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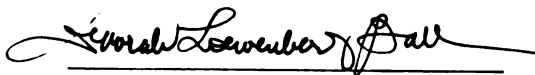
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Collaborative Experiences with Change and
Learning in a Professional Development School**

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Janet Johnson Navarro

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REACHING BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES: TWO TEACHERS'
COLLABORATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH CHANGE AND
LEARNING IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

By

Janet Johnson Navarro

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

REACHING BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES: TWO TEACHERS' COLLABORATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH CHANGE AND LEARNING IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

By

Janet Johnson Navarro

Set within the professional development school (PDS) context of educational innovation, this study examines the collaborative experiences of two third-grade teachers who structured an opportunity to learn more about teaching by teaching together. Grounded in a feminist tradition of inquiry that openly considers the researcher's own subjectivity, this study attempts to understand, from the inside out, both the meanings these teachers gave to their collaborative experiences, and the ways in which those experiences intersected with the school culture of collaboration, as well as with local, state, and national contexts of collaborative educational reform.

Teachers are typically the objects of educational reform. A great deal has been written that explains why teachers do not seem to change their practice. Teacher isolation is often cited. However, little is known about how teachers view the work of changing their own practice, why they would engage in such activity, and what it might be like for them to attempt such work together. This study examines two teachers who try to do so. They represent a range of generational concerns and professional experience; one is just beginning her career, the other is closer to retirement. Data gathered during a two-year span includes transcribed conversational interviews,

transcribed conference and university course presentations, classroom participation and observations, informal conversations, E-mails, formal written documents, and my own perspectives as university coordinator of this PDS.

This work tells a story of connected collaborative professional development activity in which two teachers attempted to transform their own practice by anchoring the focus of reform in their own questions, pertaining specifically to the realities of their own classroom practice. I argue that seven points of collaborative connection were vital to their success by showing how they were connected to a) each other, b) a normative school culture of support, c) the processes and products of ongoing educational inquiry, d) opportunities to deepen subject matter knowledge, e) their own ongoing narrative about their work together as teachers, f) other professionals, and g) the core tasks of teaching.

By looking closely at this intricate web of interconnections, this study points out the complexities of the interaction between institutional and social practices and provides an image with which to structure further considerations of collaborative professional development that is grounded in connected experience.

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To “the children of tomorrow” and all members
of the Spartan Village/MSU-PDS community who work
together toward improving their world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A dissertation is an interesting benchmark. As a book it represents the culmination of a particular project. As a project it represents the culmination of a journey that prepares one to join a society of similarly trained scholars. In my own case, as a milestone at the end of this journey, it is a paradoxical symbol of individual effort and accomplishment that pales in comparison to the continual outpouring of assistance, faith, and sacrifice I received from those who have encouraged and supported me along the way.

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Chapter 1

PUSHING ON THE BOUNDARIES OF ISOLATION

Extraordinary Goals for Ordinary Teachers

Around the United States, from the hills and hollows which hide the few remaining one-room school houses, to over-crowded urban schools where paint peels off the plaster and current books are scarce, there are pockets of excellence in which teachers are doing remarkable teaching (Hilliard, 1990). In spite of the so-called (Berliner & Biddle, 1995) crisis in American education (Futrell, 1989; Holmes Group, 1986; Passow, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995), which is often blamed on teachers themselves (Cuban, 1990a; Weiler, 1988), there are ordinary teachers in schools around the country who continually work hard to improve their teaching. Some, Cuban (1990b) says, have made “fundamental changes in their schools and classrooms” (p. 10).

However, while such impressive changes can be found, they are, for the most part, still rare. There is much more to be done. Nearly all school teaching across the country is still grounded in traditional methods, most of which are no longer adequate in today’s rapidly changing world. Simply to participate in tomorrow’s fast paced technologically sophisticated global society, whether through economic or political avenues, children need to be engaged in new kinds of learning today. It is no longer enough for children to recite interesting scientific facts, do mathematical figuring, and to memorize significant historical dates, places, and players. Even history is changing as it is re-visioned and rewritten to include the stories and perspectives of those previously omitted.

Rather, students in today's schools need to be immersed in the complexity of interdependent systems. They must know how to access and to critique the information they have found, and to use facts and figures as they work toward understanding complex global issues from multiple perspectives -- economic, political, sociological, ecological, historical, cultural, etc. Indeed, in order to meet the educational needs of tomorrow's adults, teaching and learning in schools must look, sound, smell, feel, move, and be measured differently than it commonly is today. As schools are today, a move in this direction would require wide-ranging alteration within a system that was not designed to be dynamic or malleable (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Never-the-less, of course, the push for change is ongoing. Most recently, such broad changes have been reflected and promoted by the national and state curriculum standards that have been published or are emerging in just about every subject area (Lord, 1994).

It should not be surprising that if the processes and products of education are to change, teachers will have to teach in substantially different ways. It should also not be surprising to recognize that such change will require tremendous professional growth by educators in their knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, children, cultural differences, and the nature of learning itself (Ball & Cohen, 1995). The current political climate, which includes the onslaught of national and state curricular standards, makes an extraordinary call to the nation's ordinary teachers, already up to their eyeballs in misguided demands for improvement. Most of these demands seem to stem from misplaced concerns for accountability which leads to surface-scratching workshops and the adoption of expensive Band-Aid programs.

With this in mind, I explored the experiences of two third grade teachers, Katie and Syliva, who with their colleagues from the school and university were working to improve their practice within the context of a professional development school. I believe their story to be an important one, in part, because they share so many characteristics with other ordinary elementary teachers nation-wide (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Indeed, they are typical elementary school teachers. They are both women of northern European descent. One is in the early years of her career, the other near the end. One grew up in a small city, the other in the suburbs of a major urban area. Both are teaching within 80 miles of where they were raised. As do most teachers, these two have their favorite subject areas and grade levels. Teaching was a clear career choice for both; while the journey to third grade was more serendipitous for one than the other. They are wonderful people, fun to be around. Both are warm and friendly toward students and, most usually, their colleagues. They show up on time for staff and grade-level meetings, are courteous to parents, and participate generously in staff potlucks. Yet, for a particular moment in time Katie and Sylvia stood apart from other typical teachers and did some remarkable things.

Thinking of them paradoxically, as ordinary teachers who did extraordinary things, I struggled to find words right for their story. As I strained, I remembered Ray Bradbury's introduction to Dandelion Wine and thought to myself impetuously, these teachers stand out, "Why and how? Because I say it is so" (Bradbury, 1983/1975, p. xiii). And, actually, there is a shred of truth to that notion. With the power of the pen, I am bringing their experiences with collaborative school reform to a wider audience. This in itself is significant (Martin, 1982; Smith, 1987). Yet, that alone does not make their story unique. More and more stories of teachers' lives and experiences

are making it into press (e.g., Casey 1993; Hong, 1996; Irwin, 1995; Miller, 1990; Weiler, 1988). And, I must note that Ray Bradbury writes *fiction* and this story is *not* a novel. The making of good research is, of course, more than telling a compelling narrative about people who are special because theirs is a story I share.

As I worked to uncover the significance of their experiences asking myself, what is it about these two teachers' experiences that is worth the telling, it dawned on me: I had been trying to tell the wrong story. Indeed, the power of their experiences does not come from highlighting the ways in which they can be set apart from their counterparts as extraordinary. Rather, the impact of Katie and Sylvia's experiences lies within the ways they connected to essential routine elements of their daily work as teachers teaching third grade together. What we have to learn from these two women lies somewhere between the exceptional and the ordinary. The significance of their work can be found in the way these teachers, as *part* of their daily lives in schools, transformed the usual into the unusual and then made it routine. Therefore, I will argue that by nonchalantly pushing on the boundaries of their own isolation, these two women created new contexts in which to become colleagues. They created new images of what it can mean for teachers to have significant professional relationships with their colleagues. They created images of professional growth and development with which we can imagine and toward which we can strive.

When considering both our common knowledge about the persistence of traditional teaching practice in schools and what scholars have told us about why practice persists, it stands to reason that what these teachers did together could be considered extraordinary. However, it is also striking how they began their work together simply by sharing teaching ideas and strategies

with the purpose of answering questions of their own. Such possibility exists in schools across the country. Therefore, while part of what intrigues me about their work is the relative simplicity of it, I am also intrigued by the complexity of the results. Given what is known about the historical patterns of schooling and the norms of teacher isolation, it does seem virtually impossible for ordinary teachers to do what these teachers did. It's ironic that it was *extraordinary* for them to capitalize on a relatively simple idea -- to teach together so as to learn more about certain aspects of their teaching -- while in so doing creating a new set of boundaries for their work together where collaboration is a way of life, change is constant, ambiguity is accepted, and uncertainty is grappled with, *together* -- truly remarkable things that were, to them, simply a way of life.

Hiding From Uncertainty in Traditional Practice

Indeed, the literature on teacher and school change, or the lack thereof, is full of examples that account for persistent teaching practice. Cohen (1988), for example, focuses on the very nature of practice itself, in particular the uncertain nature of that practice, and how in reality, as one of the practices of human improvement "...school teaching is an impossible profession. But unlike all the others, the social circumstances of school teaching tend to strip practitioners of the protections that help make practice manageable for most therapists, university professors, organizational consultants, and others" (p. 72). He argues that teachers, in an effort to make the unmanageable uncertainty more manageable, "adopt very conservative instructional strategies" by simplifying the work, by "defining knowledge in rigid ways," and by conducting instruction in ways that minimize discussion, conflicts, and dilemmas (pp. 71 & 72). In other words, traditional teaching practices

persist and innovation is unlikely because it is easier and probably smarter, given the inherent complexities of teaching practice within the context of society's expectations for schooling, for teachers to teach the way teachers have always taught, avoiding the additional uncertainties that accompany change.

Floden and Clark (1988) make a similar argument when discussing how to help preservice teachers deal with uncertainty in teaching. "Teaching is evidently and inevitably uncertain" (p. 507). They discuss the uncertainties found within practice, such as, the assessment of student understanding; the difficulty of not directly being able to see the effects of teaching; being unclear about content selection, coverage and emphasis; the teacher's uncertainty about his or her own power and authority in the classroom; and, as teachers, not being confident about their own professional knowledge and learning. Additionally in their work, Lampert (1985) and Ball (1993) uncover another dimension of uncertainty that teachers grapple with in their classrooms. They discuss the instructional dilemmas that arise when considering the moral obligations of teachers to teach subject matter responsibly in today's pluralistic society.

In a different spin on the uncertain nature of teaching, Cuban (1984) asserts that teaching in schools has remained virtually the same over the years because traditional practice "produces student behaviors expected by the larger society" (p.9) and because teachers are tied to the organizational structure of the school that isolates them from each other. Together Tyack and Cuban (1995) explain that the "grammar of schooling," i.e., groups of children the same age in graded self-contained classrooms, fragmented curriculum, individual student desks, and teacher centered instruction, "is a product of history" where, once established, has remained. This is in part

“because [the grammar of schooling] enabled teachers to discharge their duties in a predictable fashion and to cope with the everyday tasks that school boards, principals, and parents expected them to perform: Controlling students’ behavior, instructing heterogeneous pupils, and sorting people for future roles in school and later life” (p. 86).

