminates students aspiring for autonomy.

> Until the child is going on his own the teacher can't treat him as a person who is going on his own, cannot let him be mirrored there, where he may see himself as investigator or craftsman. Until he is an autonomous human being who is thinking his own thoughts and making his own unique, individual kinds of self-expression out of them, there isn't anything for the teacher to respect, except a potentiality. (p. 57)

Dennison's (1970) emphasis is on freedom where detached teachers stand by ". . . out of the way of the formative powers possessed by others." For Dennison the school belongs to the children in particular ways. "Now what is so precious about a curriculum . . . or a schedule of classes . . . that these things should supersede the actual needs of the child?" (p. 17). That tension exists in my piece. How can my students' needs be defined, understood and be met? Do such needs vary with every prospective teacher? How could I interpret their needs as I perceived them within the confusion of the liberal arts college and a reality of a troubled public school system? How could I clarify my commitment?

Dennison's work (1970) and Lampert's essay (1985) admit tension between the incidents of practice and their analysis. Dennison is more willing to separate the incident from the analysis, making his work a chronicle of a different order from Lampert's interwoven

writing. Looking for powerful writing, I try to ensure the incident has significance and the insight comes hard on the heels of that record. Dennison also writes schools could be used in "a powerfully regenerative way" (p. 6) but eventually I was not concerned with wider reform of either schooling or teacher preparation seeing myself as a less effective change agent than I had hoped or imagined.

Wigginton (1985) concerns himself more specifically with curriculum, knowledge, and student engagement in his fascinating account of teaching through writing a magazine. Knowledge and student engagement in teacher education were also key issues for me. Wigginton's prose sings with a teacher's voice and for me there were times when my well tuned teacher voice would sing regardless of all the confusions.

> Every year I try new approaches, tearing apart lessons and activities and putting them back together again, living for the moment when my classes transcend the ordinary and soar. It is a never ending process, but it makes the job interesting and it keeps alive my sense of anticipation. (p. 199)

All writing on teaching can be important as we try to understand teacher education. For example Wigginton writes:

> The best teachers also know how learning takes place; and thus they are living embodiments of a parallel principle: all young people can learn. This conviction is at the heart of the teaching profession. (p. 201)

As a teacher educator I both espoused and held back from these lofty aims. Despite my determination to find out, I was not totally

sure how undergraduates learn to teach nor was I sure all candidates could succeed.

Several pieces on teaching and teacher education have been collected in a Special Issue of The Harvard Educational Review. I resonated with much of this writing. McDonald (1986) calls attention to the value of anecdotal evidence on teaching seeing in these stories a theoretical significance derived from a deep sense of shared experience. Some stories had a richer theoretical value than others. Some were readily related to Waller and Dewey or other authors. From some, a theoretical insight emerged. I am unsure what sort of theoretical significance about teacher education could be drawn from my work but an insider's story is a valuable check on generalizations about our trade. Dewey was my chief theoretician and I share with my reader attempts in practice to approximate some of Dewey's ideas about content and pedagogy, theory and practice, and education as the reconstruction of experience. Anecdotes, as McDonald argues, may also mitigate the effects of professional loneliness. I hope my stories provide meat both for teacher educators at work and those in training.

Britzman's (1986) essay in this collection employs as I do quotations from student teachers. But rather than focus on the exchange with the teacher educator, Britzman writes to support three cultural myths arguing everything depends on the teacher, the teacher is the expert, and teachers are self made. I have not written to support any theoretical positions but to gain insight into the problems of practice helping us improve our art.

Yonemura's (1986) reflections in the same volume demonstrate the importance of tracing her origins for empowerment just as I might trace my attitudes to knowledge and pedagogy. The piece is not supported, however, with journal evidence nor are her ideas complemented by student voices. There are many ways to write in teacher education and I make the point of this comparison to find my place in the field not to be critical of others' valiant attempts.

Some researchers have turned their attention to their own teaching in teacher education courses or grade school to sharpen their sense of purpose, to examine their assumptions about teaching and learning, and to explore student perceptions. I hope my piece would find its place among these with the proviso that my assumptions and sharpened perceptions are read as those of the novice. I offer a candid account of what it was like to be inexperienced, teaching prospective teachers, and still do the work.

Insiders' reports differ with the insider. I am particularly indebted to McDiarmid (1990) for his reminder that I need to see students' assumptions in their web rather than separately. I present in Chapter III, Dan slow to come to awareness of how he thinks, Jenny's reconfiguring the idea of teaching to be performing, and Judy's rejection of the mind over heart. As I worked with these three students, I focussed on one assumption they made at a time oblivious that the web itself slowed growth. McDiarmid suggests, "I would argue, in fact, that teacher education students rarely become aware of the assumptions under which they operate. Instead they either reconfigure ideas and information they encounter to fit their

beliefs and understandings--or they simply reject what doesn't fit" (p. 4).

Wilson (1989a) writes on an introductory education course using stories from practice and calling for deeper research in teacher education. Wilson highlights the serious, sensitive work we do and foreshadows the significance of a study like mine.

> Just as close examinations of teachers have illuminated our collective understanding of teaching, so might microscopic studies of pedagogy and curriculum in teacher education contribute to our knowledge of the education of educators. There is a secret garden there, a frightening tangle of belief and folklore that lies under the surface of program and course considerations. (p. 10)

Work in third-grade mathematics teaching and teacher education is compared by Ball (1989) who suggests the following.

> Having a different notion of what "knowing" entails may make a difference in what prospective teachers try to learn as well as what they strive for with their students. In this way, the experience of learning mathematics can serve to break the continuity of their experience with the subject in ways that have potential to affect both their past and their future. (p. 12)

Another piece among the experts is that by Feiman Nemser, McDiarmid, Melnick, and Parker (1989). Language here is far more confident and technical than mine. Whereas I stumble rather painfully to know what was at the center of my difficulties as a practitioner, these senior researchers write with force. Listen to the tone of their self assessment.

> We looked for evidence of change in students' thinking, coding responses along the four dimensions that represent major themes in the course: (a) traditions of teaching, (b) the relationship of teaching and learning (c) the contexts of teaching and (d) the knowledge required of teaching. (p. 2)

In this field, my work will be valuable for its lack of sophistication: for its record of meeting the issues we all face for the first time. I compare it to Duckworth's (1986) agile essay going well beyond the bounds of my thesis, for she is able to take us to the heart of teaching and equate it with research. While I grapple with articulating differences between myself and my students to document and interrogate, Duckworth, a more experienced teacher and teacher educator, moves directly to understand the essential focus for the teacher researcher must not be on what she has to offer. "The important job for the teacher is to find out what sense the students are making" (p. 489). My research method gave me the chance to try to uncover what students thought and why. That uncovering is the substance of this work.

I contribute unusual work as a participant observer tackling the advantages and disadvantages of proximity to my culture and the desire to write about teacher education from the worker's viewpoint. I applied the canon of historiographical research I learned at the Australian National University to get inside the minds and hearts of my subjects--including mine. My results are not objective but their validity is real enough. If teacher education is about human development, then subjectivity is not to be feared but disciplined and exploited. I felt reassured by Dewey's (1916) definition of research: "All thinking is research, and all research is native, original, with him who carries it on, even if everybody else in the world already is sure of what he is still looking for" (p. 148). This thoughtful compilation of instances of practice could be a shot

in the arm for teacher education practice. Work like mine exploring the novice teacher educator with students outside the research institution offers instances of practice over a teaching year that other practitioners might use as windows into the tensions, intellectual, and joys of their daily work.

CHAPTER II

LISTENING FOR THE LARK

Introduction

Before arriving at Bunbury College in August, 1986, I drew up my tentative elementary social studies syllabus, realizing I had yet to meet students whose needs would shape my work.

> In my course I am stressing the possibility of excluding none of the purposes of social studies which seem foolishly grouped in rival camps (cognitive, socialization, and personal development). As the conversation unfolds I will plug for an interdisciplinary approach and global awareness. This may be easier said than done and depends on my students' agendas . . . (GRR Journal Letter, July, 1986).

Not fussing unduly about those student agendas, I was happy with my work. I had depth in the course and I had tried, be it ever so quickly, to understand something about this philosophically confused subject matter area. I remained optimistic, thinking social studies teaching could benefit from interdisciplinary and global emphasis. Excited to explore elementary school children's needs, I was curious how they might prompt me to reassess my methods teaching. I regretted I had no personal stories to illustrate my point for I had no experience being with the same children all day, shifting from one subject area to another.

In August, 1986, fall term began, and in 16 weeks our conversation addressed problems of teaching social studies in elementary school with varying finesse. We stumbled over teaching values and using textbooks.

We tackled education students' shyness and hesitance to think critically. We confronted the idea that learning might occur socially, in groups with specific tasks. We experimented with group assignments in our college class and examined tensions in teaching between individual and group needs. We had guest speakers who helped us think about gifted and anxious children. We wondered how to motivate children and how work is constructed in the classroom. The tension in our work arose from student preference for facts and direct instruction and my wider interpretation of both knowledge and pedagogy. More finely, I had to work with the different constructions my students and I placed on social studies content and the content of elementary social studies methods.

Within three weeks, my students were placed with teachers in town. I was dubious, anxious but also a little exhilarated in supervising these field experiences. As a stranger in a small country town, I looked at the teaching in these two little elementary schools, wondering how I could incorporate observation in my methods instruction. I was keen to teach students both how to observe and how to think about what they saw. One of my seniors found that helpful.

> I really liked the way we discussed what to look for in classroom observation. The discussion about what observation is and how to observe was really helpful. It helped me realize that I should put more thought into the way I observe. It gets really routine and after a while you do not think about what you are doing. This was a good reminder to me to think about observation more deeply. Also we came up with quite a few good questions to ask the teacher that would give us insight into the class, the students, the teacher and the purposes of the lesson. (Senior, October 6, 1986)

My senior's admission that students get bored while fulfilling this 10-hour requirement helped me understand students did not always automatically share my classroom fascination. Moreover, from the excited

conversation in class over placements, I suspected observation was a chance to dress up and help the teacher with bulletin boards, correcting papers or even teaching a segment of the class (GRR 15 Journal Letter, October, 1986).

Shy Students

I had nine students ranging from 19 to 22 years including five juniors and four seniors. One student came from Hacketstown, New Jersey, one from Burbank, Chicago and the rest were local ladies whose ambitions ranged from the doctorate in elementary education to teacher mother. All had at least four years' proficiency in a high school language. None was black or a member of any minority group. As we introduced ourselves, I tried to share my ideas of social studies by telling some Australian stories of the significance of the land, of explorers, aborigines, and migrant cultures; and my listeners seemed compassionate, if conservative.

After two weeks, several students admitted shyness in their first journal letter. "The first time I met you I was intimidated" (Senior, October 27, 1986). Did they expect I would retreat . . . be less demanding? Shyness was real enough but a time-honored way to avoid thinking or reaching out to a new view of knowledge and teaching. I decided to confront shyness partly because I believed shyness could make teaching harder and also because I thought I knew how to help. I may have suspected that if I met those needs, I could make my demands with more credibility. Sounding compassionate but firm I declared speaking to be a vital teacher's tool: teachers who had to take the lead with 30 others in the room could hardly afford to be shy but needed to speak

clearly and act confidently. I shared what I knew about projecting the voice and often before class I would remind students that whenever we speak or read aloud we must remember that as teachers we must be clear, articulate, and engaging. A primary task of the methods course, I said, was to enhance self confidence for the sake of the children you'll teach. I would ask students to write down a summary sentence of our conversation then share it with a classmate. I would call for each student's sentence using it to develop the case and to help students speak out. We practiced entering the room and beginning class, speaking as if the teacher. Prompted by my research concern to understand students, I asked each student to come and see me in the office for an individual informal interview during the third week of class. Meg was still so shy we opted to walk and talk instead. But more able to face the meeting, Helen commented:

> I have been thinking a lot about the talk we had in your office. I really liked the idea of you having us come in to talk to you. It showed me that you really cared what we thought and how we felt about your class. Teachers don't have to do that and it made me feel that you consider this class and teaching as important as I do. (Junior, September 22, 1986)

I thought the time well spent although I learned less than I anticipated. Students gradually became more confident and it excited me when one thought of the class as a conversation. "I'm surprising myself how much I am talking in class and being able to defend my points and opinions however they might fit into the conversation" (Junior, September 22, 1986).

After a month or so students began to call by my office to chat about their unit plans, classwork, or becoming teachers. These visits gave me opportunities to get to know young people from quite different

backgrounds than mine and helped me develop a more integrated sense of my practice. These visits also relieved a deep loneliness on the job.

> These little interchanges make my day. They extend class and journal conversations; they show enthusiasm for our work; they legitimize my asking questions to write about what they are learning and how they learn it; they know what they have written and they know I have read it. (GRR 17 Journal Letter, October 27, 1986)

In class I pushed and probed in my gentle way, insisting on more thought and more recourse to confidently figuring out teaching rather than relying on past expectations. I detected a friendly resistance. I respected the shyness but having worked on it I discounted it and forged ahead. Finally, I could walk into class giving an individual student the chance to lead the discussion without notice.

> Near the end of the class period I invited the student to explore her experience--which questions worked and how she felt--what would she do next time to improve the discussion? I congratulated her on her good work and she thanked the others. (GRR 15 Journal letter, October, 1986)

Offering these opportunities was one of the best ways to deal with shyness, and Alicia, the worst afflicted student, commented: "I do feel as though I have overcome my shyness as time has gone on" (Alicia, September 30, 1986).

Entrenched Assumptions about Social Studies Content and the Content of Social Studies Methods

Students were less shy but we still thought differently. I recalled a whole world opening before me in thinking about my Australian primary (elementary) school experience in social studies. An avid reader, I enjoyed the adventures of other societies and felt we travelled to foreign lands in grade school. Early conversation revealed my students

were unsure what they learned in elementary school social studies or how they were taught. Short memories of both content and method cut our early conversation off at the knees for these autobiographical reflections were my intended starting place. Then, as soon as we went to observe in schools, I noticed among our collaborating teachers uneven attitudes and skills applied to social studies in their curriculum. I wondered why that was so and what impact it might have on my prospective teachers. I deduced my methods teaching needed to infuse a new approach to learning--an approach that gave knowledge more value, more credence as a way of bettering the world we live in.

I was also supported by my positive experience in 1976 as Social Studies Coordinator at Geelong Grammar School in Australia where I saw the point of blending facts (as we thought we knew them) with values of tolerance and empathy to counter prevailing ignorance and discrimination against aborigines, migrants, and the poor. I thought the American elementary school teacher had similar responsibilities. I assumed I was free to apply my latest readings in social studies curriculum--interdisciplinary thinking in elementary schools and the importance of enhancing school pupils' views of the world. I would demonstrate both direct and indirect teaching methods and variations of simulation and group work, thinking simulation's combination of the imagination, intellect and emotion in learning particularly valuable in teaching social studies. I assumed we would create a lively discussion of "good" social studies teaching enriched by students' previous learning of content and pedagogy in math, science, language arts, music, and art methods.

In students' minds, ability to teach flowed naturally from knowing content so the methods course was another serious chance to amass essential facts. Having little respect for pedagogical expertise, students believed they just needed enough stuff to teach--why relate one methods course to another when teaching was managing content? Underestimating the powerful drive for facts, I imagined I explained the nature of teaching, the problems of practice, and ways of thinking about integrating social studies instruction with the rest of the curriculum.

To some extent, the entrenched assumptions my students and I held became clearer through the field experience. I hoped students might explore teachers' presentation, diagnosis, reflection, engaging pupils, uncovering content, interaction, communication, role playing, creative play, and multicultural insight. Although there is nothing inappropriate with this ambitious list, it failed to understand volunteer cooperating teachers who like me were novice teacher educators. I wanted so much (too much?) for my students. "I want students to be continually niggled into thinking about teaching as work, as a way of life, as problematic. Students, however, prefer to find things to imitate in their classroom placement" (GRR 20 Journal Letter, November, 1986.).

On a more practical note, it was certainly my task to foster a questioning attitude to what went on in the classroom. I sensed the subtlety of that.

> How does one teach observation? What sort of assignments for students doing observation really work? How can I avoid clinical supervision or checking off lists like some party game? How can I encourage students to use their journals as a place to explore their reactions to what they see? (GRR Journal Letter, 12 September 1986)

I was unsure time spent in schools would help my students think about teaching. Would students grasp intangibles such as classroom tension over ability or the teacher's internal tension between the need to control and the need to foster pupil autonomy? Would students simply integrate the class with past experience rather than be receptive to the new dimensions of teaching I might stress, especially interactions among teacher, children, and content or my interdisciplinary emphasis? How did I know what my students' past experience was and where new insights began? How could I engineer a break from that experience while retaining what was valuable in it?

To combat the idea that teaching was easy (we just need stuff to teach), I set assignments for observation designed to elicit teaching's tensions reflecting my enthusiasm in understanding teaching as tension. I don't recall wondering if these tensions could be accessible to those who have not yet taught. We had 10 one-hour visits in the schools so I prepared a chart of 10 questions signalling attention to subject matter knowledge, specific teaching methods, questioning procedures, use of praise and blame, principles of classroom management, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction and so on. I was nervous about the assignment. I had no understanding that some of these puzzles were harder than others. Nor did I understand that an observing student concentrates for about fifteen minutes before fading.

> I distributed a list of 10 elements of practice. Students were free to write up any one element on a classroom visit. This seemed water-tight until I visited Jenny in fourth grade. I sat beside her on a small chair and after some time asked her what element she was focusing on. "All of them" she replied. And I knew I was in trouble. She could see all the elements at once. (GRR 13 Journal Letter, October 6, 1986)

Anxiously, I called Dr. Henrietta Barnes, head of the department of teacher education at Michigan State University's College of Education and a member of my doctoral committee. I explored my work in observation with her. Appreciating my concerns, she suggested I think of ways to avoid students being simply anecdotal. Teacher's purpose could be a key lens showing the multiplicity and complexity of the teacher's goals. These could be dealt with one at a time then kaleidoscoped. What I needed was an overlay, templates or schemas giving structure to reflection. She urged me to keep probing for new conceptions, new understandings (GRR 15 Journal Letter, October 1986).

Dr. Barnes stressed the need to articulate the learner's view in classrooms and find evidence for it. The teacher's intentions must be probed. After observation, debriefing must address these two issues and the common fault that teaching is an expression of the teacher's personality. Heartened my difficulties were legitimate, I still found it hard to implement this advice. My impatience didn't help. Just like my prospective teachers, I wanted recipes not grounds for further thought. Some of the terms confused me. Schemas and templates appealed to me but how could I fruitfully represent these structures for reflection and how could I explain <u>reflection</u> to Meg? I failed to imagine how to integrate nine different learners, nine different classroom teachers, and a unified assignment. Near the end of the semester I still lived in doubt.

> A problem of my practice is that I have no well developed philosophy about what I want students to learn (or more broadly experience) from classroom observation in conjunction with pedagogy courses. My possible objectives are legion. Are they consistent with one another? (GRR 20 Journal Letter, November, 1986)

I tried, however, to follow Dr. Barnes' advice in the following way. In one methods class, I examined teacher purposes by asking students to imagine a balloon representing teacher's thinking in the last class observed. Below the balloon, I asked them to record an instance of teaching then draw lines up to this balloon suggesting teacher intentions in that instance. I developed a blackboard summary of these balloons and teaching instances. Inferences about the teachers' purposes were predictably vague but together we were able to take each case, tease out the practice, and fill out the balloon. These balloons filling up with what looked like such a motley lot of purposes were helpful. With the balloon exercise, I felt more in command. I relied on my own resources and working from students' experiences as if that were the text and authority brought us closer together. Trina concluded the following.

> Many times when I observe, I only criticize the teacher without thinking about the pressures she might be under. Doing this exercise has helped me realize that there are a lot of uncontrollable factors in teaching. (Junior, November 15, 1986)

> Jesse, referring to this exercise, later worked out, "I feel social studies is not important to my teacher. There is no fixed time for it. It is done usually at the end of the day. Mrs. P does not care for the book yet she follows it closely. (Junior, Final Observation Report, December 12, 1986)

But in thinking about field placements, our dissonant assumptions about knowledge resurfaced. The following example from observation nicely illuminates different assumptions at work. I intended my visit to find out more about what students in general were thinking and was astonished by the difference between us, in retrospect a difference simply representing our experience in thinking about teaching, a difference arising between the person who set the task and the person

interpreting it. This incident taught me what I needed to try to do as a professional teacher educator but not how to proceed. In the rush of the week, I could only begin to wonder if I had uncovered something significant or not.

> When I walked into fourth grade social studies on Tuesday morning I sat beside my observing student. We experienced the same reality. Her construction of that reality (knowledge?) differed from mine. I could tell that by comparing what she wrote down and by our conversation after the experience. She was constructing her own reality. I was constructing mine. Mine is presumably better informed or more professional in some way. My task is to lead her closer to my professional interpretation of what is worth noticing, what is significant, what is provocative and so on. (GRR 14 Journal Letter, October, 1986)

Students' View of Content and Preference for Direct Instruction

> I always thought social studies was primarily concerned with a geographical context. (Jill, September 8, 1986). I thought social studies was learning the states but poetry would be a change to use. (Didi, October 6, 1986)

But how exactly were students seeing content? Prospective teachers, despite their intentions to do fine work with children in classrooms, were not easily persuaded that the value of facts lies in their interconnections and that teaching was little more than presenting and testing facts and controlling behavior. Views of content were allied to less articulate views of pedagogy seen as a preference for direct instruction. In this section of the chapter, I explore Jill's views of scientific knowledge for teaching and present my parallel for social studies. I illustrate Trina's misgivings of my teaching about tensions in teaching, Meg's awakening about content and pedagogy, and Jesse's struggle to at least think more deeply about content. Looking then at a

college classroom discussion, I illuminate what I saw as a relationship between the factual view of content and traditional interpretations of the teacher's role.

Students relied on teacher, syllabus, and text to determine whether something was worth knowing. Content was scattered lifelessly across the curriculum and commitment to content by teacher or pupils was little understood. I use the following quotation of a social studies student's fear about science for its insight into the ways she expected her knowledge of subject matter to work for her.

> One of my biggest fears is--how can I teach something necessary when I'm not confident about it? I face this question when it comes to science. The instruction that I have received here and throughout my life is lacking and I am not confident nor am I excited about it. I'm afraid I will cheat the kids out of what could be the most interesting part of school. I've been reading books to try to catch up on what I've missed, but now I'm finding it hard to get the subject matter to an elementary level. I'm hoping that it will all fall into place once I start teaching. (Student Letter, November 10, 1986)

This letter shows my student thinks good teaching is confidence with facts. Good teaching does not cheat children out of specific interesting content. When I first received the letter, I detected a winging tone. Jill was angry her science has been poorly dispensed. She was desperately trying to remedy effects of poor teaching in her own schooling and hoping things will fall into place when she teaches. She did not, however, know how to learn alone. I came closer to students' attitudes to knowledge when I thought through Jill's concerns. I was troubled by Jill's lack of real curiosity for scientific knowledge. She feels she will cheat children from knowing facts, not from understanding science. I attacked the expectation that things fall into place when we

teach. I urged her to talk with local teachers about science teaching, warning her against thinking about subject matter in limiting ways such as "at the elementary level." I thought she needed to understand the principles behind the content to be able to help pupils inquire scientifically and think like scientists. I saw no alternative but hard work. Similarly, I wanted her to teach social science to help children to think like social scientists, not to do topics. "I want to learn what social studies topics are appealing to students, which are necessary and when each should be taught" (Jill, September 22, 1986).

Trina had meanwhile compared notes with a recent graduate who complained all they did was content and learned nothing of our concerns for strategies and tensions in teaching. Trina shares her concern, speaking awkwardly.

> It still concerned me a little that we were not doing any social studies in class but after talking with you and then talking to a girl who graduated last year, she told me to be thankful we were being taught this . . . I now feel better about what we are doing in class. Also after talking with you about it I see how dry the class would be if we just did social studies and nothing else. (Trina, October 22, 1986)

Trina sensibly placed content in a special position in teaching, "It seems like the whole melting pot in which teaching starts is content. You have to know what and how you are going to teach before you actually do it" (Trina, September 8, 1986).

Other students shared confusion, concern, or changing conviction about content and teaching. By October Meg conceded a balance was needed between content and pedagogy. "Content is very important of course but I feel methods the teacher uses to help her students learn will either

spark an interest or deflate the motivation for students" (Meg, October 22, 1986).

Trina and Meg have moved from wanting lists of things for definite ages and Jesse in thinking more crisply about content presents a teacher who still tells and the pupils receive.

> The educator uses his or her own technique to present information, or the content. Content is the substance of teaching. It is what one teachers. The teacher must first know the content and then decide the best method to present it to the class. Content equals information plus interpretation. You present the information to the children and wait for them to think about it. Content is the basis of everything we do. (Jesse, September 9, 1986)

One class period, we divided the blackboard space for two stick figures representing the traditional teacher on one half and on the other the teacher aiming to facilitate resources and inspire individual and group effort. We made distinctions between direct and indirect instruction and ways each type of teacher might look at their purposes, planning, and strategies. Students were immediately attracted to the direct instructor. This was a place where I hit hard against background experience and even students who felt oppressed or bored in school accepted that was how it should be. School, after all, is school. They attributed their preference to the need to control children and content. We compared ways such teachers handled their authority, subject matter, discipline, evaluation, and the pupils' work. My most positive student response was to take the attributes of the traditional teacher, then self-consciously add one or two elements of the alternative, not from conviction but constrained by the need to please. I asked which stick figure was me. The indirect instructor--they replied laughing. Did I not mix direct and indirect instruction? Students countered by

suggesting they saw my departures from traditional teaching not as a useful model but as idealistic--my practices would be unmanageable in an elementary school.

I wondered aloud with the class if the non traditional teacher might be better equipped to deal with classroom ability differences and cultural diversity. Here I had to push against students' perceptions that all children would soak up information equally well if they were well behaved, that is, under control. I imagined and shared cases of resistant, slower learning, minorities and gifted or talented young people. We practiced simulations of teacher thinking about content, strategies, and individual purposes with some of these youngsters. By now--half way through the semester--students had begun to enjoy the role-playing but I knew factual content and preference for the traditional authoritarian direct instructor's role would take longer than one course in teacher preparation to shift. And that was the significant lesson for me.

I Call on Lemleck and the Spiral Curriculum

> I want to try to use the literature to develop deeper understandings, integrating literature, experience and class conversation. (GRR No 3 Journal Letter, August, 1986)

One of our earliest pieces of literature was Johanna Kasin Lemleck's (1984) Curriculum and Instructional Methods for the Elementary School. I prepared study questions for a crucial 20 pages covering criteria for selecting social studies experiences, the typical grade level sequence for social studies instruction in the United States, and the skills developed in social studies and ways of evaluating social studies growth.

Study questions were unfamiliar to me and I offered them hesitantly, feeling they would help students feel more secure.

Students liked their direction, working happily in pairs to produce answers in the 98 degree heat and high humidity. The chapter looked at ways to develop a curriculum devoted to intellectual and emotional growth of children but classmates were not disposed to think of themselves as curriculum builders and skimmed this valuable material for helpful practical hints to apply with comforting facts.

Nevertheless, we kept working within the structure of the spiral curriculum. For approximately a month we went through each grade, from kindergarten to grade eight, clarifying likely pieces of curriculum; discussing a variety of methods including simulation, debate, mapping, excursion, film, creative writing; interviewing the locals; and library research to help learn and connect facts to a growing understanding of the social self. We paid attention to Piaget's stages of cognitive development studied in introduction to educational psychology and Kohlberg's stages of moral development from my introduction. At each level, I tried to illustrate what might be studied and how it might be connected to language arts, math, music, and science but I also worked hard to inspire students' confidence to devise their own themes and connections.

In about the fifth week, I asked students to pair off to discuss and develop a curriculum idea for one grade, each suitable for several continuous classes. We drew the results together to see what the curriculum would look like across the board. What would a child going though the grades learn? Students, although polite, were less engaged in

this analysis (a general view of social studies instruction across grades) than in specific pieces of work they could imagine using for particular grades. I took this as a sign that lack of curiosity about disciplinary knowledge carried over to professional knowledge. Most students were already definite which grade level they wanted to select. Here our different views of content crystallized. Students looking for recipes for teaching displayed their over-arching preoccupation with simple, well ordered, well organized subject matter that children could accumulate--content that was easy to grasp rather than important to learn (names of rivers, early explorers, state birds, and so on) rather than tackling questions like why explorers risk their lives in what they do. At a loss to know how to address these curtailed ambitions to fully explore content and teaching methods, I kept asking, to student irritation, "Why are we teaching this content?" (GRR Journal Letter, 12 September, 1986).

Using the spiral curriculum as my base was not without its difficulties. Expecting facts for teaching, my students were wary of values beyond interpreting the course goal, socialization, as cheerfully sharing the classroom pencil sharpener. Introducing teaching strategies I did not have a precise notion what beginners might know nor did I expect that some teaching methods would be harder to envisage than others. I did not discriminate between what novice and experienced teachers might see as useful strategies. Could students command simulation and synthesis? I had not sorted this out. Students side-stepped this talk of methods by expressing more anxiety about content they did not know. This deficit made them uneasy with values, with

interdisciplinary emphasis and with teaching for global awareness. Different understandings of knowledge and teaching were influencing our work. Berliner (1988) speculates a stage theory about the development of expertise. In the novice stage, common places must be discerned and only marginal performance is expected. Berliner alerts me to enthusiasms to teach a new view of knowledge, a new perception of pedagogy, and new teacher student relations too early in the undergraduate program.

> I am also suggesting that preservice education may not be the appropriate place to teach some things, and therefore we may have to extend our programs of teacher education for some time after our students have entered practice. (Berliner, 1988).

But my insistent purposes led me to confront values head on. Like a bull in a china shop, determined to draw students' attention to the distinction between facts and values, I asked students to choose a specific grade and prepare a three-lesson sequence, teaching a value in the third lesson. I sketched a dramatic example of the Australian aborigine on the board--a lesson about origins of this people, a lesson about cave paintings and rituals, a lesson about respecting diversity. I thought many parallel examples would come to mind (GRR 8 Journal Letter, September, 1986). These lesson plans also had to show how they would benefit from connections with other disciplines. I could have let integrating the curriculum ride for the moment but I felt driven to attend to my agenda (all of it, every teaching encounter) a source of my tension and student frustration. I asked students to think through the teacher's puzzles with the material and the children's anticipated difficulties, such as how much material to introduce each class, how to represent it, how to pace the work for the less-able, how to create

opportunities for pupil choice, how to make links with earlier and anticipated material, how to engage all children in both facts and values.

These tactics failed. I had forgotten to establish whether students were clear on the meaning of value. I distracted students with too much choice in the lesson content. I asked beginners to fuss about three lessons in a row when they could hardly determine one. Our knowledge of school children was so tentative that we had no firm sense of a context in which to prepare the class. The following student excerpt illuminates how part of this confusion about the children proved a justified distraction from blending facts and values.

> I never really thought about how I would handle the accelerated students. It's a big fear. How does one keep accelerated students interested? What age is the acceleration known? How far should this type of student be pushed? (Senior, Journal Letter, November 26, 1986)

This is a nice example of my continual temptation to tackle far too much at once. I'm sure it became difficult at times to see which issue we were working on since I placed such a plethora on the table. Even better students were irritated. Students produced three lesson plans that looked as though we had discussed none of the issues at hand but things would improve later when constructing unit plans, I saw it my responsibility to help students with the research, to assuming some responsibility for directing content as well as pedagogy.

More Literature and the Meaning of Knowledge

But my immediate response was to return to the analysis of why we do what we do. We needed to take the meaning of knowledge seriously. I

talked with my class at this point about Rita, Lampert's (1985) teacher, and Linda, her pupil. I particularly wanted to share Lampert's work with my students because she teaches and writes about her practice in thoughtful, careful ways. I wanted the idea of dilemma management in teaching to threaten students' views of telling facts. I wanted to highlight the teacher's emerging self identity. "One needs to be comfortable with a self that is complicated and sometimes inconsistent" (p. 193).

Thinking all my students were potential Ritas, I thought to meet her might be educative. I asked one student to become Rita and another her student Linda, giving them a day or two to prepare a re-enactment of the incident Lampert describes. I was doubly fascinated since the exercise was like arranging a reenactment of our different teacher-student views of knowledge in this education class. I hoped I would come closer to understanding that collision. Since this session especially provoked me, I present the passage used from Lampert in full.

> Science lessons in Rita's classroom often consisted of students reading their workbooks, looking at the drawings and diagrams in them, and answering questions and checking their answers with the teacher. The topic of one such exercise was "The Cycle of Water." The workbook presented the students with a picture of a cloud, and next to it a question." Where does the water come from ?" Rita said it seemed obvious to her from the illustration that the answer was "clouds," and so she had "marked it right" when students gave that answer. (She checked other answers which were not so obvious to her in the teacher's guide before she judged them right or wrong.) Rita was, therefore, a bit perplexed when one of the girls in her class, Linda, came up to have her work corrected and declared with unusual confidence that "the answer to where water comes from is <u>the ocean</u>." Rita indicated on the girl's paper that this answer was incorrect, but Linda was surprised by this judgement and insisted that she was right.

Rita was hesitant to contradict Linda because the girl was so confident about her answer. Although Rita disagreed with her, she sensed a conflict brewing and wanted to avoid it. So she tried to understand more about what Linda was thinking." I said to her: "Well I don't understand. Explain it to me." I was fumbling around and I was trying to figure out what she meant. It finally turned out that she knew, but she couldn't verbalize it for quite a while. After asking her questions and having her look at the workbook page, (Linda) said, "The clouds pick the water up. I don't know how, but it puts the water back in the ocean from the clouds." Rita decided in this exchange that Linda knew what she was supposed to learn from the lesson even though her answer did not match the answer in the teacher's guide.

The potential conflict between perspectives on what it means to "know" something was momentarily resolved when Rita agreed with Linda that her answer was indeed correct. The equilibrium between Linda's understanding and the book's standard of knowledge was short-lived, however, when the other students in the class took an interest in Rita's judgement. As Rita recalled, "Linda went running back to the rest of the group and told them she wasn't wrong. The other kids started arguing with Linda because they saw it the way I saw it and the way the answer book saw it. But Linda could prove she was right." Rita had exacerbated an underlying contradiction in her classroom when she told Linda that her answer was correct. The conflict came to the surface because Linda was a member of a group of students studying the same material. Moreover, they had all been using the teacher's guide as the standard by which to judge the correctness of their answers. Their complaint was that Rita had applied a familiar standard to judging their answers but had used another standard to evaluate Linda's. Unless Rita did something to manage this conflict, it threatened to become a more difficult classroom problem.

One student, Kevin, confident that <u>his</u> answer was right because it matched the answer in the teacher's guide and because Rita had told him it was right, led the class in an argument with Linda and, by implication, with their teacher. In Rita's words: "One of the kids, Kevin, said Linda was really dumb because the ocean was where the water started out, and it ended up in clouds just before it rained. It wasn't that he didn't get her explanation, but he just dismissed it because I had told him earlier that his answer was right and he also knew that was the answer the book wanted. That's why she came up to me in the first place to get confirmation that she was right because Kevin had said she was wrong." Like Rita Kevin got Linda's explanation. Yet her individual understanding of the matter was not his concern. He "dismissed" Linda's explanation (as Rita herself had done at first) because it did not match what the book and his teacher

> said was "right" and he began an argument to settle the matter. If the teacher and the textbook were to be taken seriously, he argued, Linda could not also be right.
>
> Rita's job . . . might be viewed as requiring a choice between dichotomous alternatives. If she were to practice "child-centered" teaching, she would favor defending Linda's way of thinking while rejecting the textbook's authority. If she were to practice "curriculum centered" teaching, she would judge Linda's knowledge using the written curriculum in the teacher's guide as the standard. Those students whose answers agreed with the book's answer were pushing her toward the latter, while Linda was pushing her toward the former. (Lampert, 1985, pp. 186-187)

Now we shared a window into important classroom tensions. In response, my students became more articulate--letting me see their views of knowledge and teaching. We wondered what it means to <u>know</u> something, and what it means to mark things right and wrong. Both Rita and Linda troubled my students who wanted certitudes, control of knowledge, and ways to control children. Our re-enactment of the exchanges between Rita and Linda attacked their beliefs. Rita did not know what to do. Some students were convinced that she was not actually teaching because she was so indecisive and many were appalled that she allowed Linda to threaten her. One student was appalled that a text, especially a science text, could let Rita down so badly.

In introducing Lampert's essay showing teaching as a process of managing not necessarily resolving dilemmas, I was trying to help my class see that knowing content alone did not enable one to teach and that teaching was uncertain. My task was more exacting than I understood. I thought that given Lampert's text, classroom enactments, and our analysis that my point was inescapable but students on the whole were interested, attentive, then condescendingly sorry for Rita. Her conflict was not readily admitted but her competence doubted. She lost control of the

content and the children. Maria, on the other hand, gives evidence of learning the point.

> In any class, if a child can explain how they got their answer, they will be better off than saying right or wrong. Through their explanation, the child may discover on their own where they went wrong, or the teacher may discover that the student is right. (Maria, September 21, 1986)

Undeterred, I Try Another Authority

Just after establishing the spiral curriculum in our conversation and explaining Rita's story, I introduced a diagram linking content, pedagogy and classroom management. I thought my diagram indicated Dewey's writings and calling on Dewey connected me with my graduate school teachers' legitimizing my assumptions. In my enthusiasm to get things right, I declared content and pedagogy to be indivisible. I thought my undergraduates could and should grasp the indivisibility of content and pedagogy in teaching.

In the same breath, I saw pedagogy as my province and content someone else's responsibility. I felt I should try to integrate students' content with thinking about how to teach that but they were still amassing their desired knowledge. I relied on my authorities to support my view. Two rival theories existed as students tensely believed their theory that knowing the stuff was what mattered and I tensely held my abstract, confused dreams about the indivisibility and intersection of content and pedagogy. And, in fact, we both passed over indivisibility as students emphasized content and I emphasized pedagogy. I was caught off guard, for example, when students quickly demanded more facts, eschewing interest in explaining the nature of teaching and problems of

practice. Contrary to all I had learned from Dewey, I saw myself as a teacher educator specializing in the value and intricacies of teaching methods--divorcing content and method. By the end of the third week of the semester, however, I assumed more responsibility for content in this pedagogy class. I now admitted my students' need to have specific social studies content before they could think intelligently about using texts, using group work, creating lesson plans, and so on. Still sounding a little muddled, I wrote, "Now I do not see tension between content and pedagogy. Rather I think of them as held in separation for the sake of teacher preparation" (GRR 10th Journal Letter, Sept. 21, 1986).

I was adamant, however, that I should not simply dispense facts because I saw that reliance as a weakness in my students' view of knowledge and good teaching so I incorporated opportunities for students to do pieces of research on content simultaneous with exercises designing its use. Students grumbled about extra work but their passion for facts helped them do the research even though I was requiring a different sort of knowledge, a way of organizing facts to make sense of them. With this unity of research and search for strategies, we came closer to better work.

Teaching Content and Method in Unit Plans

To encourage students to think about content and strategy simultaneously (or more approximately simultaneously), I helped them figure out a unit plan or series of five to ten lessons around an elected theme for a specific grade. Here we found our bridge of reasonableness. I am not sure how transparent my intentions for this work (stated for the

first time) seemed, especially when I read Alicia's messy description of my introduction in her journal.

> On Monday we discussed what should be included in our unit plans. We learned our plans must be realistic--in accordance with time and not just entertaining . . . We must consider the academic and social needs of the class . . . this class helped me get a grip on a unit plan but I'm still scared of the assignment. (Alicia, November 10, 1986)

Despite student obsession for facts, my promise of guided research as a hidden compromise between our two agendas seemed to cause more distress than joy. Some anticipated the thrill of the chase and looked favorably on the prospect of discovering ways to represent social studies material. Sounding as if aware of dissent over writing unit plans, Maria wrote. "I want to work on my unit. I may be the only one looking forward to it but I like to get my hands on creative stuff" (Senior, October 27, 1986). But others feared the project--both the research and sharing the findings with classmates. I felt disbelieving, even resentful that my students wanted to be teachers but feared independent learning and research. I noted the dependency stitched into this response, "Lesson and unit plans have been discussed. To me the project will be a long hard challenge. I like the idea of photocopying other students' work. I am scared of the whole project" (Junior, October 27 1986). On the other hand, others now began to come closer to real interest in their material. "Social Studies has not always been my favorite but by starting this unit I am getting very interested and my view of it has changed a lot" (Trina, November 10, 1986).

In unit plan preparation students adopted differing stances about content. Preparing a second grade unit on groups, Susan saw her purpose to teach the difference between the group and the clique. Thinking of

social studies in different ways from the rivers and mountains early in the term, she devised inventive schemes to make her point, using the classroom itself as her resource. Her opening plan was to ask students to crumple paper and drop it over the floor by each desk. One volunteer would pick up all the trash. She then would ask pupils to crumple the paper and throw it on the floor then debate how, as a group, they could help one another with the clean up. From there she planned to discuss family groups and groups outside the family to combat loneliness and enable more effective work. "As a child it is hard to learn that there is a difference between belonging to a group because of common interests and belonging to a clique" (Susan, Purpose of Unit, November, 1986).

Devising her own method for teaching a class to create a tomb painting, Jesse had a chance to experiment with us and her observation sixth grade class. She expected her sixth graders would learn, ". . . about the geography, history, society and economy of Ancient Egypt and students would understand and practice tomb painting" (Jesse, unit purpose, November, 1986).

Also interested in ancient Egypt, Ann thought eighth graders would benefit from comparing ancient and modern cultures. Whereas Susan, Jesse and Ann connected facts to wider perspectives, Maria, perhaps my brightest student, retreated into factual content--"the whos, whens, wheres, and whys of the American Revolution" (Maria, unit plan, November 1986). I focus now on that irregularity.

> In my unit on the American Revolution for grades five and six I am playing it safe--I mean I am dealing with facts not concepts. I know I will introduce freedom briefly but I don't think I should get very theoretical. (Maria, November 27, 1986)

Maria was uneasy:

> As far as the unit goes, I always have doubts while writing it--that I'm leaving out something important, or working in an area that should be held to a later grade . . . I think that's why I played it safe and took, or chose, a content topic--the American revolution.

Maria and I were quite close. This senior met with me almost daily to work on an independent study on teacher questioning. She seemed intelligent and animated and our conversation touched more widely on pedagogy's excitements and frustrations. I was intrigued then that when she felt concern with her unit plan, she didn't tell me her problems or seek advice. As class leader she might not have wanted to come forward in class as others did but she had many other opportunities. What might her reticence compared with Ruth's nagging remarks mean?

> Now let's talk a minute about the unit. My only problem with it is this: I know what I want as my topic, I'm confident that it would be a successful unit and pupils would learn from it but how do I know its the type of unit you would like? We'll talk about this. (Ruth, November 10, 1986)

It may suggest that she was so imbued with the power of facts and factual content in teaching that she saw their arrangement to be the difficulty and she could tease them out with time. In my thinking, the unit plan was to forge a combination of content and pedagogy but it may have been that Maria did not really believe there was such a thing as pedagogical expertise (an issue dominating parts of secondary English methods--Chapter III of this work). If so, questions to me would serve no purpose. She determined she needed experience.

> I do believe . . . that after teaching a grade I will be able to find their level of intelligence and what they are capable of doing. I should think I should be able to find this information about my class in a matter of weeks. (Maria, November 27, 1986)

I asked Maria to lead the class presentations of the unit plans. I wanted students to share their research, reflecting on difficult decisions made. I was meeting students' need for more content and creating a conversation about methods and that content. Maria was my natural choice as leader, since she was the smartest student, and I thought she would set the reflective tone I was after. I was wrong. She taught the opening lesson in her unit to us, illustrating her purposes and methods. The lesson itself contained 21 factual items, some of which were complicated (for example, taxation without representation). Pupils would be given a dittoed sheet to fill in on which they must achieve 80% accuracy. Too much was covered with too little connection. Maria played the dominant role and felt learners should absorb content. Even when role-playing was designed in the third class on the prerevolutionary period, the teacher again held the dominant role. "The pupil can better understand the war if they can associate with the feelings, which is what role playing is all about. It will probably be easier if the teacher takes the side of the British" (Maria, November 27, 1986).

In part these were sensible moves with pupils playing the parts of Tories and Whigs but in the same session as the role-playing two dittoes were to be completed. I could have helped Maria by talking through pupils' capacities and judging how much content to what purpose in each class. I could have helped her sort out the conflicts making her feel uneasy. This was instructive to me. My purpose had been to forge the combination between content and pedagogy but there was some hazard in letting students loose on research they wanted to do to appease their hunger for facts, pretending this was automatically "research for

teaching." Maria's methods thinking was catch-as-catch-can, based on memories of classes she attended and her own wishful thinking for the future but she still thinks she is learning to teach.

> I'm worried about content, time, lack of knowledge in a subject area and who to teach to--high, middle or low achievers. I'm hoping that all these things will become easier to understand as I get more experience. I know I can get content anywhere, and I am learning the ways to teach in these methods classes, so I'm not quite as petrified as I used to be. (Maria, November 27, 1986)

My college students were politely bored and Maria's journal interpretation of the day was: "I guess that is just a matter of expecting more of myself than I can actually do?" In some ways I thought Maria was working well. She made interesting comment on the use of texts.:

> I wish I wasn't relying on the text so much. Actually I am not relying on it per se but using it as a guide. And, it is not just one text but three. Somehow I do believe this is OK for I am adding to the text and enriching it. But this is where I worry about what group of students to aim for. I was in an enriched program, so I keep trying to diversity my activities. I don't think there is any reason <u>lower</u> children can't gain from this enrichment But I certainly don't want to be far above them. (Maria, November 27, 1986)

Although I do not have documentation to illuminate how I responded to Maria's letter in November, 1986, I would have felt some joy that she puzzled over the use of the text or texts and their enrichment, I would have been interested in the way she acted on implications of her own schooling in advanced programs, and I would have interpreted the puzzle about pitching material in teaching to be worth perusing. I would not have considered I should intervene. I thought all this puzzling, however painful, would bring results. For example, already feeling the pressure of all this content Maria pens a rationale.

> There is a lot of information here . . . if it does seem too overwhelming for the pupil some information can be cut back, but I'd rather have too much and have the option of cutting back than have too little and be unable to. (Unit plan p. 2)

Other unit plans did mention reasons for strategies. Susan chose group work, group singing, small group assignments and Eve aimed for joint construction of her unit with many procedures designed to involve teacher and pupils in decision-making. What did I deduce from all this? Caught in the gap of our assumptions met for the first time, I was only beginning to learn what I wanted from the work I required of my students in observation or in unit plans. Until I determined my purposes I encouraged student autonomy.

There were lighter moments. Maria, Eve and Jesse were given opportunities to teach by collaborating teachers. This seemed an exciting extension of the practical part of our work. Maria wrote with gusto about her own teaching recreating life on the E train in New York City for young rural children in Farmsville.

> I would like to tell you about my lesson on New York. It went well and pupils loved it. How did I know that? They paid attention, asked questions and sat up in their seats--simple, right?
>
> We discussed the elevated train and the subway. They asked if people really sprayed paint on trains. They had never heard the word graffiti. I had a drawing of a subway car and took markers and graffitied it. Amazing how I got a reaction from that. Then we set up the chairs to look like the insides of the train. I had the entire class get into this one section and told them if they had more people it would be rush hour. You should have heard the moans . . . I had the girls pretend they were on high heels and the boys were dressed in three piece suits. Then the train started. Some one asked if there were anywhere to hang on. I told them about the handles over the seats. The people in the middle hung on to each other. I wasn't sure how it worked but they enjoyed it. (Senior, Final Observation Report, December 12, 1986)

Eve summed up her experience.

> I have gained a lot of ideas from Mrs. B. She is easy to talk to and offers me tips very readily. I feel I could be just like her one day, just starting off and discovering things that work and things that need readjustment. She really works hard and I can see from her example the amount of time that goes into teaching. She has shown me that you have to be determined and a person on track to be effective. (Final Observation Report, December 12 1986)

When Mrs. B invited Eve to teach a class, I wondered if Eve were ready and how I would know. We all agreed to think it over. Eve stumbled on the perfect plan that she and I could co-teach one session. I was intrigued and nervous. Eve decided she wanted to teach <u>patriotism</u>. I could contribute an understanding that people from other countries such as Australia were patriotic. Mrs. B could not see patriotism in the text. Eve argued her case, only to find teaching values was by no means simple. We trapped ourselves in abstract ideas of loyalty, hope, and national identity.

I was introduced as the patriotic Australian. I shared my passport around the room and several passport stories emerged from children who had travelled with their parents. I was then asked by Eve to talk about my countrymen and when they would feel patriotic. I described international cricket matches, yacht races, royal visits, and wars. Eve then led the class in discussion of American patriotism in baseball matches and in Washington, trying to point out similarities. For all our combined efforts, I could see that these youngsters loved having visitors and like engaging with us but the idea of patriotism sailed over their heads. It was a nice frustration for Eve to encounter in the safe environment of my analysis and Mrs. B's agreement that we did not pin students to specific understandings. Eve was crestfallen and I was

disappointed but we learned together the difficulties in representing values in grade school. Our collaboration with Mrs. B felt like "real teacher education" to me because we illuminated the importance of reflection and digging deeper into what we observed in the classroom. Other students were less lucky in their observation placements (GRR Journal Letter, December, 1986).

Eve's unit on patriotism particularly interested me for its attempt to go well beyond the text, to face the task of developing values and to commit herself to educating pupils in social studies for democracy. These three features revealed growth in the course, even if hard to implement. She felt conscious that she was not writing a typical unit writing in her evaluation:

> The facts are not cut and dried and it is a value developing unit. This is the hardest type of unit to evaluate. I will not grade the unit but evaluate through participation in discussion; a quiz on the Articles of the Constitution or the Bill of Rights; creative writing and essays. I will have children write daily "What I learned and will remember today." This will show me they got something out of the daily session and it will also help me evaluate myself.

There were reasons to be cheerful in this assessment. Eve looked at factual knowledge now with more sophistication, trying to create an experience for pupils that will change their view of the world or enhance values they already held about democracy. In her evaluation, Eve employed various strategies for different skills and helped her pupils reconstruct in systematic ways their own experience in the class.

Eve's research included citizenship, loyalty, freedom, heroes and heroines, slavery, songs and symbols, the American flag, and patriotism in other countries. Eve intended to introduce spies and traitors ("I will show that some misuse these freedoms") and wanted to introduce the

limitations and responsibilities to choose what we do, where we live, where we worship, and so on. To illustrate the freedom of the press she planned to "Have two class papers with opposing opinions or different views to show the freedom of the press--the subjects can be minor. I'll let the children decide."

Eve integrated music with songs to illustrate freedom and loyalty. She planned guest speakers and trips to the seat of government. This was ambitious, thoughtful work and I wondered how much sooner I could have used this practical reconstruction of the problems of teaching social studies, stitching my theories into the conversation rather than trying to impose them more abstractly. Eve might have gone close to this quality thinking earlier. Then we might have worked on strategic refinements.

Perhaps exhibiting displaced frustration, my journal entry, late in the semester, expressed my dissatisfaction with the unit plans and students' class presentation. I complain this had been a major piece of work for each student and I had allocated class time to share findings and teacherly thinking. Students, however, were restless during presentations, unable to see they could learn from others' work. Some students felt differently.