It seems then that teachers adopt a conservative, or traditional, teaching stance because it reduces the difficulty, or uncertainty, of their work. Moreover, a traditional teaching stance is both encouraged and supported by the organizational structures of schooling, and the measures by which society holds teachers and schools accountable. Clearly teachers are pressured to conform to the patterns of traditional practice. These outside pressures, as well as the experiential understandings teachers gain when they establish conservative classrooms, serve to reinforce what they learned as children going to traditional schools. With such reinforcement, conservative patterns of practice learned through this apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), are difficult to change (Featherstone, Gregorich, Niesz & Young, 1995; Floden & Clark, 1988).

Increasing Uncertainty, Isolation, and Traditional Teaching Practice

These arguments assume that teachers are teaching, of course in the company of children, but otherwise, in isolation. In most school settings teachers are separated from their colleagues. Whether classroom doors are left open, encouraging the friendly social banter that characterizes teacher talk during the day, or are closed to possibility makes little difference. Teachers typically get to know their students alone, prepare their lessons alone, teach alone, assess student progress alone, and think about their teaching *alone*. What a paradox: As we approach the new millennium, society is putting

more pressure on teachers to teach according to a set of curriculum standards (e.g., National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Curriculum and Evaluation Standards, 1989; National Research Council, National Science Education Standards, 1996). As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the national standards emphasize a kind of teaching that will require major changes. Even the idea that such changes need to be made increases the level of uncertainty in teachers' lives. Moreover, while we understand that traditional practices contain inherent uncertainties already difficult to grapple with, the kinds of practices suggested by the standards push teachers toward *more* rather than less flexibility, versatility, curriculum adaptation, and choice. It appears that this particular call for change increases the level and the nature of uncertainty in teaching.

If the standards movement is a serious one that will lead to deep rather than superfluous change, teachers must learn to teach differently than they teach today. They will need to do more than adopt and adapt newly packaged methods. They will need to think differently about curriculum and teaching, about students, and about how children learn (Ball & Cohen, 1995). Lord (1994) argues that for such learning to occur teachers will need to form new kinds of collegial relationships with their colleagues. However, this would also increase the level of uncertainty for teachers in schools because developing new kinds of relationships requires a disruption of traditional school culture and norms. Indeed, changing normative relationships in schools, we have seen, increases the level of ambiguity and uncertainty in schools (Johnson, 1990). Traditionally, teachers have coped with uncertainty by retreating to conservative teaching practice within the perceived safety of their own isolated classroom. Adding this all up, the outlook on educational change is gloomy at best. This is especially true when the issues of

uncertainty are compounded by looking at teacher isolation, another dimension of the problem, in terms of its personal, professional, and structural significance in teachers' lives.

First, personal isolation contradicts the relational aspects of professional development and prevents teachers from developing "a view of self and other as interdependent and of relationships as networks created and sustained by attention and response" (Gilligan, 1988, p.8). Being isolated from other teachers, personally, squelches the relational aspects of personal development (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1988; Noddings, 1987; Tannen, 1990) so important in schools where "teaching *requires* connection between students and teachers," and knowledge is constructed with others in the context of practice (Dempsey, 1994, p. 102).

Furthermore, since teachers are accustomed to being secluded from each other both in structural and personal terms, it is difficult, if not impossible for them to take the risk involved in forming a professional community within their local sphere, or joining a broader community of educators. Therefore, teachers do not have a recognized *and* supported way to access the realms of power, knowledge, standards, and pedagogy to which they are obligated (Buchmann, 1993a, 1993b). Without supported connection to a professional discourse that examines the complex dilemmas that arise in trying to "balance the dual commitment to students and knowledge" (Ball, 1993, p. 197), teachers are left to decide what is morally right and good by themselves. "Because teachers are left on their own to develop standards for choosing and inventing their pedagogy, their learning is often idiosyncratic" (p. 202).

Additionally, the structural nature of schools (the actual buildings) and of schooling (the patterns, norms, schedules, curriculum, etc., that make up the school day) that confines teachers and students in closed closet-like classrooms, is part of what glorifies teacher autonomy by compounding the effects of personal and professional isolation and by reproducing the myth of the self-made teacher for whom seeking help or advice from colleagues is seen as a weakness. Britzman (1986) points out that,

while the structure of the teaching experience is characterized by isolation, it is also sustained and obscured by the value placed on individual effort. As structure fades into the background of daily activity and is "forgotten," the teacher's individualized effort appears as the sole determinant of educational matters. Consequently, while the teacher is a significant actor in the educational drama, the valorization of individual effort sustains a view of the teacher as the only actor. With this view, individual effort takes on mythic proportion. (p. 448)

In such an environment, teachers who want to talk about their teaching with other teachers, or who reveal their questions and insecurities, are seen by others as being weak teachers. While teachers might get to the point of forming a social community, getting along together well, and perhaps even sharing materials from time to time, in the end,

teachers tend to judge themselves and others tend to judge them, on the basis of their success with this individual struggle. Everything -- student learning, the presentation of curriculum, and social control -- is held to be within the teacher's domain, while the teacher's isolated classroom existence is accepted as the norm. (Britzman, 1986, p. 449)

Put together, these arguments suggest that for many reasons it is difficult for teachers to change, or even to *try* to change their teaching practices, such as how they create curriculum, or relate to students, parents,

colleagues, administrators, and the community. According to the literature then, when taking into consideration the inherent uncertainties of practice, the historical factors that have shaped schools and practice, and the societal and political pressures for teachers to conform to norms that glorify individualism and self-reliance, it appears that working toward educational innovation is indeed a risky business. In other words, instances of "adventurous teaching" (Cohen, 1988), innovative structural changes, or changes in teachers' roles and responsibilities are rare for reasons imbedded in a) the nature of practice itself; b) the organizational structure of schools; c) the grammar of schooling; d) the school culture as a work place; and e) the socio-political purposes of schooling and the pressures of accountability.

Turning The Unusual Into The Usual

Given the literature that clearly delineates the impossibility and improbability of teacher change, it is interesting to consider why some teachers *do* attempt to change what they are doing as teachers in their classrooms and their schools. It is potentially instructive to look at teachers whose professional experiences simply contradict the literature -- teachers who have engaged in substantial and substantive efforts aimed at educational innovation, who experiment with pedagogy that makes their work more uncertain, who open up definitions of what it might mean to know, and who think about using intellectual conflict as a way to explore ideas. Why, in the face of such difficulty, do some teachers, typical ones at that, participate in activity aimed toward changing their practice? What motivates them to participate? What kinds of educational innovations are they attempting? What are their goals? How are their efforts supported? What do they gain or lose? How do they experience their participation? How do they structure

their work? What is most important for them in their experiences? What do they think they are changing? How effective do they feel they have been? And, what sustains their work?

Eventually it would also be important to know whether or not teachers who have participated in change efforts actually do change their practice, to evaluate the range and depth of reported changes, and to find out whether changes in the nature of teaching can be associated with changes in the quality of schooling for children, and to recommend how other teachers could or could not profit from similar activity. However, such proof, evaluation, and recommendation are not what this story is about. Instead, I explore and describe the experiences of two teachers who structured opportunities to teach with each other with the goal of learning from each other so as to improve their teaching of children.

While much has been written about teachers and educational change, only a few have given voice to teachers' experiences of trying to change their own practice within the context of educational reform (e.g., Miller, 1990). We don't know very much about why teachers risk what little certainty they can carve out of their traditional teaching practice to participate in educational innovation. We also don't know much about why some teachers are willing to open the door to even greater uncertainty in order to work with others while trying to change how they think about teaching and learning. We do know that teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of educational reform (Lipsky, 1980). But, we still do not know much about how those teachers define educational innovation or what they consider to be important. We know very little about how they define their work as they move toward change, what they find supportive and helpful, what seems to

undermine their work, and what they believe drives them forward when things get tough.

At this point in our nation's history, a time when the public is losing faith in public education, when conservative and liberal politicians alike support the privatization of schooling to serve their own ends (Berliner & Biddle, 1995), and when the new curriculum standards indicate a need to replace conservative practice with adventurous teaching (Cohen, 1988) while ironically moving toward a closer attention to traditional accountability measures, it seems an important time to gain a better understanding of how teachers view their own professional learning and what they say they gain.

Given the many obstacles that discourage teachers' creative efforts toward educational change, maybe the teachers I came to know and work with in this study are extraordinary after all. And, in some ways, they probably were. But in most ways they were, and are still, just regular teachers who did some exceptional things. Perhaps it is as Little (1990) says, "Faculties who work together are by nature no more generous in spirit, quick in mind, lively in humor or inventive in action than faculties in other schools, but by habit and interaction, they appear so" (p. 188). Therefore, this is a story about how two ordinary teachers, working in a context that promoted collaboration and innovation, created new boundaries for their work together where collaboration was a way of life, change was the constant, ambiguity was accepted, and uncertainty was grappled with together.

A rationale for this work is provided in Chapter Two where I describe the contexts out of which this study emerges. I begin with the personal, providing my own account of an isolated teacher trying to change my practice and my attempts in the university to make sense of those experiences to inform my practice as a teacher educator, researcher, and participant in

educational reform. An understanding of my standpoint (Smith, 1987) is essential in considering my take on the analysis and reporting of the “data.” I move from there to the broad social and historical contexts which frame the lives of teachers in schools and provide a rationale for studying the experiences of teachers. Finally, I provide an overview and a critique of the broad-based educational reform context in which this study is situated. Such a discussion is vital to an understanding of the contemporary context of educational reform.

Methodological concerns are taken up in the third chapter, where, for one, I provide the concrete contexts of the work. I include a discussion regarding how and why I gathered the information I did about these teachers, their work and their school, and how I proceeded to analyze their words and their experiences in a methodologically sound manner. Then, because this work is part practical investigation and part methodological inquiry, I also describe in this chapter how this methodology came about and ground my stance in both the work and the words of others. This discussion of participants, place, and methodology sets the scene for Chapters Four, Five, and Six in which I present my findings and my analysis.

In Chapter Four, “Teaching Together to Improve Teaching: Creating Opportunities to Learn,” I trace Katie and Sylvia’s career development to the point where they decided to work together. In this chapter I discuss how and why they decided to work together and what they hoped to accomplish. I discuss their professional partnership and explore how it was that they opened the door that usually closets colleagues away from each other and separates teachers from each other as well as from their own learning.

Then, it seems that if we are to understand the possibility for teachers to engage in substantially different kinds of relationships with their

colleagues and what they might learn by doing so, we need to examine what teachers' value about their professional relationships with others and what they believe they gain. Such are the topics of Chapter Five, "Collaborative Teaching: Opportunities to Learn in the Company of Others," where Sylvia's history of collaborative relationships as a context for professional growth is the primary focus. I describe how she feels she improved her teaching by watching and teaching with others in the authentic context of her own classroom, and what she feels is required for the development of a fruitful collaborative learning relationship.