> Although you said that you didn't think that our teaching lessons were helpful, I did otherwise. When I presented my lesson I had some questions about what time of year to do it, how to respond to pupil's questions and questions to ask them. I thought Ruth was very helpful in answering my questions--besides these practice lessons are getting me excited about teaching. (Eve, November 27, 1986)

They showed considerable insight, "I especially liked unit planning--I began to realize the teacher has the choice between going by the book and

doing all the talking or she can involve the pupils and let them learn by experiencing" (Jesse, November 20, 1986).

Conclusion

In graduate school seclusion, I happily prepared my lark song far from Bunbury College, retaining my conviction that social studies is an inquiry stitching together factual interpretation with values. I sustained my song that interdisciplinary adventures and global concerns could and should be at the heart of social studies instruction despite the deeply embedded assumptions students clearly held about facts in the elementary school classroom and the accumulation of facts the methods course should offer.

As I pursued my interests to help these young people become good teachers, I did not try to understand their views of content but tried to work against them. I managed to be helpful with shyness (a matter of disposition) but with our dissonant assumptions I tended to exacerbate the dissonance as a solution, leaving me with no lever. In the unit plans some students heard parts of the lark's song I heard in graduate school. Sustaining my authorities in my mind, I could have developed exercises extending the unit plans as supervised forays into practice: small building blocks in the bridge I wanted to build between us.

But this is what I now see. At the time I felt tired but no wiser. I still felt optimistic that by battling away in teacher education, something could be achieved but like my secondary school teaching, I took my pleasure from individual student triumphs. I seemed to work very hard at things that matter without reward. I did not know exactly what had

happened here. I did not have specific lessons learned to take with me to the next methods course and Chapter III. I felt dispirited because my authorities had appeared to let me down. I had not yet stumbled on the insight that I had to figure out how to use not simply invoke them. If I were learning a new song, I was straining to hear it.

> Despite some visible results I feel hollow . . . I am pleased with some students' progress but we are winding up as if the business is finished when really it has just begun. (GRR 20 Journal Letter, November, 1986)

CHAPTER TWO APPENDIX.

SYLLABUS: Ed 303 Elementary School Social Studies Methods.
Gem Reid Syllabus. Fall, 1986.

COURSE OBJECTIVES.

1. To identify and understand key concepts central to elementary social studies programs.

2. To demonstrate alternative methods for teaching these concepts and for managing the classroom appropriately for these alternatives.

3. To develop the ability to use deductive and inductive reasoning in preparing classroom instructional material.

4. To identify and use cross disciplinary thinking and global awareness in social studies at the elementary school level.

COURSE OUTLINE.

WEEKS ONE AND TWO.

This discussion approaches the relationship between the students' content and the pedagogy appropriate to that content. The point of the discussion is to raise in relief the difference between content and pedagogy and the relationship between the two. I argue for their indivisibility. This course is constructed with this interpretation in mind.

WEEKS THREE THROUGH SIX.

In the analysis of lesson and unit planning we will face the reality that the best planning is flexible. At this point we will think about the value of the reflective practitioner's capacity to examine practice in action and change plans accordingly. The traditional teacher-centered approach may have limited value. We will discuss the alternatives in class and activities for learning outside class. Organization of field trips and library research exercises will be explored. Educational objectives in measurement and evaluation will be central to the discussion of planning. Students will be required to write different types of tests and explain where and why they could use them.

WEEKS SEVEN AND EIGHT.

Techniques in classroom management will be consistent with the view that classroom climate and interpersonal relations may counteract some of the likely difficulties of the disengaged student. Management then is seen as a practical interpersonal problem which must be continually reassessed while teaching is in progress but which can benefit from careful early policies. This analysis will include work on managing groups and exacting the highest potential from student interaction.

WEEKS NINE AND TEN.

Motivation might be one of the most elusive aspects of pedagogy. We will think about motivation holistically related to the quality of presentation and the principles of management evaluation. We will also look at the issue psychologically and in terms of the nature of our subject matter.

WEEK ELEVEN

Review.

WEEKS TWELVE THROUGH FIFTEEN

This discussion on discipline and professional control will flow naturally from earlier sessions. Students will be encouraged to analyze the sort of discipline they want to develop. We shall examine the teacher's right and responsibility to graciously discipline other people's children. We will examine the subject matter discipline to see if there is a relationship between that and classroom control. We shall assess the different needs for the different ages in the school, and the different ways teachers have of reacting infractions, insolence, disengagement and so on.

WEEK SIXTEEN

Review.

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES METHODS ASSESSMENT.

My evaluation consists of four parts:

1. Journal Letters 20.

2. Lesson and unit plans 20.

3. Essay tests including the final examination 40.

4. Final observation report 20.

Class attendance and excused absences.

I consider teaching to be a special form of conversation. Its rules are based on courteous respect for classmates and teacher. Tardiness is therefore inexcusable. Since the continuous thread of this conversation is so significant, absence seriously impedes both individual and class learning. Any occasion for legitimate absenteeism must be discussed as soon as possible with the instructor and together we will determine appropriate action. If students foresee an absenteeism they should drop me a note to that effect for their file to avoid any confusion in later evaluation.

CHAPTER III

PEDAGOGY REVISITED

Introduction

My secondary English methods students and I thought differently about knowledge and the characteristics of good teaching. Students understood knowledge to be factual not interpretative, certain, not ambiguous. Good teaching was telling (helping pupils amass information) rather than transforming knowledge. Could that difference be creative? In exploring our views of knowledge and pedagogy, I track attempts to help prospective teachers break from these two beliefs that pedagogy was mechanical not intellectual and that knowledge was certain. My intent is clear in the following statement headed the syllabus given to students:

> This course is designed to refine your understanding of secondary school teachers' instructional responsibilities in English. We will investigate teaching skills, strategies, and ways of thinking and talking about teaching, recognizing the characteristics, needs, and potential of adolescents in the academic setting. The course is designed to provide opportunities to prepare teaching units in writing, poetry, drama, short story, and novel. Students will have an understanding of the content knowledge and strategies to teach composition, language and literature in the secondary school. (GRR EN 409 English Methods Syllabus, January 31, 1987)

Writing my syllabus I assumed students were well prepared with subject matter knowledge. That was not so (posing my initial tension) but I had no awareness students in their major could be as uninspired by content as the social studies methods class described in Chapter II. Should I direct students' reading of literature (which I thought not my job) or should I direct reading and thinking on teaching methods for that literature? I began the course discussing content and pedagogy in students' past experience, uncovering powerful student views that pedagogy was mechanical and procedural and content knowledge of English literature and language was intimidating even though students had successfully negotiated college courses in literature and composition.

My plans included developing theories of classroom management in the secondary school and two weeks on process writing and grammar. In the fifth week, I planned to focus on the essay as a literary form. I allocated the seventh week to teaching literary appreciation, especially the novel, followed by two weeks devoted to drama teaching. In the second half of the course, I anticipated we would chose segments from the local secondary school English curriculum to plan, prepare and present in the methods class. Pressing for engagement I valued speeches, competitions, collaborative projects, writing newspapers, and thoughtful homework procedures.

This syllabus fairly represents the first half of the semester. After that items covered were determined by student needs and responses and as I saw more persuasive openings to preach

adventurous teaching. Stitching into the conversation likely differences between different aged learners in high school I addressed different capacities and dispositions among children in the same grade. I clarified my intended evaluation of student performance, unit and lesson plans, observation reports, Journal Letters, and final examination. I listed articles I would draw on during the term.

In my planning, I hoped for imaginative responses from English methods students. I wanted them to believe learning English to be empowering for all age levels. I wanted my "graduates" to emphasize careful attention to the text showing that the story in the poem, the novel, or the drama in question represents human experience which readers share or might never share. I intended students to draw on pupils' experience in writing and in thinking about literature. I intended students to model good speech and quality writing.

Dissonance in Interpreting Knowledge and Pedagogy

I wanted students to be like me, that is, enthralled by knowledge, always curious, always seeking connections, captivated by literature and by the mysteries of writing. But I wanted more than overflowing enthusiasm for Penny's sensitive understanding of English and American literature and grasp of grammatical rules and procedures and I was dedicated to enhancing her teaching performance not to sharing understandings with pupils. Dan fell into teaching English as the most manageable college major and because he liked

drama. With little college course work in hand, he was learning to teach high school English based on his memories of minimal factual content in a tiny rural high school. I wanted him to surmount those origins. Not enthusiastic, he was understandably nervous.

> Taking this four hundred level course was unnerving . . . I wonder if I would have been less nervous if I didn't know I was not supposed to be there? (Dan, Letter, May 4, 1987)

I worried about Dan from our first meeting:

> Dan's assumptions about teaching and learning to teach were less formed compared with the other students. He was in no position to understand what he might be trying to teach. (GRR 13 Journal letter, February, 1987)

Then I realized Dan was not exceptional. Except Penny, none of these students had thought independently or appreciatively about English language and literature. Dan had not thought about the nature of knowledge for teaching but neither had Penny nor Judy. I feared enthusiasm for content based on flimsy understandings would make them retreat to telling pupils what they've read and how they should respond. I wanted to change Dan to make him capable of being different in the schools not someone who would perpetuate current practice. I wanted an understanding of knowledge that would go beyond this statement:

> I will take my guidelines from the textbooks in the high school. I expect to rely on little wider knowledge, or anything more than the major. (Dan, Journal Letter, March 15, 1987)

Judy was also limited--devoted to one approach.

> I still hope to achieve my objectives through speech communication. Selecting material seems very hard and I will ask for help. I envy Penny's confidence with subject matter. (Judy, Journal Letter, April 11, 1987)

Judy felt if she taught speech she could have access to pupils without undue fuss over content. I wanted her to understand the whole curriculum and be capable of wise choices of content and appropriate pedagogies for particular children. She resisted the intellectual effort to meet this challenge. And students for the most part thought thinking about teaching methods was mostly unnecessary and expected orthodox procedures, tricks, and set methods to apply to easily identifiable circumstances. Knowing teaching to be routine, students wanted to learn to teach without acknowledging hazards like student disengagement or pupils' inabilities to learn, or alternate strategies. There in comparison was my joy.

> My teaching is the whole of me at work. The intellect, imagination, emotions, are synthesized and energized by my purpose to provoke thought, awareness, skill, and commitment. (GRR Letter to DKC January 6, 1987)

I hoped methods students could share that synthesis and energy in understanding teaching secondary school English. Penny, Judy, and Dan began methods knowing the teacher's task was to tell students what they knew and test that regularly. They did not expect to change that view. I wanted to break this tendency to reproduce knowledge. Expecting rigid lesson planning and assessments students believed methods courses held little intellectual merit or difficulty. Believing most children were alike (and much like them), Penny, Judy and Dan were not looking to understand diverse children where I wanted to foster ability to work with diversity.

For Penny, pedagogy presented well-organized facts. She would tell what she knew, quite beautifully, paying scant attention to her audience. Her own schooling had rewarded skill with facts and as teacher she would reward the same competence. Without implying she would reach out to children Penny declared, "No student should fail. The teacher's enthusiasm should win the battle. My students will enjoy English like me" (Penny, Journal Letter, March 8, 1987).

Dan's pedagogy appeased disciplinary fears. Judy, obsessed with compassion for the underdog, was emotional rather than intellectual in thinking about pedagogy. She thought kindness was the key. Teachers must not give up on children. Teachers shape pupils' emotional futures and <u>that</u> almost <u>exclusively</u> is teaching. Her own experience proved her point.

> When I was in grade school I could not read. I was lucky I had two good and caring teachers who spent a lot of their time with me teaching me to read. What if these teachers had given up on me? What if I had begun to think I was dumb and could not learn? (Judy, Journal Letter, October 6, 1986)

and now,

> I want to be a teacher. I hope I'll be a good one. I want to be a teacher who cares, understands and helps students to learn about themselves and the world. I want to give them power and hope to continue on. (Judy, Journal Letter, February 6, 1987)

Judy resisted any scientific discussion about teaching, claiming confidently for example.

> I also believe there is no such thing as <u>bright</u> or <u>slow</u> students. All have approximately the same learning ability. It is the label that causes the students to perform in either slow or bright fashions. (Judy, Journal Letter, February 6, 1987)

My task had widened in unexpected ways. "I am really concerned by the task of teaching students to change their perceptions of teaching itself as well as conquer certain skills and knowledge" (GRR 45 Journal Letter, March, 1987).

Student Views of Content

My question "What is your content?" dominated the first secondary English class. Could students explore the content they hoped to teach in high school classrooms? I wanted an idea of students' reading so I could build on familiarity with these readings as we discussed teaching strategies for poetry, novel, short story, and drama. I asked Penny, Judy, and Dan (all currently English majors) to describe English subject matter, itemizing qualities which might make English language and literature difficult to teach. Students responded in general categories like grammar, composition, novel, drama, and poetry. No crucial fascinating themes emerged. Judy and Dan had no favorite authors they wished to teach. Penny would imagine telling pupils about novels and authors but short passages only would be read. No one had thoughts on difficulties in learning English.

My elementary social studies and secondary social science methods classes in the fall had little feeling for content they could offer to children and no awareness of misconceptions that could make any piece of work hard to understand. I hoped students who had chosen an English major might appreciate their disciplinary studies for I wanted to establish in this class a lively enthusiasm

for content and an ability to select from a wide variety of sources. Allowing shyness to account for poor responses, I was still bewildered that authors' names were not on the tips of students' tongues. What surprised me most was that all these silences and this lack of vivacity about the academic major caused no panic. I became cynical . . . "Students in their attitudes to content seem concerned for certification not understanding and their commitment to teaching is not intellectual" (GRR 46 Journal Letter, April, 1987).

I felt dispirited because it had been so hard to shift my fall methods students away from their factual approach to knowledge and their lack of commitment to an intellectual pedagogy. Underestimating the tenacity of prior convictions but feeling the strength of my area and experience, I was even more determined to succeed with the English methods class. I intended to stitch into my methods course reasons for taking content seriously, for enjoying it, for believing it had a specific educative purpose.

A Diagram to Create a Shared Understanding about Teaching

I looked for a common ground. While students thought teaching a matter of controlling content and children, I thought teaching created opportunities for inquiry and imaginative problem solving. I needed ways to explain my idea and promote the sort of teaching I wanted. I thought a diagram could create an image, a way of speaking, linking us in our present and later confusions. Placing content and pedagogy on the left hand side of the drawing in a

circle signifying their unity, I drew a main line from that circle to a square holding decisions to be made make about classroom arrangements, evaluation and discipline after content and pedagogy choices. Students energetically copied the diagram and I suggested they leave room around the edges to record our conversation as I created a little case study. Suppose the teacher wanted to teach grade seven how to write a paragraph? She would chose her method: she might decide on group exercises, spreading more restless and less able students; she might decide she should choose the topic for this paragraph or she might think that one paragraph with one main idea might be better chosen from pupils' own experience. All these considerations stemmed in my diagram from her desire to teach specific content. Students were less engaged in the case study than I thought they would be. For common ground, I invited them into teachers' shoes but this did not come easily and in my rush to understand I detected resistance rather than learners slow to warm up. I needed to slow down and discover where they stood. Students squirmed as if I were preaching to save their souls as I talked of open-ended, interpretative rather than factual knowledge. I favored ambiguity. Dan thought I sounded messy, that I made teaching harder than it need be. Bemused by the fuss, he explained, ". . . content means being able to pass objective tests, and pedagogy demands appropriate factual material be given to pupils" (Dan, Journal Letter, March 15, 1987).

Alluding further to the diagram, I promised all sorts of puzzles weave in and out of content and pedagogy in any

classroom--puzzles about timing, about the individual pupils' behavior and progress, about whether pupils understood, about linking this knowledge with prior knowledge and so on. These puzzles demanded a teaching response--a strategy with an appropriate purpose. I explored the puzzles present in our class where a new teacher was trying to find common ground with new students and Penny's excitement peaked. Startled by her sudden interest and participation, I suddenly declared that with this diagram "We were at the heart of transforming knowledge" (GRR Journal Letter, February, 1987) meaning dramatically to acknowledge that transforming, changing knowledge for others was central to teaching high school English. I was so keen to win the class over to an enlightened view of their work as teachers that patient wisdom escaped me. I immediately knew from students' faces this sudden reference to what was theoretically central to my course was not pedagogically sound. Language useful to me had to be transformed for students.

In class, soon after, we debated the critical qualities of teachers who can motivate pupils. We talked about the variety of ways the teacher might enticingly represent knowledge. I suddenly noticed all ideas and excitement were mine for students had drifted away. I felt I should persist in stressing the lively, hopeful engagement between teacher and pupils that transforms knowledge but Judy, as if suddenly realizing she had no interest in disciplinary knowledge, confessed, "I really do not know enough or care enough about English in teaching" (GRR 31 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

Judy's admission did not surprise her peers. I was now fascinated both by Judy's unabashed declaration and her peers' calm response. All shared little regard for knowledge of English in teaching. Nor were these attitudes temporary. Writing at the end of the course, for example, Judy enthused about motivating less able students with drama in costume but left the choice of play itself as a casual after thought. "The play I would use? I don't know, Maybe Romeo and Juliet if they haven't read it yet?" (Judy, Final Exam Script, May 4, 1987).

Performance Classes: Teaching and Reflection

If I were to help students recognize they needed to know a new content and pedagogy to teach secondary school English (the central thread of my course), I could see I needed to experiment with a variety of powerful pedagogical strategies. An early idea was to teach about teaching through students' teaching one another. I had a small class and I thought preparation to teach, present, and reflect on that work might kindle the essential questioning I wanted about knowledge, pedagogy and pupils. "Now we had grist for our mill. What was adequate pedagogy, what was not and what was the difference?" (GRR 32 Journal Letter, February 1987).

In one version of students teaching one another, we focussed on small parts of teaching at a time, for example, the beginning or end of class, setting homework, or questioning techniques. We would brainstorm some ideas in class, questioning how our strategies would help children learn. Then I would call on one student to

demonstrate a task which might only be several minutes long but grist for our mill. That student's performance would be explored by the others, becoming gradually attentive to aims, intentions, and method. Later, when students were more at home with content and method, they could experiment with a full teaching period. I had two other intentions. I wanted to elevate student self esteem and figure out how to teach prospective teachers how to act and reflect on that action.

Penny seemed stronger academically and emotionally than her classmates so I chose her to do the first piece of teaching and help me by her willingness to model accepting criticism. I invited Penny to prepare the beginnings of a class for grade ten. I deliberately gave no advice. My idea was that she should be free to reflect what she thought was good teaching unburdened by terms like knowledge reproduction or knowledge transformation which might be more confusing than helpful. After her teaching experience she might be able to see the difference. She chose the introduction of the short story from the local high school grade-eight curriculum and prepared an accurate, technical, deadly little academic lecture. She used no examples to support or enliven her definition (which she intended pupils would memorize).

Penny gave me an excellent opportunity to question lecturing and the disadvantage of simply telling pupils what you want them to know. Penny's lack of examples allowed us to focus on why examples, analogies, and stories are useful in lively teaching. Penny's performance allowed me to lead a discussion about the relationship

between the teacher and the pupils. Penny was teaching without regard for the learner. Since I espoused the value of mutual respect of teacher and pupil, it was important that I keep hammering away at the old authoritarian image and help Penny see herself as a co-worker in the room.

I criticized her opening showing there was nothing to catch attention, to engage pupils' minds or emotions. I was able to convince Penny that this technical definition and elevated language would hardly touch pupils' lives and that the place to start might be with their own stories. Very responsive to this individual attention, as I predicted, Penny demanded another turn, implementing principles just discussed. She challenged us with small open-ended group work on the short story's significance in daily life. I asked her to reflect on her decisions in each case and her reasons for changing strategies and it was clear she had learned the difference between a lecture and a more vital exchange. More importantly she was thinking about what she was doing. I described my purposes.

> I try to encourage students who are standing in front of me teaching to see that they can at the same time be assessing what they are doing . . . Penny eventually got there. It is like putting half your thinking on hold to sharpen up what the other half is aiming for. It is <u>almost</u> like the internal dialogue experienced when writing is moving along . . . (GRR 49 Journal Letter, April, 1987)

Judy and Dan appreciated the differences in these two performances. I called on Judy to explain her plans for a new composition with the eighth grade. I was in a quandary because of her interest in speech communication and flair for performance

without a serious interest in substance so I chose language rather than literature. I found some strength.

> Judy stands and walks to the front of the room and suddenly we are under her spell. Her face becomes alive. She speaks to us as she would to the eighth graders in her mind. Then she is able to insert her reflections on what she is doing returning without blinking to the imaginary audience. She smiles to check we understand. She has expressive hands. We criticize her, she thanks us and remedies that on the spot. (GRR 36 Journal Letter, February 1987)

In using performance students were unevenly endowed but I determined over the semester to use this strategy to good purpose with all three. It seemed impossible to have suitable strategies for all students and I only had three. I respected Dan's shyness, asking him to teach later in the semester and he acknowledged my kindness. I saw hope for performance classes where students were challenged to act, think, and respond to criticism because the proof of the pudding was in the immediate eating. Ideally, I would need sufficient time for the learning to become habitual, for students experiencing small specific pieces of teaching could forget these lessons, succumbing to earlier mechanical views. They could lack the courage for radical change. Dewey shows that for intellectual growth I needed to create a climate where reconstruction and remaking would be natural. "But there is no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they first show themselves" (Dewey, 1916, p. 64).

Methods' Students as Readers

Deciding to teach high school English literature over a three week period early in the course, I anticipated students would be able to apply principles of instruction and management in one branch of literature to another. I developed the short story as representative of similar problems of practice occurring in short story, novel, drama, and poetry. I was not fretting my students understood how knowledge was transformed but I wanted them to think about teaching less mechanically and more creatively than they currently found satisfying. I wanted them to uncover content with pupils by asking more probing questions and accepting ambiguity rather than massing details. I wanted them to think deeply about the short story as a serious attempt to capture life, worth examining in its parts and as a whole. Students expected something easy to teach, somthing quick to read and easy to prepare.

I posed recurring puzzles in teaching literature methods, including what to teach, what strategies to employ, how to energize material, how to encourage pupils' participation especially disagreement, how to meet the needs of individuals and the group, how to revise with fresh vision; how to judge class pace, how to review and examine while still fostering pupil autonomy, and how to connect learning with previous and future studies.

"Do you read short stories?" I asked them. Judy and Dan could only vaguely remember high school short stories without names or authors. Penny was more scientifically able to draw on college studies. I set the task of reading one quality short story per week

then drew back from that controversy, teaching features of the short story, including the single minded theme, the clarity in characterization, the surprise often stitched into the conclusion, the sense of unity, and language carved to its special purpose. I suggested some stories lend themselves better to classroom analysis than others explaining that teachers like to deal with quality short stories where the logic is ruthless or sweetly concealed. We would need to read with an eye to the pupils' level of comprehension and interests. I explained that analytical techniques previously used with the novel, that is, introduction, development, climax, denouement, and conclusion would still apply with a sharper, quicker conclusion. And they wrote these things down.

I thought literature appreciation and writing could be combined. I wondered how we would structure the class for <u>writing</u> a short story in groups of four. Students willingly tried this exercise. Dan gave his pupils titles (chief writer, critic, illustrator, organizer). How would we monitor that they were really writing a short story and not an essay? Penny decided to allocate the characters and the opening scene to her pupils. Who would choose the topic of the story? What if the pupil's topics were impossible? How long should pupils be allowed to work on this project? How could this group work be graded? Could it be ungraded? I needed to keep showing group work was valuable for my students were suspicious of its rationale. Dan trembled at the thought of an observer catching sight of disturbed furniture and noise.

Despite superficial amenability to this direction, I felt students had ways to protect prior knowledge and prior dispositions. Creating intellectual disagreement in class was troubling and my idea of energizing material was mysterious for students who were devoted to simply getting it across and who had not studied the short story in memorable ways. Dan's fear of adolescents confused his developing sense of purpose in teaching literature. It made him negative and closed to the suggestion that an interesting English teacher engaging her classes with stories might know some American Indian tales and Greek myths and legends and 19th century Russian delights.

"I need to return to the stories of my practice, there's material there I could be tapping . . ." (GRR 33 Journal Letter, February, 1987). Class incidents of my secondary school English and history teaching brought life to our proceedings which I expected would have come from a shared love of literature. I shared these stories to provide a wider perspective on teaching practice and provide the chance to question me about my thinking as teacher. I talked about Nick, a rather limited seventh grade English student, with three purposes in mind. I wanted to exemplify imaginative ways to teach composition. I was anxious to illuminate a common tension in teaching between the needs of the individual and those of the group and I wanted to provoke debate about my actions. In this case, I had wheeled a rusty bicycle to the front of the room, declaring it had been involved in a recent crime and the police commissioner called on his top detective squad (my seventh-grade

English class) to look for clues and present a written description. He offered a reward--a $20 raise--to the most helpful, most carefully written description. I explained to the methods class that these 17 students were far happier to do their composition work if there were some spark of adventure in it.

Girls and boys were examining the bicycle or beginning to write their report when Nick walked into class after Mr. Sweeney's remedial English tutorial. I did not welcome Nick because he hated to be noticed when late. I explained to the methods students that I found Nick hard to read and hard to incorporate into this lively class. Dan asked what Nick did with Mr. Sweeney and I explained that in one 15-minute session Mr. Sweeney would help Nick work on an exercise to help comprehension and writing skills but as I told Dan I did not really see the difference in his work. Mr. Sweeney and I kept in touch informally at morning tea about Nick's progress and it troubled me that I did not know more about remedial work or how to decide what parts of my work to give to Nick. Penny was amazed I could be so vague.

In thinking about Nick, I revealed the teacher not always knowing what to do, I saw myself coping, struggling, and experimenting with ambiguity. My students imagined an assured confident, direct person who would see things clearly and always know what to do. The case gave me an excellent chance to show that although I stressed the importance of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical creativity, the child himself is unpredictable.

Returning to the case, Nick suddenly cried out angrily, ran to the front of the room, slammed the bicycle to the floor and kept running into my arms. I drew my methods students attention to tension I felt between looking after Nick and calming a startled group of seventh graders on the verge of giggling. "What would you do?" I asked, giving in to pleas to finish the story first.

In the story, I hugged Nick until his sobbing subsided then negotiated with pupils to return to work while I took Nick outside to counsel him. I explained though risky to leave my class I was focussed on Nick. Nick's frustrations flowed freely revealing some of his emotional distress for his father was dead, mother thought he should stay in school and his temper.

But what were my responsibilities? I had been teaching 14 years but I was not a counsellor. Did Nick need professional help? This question provoked debate from the methods students. It was the sort of debate I hoped for, showing the teacher's role is not always clear. There is more to teaching than controlling the class and telling pupils what they need to know. Judy saw what I did with Nick to be the teacher's real role, more significant than academics. Penny concluded Nick needed to learn to behave properly: the teacher's responsibility was to punish him and insist on improvement. Penny wondered if there were difficulties with my imaginative method disturbing Nick's routine. And Dan was already wondering, "How can I control children with emotional difficulties--can I send them out of class?" (Dan, Journal Letter, April 6, 1987).

Some case studies from my practice really puzzled my methods class in what I hoped were educative ways. I shared with them, for example, the story of my affluent year-11 American history class which resisted me with growing intensity over the academic year. It was a story of professional failure and personal anguish, failure to win pupils to be engaged in subject matter, and a failure to establish a learning community or to effect a decisive intervention against the resistance. Dan appreciated my candor. "She really wrote this, felt like this, is willing to share it" (Dan, Journal Letter, March 12, 1987).

But my purpose was to illuminate how crippling student resistance can be. These American history students were extremely rude. I explained that I let pupils force down the quality of the work from analytical essays to text-driven exercises. Few students in the class were willing to do more than the minimal work. I explained how my teaching became less imaginative and finally uncaring. I thought later Jane's story, authentic as it was, might have been too unbelievable. I asked Penny, Judy, and Dan what I could have done differently. What steps could I have taken to raise enthusiasm? But they were distracted by the fear of resistance and my unexpected ineptitude.

I hoped students would embrace that in all teaching the teacher is dependent on the pupils for success. I admitted I was dependent on Jane's cooperation but our methods discussion slid over this thought. Penny had no intention of ever being dependent on pupils for she would be in control. Dan thought the dependency my

irresponsibility and Judy kept insisting that I should have made more attempts with authority and conviction to understand Jane. I could see from these responses I did not act in the story the way my trio thought teachers act. While my students may not have grasped points I intended about the power of resistance, the critical relationship with pupils for quality learning, and teacher dependency on pupils, they did debate my management of this case trying to support their views. For that reason, I was happy with the response (GRR 37 Journal Letter, March, 1987).

Throughout different sections of the English methods class students found it hard to accept that grading could be flexible, that different types of grading might be valuable for particular children, or that group work might be evaluated using different criteria. In conjunction with Lorber and Pierce's useful work on various ways to evaluate performance in secondary school subjects, I specifically addressed these doubts with a story about grading a student's many disparate extra essays in the attempt to succeed in an external examination (GRR 40 Journal Letter, April 11, 1987).

Anthony Drimwade was a senior student committed to success in an external year-12 matriculation examination. He was a weak academic prospect, twin to a bright brother and a thoroughly nice person. He was striving not for university entrance but a decent job. I taught him Australian history which was a demanding analytical course. I explained to the methods class that Anthony, knowing his chances were borderline, took the initiative to find me and talk more about his work. I was immediately responsive. I

taught in a large co-educational boarding school living on the premises so Anthony became my frequent Saturday afternoon gardening companion.

He needed to be able to write four analytical essays well supported by narrative material in the three-hour external examination. Anthony knew his limited analytical capacity but was not discouraged. I wanted students to think about students' abilities to know their limitations as a useful pedagogical tool and take this opportunity to explore potential, ability, and disability. In the case, we continued our talks and walks about content (simply attempts to help Anthony remember key events). Amazed by any deviation from their experience, students could not accept he could not memorize.

Directed by his own sense of urgency, Anthony began to write extra essays for additional practice which I read and quickly returned. Should I give these essays a passing grade? I admitted, despite my students' disbelief, the more I read them the less I could discriminate their standard. I had to convince students of my tension and confusion. Animated discussion broke out among students who still perceived the teacher's grading as the most secure part of teaching. Dan felt cheated that there could be indecision over grading for that was one of his chief intended means of disciplining the class. "Surely the teacher has control of the grade?" Dan worried my indecision meant I had lost control as teacher. I told the class I felt torn at the time between my responsibilities for accurate grading to other class members and the system and my guess

that if Anthony could stay hopeful and determined he might pass. My reconstruction of that tension was authentic. To fail all Drimwade's essays could be needlessly destructive. I decided to pass one now and again keeping Anthony's hope alive at the expense of my grading integrity. Angling for as much dissection of the story as possible I asked, "What would you do?" Penny declared, "Grades must be meticulously honest for grading (apart from preparing presentations) was the teacher's most important task" (Penny, April 13, 1987).

Characteristically, she looked to retaining the teacher's authority as more important than addressing Anthony's difficulty. This gave me another opportunity to focus on the pupil with Penny rather than the teacher's performance. I was able to direct more questions to her. "What did I want to help Anthony achieve?" "Would my deceit help?" "Was it deceit?" Judy thought Anthony's self confidence would make or break him. "You should have given him false grades if that made him more cheerful" (Judy April 13).

Penny denied the justice of this compromise. Dan's objection was clear, "How would I feel if I realized the teacher was not honest with our grades? He could lose self respect, and respect for the teacher" (Dan, April 13, 1987).

Students engaged in the intellectual pedagogical puzzle seriously looking at Anthony's perspective, then mine and other class members. There seemed no clear resolution. No-one wondered why this student could not write essays or why I was not doing more to help Anthony with that problem. It intrigued and alarmed me that

attention did not swing from assessment to the other mystery of why Anthony could not succeed or could not learn. I interpreted this meant grading was more easily imagined than sitting with Anthony trying to work out what to do. Dan worried I still felt uncertain about Anthony's case after years of experience. Was Dan beginning to understand uncertainty and the confusion that could follow? I explained I tried everything I knew but Anthony had poor analytical powers and descriptive writing that wandered from the point. Writing more essays might not necessarily help. My incident from practice supplemented Lorber and Pierce and helped me address my intentions, "I want them to feel their expertise as well as their uncertainty. I want them to know that mixture of certainty and uncertainty will be theirs in this profession" (GRR 37 Journal Letter, March 1987).

I liked to share stories of personal vulnerability to classroom dilemmas. My brush with Julian Twitchell was a good case in point illustrating dilemmas over gender, ability, and the tension between the individual and the group. A lanky, long-haired tenth grader Julian drove me to despair because he was surly, disinterested, uncooperative, silent, and unappreciative. I tried to be personable and involve him in class discussion but I explained to the methods class Julian's lack of grooming and surliness prejudiced me against him. I grew to dislike him and I wrote him off as a serious student. Compassionate Judy could hardly look at me. Near the end of the year I set an assignment asking pupils to represent what we had been learning in imaginative ways. Julian came to life. He

used a chess set to depict the Inter War Period in Europe and his presentation was more intellectually substantial than other students. At last I had effectively engaged and tapped his sensitivity. Or had he learned in spite of me?

Julian's story had many of the elements I was trying to stress with my methods students. It exemplified the prejudices we take with us into classrooms (prejudices that can prompt injustice, provoke resistance and prevent learning). How might we deal with individual differences and our own prejudice? Dan, terrified of city folk, wondered how that would effect him. I wondered about my students working with minorities. Instances of practice helped our work become more specific. Since the stories were true and still intriguing me, they could authentically expand with student questioning or fold from lack of interest. They captured the realities that teaching was uncertain and reciprocal: pupils were mysterious. They also helped us thread together new understandings. Julian's ability, my tension in grading with Anthony, my methods students' high school experience, our in class writings, our readings of Lampert, Dewey, and Lorber and Pierce, and our work planning lessons and units could be interrelated.

Teaching Drama--I Struggle to Make My Point

I proceeded in class on April 1, 1987, to help my prospective English teachers develop a richer appreciation of drama teaching. I expected our work with themes in poetry, novel, short story, and our methods for developing character sketches and analysis of the stages

of the plot would help us broach teaching drama with more precision. A key difficulty would be to gain adolescents' attention for in my experience pupils can be more resistant to drama than other literary forms.

Drama had specific opportunities for participation, enjoyment, and learning. Penny could see the point of analyzing Macbeth but none of my students visualized what I thought critical--being able to empathize with the King's inner turmoil, thinking of ways to take pupils there as if learning were like a journey into the unknown. I was troubled my students had not experienced drama's access to the human spirit. I saw Macbeth's inner turmoil as an intellectual chance to analyze anger, ambition, and grief as classroom fare. Teaching drama was congruent with one of my intentions that pupils taught by these prospective teachers should develop powers of inquiry sufficiently subtle to confront human relations and tragedy. I valued tension in human relations in literature (for example between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) as service to young people grappling with human relations while my prospective teachers wanted to reduce the work to the plot. "Students will resist this--we should stick to plot like we did with the novel" (Dan).

My opening strategy focussed on objectives for children learning drama. I talked of comprehension and analytical skills. Penny wanted to develop pupils' imagination to empathize with characters. Dan talked about the way we would want pupils to follow the themes, the plot, and the characters at the same time. We established a schema for doing so. Then we set out to practice a

variety of written exercises which Judy resisted as too much pressure--she wanted one basic style of written work which she could feel comfortable grading. I criticized that as a false economy.

I wanted students to take upper level pupils into the heart of the piece, its internal conflicts, because drama provided an excellent chance to refine inquiry--to learn to interpret and support that interpretation. I was intending my students would see the connection between tensions in literature and the skills of argument we discussed developing expression exercises. To work on that awareness we wrote a paragraph on the tensions in Macbeth, then figured out how we might help pupils do so. For example, we made a list of the stressful events in the play, noted how each one effected the character thus building the paragraph. That was the sort of knowledge I looked for and tried to cultivate in prospective teachers considering teaching drama and dreaming up their own ways to teach it. I wanted school pupils to cultivate critical and reflective stances to the tragedy. Judy fidgetted with all this seriousness, discarding the analysis, seemingly excluding unnecessary thought argued, "As long as pupils feel comfortable acting out the plot (possibly dressing up) that's fine."

I kept trying to change student attitudes because I knew school pupils <u>need</u> to be enticed. I wanted my students to have something powerful to offer. I set the assignment for the next class "Please prepare a list of strategies suitable for working with drama--especially directed at enhancing pupils' appreciation." I wanted to

guide students to focus on capturing pupils' commitment to studying drama.

Next class, students came prepared with only one strategy each when I had called for a list of alternatives. They expected, I think, that I would teach them what they needed to know and felt sure that in teaching one idea would suffice. Half completing the assignment suggested resistance. Penny suggested pupils should be encouraged to read the play from a certain character's perspective. We discussed the craft in that idea. Dan thought pupils should prepare a plot outline. I registered my disapproval that this could only be a beginning. Judy's class would write characterizations of the players from the dramatist's perspective. I liked that idea but wondered if it were too hard for the grade level. Not satisfied that students had worked hard to create a list of strategies I therefore set a piece of reflective writing in class on "How can we foster pupil engagement when teaching Macbeth to year eleven?" We each sat quietly and figured out our paragraph or two writing on the same puzzle, then justified our planning and shared our concerns. Students were less dependent and I was less aggressive. "I've never seen a teacher write like this in class. I wonder what would happen to discipline?" (Dan, Journal Letter, March 20,1987.

I wanted us to think and write about specific daily decisions that teachers would make. I wanted to build skill in thinking out the elements of the piece of teaching. I wanted students to enjoy alternatives. Here we faced decisions about teaching Macbeth to quite senior students in rural communities. We could assume some

might be college-bound but most would not. Interested in drama, Dan planned some acting competitions which engaged pupils in selecting most powerful scenes and acting them out in small groups. Penny thought translating particular passages would help students understand the plot. Pupils could in class agree on most significant passages in the action and build up a version of the story in their own words.

I wrote about the internal tensions in the play by developing a comparison between the characters and forces in the play and their lives in this small rural town. My writing was not serendipitous. I stressed creative writing often depends on inner turmoil and that we and our pupils have lives and feelings to be tapped. We analyzed exactly what Dan had in mind for his pupils and why Penny's approach was so different. Judy refused to share--an option I allowed. I came away sensing students listened to my ideas with considerable interest <u>as the sort of thing I would do</u> but they needed something else. Judy's comment supported this fear, or was their resistance in her tone? Did Judy feel I pushed her further than she wanted to go? "After all--we haven't got your years of experience" (Judy, Journal Letter, April 15, 1987).

<u>Preparing Students for the Uncertainty of Practice</u>

Floden and Clark (1978) left me with a significant warning and charge for balance. Teacher educators should probably be moderate in their efforts to raise teachers' awareness of uncertainty. I planted the idea in our conversation that students would need to

sustain intellectual contradictions and manage classroom dilemmas (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Lampert, 1985). Berlak and Berlak isolate 16 dilemmas relating the daily problems of schooling to the social and political problems of society and Lampert takes us inside the mind of a fifth-grade teacher confronting specific dilemmas. I held the Berlak dilemmas in my mind as we worked through specific instances of practice and as we puzzled over strategies of planning time and resources while paying attention to different pupils. Berlak and Berlak provoked my understanding but I was able to give Lampert to my students as evidence of dilemmas in a teacher's mind as she works with pupils.

As we studied Lampert, "Students did not anticipate choosing among alternatives so they shied away from Lampert's dilemmas and I was expected to drill them in the right practices to adopt" (GRR 38 Journal Letter, 1987). Dan in his Journal Letter supports my interpretation. "I don't want alternatives in teaching. I want to know how to direct things my way" (Dan, Journal Letter, February 16, 1987). In fact Dan hoped for an easier way. "I want to teach the way Gem does. She stays herself" (Dan, April 29, 1987).

But Penny took to Lampert and reinforced the message that teachers will live with internal conflicts. I supported Penny's discussion with examples of uncertainty in the case studies from my practice but I felt deep resistance from Dan and Judy both of whom were first generation college students looking for certitudes in both ideas and actions. I felt troubled by Judy's depression these discussions produced. I could tell the point had not been finely

made but I couldn't think what to do. She concluded, "Sometimes I left class depressed because I felt that my job as a teacher was going to be very impossible" (Judy, Final Journal Letter, May 1, 1987).

Old Assumptions Reappear in Student Exam Responses

Realizing I had been far from successful in clarifying a common view of an exciting, demanding knowledge and pedagogy needed for teaching, I decided to stitch into my final peer process examination a necessity to address my view of knowledge.

> I have tried to encourage a professional identification with the teacher's role. I have asked students to write as members of faculty or as practising teachers reporting to a college professor. (GRR 48 Journal Letter, April 1987)

Over three weeks, I asked students to examine problems they might face teaching an eighth grade English class next fall. They were directed to write about their educational philosophy, their choices of content, their attempts to make teaching and learning engaging, their plans for dealing with disengaged, talented, and limited students, and their imaginative revision procedures. My hopes ran high but a little romantically so. "The final examination is like a dinner party before we assemble for foreign lands. The questions need to be pertinent and possible but accommodating the enigmas of the class" (GRR 48 Journal Letter, April 5, 1987). This was the main question.

> You have been assigned a tenth grade class in English literature. Write to your university professor explaining your preparations to teach that class. You will remember that the professor will be curious to

> know what you can establish about the naive knowledge of this class, your objectives for the class (including your plans for those better and weaker than average) your instructional goals in the various aspects of the literature you will address, your prospective strategies, your teaching philosophy, your methods of assessment and your views of particular needs of adolescents and possible interactions between adult and adolescents that would foster learning. (EN 409, Final Examination, May 1987)

The rest of the exam consisted of short questions on the use of classroom space, the definition of teaching as conversation, and the role of praise and punishment in learning. Another section asked students to explain the latest theories of teaching writing to a faculty meeting. Finally, I called for a review of two pieces of course literature on teaching strategies. After reading the question, Penny declared, "I am going to use this as a model" (Penny, Conversation, April 17, 1987). I wanted in this exam to lead students to debate my view of knowledge by giving room for students to stop relying on factual knowledge and embrace transformation, uncertainty and dilemmas in teaching. I required students to address their philosophy of teaching as well as strategies. I imposed the puzzle about individual and group needs and the fact that teaching strategies must reflect adolescents' characteristics. Students exchanged typed drafts of the complete response on a set date then I read the next draft before the final submission. My system attempted to model a cooperative, analytical examination maximizing the benefits of revision. Students, however, have time-honored ways of skirting such intentions. But Penny seemed to approve of my handiwork.

> I thought the test was beautifully constructed. Through writing this test I learned a great deal about myself as an educator. I found that Dan generally needed to be more concrete in his examples. As I read Dan's paper I found myself reflecting on my own. I think I may have expected him to be as specific as I was: perhaps I was looking in his paper for what I put in mine. I also found some new ideas that I didn't touch. (Penny, Journal Letter, April 30, 1987)

Dan and Penny swapped papers for the peer review in my office. I watched them readily accommodating each other's ideas and become more questioning. Even in this success Penny and Dan had hardly changed their attitude to the sort of knowledge teachers need, but this examination style gave me the chance to comment on the draft and try once more to change students' minds. I told Penny:

> This is in good shape. I would like you, however, in the final draft to be more provocative with yourself. I would like more attention to the lively tensions in teaching in part A. Take what you have here as a conversation with yourself. Indicate other ways of looking at things. What do you think of prescribed texts? What strategies might you use in class to disguise any resistance <u>you</u> might have? Try to see teaching as work as well as enthusiastically getting students on side. Tell me how you will know that you are successful. (GRR to Penny, April 30, 1987)

I told Dan, Penny had been very careful with her margin comments on his paper and where she asked questions that confused him he could argue that some matters still puzzle him for certain reasons.

> Then try to explore some possibilities. You do not have to have all the answers in some definitive way. Pedagogy is about thinking things through. Different classes need different responses from the teacher for exactly the same end. (GRR to Dan, April 30, 1987)

Judy seemed lost. She confessed no intellectual patience with drafts or rewriting and balked even at swapping drafts (failing to meet the deadline). She wanted, I think, to play this exam in controllable factual ways as she did others. She focused not on subject matter in her response but on the need to create an emotional climate suitable for learning. She chose to write solely about the disadvantaged lower class pupil. She made no use of our discussions in class on the value of the short story or other literature as a window on life. Her passionate intention to teach without attention to content (knowledge hardly matters) demonstrates entrenched assumptions despite methods instruction. She wrote passionately but without perspective.

> Short stories we will read in class because they need help with words . . . I will always be there for them. I would take extra time to write on their papers words of encouragement to help them along. If I have one success it will be worth it. (Judy, Exam, May 12, 1987)

Little happened to Judy in this class.

> In order to teach a less able class a teacher needs more compassion, more energy, more understanding, more patience and more interaction in the classroom. I care most about these kids because I can relate to them. I know that students in average and accelerated classrooms have problems too but I am not ashamed to admit that I am more interested in the students in the lower level classes. I can feel for them because of their problems related to family and socio economic backgrounds. I believe in each and every one of them. I'll be there to help them along the way. (Judy, Final Exam Script, May 12, 1987)

My examination intentions were to encourage students to debate the nature of knowledge in my terms and work out ways to engage and teach a wide variety of pupils. I have selected this piece of

Judy's work for its implication that teaching deals solely with socio-economic difficulties. Although I would not deny the importance of that, it was not the focus of this methods course and this examination. Judy had consistently filtered parts of the discussions that seemed to enhance her perspective rather than accept responsibilities for directing, enhancing, or engaging all pupils' learning. Certainly she remains a passionate prospective teacher out to achieve in schools but she has not accepted the need for disciplined preparation of subject matter knowledge nor has she realistically accepted the difficulties of the classroom: the uncertainty, diversity, and internal contradictions. Her work was uneven but there were moments of hope such as this approach to writing.

> For writing I would try some process writing and some individual writing. I would like to use debates on different topics. For example, I could put this question to them, "Should capital punishment be used in prisons?" The class would divide up with the students who thought yes on one side and those who thought no on the other. As groups they would do class research with my help. They would prepare questions to ask the second group. Sometime students would have to defend a side they did not believe. This would really get them to thinking. (Judy, Final Examination Script, May 12, 1987)

In my letter to Judy, I was more than generous with a draft that lacked teeth.

> You begin to deal with the issues we talked about in class. At the beginning of part A. I suggest you introduce some of your doubts and confusions about teaching, and your sense of mission with weaker students. Here is a chance to think some of that through once more. All your wondering about yourself is part of teacher preparation and important at that. I will be keen to read your final draft. (GRR Letter to Judy, April 30 1987)

Do I too avoid the real issues? Were they not quite visible to me? It is true I believed Judy had had a helpful semester in sorting out some family and socio-economic class pressures. I seriously meant that development would help create a better teacher but it seems remiss that I did not give specific guidance which issues she must still deal with, for example, subject-matter knowledge. Judy still believed that only children of low socio-economic origin needed to be taught. She needed to accept the challenge that all children, however talented, need to be taught. She needed to accept that ambiguity and uncertainty in teaching are natural. She needed to learn how to respond to students' ideas as well as feelings in written work. She taught me my work needed to be more specifically directed, all discussion and observation requirements had to be refined and tailored to the puzzles of the course. Penny's last word was a little more reassuring.

> I would like to thank you for the wonderful exam you issued . . . it forced me to think critically about the teaching profession and what my responsibility is . . . I have come to realize how complex a teacher's job is. It goes beyond standing in front of class and telling students what they need to know. (Penny, Final Journal Letter, May I, 1987)

My colleagues in teacher education would hardly be surprised at my uneven victories. McDiarmid (1990) writes, "As an educator of beginning teacher education students, I have become familiar with a web of beliefs that the . . . students bring with them to teacher education courses" (p. 3).

McDiarmid explains students assumed, for example, that teachers should protect children from confusion and that children are not

capable of figuring things out for themselves. If children fail it is their fault. Learning means committing to memory and learning depends on practice. Working with Penny, Judy, and Dan I grappled with three prospective teachers' sets of beliefs hitting hard against the subtlety of my trade.

How Congruent Was Observation in the Schools with Secondary English Methods?

Wanting students to reach into the teacher's mind, I set assignments to guide 40 hours' observation of the relationship between the teacher, content, strategy, and pupils. I visited the schools observing the same teaching my students watched and then reconstructing my version on the blackboard. I encouraged students to describe what they saw and together we tried to learn how to interpret these observations. Was there a chance that the mechanical, teacher-centered, uncreative view of teaching be trounced once and for all? Would Penny, Judy, and Dan now see teacher-student, and student-student interaction, student contributions to the agenda, imagination and inquiry in action? Where I had hoped for interaction, inquiry, and intellectual excitement, Dan and Judy observed teaching reminiscent of their high school experience. Rather than incite enthusiasm for what I had to say observation reinforced preconceptions.

Penny fell in love with Miss T, a flawless performer, an example of Penny's ambition. Learning many helpful approaches for organizing work and being systematic Penny did not notice ambiguity in Miss T's juggle of subject matter, method, and pupils in teaching

English in a depressed (anti-intellectual) rural setting. Penny only had eyes for her idol. Pupils remained unseen. Her crush made criticism unpalatable. Miss T, an experienced, witty, lively practitioner, accepted my invitation to meet for a session with the methods class at the college on May 11. Miss T was competent and hard-headed, knowledgeable about English literature and grammar and caring. She distributed examples of successful written assignments, speaking to their strengths and weaknesses and making the point that the best teachers keep questioning what they use. I was delighted to hear this emphasis but students were still unconvinced so much thought should go into teaching. She addressed the school's political context and the barriers the young adventurous teacher might meet with examples of pupils' resistance to content, to herself, or to school. I knew that my three students did not see themselves as adventurous teachers. They were still looking for procedures and routines and Dan and Judy seemed not to know how to tap Miss T's wit. Also Dan and Judy, resentful that their cooperating teachers did not favorably compare, chose to feel intimidated and cross rather than curious. As Penny preened with delight, Dan and Judy were surly with envy. Miss T and I faced student rivalries in the way of our purposes (GRR 48 Journal Letter, 1987).

Penny, in this love affair, refigured her observation experience (as McDiarmid argues she would) to support her initial belief that teaching and performance were synonymous. I insert two pieces of evidence in support of this insight. In the first, Penny

describes Miss T in operation and in the other she reflects on her own teaching under Miss T's supervision.

> Her accelerated junior English class this year is less open and more hesitant to freely discuss issues and stories aloud. She really has to work at drawing responses out of the students which is unusual. BUT SHE DOESN'T LET THIS SPOIL HER APPROACH. She still uses class discussions, but she works to ask the right question which make the students think, and I CAN LOOK IN THEIR EYES AND SEE THAT THEY ARE REFLECTING. Even if they don't always open up--at least they are thinking about their feelings. (Penny, April 9, 1987)

and,

> One specific method I like is something she uses in the composition class. She has a file in the back of the room in which she retains all the papers the pupils write. The file is an available source to check progress. Essays can be redone. Another thing Miss T does that I really admire is grade everything. This takes time but she feels that responsibility.

These citations are good examples of the glowing romantic view with which Penny consistently viewed Miss T's work. The line most revealing to me is the suggestion the teacher should not allow student behavior to spoil her approach--her critical performance. And reporting on the joys of her own performance, Penny writes:

> My experience was wonderful today. I had the students name some topics or issues in the community, school or world that influence them. Could we write about them? What might be the difficulties? Miss T was pleased how the class went. She said that I looked really relaxed. I did feel comfortable. I sense that I had the students' attention. I asked questions and they replied. The students were responsive and seemed comfortable with me. I can see where I might change some things but I believe my experience was successful. I have the trust and the respect of these students. I enjoy that feeling. (Penny, April 9, 1987)

Judy spent her 40 observation hours stewing over injustices spotted in Mrs. D's class reinforcing her interest in compassion at the expense of noticing content or strategy.