In Chapter Six, "The Contexts of Support," I provide more insights into the professional relationship between Katie and Sylvia, and examine the multiple contexts of support that surrounded their collaborative work in the professional development school. First I analyze the characteristics of the support structures they created for themselves within the context of their collaboration. I do this by exploring such things as energy, motivation, time, their focus on children's learning, and the meanings they gave to each. I then move beyond their work together and look at the collaborative culture encouraged within the school by the principal and the professional development work going on there. Next, I describe the ways in which the broad professional development school context of reform provided structures of support for their work. Finally, I furnish an account of one partner's administrative transfer to another school and the deep personal and professional devastation that followed. Their anger and grief is an important part of their story as it highlights the power of collaborative professional development activity by looking at it, retrospectively, through the lens of their return to teaching in isolation.

In Chapter Seven, "Teachers' Experiences with Change and Learning: Connection and Contradiction," I conclude the story of Katie and Sylvia's collaboration and extract the lessons we might all heed from the meanings of their experiences. In this chapter, I review and I theorize. I weave together the practical and the theoretical in a discussion of professional development. I pull together the themes of educational reform, uncertainty, isolation, collaboration, and professional development and illustrate the complex ways in which these issues intersect in the form of collaborative connection. I show how being connected to each other, to the processes and products of research, to subject matter, to the every day world of teaching, to other professionals and to the profession allowed them to learn together in powerful ways by being enabled to focus on the essential elements of teaching and learning within the context of real classrooms and meaningful educational reform. My discussion, while grounded in teachers' experiences, can help move discourse about teacher change and professional development away from teachers themselves, and toward the structures of support that propel and sustain them as they work toward improving themselves as educators, so as to improve the quality of education for students.

Hopefully, as readers come to the end of this work, they will have a clearer understanding of the powerful forces that have defined teachers as autonomous and independent characters who work comfortably within isolated niches called classrooms, binding them in traditional roles in which their work is narrowly defined and escape is futile. And, in spite of the complexity of these issues, and the endemic character of isolation in our culture, these two teachers will have opened up their doors, their hearts and their ideas, not just to each other, but to all those interested in thinking about the power of collaborative educational change.

Chapter 2

CONVERGING CONTEXTS OF CONTRADICTIONS: EXPERIENCE, RESEARCH, AND REFORM

Within the current political context of educational reform there is much to think about, to study, and to tell. Within this broad spectrum I chose to wander in the realm of teachers' experiences with educational reform, concentrating on their perceptions of their work as teachers, learners, and colleagues in the context of a professional development school. More specifically, my study focuses on two teachers who worked *together* to find answers their own instructional questions and to contribute to the improved teaching of others. It takes place within Katie and Sylvia's collaborative classroom and within Spartan Village Elementary, a school that was being influenced by, and in turn was influencing educational reforms that were at once national (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990), local (Thompson, 1990b), and site-based (e.g., Ball & Rundquist, 1993; Hallenbeck & Smith, 1994; Knapp & Peterson, 1993; Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992).

This work on teachers' experiences with change is situated within contradictions found in three converging contexts -- personal, social-historical, and reform. The first originates within the contradictions of my own experiences as a disheartened teacher of elementary aged children and my reflective attempts in the university to make sense of those experiences so as to improve my practice as a teacher educator and a participant in educational reform. In reality, I have been interested in the interactions between teachers and their learning and the institutions in which they teach

for many years. As Woods (1996) explains, starting with the personal is not surprising.

One often does research in part to discover more about oneself. This is not to say that it is self-indulgent, but that it is chiefly through the self that one comes to understand the world. In turn, the discoveries one makes reflect back upon the self, which then feed back into the research, and so on. (p. 1)

The second contradiction lies within the social-historical context of teachers' social location in the educational hierarchy and goes something like this: Most generally, teachers have been portrayed in the literature by those who do not teach, furthermore, those portraits are used by those outside of schools and teaching to determine the direction of educational reforms and policy, therefore those reforms and policy have historically ignored the realities of teachers' lives (Grumet, 1988). In spite of the fact that teachers, as a group, have served others as the objects of research, the rationale for reforms, and the grist for public criticism and political posturing when those reforms fail (Berliner & Biddle, 1995), we know very little about how teachers see themselves as participants in educational reform. Likewise, we know very little about how teachers experience change as they are urged by others to think differently about themselves, the range and responsibilities of their work as professional educators, and the structures of support that such change requires. What it means to be a teacher in our society has been constructed by those who teachers serve more than it has by teachers themselves. Consequently, educational directives are still being funneled directly into schools that have no say in the matter (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Furthermore, such policies are generally crafted far from the realities of teachers' everyday lives in schools and as such ignore the power of "shaping

behavior in the workplace, of organizational and cultural norms and the individual teacher's perspective" (Cuban, 1990a, p. 76).

Finally, the all-encompassing reform initiatives of the last decade that call for a fundamental change in the role of teachers in their classrooms and schools, their districts, and the profession also present a contradiction. Unlike past innovations where teachers were expected to carry out the programs and policies developed and mandated by an educational elite, these reforms call for broad changes at every level of the educational enterprise. The Holmes Group in particular suggested that teachers ought to assume prominent and vocal positions, not only in their classrooms but also within the general educational community. They called for a new way of teaching and a new way of being a teacher (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990).

And, while the Holmes Group has been losing its political prominence over the past few years, the same kind of ideas, modified to reflect its own agenda, can be found resurfacing in the recently released Report of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996). The rhetoric in both of these initiatives is appealing. For example, in Tomorrow's Schools, the Holmes Group (1990) massaged a vision of professional development schools in which school and university participants were to come together with equal voices to participate in reforming education. Roles and ranks that divide educators into groups of varying status and import were to disappear as educators united in a "partnership among peers" to focus on problems of mutual concern to educators (p. vii). And, in their report, The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996) promises that, "If we pay attention to supporting knowledgeable teachers who work in productive schools, American education need suffer through no more dead-end reforms" (p. iii).

While the rhetoric may seem beneficial to teachers because it promotes visions of schooling in which teachers play important roles in fostering the development of a kind of teaching that the Holmes Group calls “teaching for understanding” and Cohen (1987) calls “adventurous,” a contradiction appears. Remembering something Cuban (1990b) wrote brings the contradiction to the fore: “Let me apply my view of change and continuity to the most common goal of school reform over the past century: Changing teacher behavior.” He goes on,

Annoyance with teachers has grown in the past century. If only teachers were more responsive; if only teachers understood the importance of this or that reform; if only teachers worked harder -- so went the refrain. Thus by asking the wrong question first -- how should teachers teach -- a succession of disappointments in classroom reforms led to inaccurate conclusions that intransigent teachers were to blame. (p. 75)

The rhetoric of these reforms finesses the point Cuban raises by focusing loftily, not only on how teachers ought to teach, but on how they ought to collaborate and with whom, how they ought to learn and lead, how they ought to interact with parents, how they ought to develop curriculum, how they ought to be held accountable, etc. Placed within the history of decontextualized educational reforms that focus on how teachers ought to teach and then blames them for the problems of American society that they could never fix in the first place (Berliner & Biddle, 1995), I worry that without an understanding of how teachers experience trying to make changes in their work and in their professional relationships, new reforms ultimately set teachers up for failure. The backlash this time being policy aimed at clamping down again on the few curricular and instructional freedoms

currently enjoyed. Each of these contradictions is discussed thoroughly below.

Finding Contradictions While Searching For Change

My roots as a teacher sprouted in my basement classroom where I conscripted my younger brother into being my student. Equipped with cast-off dittos, felt board figures, and flash cards I faithfully followed the lead of my first grade memories and knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was an accomplished teacher. Unfortunately, my school in the cellar closed shortly after my brother refused to cooperate, and I have yet to regain that same sense of certainty I felt as a teacher back then. When I returned to teaching, this time as a K-8 certified teacher, my confidence was replaced with uncertainty, and my security with searching. I could not reach my goals, and I could not find any *real* help.

I became a teacher because I saw promise in teaching children on the margins. I wanted to reverse the effects of classroom tracking practices by teaching children who were on a path toward illiteracy to read and write. I believed that through helping those children learn to navigate the mainstream culture of literacy as Delpit (1988), Heath (1982), and Michaels, (1981) discuss, I could help my students, if they so wished, to gain some control over the choices they would make, thus enabling them to change their lives and the lives of the families they would eventually have.

Perhaps these goals were idealistic dreams. Perhaps it goes without saying that I could not meet these goals. Nevertheless, these were the goals that shaped my interactions with children, and my intent. Therefore, when I quickly discovered that my teacher education program had not prepared me to be effective, I tried to move beyond the boundaries of my isolated

classroom to learn from other teachers and experts, to expand my skills. I tried to change my practice in order to better understand and meet the needs of my students. My efforts were frustratingly futile.

As a teacher I learned much about the politics of teacher and school change and the boundaries that sustain traditional practice. Contrary to the scholarly literature that places the hope for tomorrow's schools on empowered teachers, I learned that my own sense of autonomy, empowerment, efficacy, agency, or risk taking had little to do with changing my *own* practice, much less changing practice throughout the school or district. I had plenty of that kind of personal capital -- enough to take a stand against an administrative decision, risk, and ultimately lose my position. Yet, in spite of my chutzpah, I was as voiceless as my Texas colleagues (especially after resigning) most of whom took mandates for change by turning the other cheek, knowing full well that each new reform knocked creative wind out of them and their students. Years of experience as women, minorities, and teachers from working class backgrounds at the bottom of a complex web of social and political hierarchies, taught them to stay quiet and stay out of trouble. They understood that the structures in which we lived and taught made it virtually impossible to change ourselves, our practice, or our schools. They made sense of the contradictions in their world with a line of reasoning that enabled them to keep their jobs and their self-esteem.

As a teacher I struggled to define myself and my work. I was surprised to learn that standing up for my own ideas, which put students rather than bureaucratic decisions first, would be so costly. I was surprised, and I was angry; I was angry at teachers who did nothing, at administrators who made and supported each other in decisions that harmed children; at racism; at at at... Disheartened by this dose of reality, but unwilling to learn the lesson of

silence and compliance from my colleagues, I decided to enter graduate school to search for a more "powerful voice"-- one of certainty to change my own teaching and authority to help change the schools in which I would teach.

Initially I was caught up in the excitement of new learning during a time when research on teaching was moving forward at a feverish pace. I packed away the lessons I had learned as a teacher in the cardboard box with my laminated teaching materials. While in my classroom I understood that, as long as teachers were kept out of the educational bureaucracy and therefore not involved in policy decisions about their work, their students, or their curriculum, that schools and teaching would remain virtually the same. At the university I learned to account for persistent practice through a variety of arguments (Cohen, 1987, Cuban, 1984, 1990b) only a few of which concluded that teachers become a more integral part of educational policy making, research, or reform. As a teacher I understood how teachers -- some of whom spoke of radical systemic change, others who spoke in simple terms about changing their own classroom practice -- were prevented from trying to change, often by the very mandates that claimed to promote it (Shulman, 1983).

As a teacher simply searching to meet the needs of my deserving students, I was frustrated, but also unaware of the social-historical roots of my position. It had never occurred to me that my voice would not be heard. It never occurred to me that I might actually be a pawn in political games. I had not considered the various ways in which my work as a remedial reading teacher intersected with the broad goals of schooling in American society. I just wanted to teach my students how to read better. In graduate school I learned how to place my teaching experiences into larger contexts -- contexts in which I forgot my roots as a teacher, forgot the lessons I learned there, and

initially focused my energy on learning how to “fix” the people with whom I used to work. A look at the social-historical context in which teachers teach and others frame their work and their lives explains how this happened.

Contradictions Found Within the Social-Historical Contexts of Teachers and Teaching: Functionalism and Educational Research

As mentioned above, my main concern in this work is teachers’ experiences because the experiences of teachers have been shaped by others (itself a contradiction I discuss in the methods chapter of this work). In social politics and in research, in our current thoughts and in our memories, in movies and novels, teachers are romanticized by others -- sometimes as heroines (of hegemony) and other times as fail-safe scapegoats (of bad policy). What it means to be a teacher, who teachers are, and what teachers experience in our society has been constructed by those they serve more than by themselves. Historically, as women, minorities, and first generation college graduates whose parents were factory workers and farmers, teachers have been especially vulnerable to the labels and definitions, norms, and values given them by others. Just as women’s voices have long been relegated to the private spheres of home and family, teachers’ voices have long been missing from the conversations that shape educational policy and reform.

However, current reforms call for teachers who are vital, vocal members of collaboratives. For instance, the National Science Education Standards (1996) promote collaborative groups made up of,

teachers; science supervisors; curriculum developers; publishers; those who work in museums, zoos, and science centers; science educators; scientists and engineers across the nation; school administrators; school board members; parents; members of business and industry; and legislators and other public

officials...[who] all must act together in the national interest. (p. ix)

It goes without saying that such “dramatic changes...will take time” (p. ix). Indeed, vast changes in teachers’ roles, range of influence, and responsibilities will need to occur to achieve such a vision. And, for such change to occur, not only do teachers need to change, but much in our history together as politicians, researchers, teachers, and reformers, etc., must be overcome. And, if we are to support teachers as they work toward the kind of changes called for in the reforms, we must find out how teachers view themselves, their work, their visions for the future. We ought to listen to how teachers portray their own experiences while participating in educational reform. This is a relatively new idea.

Functionalist Roots

Objects of the state. From the Common School era to the present day, images of the ideal teacher have changed with the times, primarily in response to market interests. Historically, schools and the teachers in them were established for the explicit purpose of ensuring Anglo power and privilege in the newly industrialized nation filling up with immigrants from non-northern European and/or non-Protestant beliefs (Collins, 1979). While no longer the exclusive right of the elite, mainstream bureaucrats and politicians still maintain tight control over the educational enterprise, pushing it in ways that serve their interests and even themselves (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Conservative functionalists have objectified teachers, who through effective teaching, serve to maintain the status quo by evenly dispensing knowledge to students who will, based on their own merit, occupy the full range of positions in the society. Functionalist theories ignore the

possibility of change. Teachers as functionaries fulfill rather than create; serve rather than transform (Thurow, 1977). Believing that the society is basically just and basically static, functionalist theories ignore the possibility of change (Weiler, 1988).

Educational theorists have built ideas upon a foundation of social functionalism, thus ignoring the possibility of agency, resistance, self-determination, self-definition, and self-defined purposes for teaching school. While revisionist educators argue that the potential for transformation can be found precisely within teachers' daily experiences as they try to make sense of their own ideas in the face of objectification (Smith, 1987; Weiler, 1988), as those who serve patriarchy (Grumet, 1988) teachers have been the focus of policy, research, and reform (Cuban, 1990a).

Missing and misunderstood. Even while teachers are sitting at the center of the change agenda, revisionist critiques point out that the experiences of teachers have virtually been excluded from all levels of the educational enterprise, including the education curriculum. In schools of education, teachers do not typically learn about teaching from the experiences of other teachers. Rather, they learn what the current research has determined that teachers need to know (Martin, 1982).

Additionally, traditional thinking about teachers is also characterized by an analysis that circles back to personal qualities and characteristics. While it can be substantiated by traditional thinking and theory, such analysis often misrepresents teachers' lives and ignores the complexities of classroom life. For example, actions and choices that define professional "commitment" and "opportunity" in teaching have been constructed with traditional businessmen in a traditional business world in mind, not based on the needs of teachers (Acker, 1991; Parker, Johnson, & Elmore, 1989). For instance,

Lortie (1975) determined the degree to which teachers are "professionally committed" by looking at whether they stay on a direct "career path" toward an administrative position and by tallying the number of hours a teacher works after school on school premises. Such notions of commitment overlook the married middle class teachers who are able to and chose an extended (unpaid and unrecognized) leave of absence while raising children, teachers who leave the building after school hours to take care of their own children only to put in numerous hours after those same children go to sleep at night, and those teachers who have no interest in becoming administrators but who are professionally committed to students and to the art of teaching. However, according to functionalist standards of professionalism such committed teachers actually add to the body of evidence that reveals that teachers *lack* professional commitment.

Moreover, Lortie (1975) also portrayed teachers as conservative reductionists who are unwilling to take risks and unable to cope with the uncertainties of change. Such a view ignores the ideological and practical complexities teachers face daily in the course of their work. It ignores how teachers manage the contradictions between the political and economic goals of our society (Bowles & Gintis, 1986; Shulman, 1983). It ignores the complex daily balancing teachers must do as they figure out how to care for their own children as well as for the children of others (Grumet, 1988). It ignores the complexities teachers embrace as they figure out how to best address the multiple demands of a diverse student population. Finally, it ignores the complex interaction of class, race, and gender and how that influences children's experiences in schools (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). These oversights lend credence to the idea that "teacher" ought to be the unit-of-analysis and the right place to focus efforts to change children, schools, and society. In this

social location teachers are destined to be defined by others -- sometimes the answer, sometimes the problem, sometimes the heroine, sometimes the villain.

Research: The Focus On Teaching and Teachers

Educational researchers have also defined what it means to be a teacher. One only need look at dominant research trends of the 1960's, 70's and 80's for examples. This period is characterized as a time of "social crisis" during which there was an urgent call to change teachers and practice, schools and schooling (Cuban, 1990b). As Biddle and Anderson (1986) point out, it was "an era of great enthusiasm for research" (p. 230). It was assumed that research on teaching could provide the direction for policy and reform.

Objects of research. The predominant social research of the era followed natural and physical science traditions, the goal of which was to describe and explain social phenomena in order to predict and control social outcomes. In education, researchers conducted research aimed at the prediction and control of student achievement. Then, once it was shown that teachers and schools could make a difference in achievement, the next wave of studies focused on finding out "what distinguished those teachers or schools that consistently produced high achievement in their pupils from those that consistently failed to do so" (Shulman, 1983, p. 487).

The idea of studying teaching behavior with the possibility of making a connection between those behaviors and performance, was a new trend (Shulman, 1986) and several important innovations occurred. For example, researchers moved from the controlled world of the laboratory into the complicated classroom context. Investigations focused on teachers and teaching behaviors rather than on following the allocation and distribution of

resources. Some researchers devoted themselves to describing the actions of effective teachers, others, conducted studies to determine the effectiveness of instructional interventions. However, this research, with its focus on achievement, fed directly into policy and reform debates already dominated by social functionalism and bureaucratic efficiency (Callahan, 1962). Policy makers responded to the findings by becoming even more functionalist. They promoted expenditures and programs and with outcomes that could be easily measured and monitored (Greenstone & Peterson, 1983).

As cognitive psychology began to revolutionize the field of psychology, studies in cognition moved the field beyond behaviorism toward a recognition that thought processes are connected to observable actions. Educational psychologists followed suit and studies of teacher thinking emerged. These studies began with the premise that what teachers think and know, believe and experience shape their teaching behaviors. It followed that if researchers could discover what effective teachers thought, then less effective teachers could be taught what effective teachers know (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Some of this research was concerned with the thinking behind minuscule teaching acts, such as, should teachers call on students randomly or in order during oral reading in primary grades (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979, in Biddle & Anderson, 1986). Some focused on teachers' conceptions and implicit theories (Duffy, 1977, in Clark & Peterson, 1986). While this research was foundational, and shaped much of our current thinking about classroom practices, it was limited in that it could only show a relationship between teacher and student actions. And, while providing important stepping stones toward a greater understanding of classroom practices, unfortunately such research also reinforced the rift between schools of education (researchers) and their graduates (Labaree, 1996).

Nevertheless, the fact that research of the era made important contributions toward our understandings of teaching and learning processes goes without saying. The fact that research enabled a larger audience to acknowledge the important role that teachers play in students' understandings of subject matter and of themselves as members of society was a landmark contribution. I do not write to debate the value of this important work here. My point instead is that such research followed a tradition of objectification. It reinforced policy makers and reformers and their tendency to mandate, direct, and train teachers rather than to include. Teachers and students were anonymous "subjects" whose behaviors were tallied and checked-off on score sheets. Their actions were described and predicted and later, based on findings, controlled by policy. Such research grew into scripted reading, spelling, and mathematics basals out of which teachers needed only to read, signal for a choreographed student response, correct, and repeat for achievement to rise. Research that objectified teachers by observing them, discussing them, writing about them, and renaming them, fed into functionalists reforms that ultimately blamed them.

With all the knowledge gained, it seemed that classrooms of the future could be easily managed and controlled, and that students would achieve. However, the subtly encroaching era of post-modernism added new twists to what was learned. Confounding ideas that point out the complexity of classroom life, and urged the admission of multiple ways of thinking and knowing, and being and began to change the shape of what was learned. Conversations that pushed on traditional notions of teachers and teaching in schools re-entered the scholarly debate (Buchmann 1993b; Cohen, 1988; Cuban, 1990b). Moreover in education, as in other social sciences, revisionist scholars challenged traditional thinking directly.

Revisioning and Reform

Shifts in Traditional Thinking

It is becoming clear to researchers, policy makers, and philosophers of education that teachers have knowledge, experience, and expertise about teaching, learning, students, and themselves that is valuable and important. In fact, now it is thought that this knowledge can complement the knowledge and expertise of university faculty (Thompson, 1989a). Teachers are being invited to participate in educational reform, not as those trained to follow, but as active players. Those on the outside of schools are beginning to see and act on their understanding that real changes in how children are educated in the United States won't happen by simply telling teachers what to do in their classrooms. They are acknowledging the importance of inviting the voices of all concerned into mutual problem solving efforts (Holmes Group, 1990). They are beginning to realize that there are no generic methods that teachers can be trained to follow religiously and that students do not respond uniformly to programs. Rather, they acknowledge that teachers must use their professional knowledge to create and respond to particular contextualized learning situations in their classroom (see for example, Elbaz, 1983; Wilson, Schulman, & Richert, 1987).