> I noticed several occasions where Mrs. D really hurt students' feelings because she cut down their answers. I don't like the way she poses questions in the class. She rarely called on anyone by name, so the same people answered. I want more participation than I have seen here. I do not want to teach like Mrs. D. She does not relate to students. She sets too much work to be done in pupils' time. (Judy, Journal Letter, April 4, 1987)

And a week later:

> Mrs. D often seems to not have any objectives except just to get through the class as fast as smoothly as possible--with as little conflict and as little interaction as possible. She needs to think more about the questions she asks if she wants them to think. I can see why Mrs. D had fallen into the trap of teaching the way she does. It's safe (it's boring) I think she feels she is a failure as a teacher and because of this she lays it all on the students--saying all sort of things about them such that they don't want to learn . . . I want to be involved with my students. I want to care for them but <u>I don't want to go overboard and lose my perspective as a teacher</u>. (Judy, April 12, 1987)

Dan's observation was limited by shyness. He refused to teach despite a kind offer from the collaborating teacher. I was fascinated that he felt more like a pupil (aged 24) than observer and wondered how I might have better prepared him.

> I wore a tie. I left it on because my teacher seemed dressed up. I felt like a pupil in the class not an observer . . . I made it clear I did not want to teach. (Dan Observation Report, February 18, 1987)

He became more curious and saw problems of practice but had no nerve to raise them with Mrs. J but became more alert to the relationship between Mrs. J and her pupils.

> I can also tell that Mrs. J likes to teach and cares for her pupils. I can tell this by the way she looks at them and the tone of voice she uses when she has a personal or social conversation with them. It's a different tone from her teaching tone. (Dan, May 4, 1987)

He diligently brought me his notes kept in a discreet small brown notebook but found it hard to make connections with quality instruction, equality of access or pupil engagement. He had become more thoughtful but he would need much more exposure to more teachers with more guided reflection to consolidate his experience and develop his new insights about teaching on various levels like this one:

> I feel like a student not an observer, the class was controlled from behind the teacher's desk and I wonder why the quality of reading is so low . . . I don't think Mrs. J is game to take on a full interaction with pupils. (Dan, March 12, 1987)

As he explores the difficulty of observation:

> I was hardly ever able to identify the information we talked about in class during my observation time at the high school. Mrs. J only asked direct questions and in forty hours I must have heard only ten words of praise. (Dan, Final Journal Letter, May 2, 1987)

He met with me frequently describing the disengaged pupils, boring content, and dreary instruction he witnessed. He deduced there was so much poor teaching that good teaching must be hard to do. Dan kept asking questions. He seemed on the brink of deeper understandings but stuck by the limited mobility his factual orientation to knowledge and the teacher's work allowed. ". . . I feel like I want to be able to think for myself--to understand teaching how I understand it . . ." (Dan, February 12, 1987). And I remained puzzled. "I do not know how good students can be at

observing. Experts also seem unsure. I have resolved to keep experimenting and puzzling" (GRR 48 Journal Letter, 1987).

I was generally disappointed that observation in schools reinforced student preconceptions of classroom life and the teacher's work. I wanted students to see imaginative teaching, group work, and inquiry in classrooms but the teaching was mostly average. Despite the fact that students completed a 40-hour round of observation in the local high school, the observation reports revealed students did not know what to look for. They could not appreciate the integration of the elements we worked on in the teaching act. So Judy settled to judge the classroom emotional climate. Penny adored Miss T and Dan knew something was missing. Observation seemed to support factual knowledge and unenlightened pedagogy. I record another dilemma. "It is impossible to explain the pressures of classroom life. It is hard to share with Judy that one hardly ever does as well as one hopes. Should I defend Mrs. D's short cuts?" (GRR 48 Journal Letter, May 1987).

Conclusion

In teaching secondary English methods, I tried to redefine knowledge and pedagogy for Penny, Judy, and Dan. I misjudged the power of prior convictions and the discomfort of intellectual dissonance. I sensed some success in questioning students' assumptions when I asked them to teach and talk about their teaching but problems of subject matter knowledge and vision about its power arose when I wanted to develop strategies for teaching literature.

Toward the end I tackled uncertainty in teaching. Progress was uneven as students became anxious. My students were not wilfully careless about teacher preparation but these leaps of understanding were possibly too much to expect, hope for, even work for in a 16-week period. The pity of the matter was that that secondary English methods was the only methods course offered these candidates prior to secondary school teaching.

CHAPTER IV

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Introduction

In March, 1992, at Michigan State University, Bill McDiarmid and I puzzled about my experiences and the relationship between theory and practice for the teacher educator. We spoke of my work in introduction to educational psychology, including a compulsory laboratory experience in Dustfield district schools where I led nine first-generation college sophomores from relatively weak high school backgrounds through the writings of Pavlov, Bloom, Skinner, Ausebel, Bruner, Rogers, Piaget, and Kohlberg. Since I simultaneously directed 13 three-hour observation visits in three elementary and secondary schools, introduction to educational psychology ostensibly combined theory and practice.

We referred to my dissatisfaction with the State Board of Illinois' requirement that my 16 students in the education of the exceptional child should simply know listed characteristics of exceptionalities (learning disabled, mentally handicapped, emotionally impaired, auditorially impaired, visually impaired, behavior disordered, abused and neglected, and gifted and talented) for I saw room for a deeper conversation about human needs and a responsibility to establish hope in classrooms.

In both courses, in the spring semester, 1987, I uncovered our joint nervousness about theoretical writing and thinking. Impatient with digging for depth, my students and I preferred to skim the surface, finding solace in drifting from theory to practice wherever possible. Student assumptions about knowledge and learning to teach were less at odds with mine than in previous chapters but all was not bliss. With certain pieces of subject matter (behavior disorder and the mentally retarded), students' assumptions of our work became less constructive in frustrating ways. I resolved:

> I am adamant my new teachers should see the enormity of the loss in handicaps of various kinds--how else could they grasp and accept the child and parents' pain? Teachers should keep hope alive and respect courage. I think it important to help students understand the different characteristics of exceptionality but I do not think that enough. (GRR 33 Journal Letter, January, 1987)

With this class, my idea of theoretical knowledge had shifted from psychological theories of cognition and behavior to theories of loss, tolerance, and diversity in classrooms and students became willing to embrace some but not all of these.

Continuing our analysis, McDiarmid and I thought both theory and practice are variously interpreted; for example, sometimes all college work is theory and anything in the field is practice. I had an intuitive response in my thinking as novice teacher educator that integration of opposites was always better than their division. Hence in teaching methods classes, I struggled to unite pedagogy and content. In teaching the introduction to educational psychology and the associated practicum I sought integration of theory and practice as two kinds of doing, thinking, or knowing but I stumbled on

complications. My knowledge of the psychological actors had filtered through general education rather than formal study. I had not called on them in 15 years of successful teaching and I seriously wondered about their claim. Were there not other ways to think about the wonders, intricacies, and eccentricities of human development that might be more helpful for teaching candidates? Suppressing this observation at the time I tried to do what looked like my job seeking help from Dewey and James.

Dewey's What Psychology Can Do for the Teacher (1895) and The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education (1904) highlight three main points relevant to teacher education practice in these courses about psychology and learning and emotional disabilities. Dewey, hesitating to separate theory from practice, stresses teaching practice should be grounded in ethical and philosophical principles because of their indirect value, forming habits of mind (using native skill) because they will help perfect experience with least time and energy and create a standard to test suggested methods.

> We may say that the teacher requires a sound knowledge of ethical and psychological principles--first, because such knowledge, besides its indirect value as forming logical habits of mind, is necessary to secure the full use of native skill; secondly, because it is necessary in order to attain a perfected experience with the least expenditure of time and energy; and thirdly, in order that the educator may not be at the mercy of every sort of doctrine and device, but may have his own standard by which to test the many methods and expedients constantly urged upon him, selecting those which stand the test and rejecting those which do not, no matter by what authority or influence they may be supported. (p. 202)

Firm about observation's possibilities and difficulties Dewey argued observation should be addressed on psychological not practical grounds avoiding imitation by seeing what is going on in the minds of others observing how teacher and pupils react upon each other--how mind answers mind.

> Observation should at first be conducted from the psychological rather than the practical standpoint. If the latter is emphasized before the student has an independent command of the former, the principle of imitation is sure to play an exaggerated part on the observer's future teaching, and hence at the expense of personal insight and initiative. What the student most needs at this stage of growth is the ability to see what is going on in the minds of a group of persons who are in intellectual contact with one another. He needs to learn to observe psychologically--a very different thing from simply observing how a teacher gets good results in presenting any particular subject. (Dewey, 1904, pp. 324-325)

James in Talks to Teachers On Psychology (1958) believed "psychology ought . . . to give the teacher radical help" (p. 22). James passionately argues the child was a behaving organism so teachers must pay attention to interest, attention, habit, and the association of ideas. James claimed we know in advance, if we are psychologists, that certain methods will be wrong and we have been saved from mistakes.

On the other hand, James continued.

> I say moreover that you make a great, a very great mistake, if you think that psychology, being the science of the mind's laws, is something for which you can deduce definite programs and schemes and methods of instruction for immediate schoolroom use. (p. 23)

and further,

> To know psychology therefore is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers . . . ingenuity in meeting and pursuing the pupil, that tact

> for the concrete situation, though they are the alpha and omega of the teacher's art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least. (p. 24)

Integrating theory and practice, Dewey stresses the teacher's need to have practice grounded in principles, to test methods, to develop native skill and to perfect experience and observation should be psychological (observing minds not results). James pushes in almost contradictory ways. Theory will give radical help but cannot determine classroom methods. My problem of practice was to figure out what theory students need to know and how theory can be related intelligently to practice? I thought theory and practice would naturally be interwoven as students proceeded through the program. I did not see them as the same (the way I accepted content and method could be unified) but imagined them mediating each other in student understanding. I found my constraints often tending to prefer using practice to stimulate inquiry rather than theoretical constructions. My view of teaching as an intellectual affair prompted me to favor Dewey's emphasis on observing psychologically but I hit obstacles.

My problem in the introduction to educational psychology and the education of the exceptional child was to foster interest and respect for helpful theoretical knowledge in learning to teach and learning to help those especially disadvantaged. I explore in this chapter student resistant to theory and to my pedagogy. In Chapter V, "striving for authenticity" resistance more often becomes cooperation with pedagogy more in tune with Dewey's "perfection of experience" and cultivated "habits of mind."

Kendel Rejects Theory

Kendel, a special education major, not attracted to academic or book learning, illustrates an extreme reaction to theoretical knowledge among my introduction to educational psychology students. Kendel declared theorists would make no difference in her work. They had nothing to offer. "I don't think I will change the way I deal with children . . . the way I communicate with them allows them to grow but doesn't scare them because the concepts are not too far ahead of them" (Kendel, Journal Letter, May 1, 1987). Kendel then ignored any theoretical claim on her thinking supporting this view by suggesting she needed to know less for her academically limited clientele in special education. She needed to be concerned, cheerful and patient and theories of learning would not help as personality not book smarts formed the sort of teacher she wanted to become. Despite this flamboyant retreat, however, Kendel still took part in animated educational psychology classroom conversation. Ignoring theory, she carelessly mixed classroom tales without insight and stories about observation with personal sentiments like: "Children seem eager to learn. "It will be a wonderful feeling when I know I can make a difference in a child's life." (February, 4, 1987).

I was silent in the face of this extreme view, allowing Kendel to speak without reading and often it seemed without thinking when these were both sacred canons for me. I was working hard to establish conversation as a way of learning, tending to accept participation as my standard rather than hard work. My teaching as

conversation explored in Chapter III of this work was under fire as a romantic notion as such pratter filled spaces in class I struggled to think about how to teach theory to students with a factual orientation to knowledge and a practical view of teaching. I could not simply insist Kendel told her stories while referring to the text. I needed to teach her how that could be done. I did not have that figured out and my days were consumed with many problems of practice hard to place in order of priority. My silence stemmed not from lack of courage but a form of paralysis with Kendel's conviction theorists had nothing for her. Kendel held an extreme view but how were other students responding?

Wendy's Emotional Flight

> Both these theories (Piaget and Kohlberg) should be taken with a grain of salt because every child is different in their values, beliefs and intelligent level. Even though the guides are good ones, educators must remember that children are beings not statistics. (Final Examination, May 14, 1987)

I saw Wendy in emotional flight from theory. For Wendy, Piaget and Kohlberg were isolated folk on the edge of real children and real classrooms and should be given little weight in thinking about the child. She trusts what she sees as she interprets it.

> The third row of five, faces with their right hand side toward the blackboard. They can see all the other students, the blackboard, the outside world through a small window, and the class rules. This row is constantly turning around to see what time it is. Seeing the outside makes them think of recess which in turn makes them wonder how many minutes it is until then. (Wendy, Observation Report, March 3, 1987)

Wendy seemed unwilling to submit to disciplined inquiry yet I did not intervene for I did not quite know how to tackle what seemed to me an intricate web of perceptions about the world, thinking and children involving long standing habits. Where would I begin?

Chris's Confusions

Chris compared with Kendel and Wendy made an effort to use his understanding of the theory offered in the class. But Chris floundered taking me with him. He seemed more competent dealing with a specific idea like motivation rather than a whole theorist. For example, claiming affinity with Bruner for the purpose of gaining credit, Chris gave a peculiar interpretation of that author at the end of the course: "Discovery learning holds many things on the way I think and teach. As a PE teacher I must give my children a task to accomplish without making it hard and without getting myself involved with the task" (Final Exam script). Chris seemed unable, unwilling, or ill-directed to go slowly looking at the words digging for deeper meaning. He did not normally figure things out so why should he now?

More jumbled words possibly disguise insight or remain no more than jumbled words as Chris asserts, in his exam, children are motivated (born) to learn. But "sometimes parents push too hard and the child rebels so when the teacher tries to motivate the child he is going to feel like a sandwich. The child will not learn if he feels pushed from both sides." He ended this section of the final paper in considerable confusion but at least he has tried to capture

what is happening in his head, "Once the child gets older the need to find his or her true self without ending up being someone else is a type of motivation. Is it morality that is a motivation or is it a mimic to get gratification? That remains to be answered" (Exam script).

Chris spent 16 weeks in my classroom and in field experiences yet finished in such confusion. I felt pressured by what I didn't know in the theory and in strategies to teach both the theory and its relation to practice. Chris's non-analytical construction of knowledge and inability to look for the knowledge I thought teachers need, meant he, like Kendel, needed to twist the conversation as often as possible away from theoretical views to classroom stories from their own and observation experience for self protection. My reliance on students to be their own thinkers exacerbated our difficulty encouraging the shift from theory to an apparently safer practice.

Despite my growing awareness of what I wanted, my exam questions failed to extract a finer response. Chris slid round his responsibilities. Chris explained Piaget.

> Piaget believed that if a child did not excel in the class that he was stuck in one of his stages, such as preoperation. At this level the child is trying to develop reversibility or the law of conservation. Let's take an example here: Johnny has trouble with story problem in mathematics. His teacher sees him failing and doesn't know why. He does fine on English and Art; he does have a bit of trouble with reading but that is nothing to worry about. Johnny always finished his reading assignments. Now let's say that Johnny is twelve years old. This is when the logical stage of Piaget's theory comes into play. This stage is the Propositional or Formal Operation stage. To Piaget the child has not reached this stage of development and is

> lacking in logical reasoning. The real reason is that Johnny has Dyslexia. He sees letters backwards and has trouble spelling. He is afraid of what is happening and has accepted it. To Piaget, the child's mind is not developed enough. (Exam script)

Should I be delighted? Chris has moved from Piaget's theory to think how he would interpret a child in class. But the example is extreme. Chris tried to place Piaget at the disadvantage rather than fathom how the teacher might interpret the stage of development. Nor is Chris's thinking about dyslexia properly informed. Should I have presented case studies asking students to figure out which theories could help the teacher and why? (GRR 55 Journal Letter, May, 1987). Was the real difficulty poor judgement starting with the abstract before the specific?

Inexperienced Thinking

Student resistance to analytical reading, their view of knowledge as information and their delight in being with children prompted us to explore teaching rather than educational psychology. I suggested to students unwillingness to read theoretical material: "As you read, make it a practice to record confusing material or concepts and raise these in class" (GRR 33 Journal Letter, February, 1987). A completely foreign suggestion was ignored for that knowledge was not valued. I knew some readings would be tedious but I thought students would realize how little they knew and be prompted to try. Accustomed as they were in high school and college to read for facts matching teacher expectations in a quiz, students were not interested in exploring readings for ideas, precise

meanings, and connections of ideas. I decided to be encouraging rather than bitter, urging students not to panic but to realize with a mixture of study and use they would feel more control. I wrote:

> Beginning to appreciate how foreign close textual analysis was to everyone in the class I adopted an encouraging tone--clearly learning theory intimidated students who were in fact ill equipped for the work. I urged diligence and patience and the strength that comes from learning together. (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February, 1987)

On February 26, six weeks into the semester, I clarified how uneasy my prospective teachers were with intellectual inquiry. A small writing task illuminates my problem and individual student responses. We were on the run from theory and muddling about. I suggested we should all write for 20 minutes on Piaget, recording what we understood. I struggled to help students have the confidence to start then the class settled. I asked students to swap papers and record other student's success. I came closer to understanding student discomfort. Kendel began, "Although I don't understand Piaget, Gem gave orders to write" (March 1, 1987). Appreciating the exercise, Patricia decided: "I know small things but it would take years to understand this theorist but switching papers was especially helpful. Once I started to write I could hardly stop. I liked reading others' work and their comments on mine" (Patricia March 1, 1987).

Wendy, however, troubled that Piaget's stage theory limited the individual's chances in education, felt unhappy with student responses to her writing.

> By writing in class I am learning how to organize my thoughts quick. I found out that if I write

> confusions down on paper I can sometimes find an answer to them. The other students comments on the papers we swapped are nice but not very helpful. They all more or less agreed with what I said so in turn I really didn't learn anything new. No new ways of looking at it or new concepts on it. (Wendy, March 2, 1987)

Tracy, a psychology major, argued Piaget was less significant than personality theorists. Joyce wrote intelligently about the way the theory might help teachers. Noreen wrote, "After trying to write on Piaget I could see how little I knew. This was an excellent exercise to let me analyze my learning" (Noreen, March 2, 1987). Assuming students were intellectually like me, I thought writing from memory would work for all. For Patricia it helped. For Kendel and Wendy there seemed little benefit. Students seemed both disinclined to enthuse over the theorists' words or adopt my strategies for doing so. I summed up my impressions and frustrations in my journal: "Certainly as we now move on to Kohlberg I do not have a group of confident Piaget scholars. Some of this is lack of commitment to any theory but pushing more Piaget just now seems unwise" (GRR 37 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

Wanting to help student efforts furnish us with provocative conversation about human development, I led a discussion with that in mind on the conception of the good teacher. Annette thought the task helpful but could not work out why we did it. I was not alert to my need to guide Annette's reflection in specific ways to make tasks with my purpose educative or memorable to her. Chris was fired up that other students held different views from his--when he was right.

> Some make it sound like the teacher should be a slave driver. . . . A few had it right--they commented that a teacher had to be confident of himself caring, dedicated, have potential, a guide, all of the things a teacher should be. (GRR 34 Journal Letter, March 1987)

Unaccustomed to wondering about the conceptions of things or the differentiation between good teaching and poor teaching students wanted to flee from the task. I saw myself with " . . . the authority of the teacher. We needed someone to legitimize proceedings, to make suggestions about how to do the definitions, to synthesize the remarks around the room" (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February, 1987). This interpretation did not satisfy Annette, who suggested:

> I don't feel you give us enough input. Sometimes we would go off in a direction and we would never know if we were on the right track, or too far off track. I suggest you write a journal letter to us about our observations and about our work in class. We let you know what we are thinking but you don't tell us what you think about our thoughts. (Final Journal Letter, May 1, 1987)

I thought Annette's demand for more of my thinking symptomatic of her dependent attitude to teaching and learning. My detachment should continue. I could have more profitably gone the other way. With mature reflection, I think both she and Noreen felt rudderless in my hands. Sometimes, for example, I allowed conversations to meander, hoping valuable nuggets might emerge but the class was not used to capturing intellectual delights this way. I might have tried to see this course through Annette and Noreen's experience and made it valid teacher preparation regardless of the limitations. I did not think time spent telling students what I thought necessarily

helped them understand. It was deceptively easy but mostly unprofitable. Nor did I want to reproduce knowledge. I wanted to learn with students who learned from each other. At the end of the course I was left with my dilemma: "How can I learn to temper my concern for the student to learn through his or her own engagement with the realization that I sit on important knowledge and experience" (GRR 52 Journal Letter, April 1987).

Nor did things necessarily improve when students were in charge. "Presentations brought stress into the classroom. Presenters had a lot to cover. Classmates were impatient but the information was helpful (Joyce, Journal Letter, May 1, 1987). Students were accustomed to teachers possessing knowledge and explaining themselves. In thinking student research and class presentations would be an appropriate way to trap student commitment I assumed student competence in reading, thinking, and synthesis. I assumed experience in high school debate. Recognizing student anxiety, I wanted to help them overcome their nervousness and approach learning in this more lively more enduring way. Complicating matters for students by wanting to teach in a special way, I squared things away as follows:

> I was relying on student strength to thread the content into the fabric of the class but I should not belittle my own expertise with questioning, exposing students to various diverse points of view. Much of the threading is my doing. It takes time for the method to work because of the novelty of the experience. Students need to commit themselves to this method in their own time and in class time and they need to accept my different role. (GRR 35 Journal Letter, February 1987)

I interpreted the considerable tension about reading and thinking as described as the student's difficulty. The students needed to commit themselves to my style or emphasis to learn. Feeling my own tensions of inadequate knowledge and frustration in class, I forgot to ask if my solution were possible. This represents, I think, paralysis in my teaching as I made moves, consistently hoping students would respond, holding them at fault if they did not.

Anchoring Theory?

Trapping interest then facilitating theoretical understanding was never simple. Compelled to simplify theory, I gradually took a more positive lead in student presentations suggesting what to record and how to translate meaning. Our first presentation on February 6, 1987 was given by Dr. Sidney the psychology professor. I enjoyed this clear exposition on the nature of intelligence but Dr. Sidney's remarks were not mentioned in students' journal letters, observation reports, and exam scripts and his thinking was not raised in later presentations and seminars. He argued educators daily face differences in intelligence reflected in different learning types. Dr. Sidney urged education students to see the point of playing to the child's strengths--forcing the reflective child to work fast, for example, he thought counterproductive. If lack of interest in theory occurred with a professional teacher and popular college lecturer, what worse might befall us as student presenters took their turn? More fundamentally--why did prospective

teachers not jump at the chance to learn about intelligence? Not one question was asked (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

After Dr. Sidney's performance the lead shifted to Kendel as the first student presenter. Here my pedagogy asked a student, who, unknown to me, had decided theory does not count to lead the class in pinning understanding of a theorist. I suddenly realized my risk.

> Kendel took over. What would I have done if she were not present and prepared? I took careful notes as did students. I kept my eye open for likely debatable aspects of the presentation. (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February, 1987)

Was I rash to assume students could research and present theoretical knowledge? Kendel certainly had little idea how to present her material but calmed as I suggested she give us her definitions of Bruner's concept, category, attribute, and value which we would put in our own words. Chris was scathing.

> I understood because of my own reading. Kendel didn't look like and act like a teacher and her information was scattered. I pointed out a theory of Bruner's and she should have incorporated it rather than put it on the back burner. Other students were as confused as I was. (Journal Letter, March 2, 1987)

This entry does not mean Chris enjoyed a superior intellect or that he had read Bruner with a fine tooth comb. What it did mean was that Chris reacted against Kendel as teacher whom he expected to deliver the goods in certain ways. Chris was not alone in criticizing Kendel. Paula felt Kendel had cut herself off from the class. Patricia worried there were many gaps and would I fill those in? These concerns surmounted interest in Bruner's theory. While I thought the session helpful in raising questions about discovery

learning and learning more generally, students used to more cut and dried instruction felt troubled by its loose structure.

Annette and Chris dealt with Piaget. They had carefully done their homework and prepared a skeletal outline of Piaget's theory of development for the chalkboard. Quotations supported each stage. The class felt better led and remarkably more committed. Annette (social science) and Chris (physical education) acted together elucidating the theory and fielding questions but Annette was really in charge. Annette could sustain interest in abstract ideas longer than Chris who by his own confession, was trying to make things entertaining rather than understood (Journal Letter, March 2). In itself, this was an interesting flight from theoretical scholarship. Annette, on the other hand, acted as interpreter to the class. We moved to some understanding of Piaget's stage theory (GRR 36 Journal Letter, February, 1987). Chris thought he and Annette had done well but Piaget was over rated--a useful retreat from these writers' claims on his attention. Most students chose to write about Piaget in their exams denoting some comfort with him but they were willing to be surprisingly critical considering their intellectual inexperience although less knowledge can sometimes make the critic more confident. "Piaget does not feel environment had much to do with educational growth: other factors he leaves out are resistance, response to authority and motivation" (Cheryl, Journal Letter, May 1, 1987). Wendy did not think presentations an appropriate strategy. "When I gave my presentation on Pavlov and Skinner I felt I learned a lot about them and their theories. The information

stayed in my memory. I can remember nothing about Bruner and Piaget. Its harder for me to grasp them by presentations given by other students. It makes me feel terrible to think that other students in the class have had to do the same" (Wendy, March 2, 1987).

Wendy's point is well worth taking. If she cannot learn from other students' work, then it may seem appropriate to cease this strategy. Or did I need to adopt various preliminary steps in introducing the method? I worried about Wendy's response because she wanted to teach but not to learn from others. Presumably her pupils would not learn from each other. Whatever theory we learned (or mislearned) these presentations were meant to help students question the nature of the teacher, pupil, content relationship, and value working together.