Consequently, reforms are calling for a "new way of teaching and learning" (National Research Council, 1996, p. ix), which puts an emphasis on eclectic approaches where teachers frame instruction not as generic methods aimed at the ubiquitous average child, but, in terms of fostering all students' abilities to critically and creatively solve the problems of the next century. In a synthesis of approaches to instruction, Prawat (1991) discusses the "immersion approach" which requires teachers to be knowers of content and

context in ways that promote deep understandings. The Holmes Group (1990) promotes "teaching for understanding," defined as, "the complex, internalized, public and private scaffolding of information, insight, and experience in any field that can lift you to the next question, and get you started on it" (p. 11), a complex notion at the heart of several innovative collaborative works on classroom practices (Cohen, McGlaughlin, & Talbert, 1993).

According to social constructivists, teachers should participate in thinking about better ways to educate children. It is thought that positive and meaningful learning occurs, not through the mere telling of facts, figures, and objectified abstractions, but through dialogue. The Holmes Group (1990) explains that teaching for understanding "won't happen in classrooms where students sit silent and passive. Through participation in discourse, teachers help students construct more adequate meanings" (p. 11). Furthermore, "to understand a subject means in effect that you have been initiated into a community of discourse--that you take part in the conversation" (p.12).

From a philosophical perspective, Fenstermacher and Amarel (1983) argue that teachers should have the most prominent positions in educational debates because it is teachers in classrooms who "ought to be responsible for the day-to-day resolution of dilemmas implicated in educational encounters for...attempts to prefabricate resolutions stand to distort, even debase, the interests of all who have a stake in education" (p. 392). Also, both Hawkins (1974) and Schwab (1976) describe humanist processes through which real learning takes place only when there is respectful communication between teachers and students as persons -- not roles or ranks -- involved in a common pursuit of learning meaningful knowledge. Indeed, Ayers (1995), Eiker-Rich and Van Galen (1996), Noddings, (1987), and Prillaman, Eaker, and

Kendrick, (1994), maintain that a primary goal of education is the nurturing of human relationships within caring classroom and school communities.

If teachers are to initiate students into communities of discourse in which respectable communication is the norm and the foundation of meaningful learning for all, then they must be able to create learning communities in which they as well as their students engage in situated, substantive, meaningful dialogue. This would take a wise, efficacious teacher who has strong background knowledge in subject matter and pedagogy, who can flexibly respond to the diverse needs of a multi-cultural student population, foster the development of multiple forms of literacy, understand that "curriculum, like language, is a moving form" (Grumet, 1988, p. 131) and can flexibly and appropriately tailor instruction for specific classroom contexts (Duffy, 1990). Thus, if empowered teachers are at the center of the educational enterprise, then their voices should be part of educational debates on local, state, and national levels.

Challenges to Traditional Thinking

Recent trends in revisionist scholarship have challenged traditional thinking and recognized the agency and subjective understandings of marginalized people. In education, revisionist scholars have done the same. Starting with the subjective experience of teachers, their work challenges the ways in which behavior, knowledge, beliefs, and thinking have been codified by others. For example, feminist scholars have placed "women's own understandings of their experience at the center of the research agenda" (Casey & Apple, 1989, p. 181). Casey (1993) looked at teachers who were teaching for social change. Grumet (1988) examined the complex contradictions inherent in being a woman, who by working as teachers, are,

in essence, teaching children how to participate in and perpetuate the marginalization of themselves and their daughters. Lightfoot (1983) broke new ground by looking at teachers as individuals and exploring the relationship between their personal and professional lives.

Examples of teachers who are now telling their own stories are making it into print. These stories tell different tales from different perspectives. There are stories of a) teachers' understandings of their own lives as vital, active, politically minded teachers with social change agendas (Casey, 1993; Weiler, 1988); b) teachers mired in the dregs of women's work that is underpaid, under valued, undermined and under scrutiny (Apple, 1983; Spencer, 1986); c) women teachers of color (Delpit, 1986), and d) men teachers of young children, persistent in spite of being socially denigrated for doing woman's work (Seifert & Atkinson, 1991). These stories are helping to crack open the possibility of building a profession for teachers that is grounded in the contradictions of their everyday worlds (Smith, 1987), and therefore, theoretically at least, better suited to their own needs (for an example of how this might play out, see Parker, Johnson, & Elmore, 1990) and, to the needs of students and families, teachers have moved into more prominent roles in classrooms and board rooms. These stories have helped to open up new possibilities for teachers to participate in their own reformations. The recent educational reforms have followed this trend.

Voices in the Vision: Contradictions in the Reality

The current context of educational reform implies that many changes will need to occur in the norms so deeply rooted in our social-historical context. As are many political statements, the rhetoric of the reforms is smooth and enticing, broad and principled. Yet, closer inspection reveals

general, often nebulous, ideas and it is difficult to pinpoint how such major change can take place. Since this study is located within the context of the Holmes Group reform, I speak here about that reform, rather than providing a review of the others currently making headlines. Indeed, the Holmes Group reform which emphasizes collaboration within professional development schools as a way to start working on vast educational change at all levels of the educational enterprise, is an ideal place to study teachers' experiences with change.

Assumptions in the rhetoric. Cutting across the main themes of Tomorrow's Schools (Holmes Group, 1990) is the assumption that school and university participants will come together with equal voices to participate in reforming education. Roles and ranks that currently divide us into groups of varying status and import will disappear as we all come together in a "partnership among peers," focused on problems of mutual concern to educators (p. vii). It is further assumed that our educational concerns cross institutional boundaries and are indeed mutual.

In this democratic vision of rankless people with roles based on particular experience, expertise and interests germane to a particular professional development school (PDS) context, equal voice means every voice in the learning community will be respected, valued, and heard. As Thompson (1989b) described the merging of expertise, "when you combine what university people bring with the experience and practical knowledge that teachers have, you get powerful new educational approaches that neither one could produce alone" (p. 11). Furthermore, since every professional development school is "evolving into something new -- uniquely fashioned for their own faculty, resources, students, and community" each voice has equal power to influence that evolution (Holmes Group, 1990, p. vii).

Equal voice means participating in a learning community equally and in so doing helping all to "find their voice" so as to find a common language (Holmes Group, 1990, p. 35). Each person's talents and skills are essential to the success of the group, and the success of the group is essential to the success of the reform. The ideal of equal voices constructing a mutual agenda really means that collectives (i.e., PDSs) will find a common language that takes into consideration and values all its members in order that they may contribute to a more equal and democratic society (Holmes Group, 1990).

A critique of the assumptions. Indeed, this vision is characterized by equally voiced people in a learning community where individual differences become collective strength and consensus is reached through open discussion. However, the everyday realities of life and work in such collectives and the history of relationships we must overcome make the realization of this reform questionable. In assuming that teachers will have an equal voice in reform proceedings, are they being set up by a promise of equal voice, that is, a promise that they may finally participate in school change, only to have their voices unheard and disregarded? Holmes Group authors assume not only that all voices will have equitable access, but that all participants come with an equal voice ready and able to participate. This disregards a long history of silence in which many of the people now expected to participate have been denied access to public participation in these realms. It also assumes that those who participate will support the visions being promoted. There is a glorification of the teacher here, without the caution that Buchmann (1993b) discusses during her analysis of two poles present in today's educational debates about the role of teachers' voices in research and reform:

Some researchers recoil from much of what goes on in teachers' minds, because teacher thinking seems rarely transformative, being instead conservative and idiosyncratic...Veering from vindication to defense, other researchers attach themselves to teachers' thoughts, even calling them theories, just because those thoughts are personal and grown in "their own gardens" (p. 175).

Moreover, the assumption that teachers are now automatically full and equal partners in school reform in professional development schools disregards a history of exclusion. It indicates that academics and policy makers now recognize the importance of teachers' support in reform initiatives and are now willing to "give" teachers the right to a voice. This is a disturbing notion, but, difficult to shake because the institutions that have muted are also in a position to grant the opportunity for voice. Furthermore, this idea suggests unalterable power relationships between schools and universities, teachers and professors. It's an issue that will need to be dealt with very carefully. As stated above, teachers may simply be being set up. Worse, individuals may work very hard to find their own voice, only to learn that what they care about doesn't fit the broad agenda, or how they express it isn't received.

Furthermore, the vision of equal voices in the reform does not capture the possible impact of the reform document on the various people and groups who are struggling to find their own voice in the proceedings. Tomorrow's Teachers is a document representing the collective voice of the Holmes Group, who joined voices to form a mutual agenda for change. They propose we do the same. But the fact remains that their voice has been published. While it is intentionally open and vague in terms of specific implementation procedures, it does communicate an authoritative agenda for change. It is directed at Holmes Group institutions with the hope that

conversations will begin there and then bleed out to schools via professors (pp. ix & x). The fact that the report can be passed around and read assumes that only those who buy into the basics of that written agenda will be viable participants in the reform.

Additionally, in assuming equal voices in the reform, the Holmes Group (1990) omits a very important point. While it makes clear that students need to come to know themselves and others and learn how their voice fits into the communities of discourse that represent knowledge, it is assumed that adults who participate can just jump into said conversation. The Holmes Group (1990) makes it clear that children need to learn that "some understandings are more equal than others in making yourself at home in the world" (p. 11), and that "while there are multiple interpretations...not all of them are equally valid" (p.17). Yet what does this mean for those of us who enter into professional development school work with the idea that we are working toward equal voices? Does it mean that some of the voices will be more equal than others? Does it mean that some of our ideas will be more valid than others? Our social history provides the cautionary note on whose ideas would be more valid than others.

Finally, there seem to be contradictory visions of equal voice in Tomorrow's Schools related to what is expected for diverse learners. On one hand, equal voice refers to a melting pot idea, meaning, we can/should combine all our voices to sing in unison in the grand communities of discourse; as written by and for an elite class. On the other hand, everyone is urged to add to the grand conversation. It will be a challenge for teachers and professors to find an appropriate balance especially when diversity issues among the people who are assumed to develop educational innovation for children, do not seem to be addressed. Again, it is assumed that adults will

come together in mutual pursuit of educational innovation in ways that help all children learn with understanding. Yet, having ignored a past history of institutionally and socially constructed identities of self and other as participants in voiced and silenced groups, this coming together may be impossible without care and caution.

The assumptions pulled from Tomorrow's Schools indicate that we are more than a day's journey to utopia. We are a long, long way from changing schools and schooling. We can assume neither that we all see the same need to improve the quality schooling for children, nor, that reasons for change or our methods for doing so are the same. We cannot assume that we can all join together and live happily ever after just by implementing a jointly constructed agenda for change. Furthermore, while we do know that building personal connections is an important step to beginning such relationships, what remains to be seen is, if we are mindful of our history and approach partnerships with great care and personal sensitivity, will we be able to navigate the institutional morass in order to meet on equal terms with equal voices to forge a mutual agenda as assumed.

In this chapter I have described the contradictions in the contexts out of which this work emerges. This chapter provided a rationale for the study by grounding it in experience and literature which suggest that current thinking about educational change ought to consider the experiences of teachers. It mentions examples of research and educational reforms that claim to do just that. However, the rationale also indicates that a genuine focus on teachers' experiences challenges the deeply rooted patterns of all participants in the educational enterprise (Harding, 1987), and furthermore that such challenges are not yet the norm. Furthermore, how it would happen, how teachers might respond, and/or whether persistent educational practices might

actually change (Cohen, 1988; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) is not known. In the next chapter I discuss the issues, contradictions, and dilemmas that define what I mean by a methodology of humility and show how it shapes and provides an argument that validates this work.

Chapter 3

A METHODOLOGY OF HUMILITY

My relationship with the teachers I write about has required me to navigate some murky methodological waters. It has meant that from the onset this work has had parallel strands. One of them has been a methodological inquiry as I sort out how to “study” those I know well, (who also know me well) in the context in which we both worked. The other strand is more empirical as I look into the lives and experiences of teachers who are involved in trying to change patterns of traditional practice in the context of a professional development school.

In learning my way through the marshes, I have found a course that leads at once toward defining the nature of the work and understanding its credibility. In this chapter I retrace my journey pointing out key landmarks and issues along the way. I characterize the context in which the study took place and describe the information I gathered to write this story.

Defining the Nature of the Work

In my role as university coordinator of Spartan Village PDS, I shared life with the teachers I write about. I was there during the ice cube melting race, listening while small clusters of children in Katie and Sylvia’s 3rd grade team classroom decided whether an ice cube would melt faster clutched in a hand, under the faucet, in a cup on the heater, in a container of hot water, etc. I was there when the lesson was analyzed and debriefed in terms of the students’ discourse and learning, with a science education professor from

MSU and their student teacher, both of whom were also participating in this unit. I was there when the first graders along with their two teachers, observed, described, and then debated the relative merits of water filtering materials such as sand, charcoal, rocks, and pebbles. I was there, too, when several of us worked together to construct the rationale and the structure for a new kind of teacher we were proposing to hire called a co-teacher. I was also there at the state-wide meeting of PDS participants where one of our Spartan Village teachers presented findings from her math assessment work. I was there, too, at the state-wide meeting where 12 of us presented our work in sessions that focused on our work in science and literacy, in math, on what it means to collaborate, and new models for restructuring work and time.

Over the five years I worked at Spartan Village I was part of countless events, discussions, presentations, and meetings. I know the players and they know me. I learned a lot. We all learned a lot, together. Even so, it is significant that the teachers represented in this work entrusted me to tell a story about a particular slice of our lives without even knowing what the story would be, how they would be represented, or even if they would find themselves in it (Behar, 1996). No matter how much we worked together, in the end, a project such as this, by virtue of what it is, is my story alone. This is so, because as Coles (1989) points out, this story is my version of these teachers' versions of their lives. Moreover, it is also my story because,

...when we discuss others, we are always talking about ourselves. Our images of "them" are images of "us." Our theories of how "they" act and what "they" are like, are, first of all, theories about ourselves: who we are, how we act, and what we are like. This self-reflective nature of our statements is something we can never avoid. In social science, although we may try to comprehend others, and although we may aim to depict the ways their realities are different from our own, understanding others actually requires us to project a great deal of ourselves

onto others, and onto the world at large. It also requires taking others into the self in an encompassing way. (Krieger, 1991, p. 5)

Implicitly, we all knew that this story about their experiences would, in the end, be *my* story (Krieger, 1991). Nevertheless, throughout the life-span of the work, from its conception to this final stage of putting words to the page, I've taken seriously the responsibility to honor their words as they intended them, and to respect the fact that their lives continue on with each other close to home, even though, as I write this final version, I have relocated to the other side of the country. My methodology, the way I have conducted my study and myself with others in it, is both grounded in and reflective of this interaction of self and others within the context, over time and distance, and within my own mind.

Spartan Village: The Elementary School

One of the things that always intrigued me about Spartan Village Elementary School was the paradoxical tensions between diversity and sameness. For example, I loved the world maps pinned to the bulletin boards in almost every classroom. Usually with photographs and yarn, these maps pinpointed the home country of each child in the classroom. The displays accentuated the diversity represented in each classroom. While sometimes mind boggling, it is true that the approximately 225 K-5 students attending Spartan Village came from over 40 countries and spoke over 30 native languages. In this regard the diversity was rich. The children represented a wide variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. About a quarter of the students met daily with one of the two full-time English as a Second Language teachers.

Yet, while the children's backgrounds varied, their lives were also characterized by several equalizing factors. One, for instance, is that everyone was dealing with diversity. Children at the school seemed to take it for granted. It would not have been unusual to have recently arrived from Brazil, to be listening to your new teacher give directions in English, and to hear two of your desk-mates speaking Korean as one explained what the teacher just said to the other. As a teacher you might have children in your classroom from Latvia, Palestine, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Korea, the US, South Africa and China to name a few. Transience was also common. Everyone in the school community dealt with the regular comings and goings of children as a matter of course.

Spartan Village Elementary School, one of seven elementary schools in the East Lansing Public School district, was built on the campus of Michigan State University to serve the children of undergraduate and graduate student families living in the surrounding university housing complex. While these children came from all over the world, everyone was equalized in terms of living space. All the one- or two-bedroom apartment units were laid out and furnished almost exactly the same. Also, in these households, either one or both parents attended school. Most Spartan Village families dealt with the pressures of having low incomes. Second hand clothes were common and unremarkable. In 1993-1994, two thirds of the children qualified for federally funded lunch programs.

Additionally, most of the children were dealing with the stresses of relocation. Many children from the United States came from single parent homes where the recently divorced or never married parent was working toward a college degree. And while some families brought grandparent caregivers with them, most children had recently moved across the country,

or the world away from extended family and support, sometimes even leaving younger siblings behind to be cared for by extended family members. Finally, it was common for families to be caught in a cultural dilemma of assimilation: While on the one hand they might be trying to help their children maintain the traditions and native language necessary for survival when they returned to their homeland, on the other their children were being immersed in the popular, consumer culture of the United States and rapidly learning the English that facilitated such assimilation.

Spartan Village: The Reform Context

In the previous chapter I provided an overview of three historical contexts that frame this work. Interestingly, these contexts also frame the more specific “context” in which this work took place. To be sure, the story I tell occurs within Spartan Village Elementary School at a particular point in time when the historical influences of, not just these three, but *multiple contexts* converged in the ongoing collaborative “professional development school” work that took place there. However, the three histories reviewed in Chapter Two are especially important ones here. They not only provide a rationale for this study, but as historical baggage, as it were, they also frame the context in which we worked.

First, my own history as a teacher, a teacher educator, and a researcher influenced my work as the university coordinator at Spartan Village; it influenced my purpose and my relationships. For example, remembering my own frustration as a teacher trying to find others with whom to talk about improving my teaching, I worked toward, participated in, and valued professional development school work that fostered such projects. Secondly, influences from the social historical context of “objectification,” which

broadly envelopes the work of educators in our society, were present in the school and in the development of our relationships. As Boostrom, Jackson, and Hansen (1993) describe,

The researchers were neither the legislators of classroom practice nor the dispensers of wisdom. The voice of each member of the group was equally worthy of being heard. The refusal of the researchers to be in authority or to act as authorities finally helped to convince the teachers that they were not (as one teacher suggested...) "insects pinned to a display board." (p. 43)

Even so, they go on to say, "Treating each other as equals at the dinner table or around the discussion circle does not get rid of the various forms of institutional hierarchy that are embedded in the structure of the educational system" (p. 43). Finally, the ideas in the Holmes Group reform influenced the professional development school context at Spartan Village because we grounded our work in the Holmes Group's principles (1990, p. 7).

But, that makes it all sound so simple and unidirectional. Indeed, the complexity of the context is astonishing. The experiences of those who worked in the context of the professional development school at Spartan Village also influenced history. For example, teachers, the principal, university faculty, graduate students, and others involved, re-focused my attention toward the teacher and shaped how I now see myself as a teacher, a teacher educator, and a researcher. This work is an example. Secondly, through the structure of an ongoing collaborative school-university partnership these teachers directly challenged the legacy of objectification. And, by virtue of their particular location in time and space and the particular individuals who converged there, professional development school participants at Spartan Village also shaped the Holmes Group reforms, which

initiated a nation-wide proliferation of school-university partnerships. To understand this notion I offer a brief, but important, explanation that revolves around leadership. During the five years I was a participant at Spartan Village I was connected with Michigan State University. Our dean, at the time, provided leadership and support for this and the other professional development schools that were emerging. But her role in our work was broader than that. She was also the president of the Holmes Group. Those involved in the early stages of professional development school work through various research and teacher education relationships with schools, served as prototypes for what the Holmes Group reports more broadly proposed. Furthermore, our dean was also the CEO of the newly formed Michigan Partnership for New Education, which, as one of its many functions, served as a funding source for professional development school operations across the state.

The Dean of the College of Education during this time was a visionary hub. Her vision was influenced, in part, by what she saw going on in a few schools that had ties with MSU faculty and students, and our ideas were influenced by her visions of the future of K-12 teaching and learning as well as for teacher education, school organization and management, and research that emerged from and supported change in those main areas (Thompson, 1989b), as well as by our reconstructions of those images as they interacted with a host of others and the ways in which resources were mobilized to make extending the work more possible. There were multiple intersections of connected contexts that converged in a time and place called Spartan Village, which was already a context in its own right.

A definition of context might be helpful here. In this work I define context as “ever-expanding networks of connections unique to a particular

time and place” (Reineke, 1995, p. 66). The reform context at Spartan Village was a place where several “ever expanding networks of connections” overlapped in a phenomenon we simply called, “PDS.” In this work I call that phenomenon *a formative interaction of contexts* to define a powerful context. A name change is a significant example: To those involved in the PDS, Spartan Village Elementary School became Spartan Village/MSU-PDS and a new sign was ordered for the school. It is within this formative interaction of contexts that I pursued answers to my questions.

Study Specifics

Guiding Questions

As I conceptualized this work I wanted to listen to and learn from teachers. I wanted to hear what it meant to them to participate in a collaborative educational reform effort. I wanted to gain an understanding of the meanings teachers made out of their participation in such activities. I also wanted to know, from their points of view, why they participated in the first place. Therefore, the questions that broadly guided my exploration were:

How do these elementary school teachers experience change while participating within the collaborative professional development school context of educational innovation?