Kohlberg was the theorist on our agenda immediately after I announced, into the second month, we must snap out of our laziness with theory. Laziness is of course a defensive term for a troubled teacher putting the blame on students and I often felt no one else was really serious (GRR 36 Journal Letter, March, 1987). I felt apprehensive for Wendy and Cheryl who had done the homework on Kohlberg to help us understand his work. I knew Cheryl would try hard but I was dubious about Wendy who proved to be a dark horse. Everyone in the class seemed more alert and Wendy and Cheryl had been attentive in their preparation. Wendy stood firmly and fully explained the stages of moral development coping fluently with questions and comparisons with Piaget and referring to examples from

the classes she had observed. I seemed more confident of our progress, commenting on ". . . a more alert, more academic atmosphere" (GRR 37 Journal Letter, March, 1987).

I took a more definite lead in the presentation on Kohlberg's theory of moral development than the earlier Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development. I helped students more by signifying what parts in the discussion were worth recording and how they might be related to the classroom or work with children in the playground. I deliberately invited the two presenters to repeat pieces of their presentation for tighter discussion and emphasis and asked students to translate key terms like morality, justice, and development into their own words. I did not take over the conversation so much as oversee it more efficiently. I realized rather late in the semester I must teach students to listen and think by example and nudging rather than simply expect these skills.

Our flight from theory (now jointly constructed) impeded intellectual development. Because of it, connections among theorists' ideas, past experience, and observation could not be made. Presentations on theorists were mechanical not probing. Students' preconceptions of teaching were reinforced that teaching was practical not intellectual and children need nurturance not challenge. Dewey (1904) would recognize these prospective teachers were shortchanged in a most significant way because: "The study of psychology has a high disciplinary value for the teacher. It develops the power of connected thinking and trains to logical habits of mind" (p. 196). He meant the abilities to reflect and

abstract--essential elements of the clear thinker and clear teacher (p. 197). Our conversation on the other hand encouraged a naive enthusiasm. I confided frustration in my journal. "Educational psychology flies out the window a little. I am tempted to allow that to happen rather than fight a battle whose parameters I do not really understand. I would like to be sharper on this" (GRR 31 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

Flight from theory took us quite naturally to practice. Hesitant students intimidated by college work liked observation's chance to empathize with both teachers and pupils. Observation was more appealing than disciplined study. Some, like Annette, felt their professional identity blossom. Many, like Joyce, became more involved in the education major and some had the chance to teach. Students embracing their cooperating teacher as all-knowing wizards identified with the teacher so easily theory seemed increasingly irrelevant. They thought about the classroom in uncomplicated ways not really noticing what was there. They asked few questions. No students at the end of observation joyously announced it had helped them grapple with the theories in the class. Rather they made the point it was the best part of the class. They perceived observation as a separate more desirable experience and in educational psychology they drew on their experiences and understandings from observation in preference to and isolation from theoretical principles of learning.

As class conversation about teaching and learning developed momentum around practice, I sensed a commitment--a fascination with

the Tuesday morning visits to Dustfield schools. And I thought these conversations had their place. I was sure theoretical knowledge could heighten prospective teacher's effectiveness and I was sure observation of teachers and children at work could also help. But I couldn't get it right. I couldn't make my students dig inside the minds they saw minds working together (Dewey).

Paula's Ambiguity

Paula, looking to her fifth grade music cooperating teacher, Mr. Filem, for inspiration, felt relieved he had no recall of theorists in his preparation to be a music teacher. She wrote:

> I explained to Mr. Adams that we have been studying the different theorists in this class and that we were doing our observation in conjunction to the theories we were studying. He claimed that he really couldn't remember much of that kind of thing from his early days, I wonder how many teachers do? (Paula, March 6, 1987)

Feeling uncomfortable with theory herself Paula checked with her practitioner for reassurance. Nevertheless, she tried to face assignment to look for examples of the steps in Ausebel's expository teaching in her morning's observation.

> I tried to do my observation using Ausebel's Four Characteristics of Expository Teaching, but too many things happen at once when you are dealing with music and I had trouble deciding what category to put things under. I ended up just looking at the whole thing and writing down what I thought was important at the time. (Paula, February 27, 1987)

This is a wonderful example of a serious student's flight from theory, in good conscience, and the subtleties of learning from observation. There were intriguing things for Paula to see.

> The young girl has a head tick. Her head bounces up and down as she sits, walks and even as she talks. She is a flute player with the ability to overcome her handicap through concentration. While playing her flute, checking the fingering for a note, clapping a rhythm stopping her from bobbing her head. I still haven't figured out if it is all mental or unintentional. I would like to think of the flute as a concentrational device through which the girl absorbs herself and overcomes the handicap. I cannot be sure I am right but I will keep an eye on this in my next observations.

This moment in practice prompted a research project for Paula. Perhaps she would turn to theory of some kind for an explanation? Instead, she continued to observe, making her hypotheses based on common sense without resorting to the medical library. I remained silent as if accepting Paula's rejection of Ausebel, her call on Mr. Filem's little use for theory, and her approach to the head tick.

Joyce and Kendel's Misperception

Our assignment at Jordan Elementary School was to observe intelligence and creativity. In one special education class, first to fourth graders tried to figure out how to communicate with hands not words while an aide hovered over an aggressive youngster with black, unbrushed hair. Two educational psychology students and I were in class for about 30 minutes and I carefully watched Joyce and Kendel's responses to the children and teacher. Listening to their assessments, I suddenly realized, "Neither Joyce nor Kendel saw the whole teacher student interaction. They focused on either the teacher or the pupil, they do not see the process" (GRR 46 Journal Letter, March, 1987). I was unnerved: "I do not really know how good students could become at observing nor do I have a clear sense

of what is attainable" (GRR 49th Journal Letter. March, 1987). Stunned, worried and unsure about what to do, I did not confront Kendel and Joyce with this problem. I saw Joyce and Kendel were unaware of work in progress with children and had their eyes glued either on teacher or child not both. I did not act immediately to counteract this significant misperception. I did, however, keep thinking what this might mean. I was grasping at straws in my own thinking. What had happened to our learned discussions about teaching as an interaction of teacher, pupils and content. What of our deliberations on learning theory? Were my students not reconstructing any of the new material in the class at all? If that were so--where could I begin?

Final Educational Psychology Class Meeting

My report on the final class meeting illuminates our flight from theory and embrace of practice. I had chosen the question "What is learning?" and asked students to pretend they had been invited to dinner with our theoretical friends. What would they like to ask them? What did they think they might have to say as the uppermost thoughts in their minds? I asked three students to impersonate Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson. Students had made small collections of pertinent quotations from their notes. I recorded:

> The conversation began strongly with Wendy acting as Kohlberg. It began to blend the literature, common sense, and conclusions from observation. Gradually its emphasis swung to a concern uppermost for students . . . can a teacher befriend a student or does friendship cause havoc in relationships that need to be impersonal and professional?

Wendy was the only speaker to refer specifically to one of the three theorists for the day. Piaget and Erikson seemed to have been struck dumb on arrival. In the blend of literature, common sense and conclusions from observation, literature had low priority. Students were willing to raise personal issues that really concerned them about the prospect of teaching as a profession but the force of theory was absent. We were willing to make an opening remark about stage theory or discovery learning then allow the conversation to dwell on our own personal theories and observation reflections. Perhaps students were a little more attentive to theoretical thinking because we were further into the class. Students argued personal involvement or friendliness was essential to encourage learning by making children comfortable and by developing trust. Students saw a conflict of interest where teachers need to be supportive but encourage independence. But friends, too, might encourage independence, they argued, and friends might help one learn because they believe in you and teachers should believe in pupils in this empowering way. Could teachers and students trust one another and what impact would this have on learning? Joyce expressed concern: "If trust is less significant in homes and society how can it hope to be the basis for educational institutions? How can we on graduation hope to cope with the changes in society represented in classrooms?" (Joyce, May 8, 1987).

This lively, enjoyable conversation had run its course without confronting theories. I attempted by inviting theorists to dinner to make a turn for the better but students took off without them.

Although my pedagogy was both imaginative and engaging, students constructed its possibilities quite differently from me and having succumbed to conversations prompted by concern for children and common sense dictated by past experience and thinking in the past, it was hard for me to redirect the tone in the dying stages of the course.

Disquiet

Variations of the problem of balancing theoretical and practical or emotional knowledge for undergraduates in teacher education occurred in the education of the exceptional child class taught in the same semester as the introduction to educational psychology, to many of the same students. Similar difficulties in my perceptions of theory and practice and students' dispositions thwarted my efforts to help students grow in self-awareness and appreciation of others' writings in attempts to explain why loss is part of the classroom teacher's work.

I felt confused about the breadth of material to be covered in a survey course with 55 minute classes. How could I sustain interest and commitment? I thought it best not to rush too quickly into more technical material knowing my students' tendency to look for facts not understanding. I began with stories of exceptional children and invited students to write their own. Wendy's well-written account of Toby, with problems of speech and writing skills, written as a journal entry got inside Toby's sadness about not being able to learn as well as his friends and wondering if

indeed he had friends. Sandra commented, "This story almost made me cry because of its reality and how cruel people can be to those less fortunate than themselves" (Sandra, February 4, 1987).

Except for the value of establishing student rapport I think I wasted time. Now I can see how slow we were to ask more critical questions than Toby's feelings about friends. We needed to ask questions about how we learn and why Toby is restricted and how a teacher might work with him in positive ways understanding the deficit--stressing the possibilities. Overall, class statements focussed on the child's likely need for friendship and fear of abuse or rejection, strained relations with parents, emotional frustrations in learning, and lack of confidence in a confusing school life. This thinking was not totally inappropriate but I felt caught in the tension of my inexperience trying to figure out students' intellectual needs in a survey course right at the beginning of their teacher preparation. Was I sure about my direction? Did what I do here count for something toward preparing the teacher? On the one hand I felt cheered that Mathew, Toby and others set us off <u>on the right foot</u> (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February 1987). We were looking at exceptional children as people with personalities and individual spirits to sustain the emotional burden of accepting loss and we needed to know what it means to have a disability for learning.

Students appeared to come to terms with exceptionality's emotional demands with little specific information. This stance reminded me of students desire to grasp Piaget with little effort.

Joyce, for example, who gave a class presentation on the learning disabled paid some attention to the disorder but more to social and emotional health. Nevertheless, her presentation brought us back on track with characteristics of the learning disabled and we spent time in class deliberating each of these facets of the problem. The following passage shows how little into theory Joyce ventured.

> This cognitive disorder is often characterized by poor speech, writing, spelling and reading. It also encompasses areas such as short attention spans, low comprehension rates, lack of motivation and low self esteem. The learning disabled person often alienates himself from others which may make their disability worse. Because the learning disabled person is behind the normal level of learning for their age, people have a tendency to treat them younger. It is important for the teacher to remember not to talk down to the person. Praise encouragement and a simple smile can give the person the needed sense of belonging. (Joyce, March 2, 1987)

What did I do? My paralysis returned. I needed more knowledge of resources that could be used and effectively read by these students. I needed a way to insist efforts were commendable but not enough. I was trapped by my perception these students needed to be nurtured for at a time like this. I allowed the class challenge to be tailored by students' weaknesses not potential. Nor was I pushing my understanding of theoretical knowledge about learning disabled children and what elements of that body of knowledge could stimulate and help my beginning students. Our reconfiguration of our work, appreciating one another, and touching the surface of new knowledge suited my needs as well as my charges.

Nor was that the end of the matter. In our work with the behavior disordered and mentally retarded children I became aware of

powerful student assumptions about exceptional differences among pupils. With Patricia's behavior disorder presentation the child's loss was forgotten as students struggled to understand the teacher's difficulties. Her course was not about strategies for teaching exceptional children but surviving them as teachers. A similar shift occurred in conversations about mentally retarded pupils. Students felt threatened by implications for practicing teachers more than compassion for the suffering child. I was slow to realize why compassion should suddenly falter, why a class can be motivated by fear. I underestimated the volatile emotions in young adult students who at once idealistic and anxious about their own inadequacies could be both tearful and fearful. Class involvement faltered as clearly demonstrated in this response. "Student presenters on behavior disorders had asked students to read a chapter from a book in the library as preparation for class. Class members almost to a man failed to do so and we went through a tense period of fury and resentment" (GRR 46 Journal Letter, April, 1987).

Patricia presented the behavior disorder child as a warning to prospective teachers.

> When I consider the characteristics and learning problems of behavior disordered pupils I think we as teachers should be most concerned about this group. Their first characteristic would be that they are anxious and withdrawn. The child would be holding back her feelings keeping them deep inside and this is partly the difficulty.
>
> The second characteristic would be acting out. This is the opposite of the withdrawn child. He would let his feelings out an everyone would know his feelings on any one day. He would also be very aggressive. A sub category of this would be the hostile aggressive child letting his feelings be known

> by using verbal threats or violence--kicking lockers and so forth. My last key characteristic is depression. The withdrawn child is depressed and will tell no one about it. Depression could turn the withdrawn child into the hostile child. Teachers need to be very observant of these changes.

Assumptions that teachers mattered more than children mitigated interest in researching the child's condition. Our work adopted a judgmental, irritated tone, as prospective teachers' attentions shifted from the needy helpless child to the struggling unreasonably threatened teacher. We lost hope for both teacher and child. Deeper emotions intruded. Patricia introduced the range of behavior disorders and led the class discussion in cautious anger. This is how she sounded.

> Behavior disordered children do not want to come to school. They would rather be anywhere else. They do not want to learn. They do not want to follow rules or accept discipline. They think they are right and the teacher is wrong. These characteristics pose tension for the teacher if she takes this behavior as a personal attack on her. (Patricia, Presentation Report, submitted May 14, 1987)

So what is Patricia's solution?

> Since the behavior disordered child does not want to work on their own or in groups the child should be in a special classroom so as not to bother other children. They will do anything to disrupt your class--not intentionally. They can't control their emotions. This disrupts the learning environment for other children but also takes allot out of the teacher. These children need a lot of attention and regular classroom teachers do not have the time or skill to give this attention. That is why I believe it is important for the BD student to be placed in a special classroom where they will get this attention they so desperately need.

Fear prompted stark alternatives. No one asked for literature to help them think about this problem of practice. Half the class

argued such children should receive special qualified attention in another room and some insisted teachers should be properly prepared to cope so the child could stay with peers. No one asked what knowledge would be involved in that preparation. Would observation clarify pressure on the classroom teachers and the possible extent of the child's distress? Would observation have prompted questions about what we did not know about the problem as well as ways practitioners think about the tensions in their work? Perhaps little could be achieved without seeing children being taught, disciplined and encouraged to progress. Sadly our experience using observation as a way to learn to think about psychology in the introduction of psychology left me wary. "This presentation left students confused, doubtful and angry" (GRR 40 Journal Letter, 1987). But of course that confusion about behavior disordered was not entirely unfortunate. Didi explains her response:

> In class we talked about what we could do in certain situations. Most of the class have never seen an exceptional classroom. I am sure that with research we could find places to go and see these children and teachers in action. After classes are over this semester I plan to visit my friends and see how his class is run. I valued the time Mrs. S came into the classroom to talk about her behavior disorder job. It is too bad we could not have some of these exceptional people come in and tell us their feelings. (Didi, May 1, 1987)

Similarly, if more extreme responses occurred when we moved from the learning disabled to the mentally retarded child. "We introduced the mentally retarded child. The tension suddenly seemed to increase. Students explained the literature suggested mentally

retarded youngsters reacted in certain distressing ways that were difficult to think about" (GRR 42 Journal Letter, April, 1987).

Jill confronted Meg's material with more of the depth I was looking for but she had done this course the year before, repeating for a higher grade and she demonstrated the advantage of more information and time to reflect on that knowledge. Perhaps I was struggling to do too much? Jill commented:

> Meg's presentation brought several questions to mind. Her interpretation of mentally retarded and mentally ill made me wonder. I disagree that mentally retarded is a pre-natal problem--people can suffer brain damage due to loss of oxygen supply to the brain and other tragedies yet I do not call this mental illness. Her method of deciding whether or not the child was mentally retarded seemed very simple yet deterministic. She also implied that retardation was a result of the child's social inadequacy. I feel that it is equally caused by a social inadequacy on the part of society as well as the child. The point she brought up concerning the employment and employability of these people bothered me. Though 75% can support themselves, only 10% receive minimum wage. What kind of pay are the other 65% receiving? It seems these people are being exploited; what makes their work less valuable? (Jill, April 8, 1987)

Cheryl, betraying old assumptions rather than new ones, wrote in her examination responding to a question inviting the student to envisage a handicapped child in their elementary school classroom and how they might meet his or her needs.

> Nathan is my mentally handicapped child. He needs a lot of individual attention and should be separated from other students. We program his day so that he is always doing something. We help him practice the skills needed in everyday life. I have to realize Nathan will not learn much academically but that he can learn the basic needs for survival. (Cheryl, Final exam script, May 14, 1987)

Students, uneasy with tragedy could envisage no laughter, making it hard to embrace the mentally retarded child. Meg's weighty presentation of facts, figures and abnormalities made students uneasy and written responses reveal a social not personal acceptance of this exceptionality. Responses like Cheryl's became mechanical or superficial. We played with air. We were uncertain what knowledge meant here. Meg had no case study except her mildly retarded friend in a wheelchair as Annette noticed.

> Meg's friend in the wheel chair made her say that although he is in a wheel chair and mentally effected by his injuries that he is still the person she knew and grew up with. I think the idea of personhood and individualism came through in the presentations as a reminder to us that exceptional children are people. (Annette, May 1, 1987)

Carla makes a positive assessment of her learning but I see it as only a thoughtful beginning and I found it hard to trap opportunities to address the implications of what students told me.

> Before this class I had grouped all mental handicaps under the heading of <u>mentally retarded</u>. I had realized that of course there were different levels of intelligence, but I thought since a person was born with a cognitive or physical problem that was that. Meg in her class presentation on mentally retarded children opened my eyes to many things. I was surprised to learn how little workers in sheltered workshops are paid. I had previously believed these workshops were ideal for the mentally handicapped. I really liked Meg's quotation that "the failure with the retarded is not with them, but with us." (Carla, April 8, 1987)

I see similarities between Carla and Didi's thinking about the mentally retarded as both students move from the child's learning to finances or employment. I wonder if we shifted the assumption that such children cannot learn. Didi concluded.

> I think the most interesting presentation was Meg's report on mental retardation. I was very surprised by most of the information she presented . . . Meg said that 1 in 10 may be mentally handicapped. The IQ score is interesting. I don't remember being tested and I am unsure I am in favor of this test. But I have no reasoning to back up my opinion. I appreciated Meg talking about the cost of care. I have a friend with a daughter who can do nothing for herself. She has been in a special school but now is too old. The family has two choices. The first is to put her in an institution where they take the chance someone could work with their daughter or they keep her at home. I don't know what I would decide. The ideas we brought up into the discussion made me look more closely at how I used to view a mentally handicapped person. I joined a crowd of friends and made fun of this person. (Didi, April 8, 1987)

Alarmed and surprised by Meg's presentation, Didi worried about her own experience and insecurity with intelligence tests. Cost of care for the adult mentally retarded provided another suitable diversion. She slid away, just as Carla did, from an image of the mentally retarded child in a classroom. Just as Carla did, she sought relief in feeling guilty reconstructing her own behavior in the past poking fun at the retarded. None of these thoughts are out of order but they fail to confront the authentic mentally retarded child as the Down Syndrome child was confronted (recorded in Chapter V of this work). This lack of focus concerned me for its own sake but also because I could see our work now being constructed to accommodate tangents, to deviate from our opening theme of knowledge providing skill and hope. Joyce in the excerpt below writes as if a little jaded by one exceptionality after another.

> A mentally retarded person is gregarious, honest and open. The teacher needs to use this openness to help the pupil set realistic goals. The teacher also needs to remember that the mentally retarded students

> need challenge as much as the normal student. In other words the teacher must test and expand the boundaries of the mentally retarded student. More than anything these students need the attention and the approval essential for their learning. (Joyce, April 9, 1987)

The presentation method allowed students to set the pace, to choose the level of difficulty in the material and although we were mostly happy with them, I could see we were not coming to grips with what must be essential experience for the teacher in preparation. Joyce exudes no doubt that all mentally retarded children are open and responsive and that teachers could approve, challenge, test, and expand these learners. When threatened, prospective teachers like any other students seek safe places, tidy learning, and controlled commitments. My teaching did not acknowledge the power of such fears over students' thought because I shared students' difficulties with learning disabled and mentally retarded children. I did not actively counteract the shift in their empathy from the child in distress to the threatened teacher because I unknowingly experienced the same shift.

Conclusion

Establishing a relationship between what sort of theoretical knowledge about psychology and exceptional children I thought students needed to know and the knowledge students were willing to work for proved more taxing than my reading of Dewey and James suggested. One of Dewey's aims was to perfect student experience with an economical use of energy. In this chapter, I have shown Kendel, Chris, Paula, Wendy, Meg, Annette, Jill, Joyce, Didi, Carla

and Patricia grappling, or failing to grapple, with this issue. In these instances of practice, my pedagogy failed to create authentic experience students could effectively reconstruct and their understanding remained unfocused. In the next chapter, I explore more successful adventures with this critical question of theory and practice where my pedagogy had deeper aims than keeping these two courses moving.

CHAPTER V

MORE AUTHENTIC LEARNING

Introduction

Interested in my struggle to forge a relationship in prospective teachers' minds between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge concerned with psychology and learning disabilities, I discovered the gap between theory and practice, partly diminished when I offered personal stories as case studies, asked students to find stories and tell them and I found personal literary accounts that helped us understand that theory and practice run hand in hand. Then, appreciation of knowledge shifted from facts to recognize human complexities. In this chapter, I trap student responses to these particular teaching and learning occasions showing they could more powerfully reconstruct new knowledge. These occasions juxtapose more conflicted instances of practice explored in my preceding chapter for unaware that striving for authenticity was our crucial ingredient our commitment and consistency were not automatic. Nevertheless, a different kind of risk emerged for me and students as our stuff became more intimate, more ambiguous but at the same time more instructive.

Annette: Sense of Theory

"A stronger student, Annette struggled to make sense of theory (like chemistry or algebra) despite the fact that our happy classroom chatter was not theoretical and educational psychology had become an excuse for a non-theoretical conversation among concerned young educators" (GRR 37 Journal Letter, February 1987). Initially, she struggled to grasp theory as isolated knowledge then gradually she took her learning in her own hands and saw something of the way theory and practice might be connected in teaching. In the first instance, she appreciated definitions (theorist, developmental, behavior) for they made her more comfortable (not necessarily knowledgeable) (February 3). One month later, she could excitedly spot theories in the classroom and enjoyed talking about them (March 2). Annette had a tiny love affair with Bruner and Ausebel's ideas as theory and practice became one in her observation. In the same letter, becoming more scientific, she demanded to better understand the theories or else we could not spot them effectively (Journal Letter, March 2, 1987). After that, Annette developed questions from practice apparently not answered by our theorists. She pleaded a case in observation to look to her own concerns, ignoring the assigned Ausebel and Piaget. Feeling her excitement, I gave her leave. Wanting to understand teaching practice and seeing teaching as action, she apologized (with little sincerity) for leaving the theorists out while investigating her own concerns. "Many of the things I wrote down had nothing to do with Ausebel and Piaget but I feel they were of some concern" (Journal Letter, March 2, 1987).

Wanting to test preconceptions or her own theories about teaching by investigating cooperating teachers she mused, "I think I will continue to monitor Mr. Green because I have a few ideas about his teaching and I would like to see if they have any grounds" (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February 1987).

As early as her first observation report in educational psychology (February 4), Annette's authentic inquiry stumbled on pedagogical knowledge which was probably not exactly the intention of this introductory psychology course. Writing like a methods student guided to examine teacher strategies for pupils' learning she noticed the use of examples in class to ". . . get the point across and to help the student understand a different point of view." Annette distinguished Mr. Green's examples in local government to help students understand abstract principles of government while Mrs. Wade ". . . had the pupils give the examples." Annette noticed a relationship between this use of pupils' examples and motivation. Impressed with Mrs. Wade, Annette analyzed her class review. "It seemed to me from the review, pupils remembered pupils' examples better than the teacher's" (Observation Report, February 24, 1987).

In another instance, making the most of her sparse undergraduate wardrobe, she walked the corridors of Flashback High School with self conscious dignity trying to be professional. Annette felt furious and hurt when Patrick, a black tenth grader, ran his hands through her hair on the way to his seat. She explained: "Mrs. Diamond always stressed how important it was to

look professional and act professional and I was doing just that. I guess looking and acting professional doesn't guarantee one will be treated as professional" (Observation Report, March 3, 1987),

Annette called in to see me about her distress and I encouraged her to phone the teacher to find out more about this pupil and learn Mrs. Wade's interpretation of the hair ruffling. Annette came closer to understanding more of the intricacies of teaching adolescents and closer to knowing her teacher who became a powerful role model. Later, Annette made sense of this intrusion in interesting ways.

> I think the kid was just testing me to see what kind of reaction he got. If I decide not to go back to the class, it could be almost like he's won. But I think I'm going to have to be careful around this class. (Observation Report, March 3, 1987)

Initially Annette hated Patrick that he should think of her in such an unprofessional way. Then knowing she must try to understand, she did not turn to tomes on adolescent psychology but talked to practitioners (as she perceived me). Preferring to flee from theory and deal with this specific classroom threat, Annette took individual strides toward becoming a teacher. Her concern had been to be professional and her professional identity strengthened in adjusting to Patrick's attack on it. She made more connections with me. Working through this experience, she uncovered many emotions involved in working with children and began to see her identity creating a concerned collegial relationship with her cooperative teacher and she exploited Patrick's story with fellow

students. Annette had her instance of practice--one that stirred her up in authentic ways to suggest theories about what matters.

Annette's quest to understand teaching then scrutinized Mrs. Wade who had concocted a six-week sociology project for year 11. Students were married to each other and had to spend time researching problems and resolving interpersonal issues.