- Why did these teachers participate in collaborative projects?
- What is the nature of these teachers’ collaborative work?
- In what ways do these teachers describe/define change in their teaching, their roles and the range of their responsibilities, their relationships with others, and the nature of support that could sustain their participation?

The Teachers

While I originally explored my questions with six teachers who were involved in professional development projects at Spartan Village/MSU-PDS during the 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 school years, I write this story around the experiences of only two so as to develop a more in-depth case of their experiences. Since I was interested in how and why teachers participate in collaborative work, what they experience while doing so, and what sustains their efforts, I chose, for this story, two teachers who were working closely together in a PDS project that was one part of our whole-school PDS proposal.

As previously mentioned, the case I explore is of two women teachers of different generations. One was just beginning her career, the other closer to retirement. While diverse in terms of generation they have many of the typical demographic descriptors in common. They are both of northern European descent, of similar socio-economic backgrounds, from similar faiths, from similar parts of the country. They also held in common many of the values and beliefs that propelled them to choose teaching in the first place. Additionally, they share an active involvement in PDS related projects and their willingness to be involved in one more -- mine.

I chose to write about these two particular teachers because they also represent a range of PDS related experiences. One was instrumental in the development of the collaborative teaching model. They have both provided leadership in school-wide PDS configurations. They both served on the PDS Council and have been active in other professional committees in the school and the district. These teachers participated with openness and trust, believing that my telling of this story about a part of their lives would be accurate according to them. Their willingness to help me with my work is also important data.

Sources of Information

My three primary sources of evidence for this story are a) reflective interviews or structured conversations that were audio-taped and transcribed, b) conference or university class presentations, audio-taped and transcribed, and c) written documents. Let me explain.

Structured conversations are open-ended, yet topic focused conversations that take place between one or a pair of the participants and myself. They are a bit like interviews but different. First, rather than a predetermined set of questions I use a list of topics. I generate topics in a reflective process that grows out of my familiarity with the literature and the context itself. After topics are generated I speak with participants to see how they would like to configure themselves for conversations. I generally like to talk with more than one at a time. Talking in a group has advantages. While I initiate the conversation by raising a topic, once rolling, I join as an active listener. We all raise issues. Sometimes a new topic is offered to clarify a previous one. Other times new issues are raised because they are important to the speaker. Talking in pairs helps people remember things. In addition, they interact with each other, they agree, disagree, clarify, prompt, and make connections to things they would not be likely to do on their own.

For example, in previous work of mine (Navarro, 1990) structured conversations were held with two collaborative groups, one from a middle school and one from a high school. Prior to these conversations, topics such as, "collaboration -- what is it?" "leadership," "successes and frustrations," "is what you are doing worth the effort it takes and why?" were generated through reflections based on observations of collaborative governance structures and classroom teams in action. To confirm topic ideas, informal

interviews aimed at collecting personal stories about collaborative work were held with a PDS faculty member participating in a different collaboration at the high school, an individual developing a collaborative relationship outside the realm of PDS work, and a PDS member who was part of the study.

The information shared during such conversations was reflective in nature. In these conversations we worked together to reconstruct the way certain events and experiences felt at the time they occurred. We also reconstructed the way things were before such events so as to determine what had, if anything, changed and how such change happened. As we remember, those things that are most significant tend to be in the fore. Thus, from such reflective conversations I can learn what was of significance to teachers as they experienced change while in the midst of doing it, in the context of a professional development school.

In addition to these structured conversations, both teachers shared parts of their collaborative story with others at conference presentations, and in both undergraduate and graduate teacher education courses. I attended six presentations over a two year period. I listened, took notes, audio-taped, and later transcribed each presentation and analyzed the contents of those transcripts along side each transcribed structured conversation.

I also drew from formal and informal written documentation. Formal written documents include public documents, such as, project proposals and end of the year reports submitted to the Michigan State Department of Education and the Michigan Partnership For New Education, the Spartan Village-PDS newsletter, a written summary of work prepared for an outside evaluation of the professional development school effort underway through Michigan State University and that evaluation, and a published book chapter. Informal written documents include such things as field notes, E-mail

messages, meeting minutes, etc. With the specifics clarified, I turn now to a discussion of the other methodological considerations of this work.

Humility and Trust

Our research agendas, and our work with teachers and as teachers, are outgrowths of our moral selves. Who we are as moral beings is expressed in our work. If we are consistent, both what we choose to study and how we study it are outgrowths of who we are and who we want to become, rather than an outgrowth of how we've intellectualized, figured, and labeled others so as to judge how they should be. Humility begs a common starting place, a "gentler tone, a slower pace, a different use of mind" (Coles, 1989, p. 14). Humility brings the moral character, the intellect, and the emotion together in order that one may live life as an outgrowth of the inner moral life. Thus sharing and caring, the building of collaborative trust, and the development of a "friendship that transcended the roles of researcher and practitioner," (Boostrom, Jackson, & Hansen, 1993, p. 43) were essential elements of my work.

As university coordinator of Spartan Village School, I shared community membership with the six teachers about whom I now write. I shared in birthdays and baby showers as readily as I shared in the joint struggle of trying to change school practices and norms. We shared the stuff of our lives and the stuff of our practice. I was guided by them and learned; I was also a mentor and provided leadership.

Of Objectification and Objectivity

For many, such a brazen admission of self in research is problematic. Traditionally, the bringing in of self is thought to compromise the researcher's objectivity and therefore, his results.

What bothers critics is the insertion of personal stories into what we have been taught to think of as the analysis of impersonal social facts. Throughout most of the twentieth century, in scholarly fields ranging from literary criticism to anthropology to law, the reigning paradigms have traditionally called for distance, objectivity, and abstraction. (Behar, 1996, p. 12)

Krieger (1991) makes a similar point saying that the "self as contaminant" view has long been the norm in the social sciences where *objectification* serves objectivity. Such a view, she claims, ought to be altered for the role of self in research is inescapable.

However, bringing the self into the work means going beyond the mere sharing of tea and teaching. To me that means going beyond developing trust and then assessing how my biases influence the design of my study, and how I make sense of what I hear and read. Krieger (1991) argues that those of us practicing in the social sciences ought to look for and make explicit our own relationships between the work we do and our inner selves. Doing so, she argues, will not "lessen our abilities to understand the world outside ourselves. Rather...increased personal understanding can help us think more intelligently and fully about social life" (p. 2). Behar (1996) also makes a point about this issue saying, "Efforts at self-revelation flop not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinized the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed" (p. 13).

Harding (1987) pushes this farther when she describes, not only the futility in trying to embrace an objectivist stance, but how such a stance ignores crucial evidence.

...the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of the research. *This* evidence too must be open to scrutiny no less than what is traditionally defined as relevant evidence. Introducing this "subjective" element into the analysis in fact increases the "objectivity" of the research and decreases the "objectivism" which hides this kind of evidence from the public. (p. 9)

Taking this line of reasoning even one step further, Behar (1996) points out that,

vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise go. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake. (p. 17)

I believe that this is the case in my work with these teachers at Spartan Village. Being myself, building personal relationships, and becoming a trusted and equal participant was a crucial step. So, too, was the constant inner reflection and understanding of self in context and how this understanding led me to my interpretations and conclusions.

I believe that humility is the key to this generative process. Let me explain. Humility, as an orientation, enables a certain kind of reflection about self which enhances the building of a certain kind of relationship. Grounded in humility, friendships engender trust. Trust enables the sharing of information that might not otherwise be shared. Treating new information with humility strengthens relationships. This kind of relationship goes in

both directions and is cumulative. It enriches the individuals and it enriches the context, which also serves to further enrich the individuals, and so on. This process also enriches the data and the conclusions I can draw.

Four Phases of Humility

Humility, as stated, as a personal stance, is the philosophical thread that ties this kind of work together. It infuses the analysis of information which is ongoing. Unlike research that is more easily chopped up into discrete parts, one of those being “the analysis of data,” this work has evolved out of an ongoing reflective, reflexive use of the mind. What counts as data, what counts as analysis, what counts as assertions, and evidence is, in this study, characterized by fluidity. To put this moving stream into a glass jar for inspection, I describe the four phases of my analysis: The study comes alive, living data, the story is told, and, the story lives.

The Study Comes Alive

This is the earliest phase of the work. During this time I got to know people, developed trust, participated in the work we shared and, at first, didn’t think too much beyond the fact that I knew I would conduct a study. Later on, I started thinking about guiding questions and participants, and method and got things rolling. During this phase, the two most important considerations focused on weighing and contemplating the interaction between my role and theirs in the context of the shared work and, the gleam in my eye that would become this work, and issues of confidentiality. For example, regarding my involvement, in the beginning of the work I contemplated my role in the school. I thought about my influence, my intervention, my biases, and my predispositions. I thought about this as who

I am, what I bring to the context and to the research. I thought about my previous experiences as a teacher and how they shaped my thoughts about these teachers. I wondered, not so much about how they measured up in terms of my own experiences, but how much they reminded me, or didn't, of colleagues I had or had wished for. I thought about my previous work at this school and how that influenced what I brought to the study. I thought about my previous experiences with these teachers as individuals and wondered how that shaped the questions I asked, the responses they offered, and the sense I made of our conversations. I thought about the delicate balance of relationships and how they make up the professional development school and I wondered if/how my study might change that. Would the biases I bring into the conversation change the nature of our relationships? (Field notes, 4/30/94). More specifically, in earlier field notes I recorded to myself:

This is my 4th year at Spartan Village, my third year as facilitator. These years of growing into a PDS community were filled with struggle...Now this year, we are calm and productive. Activity and energy is focused on our work and our interests not on sabotage or on riding the tides of confusions. We are finally a "we." The PDS here is no longer a "we" vs. "they" function. We are a group of people driven by a common desire. We are learning how we can become better educators and better learners ourselves. We are interested in how we can contribute to something bigger than ourselves and our classrooms...We are in it together...It's comfortable. It's a comfort that we have earned through several years of hard emotional work. To think about asking teachers to become involved in my project is scary because I might upset the balance...I'm conscious of the relationships we all have now...but as far as pushing on the relationships and prying into their lives as I want to do here, we have not taken those steps yet. Will I be rejected? Will they say...OK this is what she's been waiting for. In a way, it is what I've been waiting for. (Field notes, 2/10/94)

Indeed, role is a complex idea to dissect when thinking about it as the context of myself in the middle of the research context. In *any* setting I would bring my “biases” to the work. However, at Spartan Village this situation has multiple layers and is complicated. As I began to conduct sets of “formal” interviews, or structured conversations in a sense, I literally meant, what is my role, or what should my role be as I conduct this research? Should I bring what I am learning from the interviews into my practical work? If so, by what set of criteria should I be guided? A situation I wrote about in my field notes illustrates what I mean:

Two of the teachers participating in the study have opinions about each other that they try to hide. One day there was some uncomfortable veiled conversation between them. I had been privileged to hear about this situation from both individuals before the project began. They had both shared their feelings with me about this interaction on more than one occasion. In fact, it is quite interesting to hear each of them tell their version of the same event. On the level of biases I do have my own opinions. In fact, I have sometimes been pulled over to one of the “sides,” drawing my conclusions based on little concrete or substantiated information. I have come to my own conclusions about certain behaviors that may not be fair, by talking more to one teacher than the other. Through occasions of being in the middle of these teachers I have learned a lot about myself and about who I’d rather be. I’ve matured as a leader, realizing I must walk a tight rope to find a productive balance between being any one teacher’s friend and being a good leader for all in the building. So, on the level of biases now that I am engaged in the actual research part of my work, I am aware that, how I feel or have felt about each of these individuals might influence the kinds of questions I ask them and the ways I might analyze what I see. Yet, what is my role? (Field notes, 4/30/94)

As a researcher it seemed clear. My role was to listen, to pursue topics of conversation that would lead me to some conclusions about my questions. Yet, the researcher role overlapped here with the friend role and the facilitator role. Because I am a friend, things were being shared on the audio-

tape that I suspect would never be said were it someone else who conducted this project. I wondered whether I should listen benignly, or if it would be ethical to use these occasions to facilitate intra-school relationships. I wondered, was I a friend, researcher, facilitator, colleague, peer, or what? Can I separate these roles out? And furthermore, ethical considerations change depending on the role taken.