> They have to deal with marriage budgets, religious attitudes, career differences, interracial problems--in doing so Mrs. Wade is making pupils figure out their own beliefs. Pupils were excited about the marriages and I realized she was not a typical teacher . . . I was amazed at the idea of a high school teacher taking a poll to find out student concerns then give them a project to encourage their curiosity. (Observation Report March 3, 1987)

The marriage project, favorably received by pupils, rightly attracted Annette's imagination. She saw its developmental value and she rejoiced in teaching recognizing the student voice in the curriculum. She might try this in her own career. Mrs. Wade's students' concerns in her class agenda contrasted markedly with Annette's experience in a small, rural, predictable and impersonal curriculum where she rarely shared a real thought with her teachers (Private conversation, March 4, 1987). Preconceptions about teaching, therefore, crashed profitably in Annette's observation. Annette, then, developed some command of the observation process in going beyond the assignments, interviewing teachers and pupils and endlessly raising questions showing me that placing theory on hold and embracing practice can be profitable. Her inquiry was to understand practice not theory but she was open, given the instances described, to wonder about theoretical explanations or possible

solutions. Allowing Annette to follow her initiative and intrigued by the results, I sat back, watching her mind at work, listening to her stories, applauding her involvement and sensing her learning. This was better teaching, finer learning.

Nan and Dewey

Sometimes a student tells you exactly where they stand doing you a real favor by expressing impatience with proceedings. For example, Nan, a candidate in secondary history teaching who would change her major after this semester, was apparently quite clear about what she needed from this course and forced me to remember Dewey and question my pedagogy when she wrote:

> I often felt lost and confused in class lectures . . . the class often loses focus on the theories--we spend too much time discussing personal theories and observation experiences and not enough time on the theorists themselves. I do believe it is important to connect our experiences to the theories. But I do believe it should be in moderation. I think we should focus on a balance between the two. (Journal Letter, March 5, 1987)

For Nan, classes were too indefinite to meet her objectives and the conversation, though interesting, lacked clarity or sticking power. She did not deny the value of past experience or observation in understanding the theory but the theory itself did not stand in clear relief. I was not using a textbook because I had not had time to read a range of texts and make an intelligent choice. Such a text, however, might have helped Nan sort out theorists more easily on her own and early student presentations were uneven. Kendra working on Bruner was uninspired and Annette and Chris tried hard

with Piaget against some hostility and impatience. Students had settled into observation placements where an excited tension clouded their judgement and it was hard to help them see what mattered. Nan astutely interprets our run from the obligations of theory as a problem of focus or direction in class and therefore my responsibility. Nan's observation helped me focus on mediating theory and practice in finer ways.

I tried to reshape class discussion to attend to both theory and practice but it was hard to nudge dispositions (including mine) linked to attitudes to knowledge, to children and self. I watched one role playing strategy specifically designed to engage students in developing a conversation as if they were particular theorists. The question for discussion in the sixth week of the semester considered What is motivation? Students created a circle at my suggestion then sat on desks at their inclination with leg swinging space. I thought at the time (driven by optimism) that all books were closed indicated readiness to trust memories of our learning but now, more aware of the way students were constructing knowledge, I am persuaded it was a tacit statement that books did not matter. Had students adopted my role playing strategy as easy learning or was the process of mulling over their experiences valuable? I did not seek to cause a break with that experience but facilitate its continuity to accommodate new knowledge.

In the ensuing discussion, theorists were barely mentioned but students' theories of behavior were implicit. Initially, attention was paid to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation in pupils' incentives to work, reward and punishment, and self discipline. The distinction and examples of differences between the two, occupied the class for over an hour. Teachers in the end were assumed to have to tap both motivations. The whole discussion intrigued me for the class could have been an introductory class but this was the sixth week and students were intensely interested in what I thought were preliminary levels of understanding about why teachers do what they do. But how preliminary are these important questions? Still eschewing theorists' views the conversation swung to the best type of relationship among teachers and pupils and Annette's sense of justice outraged by teachers who play favorites. Students were easily distracted from "professional" work by injustices suffered at teachers' hands. But these injustices had stitched into them authentic insights to clarify or confuse the teacher's role.

Students held teachers should make students do what was required. My idea that teachers might help students explore their own inner resources was not well received. But it was heard. Identifying routine flatness in her observation classes at all levels, Nan called this disengagement low motivation, interpreting it to be the students' loss but the teacher's fault. Holding the teacher responsible, Nan did not wonder how relations between students and teachers could be jointly productive. Nan, unlike Paula, who feared and respected student resistance, gave teachers the whole responsibility to motivate. If teachers were organized and energetic, then pupils would want to learn, to be organized, to

be enthusiastic. Nan did not question what pupils might be motivated to learn. Chris, pretending to be and think as Piaget, entered the discussion as the psychologist. Here was theory's chance but he could not be authentic. I capture his entry: "Some strange thought processes here. He was at once relevant and way off base. Student listeners were tolerant but muffling impatience or confusion" (GRR 36 Journal Letter, March 1987).

No one tackled Chris's Piagetian confusions--they simply waited for the gobble-de-gook to pass them by. Were they not ready? Were they predisposed not to fuss about Piaget's intellectual constructions? Were they learning more than I knew from the work as we constructed it? Illustrating how we were constructing the relationship between theory and practice, Sheila swung us back to the safety of practice by stipulating we must find out why the child is not motivated. Kendra, building on Sheila, suggested we could say "the teacher's job was to unearth motivation, preserve it, carry it further" which seemed a pleasant sentiment. Students occasionally paid debt to Bruner and Ausebel but this conversation on motivation took place among young people with warm amateur interests in children, provoked by observation and beholden to preconceptions about teachers held at the opening of class. They came interested in classroom relations and now debated friendship and trust with pupils. That others before them have written about how the child learns, organizes knowledge, remembers, feels, and creates was not compelling. My attempt to recreate the theorists may have failed. But, why was that so? I agreed with Nan that our

work needed tighter direction and I stepped more decisively into guiding student presentations but this role-playing occasion highlights how easily my pedagogical search for authenticity could be put at risk if I forgot that the most powerful authenticity might come from the very conversation where I felt edgy, if I knew what to do.

Authentic Practice

Simple assessments at the end of this course convinced me that many useful inferences had been made from observation of practice even if those inferences did not amplify student understanding of psychological theory. I came to rejoice students did grow in ways they did but be anxious about how serendipitous it seemed. Joyce, for example, embraced the classroom and was sobered about teaching as work. "Having seen many grades and many teachers, I now understand the amount of work involved and how inconsistent and unsure it is" (May 1, 1987). Mary, similarly appreciated observation for the way ". . . it gave some idea of pupils' different backgrounds and how they effect learning" (March 5, 1987).

Kendra relished her life in the observation classroom but was as unprepared there to dissect her preconceptions as she was in the theoretical classroom. She accused Mrs. Richards of ignoring students, of giving insufficient supervision to the class and mismanaging Ernie. And here we witness a very rare attempt to think about theory with practice. "I can see that he prefers reading to math, so I think she should try to see if she can at least relate

math to his experience, isn't the theory of Bruner saying we learn by experience?" (March 1, 1987).

Opportunities to teach in the observation lab were powerful occasions for students: "Although I dreaded the long drives every Tuesday, I loved being there. I found out I could teach the lower grades and was glad I was given an opportunity to do just that" (Kate, May 1, 1987). Jenny an academically limited but sincere candidate for teaching felt her accomplishment.

> By observing I have learned a great deal of things. I have learned how patient one must be, the little things students will try to get away with, and the importance of establishing yourself as an authoritative figure while still being understanding. I've seen things I like and dislike and hopefully from these experiences I can be the best teacher ever. (Jenny, May 12, 1987)

And speaking to the complexities in teaching Patricia commented, "It's hard for me to write down the things that I observed because sometimes it would take pages and pages to explain what happened in one minute" (Patricia, May 12, 1987). So what did students learn in Dustfield? Joyce, a thoughtful intense person, from a tiny rural town in Southern Illinois became emotionally involved in the inequities she saw and asked good questions in class about what could be done. She wrote:

> Observation was the most valuable part of the course for me. I saw a variety of grades and teachers. I had no idea how different urban and rural schools were. Students face realities I never dealt with and hands on experience got me more involved. (Joyce, Observation Report, May 4, 1987)

Paula learned she could not think about Ausebel and the music classroom at the same time. Joyce felt sobered about teaching and

more aware of pupils' backgrounds. Why did all this seem attractive and purposeful compared with stage theory? Summing up, Joyce who worked hard at theory did not mention her keen efforts there.

> The observation hours for this class have opened my eyes to many things I have never thought about . . . I learned many things about teachers, students and how an urban environment effects them all. Overall, I found this experience to be challenging and very beneficial to someone going into the field of teaching. (Joyce, May 12, 1987)

As other students responded quite happily to observation assignments they saw the magnitude of the task (Patricia), what they liked and disliked in teaching (Jenny), had opportunities to teach (Kate and Annette), and saw the influence of student socio economic background (Mary). I encouraged students to talk energetically about these findings and form conclusions about teaching practice from them without demanding connections with our theorists. I don't think I thought that possible; I rejoiced in the individual responses to observation experience and student willingness to keep puzzling about what they saw. For students in their first education course that seemed appropriate to me. They became animated, talking about their classrooms with professional dignity. Students saw the value of the practical experience without deploring loss of theoretical insights. I became less uneasy in class seeing I allowed a different type of theory to emerge where theory was based on student inferences. I imagined this thinking could be reworked over time in the teacher education program with more experience and more exposure to literature. At times, students seemed close to getting inside the minds of teacher and pupils. They felt the

authenticity of practice as I puzzled how learning from observation actually happens. Both the excitement and my sense there were huge questions here for my research and teaching satisfied both parties.

Paula's Own Theorist

Paula showed energetic initiative in two ways. The first involved constructing her own theory of learning and the second took her to the library shelves and a writer who met her concerns better than those on the syllabus. This creativity in constructing a theory and resourcefulness in finding a theorist who responded to a problem of practice gave me heart. Paula could see the difference between understanding theories and integrating them. "I think I understand a lot of different theories we've been discussing, but I still haven't discovered their place in my thinking" (Paula, Journal Letter, March 2, 1987). I took this to mean that Paula could categorize the separate theories in her mind but not see how combinations of them afford insight. Paula's message was helpful to me if only I could figure out what to do with the mental processes she described. Writing boldly, Paula explained her own theory formed along the lines of a pyramid.

> We all start at the bottom and through acquiring knowledge (by experiences, research etc.) we advance by levels working up the pyramid. We may never reach the peak, but our experiences along the way strengthen the levels we passed through. The pyramid moves from a basis for knowledge; to understanding of knowledge; to appreciation of knowledge; to application of knowledge and at the top-professional or semi-professional education of others . . . This is not a complete theory but I hope one day to develop it into a working theory for use in my teaching instrumental music. (Exam script, 1989)

Paula felt driven to understand resistance as a problem of practice bending literature effectively to that quest. "It is harder to speak in class. Others don't see the student can be a threat. I can't make them understand" (Student Journal Letter, March 2, 1987). Looking for explanations, Paula pursued Meyers' (1986) Teaching Students to Think Critically. Looking at the chapter headed "Fostering Students' Interest and Motivation," Paula records, "Even though he isn't one of the theorists we studied I liked what he had to say and I see it as a fresh approach to a difficult subject" (exam script).

Meyers legitimized Paula's thinking. "Meyers says that we are powerless--unable to control what is going on in people's minds during classroom hours" (exam script), making sense of Paula's thinking about student resistance. Myers suggested external forces impinge on motivation even though the teacher's task is to nurture the natural inclination to learn, outside pressures encourage intellectual caution and discourage reflective thinking. The teacher has no control of the negative preconceptions brought to specific subject matter areas. Myers is summarized as saying, "The class format is often a hindrance to productive and motivated learning. The student who goes from one 50-minute class to another needs to settle down and engage in topics of interest" (exam script).

For Paula this is true in music. Myers explained preconceptions of a particular academic discipline come from previous encounters and the pupils' own whims and dislikes. Paula

liked the correlation between her theorist and her view of music teaching. To Paula's delight Myers suggested procedures.

> Three of the ways that Meyer says we can help to turn the above situations around are to use an open dialogue with students about the subject taught, through the use of anonymous survey forms, and presenting a problem or controversy at the beginning of the course for which the class and the teacher will make a discovery about. Of these the best seem open dialogue. (Exam script)

The key, Paula reports, is to relate new knowledge to previous knowledge using powerful analogies and metaphors. "As I mentioned before, I like Meyers' approach best. Not only does he tell you the problems that you will encounter as a teacher, but he gives several different techniques for you to try in the classroom" (exam script).

Paula engages Myers' argument, follows his reasoning and agrees with his findings. Perhaps Paula's story exemplifies her need for Hawkins' (1974) <u>engrossment</u> in an issue from practice before theory will have a telling effect? Her report of Myers is consistent with her serious thoughtful journal letters and observation reports enabling (as she suggested at the end) deeper insight into teaching. "I have seen the teacher's side of the podium; that of frustration when things don't go as planned or not being able to influence the student/inspire them to want more from their music" (exam script).

<u>Mathew</u>

Just as Paula found her authenticity in Meyers, I brought to students' attention a personal experience to use like a text in the exceptional child class. I had decided to be deliberately open about my own attitudes toward the exceptional child as victim,

student and human being. I did not hand out a syllabus of directions or requirements until the next session but placed students in a circle to listen to Mathew's story. I spoke without notes but I had carefully rehearsed the story at home. I told them about a young American friend of mine who had taught me over two or three years to love the handicapped child. I wanted students to be emotionally moved as I was by a nine-year-old boy's courage to become aware of his loss, his acceptance and hope. Could we think about teaching him? Nine-year-old Mathew was a victim of spina bifida with no sensations from the waist down, mostly operating in a wheel chair or edging about on the floor. He attended school in the same elementary school classroom as others his age and was, therefore, taught by a teacher like my candidates for teaching in elementary education. He exemplified the exceptional child.

But Mathew, I told the class, was blessed with a fine inquisitive mind. His school work was above average and he wanted to be a movie director, imagining himself sitting in the director's chair. Sharing Mathew's photo with the class I described how he liked to dance, placing his fingers spread-eagled making patterns in the air with mine, conscious he could never really dance. I said I felt my heart jump at Mathew's enthusiasm and constraint. Sometimes losing heart, he found school work ungratifying. His close friend Jim wheeled the chair out to recess, putting it where Mathew could be part of the play. When I last spoke to Mathew, it was about Jim's tragic death in a motor car accident. Mathew wondered why he should be still alive with this handicap and his healthy friend

dead. He courageously faced these questions. Could I? Could we together?

I wanted to share this story at the beginning of this new course because few students in the class would have the privilege of friendship with someone like Mathew. I wanted to focus on an authentic life of the real exceptional child, not a statistic or textbook definition. I wanted a powerful opening and a continuing image. I wanted students to confront Mathew's physical problems, considering their emotional impact on Mathew but also on other students and on themselves as teachers. I wanted students to notice similarities and differences between Mathew and the children they knew or had been. I wanted Mathew to be seen as a family member and as a small boy grieving his friend. I wanted to make the point that Mathew's mind could be nurtured by talking about his ambition to be a movie director and I had a hidden agenda. "I am intent to cultivate a richer perspective on teaching with every child since I believe loss occurs to all and hope is due to all" (GRR 33 Journal Letter, January, 1987).

Class members valued the exercise. Chuck, representative of many rural high school students, helped me see the importance of creating a starting point for understanding exceptionality and loss in the classroom for students with limited personal experience. After meeting Mathew, Chuck could grow. Mathew alerted Chuck to the possible and Chuck responded. He wrote soon after the class, "Listening to classmates' responses to Mathew I realized that in

many large schools these things could really happen. I came from a small school where handicaps were rare" (Chuck, February 3, 1987).

I felt justified in my unorthodox beginning. Sandra's class, writing in response to Mathew's story, was particularly telling.

> When I signed up for this course I didn't know what to expect. My first thoughts were that we would be reading from a textbook about every ability and disability a child could have but the first class proved me wrong. Mathew. Even though he was unknown to me, he was real, not just a story in a book. Aside from his physical handicap he was experiencing things I could relate to--difficulty with his sister, feelings of competitiveness and emotional needs. When you asked me to put myself in Mathew's shoes and speak his mind, here is what I was thinking.
>
> As I am walking down this ramp on my brace and crutches, I see two little boys playing, same age as me, playing tag football. I wonder if I were normal like those boys how much more I would be liked. I know that handicapped children get a lot of attention, someone constantly around but I feel that attention stems from pity. If I were normal, I could pick on my sister, play with other kids, just be bored--all the things a normal child can do. But I can't. I used to have Jim to play with, but he died and now there is no one. I sometimes wish I had died too--then everyone would be happy. My parents would get a rest and my sister and grandmother could stop feeling guilty and I would be at peace. (Sandra, February 3, 1987)

That evening I made this remark in my journal: "Sandra and I danced in this authentic experience" (GRR 33 Journal Letter, February, 1987). What did I mean? Did I think of teaching as a powerful dance--a dance between the generations where the lead could change? I sensed in Sandra's writing that she had been caught off guard (expecting something dreary in her first class) then, her attention caught by Mathew's story, she moved in step with me (thinking similarly), similarly aware. Mathew, so real for me, became real for her. She explored his emotional needs like hers

then she took the lead in the dance by creating her interpretative football images, phrases of the normal child, and her sense of Mathew's restless spirit. Perhaps she danced in her imagination with Mathew's fingers? Whatever the case, when I read Sandra's piece I felt we were connected with this small boy in loss. I felt empowered (thinking we could all grow in the dance) assuming every member of the class could have written as Sandra did. I summed up the general response, not realizing that the dance could be risky. Had I ambitiously aimed for a philosophical or moral acceptance of difference rather than conquering the State Board's characteristics first? What did it really mean for the development of a learning experience to suggest, as I did, "Students were willing to be saddened and uncertain as we faced unanswerable stories of human loss" (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

I draw on my experience with a disabled child. By telling the story of Mathew and showing his photo, I created a connection for us to share throughout the course . . . a connection stronger than a piece of descriptive literature. Included in my story telling was a commentary on my feelings about Mathew and an invitation to the class to figure out how Mathew felt.

Role Playing

I became convinced that a form of authenticity could be secured through role playing if it placed sensitive demands on student imaginations. Late in February, after Joyce's presentation and more discussion of the learning disabled characteristics, I tried the

following imaginary technique. Seeking empathy for the parent, child, and the teacher's perspective and tensions among them in working with the learning disabled, I placed two empty chairs in front of me facing my students. I introduced imaginary eight-year-old children, Billy and Jean, who were mildly learning disabled. I posed the question--what can we do as teachers to help these children? How might the teacher adopt an appropriate manner in assisting or instructing? Able to apply some knowledge from discussion of the learning-disabled child, students responded with considerable staying power. Quick to the rescue, no one resisted helping Billy and Jean. Joyce suggested we could use another chair in the middle for a student without any difficulty who could befriend Billy and Jean and who the teacher could use as support in instruction. Karen thought communication would be blocked by this row of chairs so we should rearrange the chairs making a natural cluster so all three pupils could see each other and each other's work. We devised a group writing project for all three to master together. We practiced talking to these children and once more engagement was lively and critical. Imaginary teachers' tone of voice was scrutinized for signs of praise, encouragement, or disappointment. Billy's father and Jean's mother visited class, sharing their reasonable fears and hopes with us. We planned a whole day's curriculum for the class enabling Bill and Jean to contribute to the work like the other children. Our curriculum thinking was rather amateurish for students had done none of their elementary methods courses--so in some ways this adventure was not

pedagogically strong. On the other hand, acceptance of loss was at the heart of our exchanges. Something could be done. The learning disabled could be loved and helped. The learning disabled could be taught. At the heart of this role-playing the child's problem was accepted and hopeful actions abounded. "This imaginative method seemed to help" (GRR 34 Journal Letter, February 1987), and "The role playing strategy I used in educational psychology to synthesize theoretical positions now took on more life and power in transforming knowledge of the exceptional child" (GRR 35 Journal Letter, February, 1987).

Down Syndrome

Perhaps our most powerful learning experience in the education of the exceptional child class occurred when I used a student researcher's visit to a home where a child suffered from Down Syndrome. At the end of February, still relatively early in the semester, the dance resumed when Carolyn led us to a sensitive understanding of loss in her presentation of Jonathan, a Down Syndrome child. Nagging me for appropriate books or case studies, she resorted to the college library and found few references there. She fumed a little then had the wit to realize that in a small rural village near her home a family reared a Down Syndrome child.

Taking her risk she spent the weekend with this family. That Carolyn should think of this wonderful idea indicates her positive attitudes to our content and the type of understanding she valued. As Carolyn opened the presentation with a description of seven-year-

old Jonathan at play, she was visibly excited, thoughtful, and responsible for she had been on quite a journey. In her interviews with both parents and with an older sister, Carolyn followed and recreated Jonathan's story from birth through all stages of school, play, and medical experience. She tracked his parents' anguish endured in establishing at the elementary school whether Jonathan was educable or trainable. She had grasped and was able to convey his parents' anger and grief. She helped us understand his sister's jealousy and confusion because of all the time and attention he required, leaving her with what felt like less love. Carolyn's quiet firm voice brought the Down Syndrome right into our classroom in an inescapable way. We felt the child, those parents, and that sister in our class conversation. Carolyn had plentiful interview notes but rarely needed them as she fielded questions with sensitive aplomb. Her learning was deep enough to readily teach others. Everyone agreed that this was an outstanding presentation because with Jonathan, just like Mathew, our awareness was tied so neatly to reality--we felt the real experience and suffering of Jonathan's parents and some small sense of what it was like to be Jonathan himself. "We felt like Carolyn, as if we had been in Jonathan's home" (GRR 35 Journal Letter, February 1987).

Fellow students were keen to write about Carolyn's work--an important gauge of connections students were making with one another's thinking. Annette, who was one of my most intellectually lively students, seriously wanting the best possible preparation for teaching, immediately appreciated the presentation because of its

emotional impact: "Carolyn's approach was especially moving because it wasn't just a figure or a number but a real life situation with real feelings (Annette, March 1, 1987). Annette asserted she learned from these shared feelings in more powerful ways than a statistical analysis. But Annette's learning, after three months' reflection and continued classroom debate went further--her assumptions of what happened in troubled families were shaken and extended to include this wearing political struggle about a definition distinguishing Jonathan from being educable or trainable. She changed her mind about the extent of loss. "Hearing the struggle of the Down Syndrome child really touched home. I can't believe, now I can, that one family would have to go through so much to get a decent education for their child" (Annette, May 1, 1987).

Annette came to grips with unexpected dimensions of the problem of the exceptional child and Jonathan's need for strong advocates to seek out the decent education others would simply expect. Through Carolyn's investigations and observation, Annette became more sensitive to the authentic experience of the child, family and inequality's grip. Joyce, soon after the Down Syndrome presentation, carefully measured out reasons for optimism in confronting the Down Syndrome Child's loss. She conceded we have discussed the disappointment and the challenge of the exceptional child.

> The Down Syndrome student has special characteristics and considerations that need to be taken into account. Down syndrome is both a physical and cognitive disorder caused by the failure of miosis that creates an extra copy of one chromosome. This extra copy causes physical disorders such as an

> enlarged tongue, chubby and clumsy hands, slanted eyes and weak necks. Down Syndrome also causes cognitive disorder such as slurred speech and slower learning ability, although the learning ability is present. Because the learning ability is present the teacher needs to work with the student to set goals and help them reach these goals. Since the Down Syndrome child has physical weaknesses the teacher needs to be familiar with the types of therapies available or that the child is receiving. Through this class we are faced with many disappointments of the exceptional child, it seems as if the Down Syndrome child, despite the problems they may have, is one of the bright spots in the area of exceptionality. (Joyce, March 2, 1987)

Carolyn showed we could learn about exceptional children by spending time with them and their families. She advocated the power of that authentic experience in her own demeanor in class and in her understanding. Annette made similar connections and although these connections of authentic experience may have been less explicit for Joyce and Patricia, they helped their ability to accept the loss and be hopeful about thinking about supportive educative measures. Carolyn's presentation lived on for Patricia was prompted in her exam paper to think more about detailed characteristics in the presentation and her conclusion had a spirited twist.

> The Down syndrome child is different from other categories of exceptionality because he is <u>able to learn</u>. Their problem is with speech and appearance. Teachers need to work on the physical problems. Constant work with a therapist to improve speech would be critical. Help children set goals and check them often. Once they reach those goals don't stop there--keep going to bigger and better goals. Keep them motivated and encourage them to do the best they can. Involving parents in the child's progress could be very useful. (Patricia, Final Examination Script, May 14, 1987)

Writing at the end of the semester looking back at the Down Syndrome, she has learn to think positively and hopefully about

these children. She can imagine herself accepting the problem and working hopefully on it with others. The child can learn and she could try to teach him.

Parent's Story of Loss

Reading selections from an autobiographical account of a difference in the family, I created a piece of theater for students who moved to tears took on new appreciation of pain and acceptance. Early in April, much later in the semester I found a book by Featherstone, A Difference in the Family (1980) that I thought would help us understand some of the ineffable issues of loss in this course. I met Featherstone in Cambridge and from her understood a little more about the need to explore loss in teacher preparation. I was on the right, if difficult, track in Illinois.

> I met Helen Featherstone today. She has been on my mind. I am reading her book about her severely disabled son Jody while looking for case study material for my exceptional child class. The book is what I am looking for. (GRR 40 Journal Letter, April 1987)

This book told us of daily lives of anticipation, sorrow, and continued effort by parents and siblings to deal with the reality of difference. Without multiple copies and suffering restricted funds for photocopying, I decided to mark passages and read these aloud to the class with little commentary apart from connecting details. I chose a variety of scenes recounting Helen's experience with her son Jody, a severely disabled child. There was something in this resource that prompted an awakening in my students. It was as if they felt chilled by the whoosh of honest emotions. I think it was

Jody's humanity but also Helen's motherly dilemmas and pressures. Meanwhile I grew.

> Featherstone's honest autobiographical insight into her own loss and that of others--dignified loss for me--helping me understand I must encourage prospective teachers to respect individuality in loss. (GRR 40 Journal Entry, April, 1987)

My teaching had been tending toward a generic loss and a generic hope. I understood more now about the ambiguity of acceptance and the challenge of developing this attitude. Featherstone writes, "There is nothing final about acceptance. Whether our children are healthy or disabled, most of us view our life quite differently from one day to the next" (p. 231).

What extracts did I choose to read aloud and what did I assume they might capture? Some I read for me (for my education) for students to see me puzzling about aspects of a difference in a family. Some I read for memories of my own childhood but mostly I had chosen to enlighten and provoke my students who had seemed thus far willing to be moved, willing to tackle these unanswerable questions. This key resource took us into the family's loss with honest language accessible to undergraduates. The story was compelling--the pain both obvious but refined (respected). Jody was partly a mystery but he was real as were Helen, his father Jay, and his sisters.

We had in class been thinking about hope as if hope were an automatic human quality in distress. I wanted my prospective teachers to embrace hope with differences but Helen reminded us of the tenuous link between despair and hope and the shifting quality

of hope as more bad news arrives. After this reading would we grasp that parents and teachers fight for hope and teachers battle with despair? I felt I was creating a piece of theater with its persuasive power as I introduced Jody.

> . . . as the months went by we learned that Jody was not only blind. He had cerebral palsy; he was probably severely retarded. During the first eighteen months of his life he cried almost continually from pain that no one could diagnose or relieve. His days and nights were passed in misery; his future looked bleak and limited. Hardly a day passed without our asking ourselves whether his life was worth living. Each of us separately and together, wished for an end to his ordeal: a peaceful painless death.
>
> He did not die. He was remarkably tough. Unexpectedly after the doctor removed an infected shunt, his pain went. He cried less during the day and slept longer at night. He smiled more often even laughed. Liberated from his inner torments he responded to us. We began to like him. He gave more: his smiles his laughter his delighted shrieks. He asked less. He still needed a lot of special care, but we no longer performed our daily routines with one hand while patting a wretched baby on the other. Each of us began to feel that Jody's life was worth living, and that he made his own special contribution to the family. (p. 236).

I returned to an earlier statement of Jody's problem.

> My husband and I learned that Jody's eyes were badly damaged when he was two weeks old; the doctor told us that the infection that had scarred his retina might have invaded his brain as well. For months we worried and worried: Would Jody be retarded, and if so, how seriously? Would he see at all, and if he could how much? We watched him nervously, searching for the answers to these questions. Hope battled with despair . . . (p. 15)

I left until almost last the transcript of the siblings dwelling on this piece of text for two reasons. First, I wanted to provoke curiosity how other children reconstruct tragedy, difficulty and difference. Second, I wanted to demonstrate the emotional

involvement of Jody's sisters to help us understand such brothers and sisters in our classrooms. This extract helped us identify with deep emotions. It is quite long so I have extracted some of the conversation. The two girls with a tape recorder are creating a radio play. Jody, their brother cannot walk, talk or see (p. 137).

Witch: And now, I can't blame you. (Pause) But perhaps I do blame you. Why didn't you use signs, the communication system that would indicate that you wanted to be taught to speak?

Child: He goes to a special school.

Witch: (ignoring her) Now, use the signs, deaf boy. (To child) since your brother cannot hear . . .

Child: Yes.

Witch: Deaf children can be taught to speak. He is blind and deaf so let him put his hands on your lips.

Child: Okay.

Witch: And, so he can learn to speak, I will not think of murdering him. But if he cannot learn to speak in ten years I shall kill him. Okay? In ten years you will be thirteen and he will be fifteen. Bring him to me in ten years. Teach him. Work on it every day except when you are in school.

Child: I also go to play group every day.

Witch: Except when you are in play group and he is in school, work on it. Teach him to speak.

Child: But his teachers learn him to speak.

Witch: Help them. Stop going to play group. Go to school with him and help his teachers to teach him to speak.

Child: Well, then my sister and my mother will be mad at me.

Witch: I don't care. If you do not do it, your brother will be killed.

Child: I know, but the teachers don't need any help.

Witch: Help them. Do as I say or your brother and you will be killed. Do it. Go. See you in ten years.

To juxtapose this powerful reading I chose a passage of triumph. Helen shares her experience.

> On the way to the first pre-school I got lost and nearly ran out of gas. I was nervous. I knew the children would be handicapped and I wondered how they would look to me. I was afraid I would want to turn away in embarrassment. When I entered the classroom I was astonished. It was not the children's disabilities that struck me. It was their vitality and beauty. I marvelled at the miracle of mobility and the achievement of human communication. A little girl hitched herself across the room to me to offer me a toy and a smile. I was touched. Driving home I thought, "this was a gift from Jody. If I had visited this school three years ago, I would have recoiled from the kids. Now they look beautiful to me." (p. 227)

My evening journal entry was deceptively simple: "Then I read Helen Featherstone, description of Jody, times with medicos, acceptance, siblings' story of the witch and Jody's gift when Helen saw the beauty of the disabled child. The class cried (GRR 42 Journal Letter, April, 1987). Something remarkable had happened and class members at their own suggestions wrote to Helen Featherstone in Cambridge, thanking her for coming into their lives.

Conclusion

Pressured by the puzzle of theory and practice in undergraduate teacher preparation, in Chapter IV, I collected examples where I kept silent and students retreated. Dewey might point to

unconsolidated principles needed to ground learning. He might note my concern, like any beginner, was to create experiences and opportunities for learning without patterning their intellectual reconstruction. It was hard to pave paths toward that reconstruction. In this chapter, I used authentic experience, telling stories, reading selections of powerful cases, and calling on student research and experiences to lead students more effectively to theoretical and dispositional knowledge. The paths were more intimate, more enduring, but still not necessarily sufficiently well-mediated with recognized theorists in these fields.

CHAPTER IV

HINDSIGHT

After two years' further experience with teacher education undergraduates at Bunbury College and two years at Michigan State University's College of Education, I realize student enthusiasm to learn to teach in 1986-1987 was rarely wedded to intellectual curiosity but was prompted by few alternative career possibilities, by emotional attraction to children or tenderness for past teachers. Wanting to do something worthwhile, students delighted in my belief that teaching was important work, believing teachers should do <u>good work</u> (pupils should learn) but they supposed teachers could operate with little professional education, beyond adequate factual knowledge.

To be enthusiastic about becoming a teacher is one thing and to be educated for its intellectual worth is another. My cry for analytical rigor conflicted with students' truths about knowledge, pedagogy, and schooling. Nor were my lessons easy--the uncertainties of teaching as work, the ambiguities involved in gauging pupil's reactions and understandings, attention to relations between theory and practice, and so on. Tension between enthusing about teaching and learning to teach underscores my analysis of

secondary English methods where students did not resist the education I had in mind but could not embrace it.

I set traps or posed situations to promote understanding but my learners were prepared for different traps--different situations and different reasons for studying. While students expected little difference between learning biology and learning to teach, I did not know how to prepare them to face and embrace the sort of work we would do. Expecting to swiftly engage students in pedagogical thinking, I tried to call on secondary English methods students' knowledge of literature for debate, reflection, and appreciation preparatory to exploring multiple appropriate teaching strategies. To tap their passion, I asked my probing question about authors they wanted to share but students, not driven by a passion for literature, misinterpreted my remark to suggest they needed more facts.

Some student constraints had their origins in high school education which left them generally ill-prepared either to be curious or endure. It was hard then to learn (let alone learn to teach) in social, analytic ways I had in mind--questioning, discussion, debate, disputation, role playing, simulation, writing and rewriting. Students, unused to learning co-operatively, expected me to tell them the facts I thought they needed to know.

Working class students tended to be practical rather than dreamers. Many, first in their families to attend college and not knowing bookish delight and intellectual progress, felt tentative. On the whole, they were looking, I think, for a spiritual and

intellectual odyssey but knew neither what it looked like nor its benefits. Offering a dream of fine teaching, I thought I could help for I came from the Australian working class but my vision had expanded and it was hard to look back and find myself in these restricted views of the possible for students and potential pupils.

My learners suffered. More pressing lessons in life interrupted concentration and tenacious thought as many conversations in my office were about relationships with parents, loved ones, employers, campus enemies, and death. Judy struggled with complicated life choices including a small fatherless son. Paul needed to talk about his mother's death from cancer and attempts to help his depressed father and troubled high school sister. Paula's father was seriously ill. Grandfathers died and close friends were killed in car accidents.

Moreover, the cultural context (faculty, staff, and students) in this liberal arts, working-class college made education majors feel intellectually inferior to mathematicians and biology students who studied <u>real knowledge</u> while education majors (both elementary and secondary) <u>played with scissors and paste</u>. In a small rural setting, these attitudes had greater power to constrain prospective teachers' views of themselves as scholars than in a larger, more diverse college where teacher education faculty and majors might, unharrassed, pursue excellence.

In my first chapter, I show how these constraints played out in our teaching and learning. I argue high school inadequacies, socio-economic origins, personal ordeals, and cultural context

produce entrenched inescapable assumptions students held about knowledge and pedagogy clashed with my equally entrenched views seen in my hesitation to rethink my teaching in elementary social studies methods. There we faced each other with an enthusiasm about becoming teachers but completely different views of content, strategies, classroom management, role of teachers, or the purposes of schooling. My response was understandably slow as I optimistically assumed I could translate my enthusiasm using my authorities but those authorities informed my passion not theirs.

It is tempting to think we created a reasonable, intellectually satisfying, compromise in our dealings but I hesitate to make such generalizations. Moments of illumination, using performance as a teaching device in secondary English methods or calling on authentic experience in educational psychology and education of the exceptional child, were offset by development so small as to remind us that this work is as slow as change wrought by therapy. I felt my learners' heightened self respect over time but it would be hard to claim students necessarily learned to think like teachers.

Annette, in contrast, developed in leaps and bounds from 1986 to 1989. Showing an unusually independent mind in the introduction to educational psychology in the spring semester, 1986, she tackled observation as if already a senior methods' student. Her work debating mainstreaming in the education of the exceptional child embraced ambiguity. She became increasingly, consciously intellectual as she progressed through the program. I had the thrill of seeing her in social science secondary methods (spring,

1988) where as my only student I saw what could be. Already firm friends from the previous year, we worked together as if inspired on the excitements of pedagogy and the realities of surrounding schools. Annette caught fire, loving talking about these matters as much as I did. In this class, Michele embraced every opportunity to think deeply about the interrelations of content, pedagogy, and children. She ably reconstructed her experience and vivaciously commented on examples from my practice. She puzzled about spontaneity in working with adolescents and the need for clear advance planning. She saw the curriculum as a place to foster democratic values and respect for diversity. I had envisaged such conversations in 1986 when I entered the college.

We tackled student teaching in social science (spring, 1989) at a local, rural high school. Annette battled with weaker students, belligerent types, and a depressed intellectual school climate. Having been anxious about slower learners, Michele found unexpected patience. Belligerent children caused more panic but honest written reflections helped her adopt an adult perspective and resistance hurt less. Determined to remain cheerful about knowledge and its value she tried to forge relationships between history and pupils' backgrounds or aspirations. Proud of Annette's work, I learned more about my own. I modified some earlier expectations about the school as a place to learn to teach recognizing the multiple, swift-moving pressures and doubts inevitable in such a practicum.

In my novice year, the significance of the gap between enthusiasm to teach but little passion for knowledge passed me by.

Had I noticed the gap I would have been in less of one muddle but more in another--trying to figure out how to cope with this problem of practice. If I thought teaching were an intellectual process I would need to teach in ways that remediated high school intellectual experience and combatted the cultural context. That's a lot for a novice! Where I had more time--over five teacher education experiences with Annette in foundations in American education, introduction to educational psychology, the education of the exceptional child, secondary social science methods, and student teaching seminar and supervision, I witnessed a beginner teacher take to the blocks, accepting the ambiguity of her work with children and content with a lively, curious and hopeful mind.

What Would I Try Now?

Now, I would have certain habits of mind stitched into my strategies and classroom conversation. In elementary social studies, for example, thinking of observation as a habit, I would work on students' abilities to observe well before I sent them into the schools (programming observation as late as possible in the semester with full- or half-day experiences rather than one-hour slots). Before entry to the schools, I would foster attention to detail and develop inference by conducting a series of exercises beginning with observing a tray of non-human, non-moving objects. My next assignment would have students observe people at work, other than teachers. Saturday mornings would be fine times to watch the supermarket supervisor, the bank teller, or the mechanic. Tasks,

attitudes, rewards, stresses and strains, interpersonal communications would all add to knowledge of work enhancing the capacity to watch teaching as work. Third, students would be asked to observe my teaching another class, questioning my purposes, strategies, actions, interpersonal relations, successes, and failures. Observation of another college professor could follow.

I would then be in a firmer position to judge what students can learn from observation, what types of placements to seek and what assignments to set. Prospective students, on the other hand, might be more self confident in their visits, see more intelligently and be more likely to talk constructively with practicing teachers. Students unprepared for entry to classroom observation enter seeing what they used to see, applauding what they used to applaud, and imitating behaviors that once pleased them as students. I sat with Bill, a social science major, observing an eighth-grade class in the fall semester, 1986. We both agreed to take notes. He could think of little to write except that the content was interesting compared with my intense analysis of the teaching and pupils' reactions. Prospective teachers are free to see what they want--how can that freedom can be "capable of realization"? (Dewey, Experience and Education, 1926, p. 22).

My drive now would be to foster a cultivated perception of the classroom as learning community where teacher and pupils work together to construct knowledge. Better use of cases reconstructed and compared with similar cases in students' experience may be a beginning. It is easier to state my aim than my method but I would

seek awareness of the divergent and uniting factors in the room, an appreciation of the teacher's roles with content, strategy, child and self and an appreciation of observing itself as a tool in teaching.

The key difference in my practice, then and now, is that I would try to saturate my practice in students' minds (no longer appalled and paralyzed by what they think). I would use my mind to show students how they were thinking and the consequences of these patterns of thought. Lending students my mind I would spread their thinking out so they can see it and decide whether they really wanted to pursue that direction or accept that premise. In revealing these consequences and alternatives I would target habits of mind including wholeheartedness, curiosity about teaching and learning, respect for the imagination, discerning observation, and tolerance for ambiguity and diversity. Rather than suspending my ego (Kohl, 1984, p. 67). I would become deliberately vulnerable to ill-formed, impatient thinking, working to restate and reshape it, teaching students how to take control of this move from uncertainty and confusion to reason. I would reverse my tendency to silence when flummoxed such as in Chapter II when students missed the point about Rita. Now, I would say, "As teachers, should we think and act like Rita or can we imagine better alternatives to help children grow?"

Aiming for a different relationship to the literature, I would set fewer readings and be more purposeful in assigned responses, refraining from asking students to read additional pieces on reserve

or in the packet of readings without stitching these readings into the conversation. I'd initiate conversation about reading. "What happens when you read?" trying to counteract weak high school experience in reading, writing, and analysis since these skills are so significant in the new teacher. I would invite comment on readings seeming too abstract, too theoretical, or too long. In preparing the social studies elementary methods class, for example, I would still use Lemleck's (1984) introduction to the spiral curriculum but seeing its connections with likely teaching instances I would not restrict its use to questions and answers on a hot humid afternoon. I would work with that reading for five or six classes, spinning off to practical examples of dilemmas from the wording of the text, raising important issues, like values education in social studies instruction.

I would not now expect undergraduates to read (initially) with intellectual purpose but I would work to help them do so with simulations, for example, taking on the features of four socio-economic class attitudes to knowledge, playing out Anyon's themes in parent conferences, mock faculty meetings, and teacher-student interviews. We would make diagrams based on Lampert's (1985) description of her research to figure out her classroom dilemmas, developing similar diagrams to capture the inequalities and tensions in our own classrooms and classrooms we observed. One student would impersonate Lampert playing the role of teacher researcher. Others would act as her consultants. We would work in small groups with the task of representing visually and explaining to the rest of the

class what Hawkins' (1974) really meant in 'I, Thou and It.' With more formal position papers (two paragraphs only), we would begin to take steps to make these authors professional allies.

But experts' written text is not our only, nor necessarily our best resource. Student autobiographical experience of parents, schools, teaching, and life especially race, class, and gender can be central text. Samuel, white, the grandchild of an openly-prejudiced Michigan farmer crouched near the chalkboard at the final class party in Exploring Teaching engrossed in a senior student's final paper about his evolving understanding of growing up a black American in Detroit (GRR Journal, June 4, 1992). Joe had written about discrimination, setbacks, and growing hatred for whites and his intellectual seesaw with Martin Luther King and Malcomb X. His life became dignified, working material for discussion in unforgettable classes and now Samuel thought again as he read Joe's writing. I would ask social studies methods students to write about what they can remember from elementary social studies teachers. What was the content? What were the teaching methods? To approach the purposes of social studies curriculum by this route would be far more memorable than my stuffy, novice announcements about the cognitive, affective, and socialization purposes recorded in Lemleck (1984).

I juggled in secondary English methods with Judy's determination to reach underprivileged pupils, her limited subject matter knowledge, her personal disquiet and irritation with authority. As I juggled, I gave Judy space to feel accepted and

grow but my view of Judy's growth was framed more by her problems than my intentions--problems she shared with me in confidence: problems about authority with cooperating teachers, problems of reduced concentration in class, and problems with writing. Nurturing Judy, I embraced her personal anguish allowing her space in class to expound on injustices in observing classrooms, failing to be clear there was more to see. Possibly I felt more comfortable helping her personally than intellectually for how sure was I of my trade? I remember as a young schoolteacher becoming similarly easily entangled in adolescent emotional crises while trying to figure out history teaching.

To take a case in point, Judy didn't like to write. Because she was so often upset, I let her slide away from the written responsibilities as if she were not capable. Now, I would require one fine paragraph each night responding to a small part of the assignment or the central class idea. I would believe both in Judy's capacity and my responsibility to tap it. I would set about to teach Judy to <u>think</u> as well as <u>feel</u> rather than allow us to wallow in her troubled emotions. We would muse over the place of intellect, emotion, will, and imagination in our learning. Hearing Penny, Dan, and I talk about our attempts to understand these elements in us would heighten my chances of nudging Judy on from her emotional response closer to an intellectual one. It may also have made her more anxious but that inhibiting risk at the time now seems imperative.

Judy's academic program encouraged her to think of herself as a speech teacher so principles of speech communication, not literary examples, became her perceived teaching content. Alison Jordan, the particularly lively, college speech and communication professor, took a serious interest in students and had a special affection for Judy, giving her quality training, confidence, and emotional support. This speech orientation conflicted with my hope students be captivated by literature's mysteries. But Judy's blinkered vision about content flourished as I rewarded her performance or whenever she spoke with vitality about speech in schools and what she might do there with pupils. I was confused about the difference between showmanship and substance,

> The difference between an interesting and tedious teacher consists in little more than the inventiveness by which the one is able to mediate these associations and connections. Anecdotes and reminiscences will abound in her talk; and the shuttle of interest will shoot backward and forward, weaving the new and the old together in a lively and entertaining way. Another teacher has no such inventive fertility and his lesson will always be a dead and heavy thing. (James, 1958, p. 75)

Now, when Judy wove this story in class, I would urge her to work with harder, more taxing subject matter and pay attention to trouble makers. In teaching Judy (and her class) I only went so far. I decided Penny thought teaching performance, that Judy thought it speech communication and Dan was new to college English. I elicited Penny's egocentric emphasis, Dan stressed discipline, and Judy kindness. I let us live with those positions rather than widen perspectives of teaching practice. I was tempted to think if I <u>stated</u> alternatives, faith in them would follow. I now realize I

need to become saturated in these students' thoughts to see how they hold together and where my intervention would count.

I would ask Judy to examine our copy of the local high school English curriculum, underlining all references to speech determine how much teachers actually teach speech. We would talk over her findings, then, together, visit the principal of the high school or the head of the English department to ask the likely demands of a beginner teacher in that department. In these two specific ways, I would garnish Judy with more specific understanding of the secondary English teacher's role and motivate her to see the need to read poetry and novels and worry about how to teach grammar or composition.

I failed to pull Judy up short. Now I would do so. I would make finer, well-directed, probably uncomfortable interventions not allowing her, for example, to slide out of the requirements that framed the final examination. Knowing her tenacity in coping with quite formidable personal odds, I would harness that determination to our advantage, structuring smaller demands with a tighter schedule. I would help Judy focus on intellectual goals. At the time, I allowed myself to be distracted from my purposes by Judy's fretting but now I would use all these emotions in class. We could think about the value of writing passing through students on the way to the teacher. I would draw on Penny's clear statement of what she saw in Dan's paper and Dan's concern that he might cheat if he incorporated Penny's ideas. Assuring Judy I knew she could succeed, I would challenge her to polish part of her paper for Judy, part for

Dan, and part for me, meeting with us separately. We would have demonstrated that different learning styles exist, that emotions effecting learning can be dealt with sensitively in discussion, and that alternatives can be found without sacrificing quality or heightening panic.

When Judy hated her methods cooperating teacher, Mrs. D, I would arrange a meeting with Judy and Mrs. D to discuss the particular children Judy assumed oppressed, showing I respected this practitioner. Mrs. D might help Judy see she, too, would not love all children. After the meeting, Judy and I would go for a long walk noting our view of Mrs. D was now fuller, more realistic, more understanding. Perhaps she had more to teach us both about the classroom than we thought before the meeting? How quickly should we use terms like oppression? I would ask Judy how our own childhood alters the way we look at other adults working with children. I would not withdraw my support but walk Judy along her difficult paths until she could walk alone.

I learned (as Dewey tried to tell me) that I could only work with students where they are. This principle, known to me as a seasoned history teacher, seemed easy to forget in my new field. To do well I learned I must think hard about my significant others and know my own mind with increasing clarity. Rigorously exposing student assumptions and anticipating reactions to my pedagogy, I needed to both clarify and believe in the direction and power of my own thinking about what teachers need to know and how we could get there--because it would be difficult for a disengaged student to

become passionate if I didn't take the lead. I needed to be sensitive to the gap between us, its origins, its conceptual impact with deceptively simple words as knowledge and pedagogy. I had to learn to rewrite the melody and the words with student experience and stop drowning our conversations with my writers' powerful song, that of Lemleck, Lampert, or Dewey. That is, students and I needed to learn to sing parts of each other's songs.

Since students did not see their questions in the readings, I learned the value of choosing one or two authors to become close friends, connecting other principles to those readings in authentic ways. Since 1990, in my recent teaching, Kohl's Growing Minds (1984) and Anyon's Social Class and School Knowledge (1981) have given students the chance to think over the same stories of teaching and learning from different perspectives of class, race, gender, and pedagogy. Understanding gradually accumulated and deepened with our revisitings. I learned that action with literature might be more helpful, less ambiguous, and even more instructive than reflection which is a less automatic capacity than I supposed (Korthagen, 1985).

My learning was not dissimilar to my first year's experience at SCEGGS, Moss Vale, when as a history buff, aged 20, without teacher training, I found senior pupils' enthusiasm for ancient and modern European history tempered by concerns to defeat the external examiner much like teacher certification requirements. At Moss Vale, I had everything to learn about engaging pupils over time, about democratic or authoritarian human relationships in the

classroom, about anxiety and contradictions in my head about evaluation, about keeping my temper, about matching involvement with detachment, and about administrators' distaste for innovative teaching. I was unsure how to learn all this. The problems and the feeling were replicated at Bunbury College. In both schools teaching was exhilarating, all consuming, and lonely for few others cared about the fuss in my head. And the words would not come.

In both inaugural years in my career, students played an enormous part in my developing thinking. At Moss Vale, students curious about my passion for history taught me how to successfully tip what topics would be examined that year and how to teach poor historians how to fool unknown examiners. Worried about my lack of organization after my three weeks enthusing at Moss Vale, Pauline stood at the back of the room, straight and tall in her navy uniform and blond plaits, to ask, "Please, Miss Reid, can we begin the syllabus?" I equate that remark in 1967 with my prospective teachers' journal entries in 1986, giving me a second chance and more time to learn. In both places I heard the students' song but in teacher education the duet is a more sophisticated composition.

How can one prepare for such work? I had a vocation for teacher preparation inspired by conversations with Frank Keppel at Harvard's Graduate School of Education in 1982 and 1983. I had taught school for many years, knowing the difference between beginner, middle, and mature high school teaching. Disciplined to think independently and imaginatively, on the hunt for the origins of things, I was both sympathetic and empathic to students. I

needed to be willing and able to make a unique response on the job at Bunbury College just as I did at Sydney Church of England Grammar School for Girls, Moss Vale, Clyde School and Geelong Grammar School in Australia.

I needed to have read differently in graduate school, feeding two minds not one--one to inform my practice and the other to figure out prospective teachers' likely minds. I needed to think out exactly how an idea I read might addresses students' specific intellectual needs and how I can tie the reading to our individual and collective experience. For example, when I read Dewey's thinking on content and pedagogy in Democracy and Education (1916) I was not envisaging how these thoughts might help or hinder students' intellectual development. As it turned out Dewey (illuminating and prodding me) was not especially suitable for students in this context. I lacked knowledge of developmental psychology for the later adolescents to feed my intuitions about young adults seeking professional competence and a new identity. Case studies of psychologists' interviews with such students would have helped me grasp what I saw happening to my students in half-baked, anxious, undirected ways.

New Directions

I want to learn now to listen to students beliefs and assumptions like a psychiatrist looking for patterns of understanding and specific confusions. To improve my listening I would read psychiatry and teacher education literature together,

learning more about the intellect, emotions, will, and imagination to help me know rather than intuit how reconstruction of experience (the core of teacher preparation) actually happens in different heads. In reacting to what I hear, I would calm down--seeing that becoming a teacher, like becoming a parent or writer, is a gradual accumulation of thought, feeling, and imagination. Working in this way on developing in myself and students' specific habits of mind essential for fine teaching, I feel hopeful my work will reshape their classroom thinking. The finer my daily work, the better.

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