As a facilitator with leadership responsibilities, it may have been more ethical to have used what I learned as an occasion to facilitate the growth of two teachers who taught in the school. As a friend, I could have pointed out the kind of things friends point out to each other in the way that only friends can do. As a peer or a colleague, it might have been more appropriate to facilitate a free flowing exchange of ideas. As a researcher I felt that I ought only to nod and say, "Oh tell me more," and "Why do you feel that way?" or "Oh, I see, can you give me an example?" But, if that were my only role, would I have the credibility to write about them in the first place?

From this phase of the work, which took place over a span of about four years, and as indicated above, included the gathering of formal data, I moved my analysis into the next stage.

Living Data

Deciding when to gather and when to stop gathering formal data was somewhat arbitrary. In truth, I audio-taped conversations and presentations until I felt like I would have enough recorded information to turn to, to make assertions from, and to cite to make my story believable. After the structured conversation data were transcribed I started the process familiar to field researchers everywhere. I sorted it, cataloged it, compared and contrasted it, categorized it, and let the words on the transcribed pages seep

back into my emotion. I asked myself, "Is this how these words felt then?" "Is this how I remember it?" And then, when I had recaptured what I had lost from the moment and regained my sense of self in the context, my certainty, as it were, I knew it was time to open myself up to surprises. Indeed, as saturated as I was with insidership, becoming and remaining open to surprises was my biggest concern during this phase.

Ready to see myself and the teachers again for the first time, I re-sorted it, re-cataloged it, compared and contrasted it again, re-categorized it, and let the words on the transcribed pages seep back into my emotion again. Then I asked myself, "Is how I am thinking about this sensible?" "With what I see on this page and what I recall from the event, can I say this?" "Does this assertion feel right, given what I knew then and know now?"

Additionally, during this phase I read. I read about other teachers' lives and I read about what other people have said about teachers' lives. I read about education and reform. I also wrote. I consulted field notes and wrote memos. I began to make assertions and to find the evidence in the data that would bare them out. I talked with people. I ran and mulled things over mile upon mile. Most importantly however, I have kept relationships alive with two people in particular. They have read some of my words about them. And, we got together. We talked about the words. We celebrated the words because the words brought back memories important for all of us to retrieve.

The Story is Told

The next step was to develop the text. As I combined words to make sentences, out of the data and my thinking, this particular story was born. A crucial aspect of this process is the continued analysis that goes on. As I think about the story I'm creating as I create it, I continue to inspect the data, to re-

sort it, re-catalogue it, compare and contrast it, re-categorized it, and continue to let the transcribed words move me. I ask myself, "Do these particular words reflect the emotion, the purposes, the relationships?" Do these particular words tell the story I want told?

In the introduction I said "the making of good research is more than the telling of a compelling narrative about people who are special to me because theirs is a story I share." This chapter clarifies how my research differs from fiction. Yet, it is also true that the telling of a compelling narrative is part of what makes a research study, such as this one, good. Writing is an essential phase of the analysis. During the writing, the story expands and contracts. Having allowed the transcribed words of the teachers to seep into my memory and my emotion I write differently. And, this writing is similar to the kind of writing novelists describe when they talk about how characters or plots take on a life of their own and write themselves into the text moving the story in the directions they want it to go. Unlike the detached reporting out of the data that characterizes much traditional research, Behar (1996) discusses how Clifford Geertz, in his book, Works and Lives, suggests that "ethnographies are a strange cross between author-saturated and author-evacuated texts, neither romance nor lab report, but something in-between" (p. 7).

Yes. While in a romance novel, characters who never lived take on lives, in traditional educational research that objectified teachers, we read about them as if they never lived, seeing them as Teacher One and Teacher Two. In my writing, I am certainly trying to honor the lives as they were lived, but I am also trying to show how those experiences can take us all beyond the immediate.

Specificity to generalization. To be sure, through my processes of analysis I have attempted to understand and describe the lives and experiences of six teachers with whom I am directly acquainted. Yet, in order to make this project a worthwhile endeavor, to live up to my responsibility as a researcher, my quest for understanding must lie beyond mere description. Certainly “we are interested not only in learning *about* a specific social situation, which is the concern of the participant, but in also learning *from* that social situation” (Burawoy, 1991, p. 5). Indeed, one purpose of this work is to gain a *specific* understanding of these six teachers, their worlds, and their work, as experienced by them in the context of the educational reforms going on in their school, in order to understand, *generally*, more about the intersection between teachers and educational reform. Moreover, I aimed to see through the “window” of these teachers’ *specific* experiences (Price, 1995) to gain clearer views of the ways in which teachers’ lives are defined by and define the boundaries of their work. I have tried to “continue in the methodological tradition of speaking specifically in order to speak generally” (Krieger, 1991, p. 4).

A caveat. Moving between the specific and the general is not as easy as it might sound. During the analysis and writing I have been conscious of walking a fine line between making credible assertions about the specific and making generalizations that go well beyond what was lived, neither of which are well-grounded in the data or useful. Therefore, my role in this stage of the work as I prepare to give this story over to the reader is different than it was in the beginning. Buchmann (1993b) helps me explain by reminding us that we've all entered an era where others’ experiences are valued, sometimes to the point where no critical analysis is provided at all. I have wondered often during this work, as a researcher how I can look through a

critical lens in order to see these teachers' experiences in ways that would be valuable to others, while still valuing the worth of those experiences as they were lived.

As a researcher studying teachers' experiences with change I find myself entangled: If I believe in and value the validity of another's lived experience, then where and how do I enter in as critic in order to test the validity of self-reported data and to theorize? Put another way: How does one critique the legitimacy of another's experience saying it is or it isn't what they say it is? How can the researcher bring the voices of others into the work while also trying to do legitimate theorizing based on the reported experiences of those voices?

Here again, humility is important. I have continually reminded myself what my study is about. How did it feel to these teachers to be involved in a collaborative change effort? Why did they participate? What meanings did they give to their participation? What kinds of support did they need to sustain their work? The objective of the study is not to make a claim whether or not change has occurred or to seek "the truth." Harding (1987) explains that the questions that marginalized groups want answered "are rarely requests for so-called pure truth. Instead, they are queries about how to change its conditions; how its world is shaped by forces beyond it; how to win over, defeat, or neutralize those forces arrayed against its emancipation, growth, or development; and so forth" (p. 8). In this way, these teachers' experiences are the data I am using to tell my story, which is about our experiences together in a place where innovation was the context. In so doing I have tried, as Coles (1989) writes about his work, to make my guesses and indicate my sense of things simply. After all ease of accessibility is of great importance because the final stage of analysis is up to the reader.

The Story Lives

In reality, the final phase of analysis occurs when the reader, complete with his or her own background experiences, makes meaning out of my text. My analysis and the words I choose must tell a story that, in its honesty, is compelling enough to move the reader. My telling must strike a balance between the daily realities of our lives and the words of others who have thought about similar things so as to meet the rigors of scholarship. Only in this way can I, the participant, the observer, and the one who is telling the story, truly keep the lives of real people alive. If readers relate to and can connect with the experiences I write about, if readers find the text “interesting, useful, or valuable” (Krieger, 1991, p. 6), they will also take the specifics of our experiences and generalize in ways that make sense to them. For that to happen readers must be able to identify with the researcher/writer who serves as their guide through the morass (Behar, 1996). And as a guide, trying to evoke both “intellectual and emotional responses” in the reader (p. 20) I have entered the story and drawn upon the personal voice, which, Behar says, “if creatively used, can lead the reader, not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues” (p.14).

Back To the Moving Stream

Now I pour the water out of its temporary container, where we could see its phases more clearly, back into the stream where we have a final look as it swishes and swirls in the rapids. As I stated above, I used the narratives generated from two teachers not only to describe the specifics of *their* experiences, but also to understand more generally the intersections between teachers’ lives and the institutional structures in which they work. This is

particularly true because of my role in the school. What served me well in terms of gaining these teachers' trust and confidence, could make it difficult to stay within the bounds of my data. In other words, in addition to notebooks full of transcripts, that which might be called "formal" data, I have mentally catalogued countless informal conversations, have amassed files and files of E-mail, handwritten letters and cards, and working journals full of notes. This data, as well as the sideways glances and shrugs are the nuances and the artifacts of trust. They serve me and, as implied, make what I know credible. I am on the inside (Sizer, 1988).

Being an insider and privy to knowledge that is used humbly, no matter which lens of role is used, actually increases the believability of my conclusions, because it increases the information I have. Each role is another lens and each lens provides more data to consider. Moreover, coming to know myself in my many roles in the school, and how that both influences and enhances the nature of the data and the analysis, increases the believability of my conclusions.

Merging the roles I played, rather than separating them out unnaturally seems to highlight the fluidity of the work. This kind of work is not something done from the outside looking in, rather from the inside looking even further inward into the context, into the self, and into the interactions, the conflicts, the dilemmas, the tensions. As I have tried to show, it is a dynamic process. What I learned from one conversation not only shaped the next conversation I had with that person or people, but also shaped the conversations I had with others. What I learned shaped how I participated in whole-school meetings, in council meetings, and in university meetings. Likewise, various interactions in each context also shaped what I

talked about to individual study participants. This process was in motion for everyone in the school and influenced the conclusions I draw.

Chapter 4

TEACHING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE TEACHING: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

It has been three years since I sat with Sylvia and Katie in my office, tape recorder on and catching our voices still fresh with the confusion, anger, and pain of their loss, our loss. And, it has been four years since Katie, -- in the heart what she, at 26 and in her *third* year of teaching was soon to call the "high point of her career" -- was "pink-slipped," which she explains was "just a warning that you might not have a job, then by the last day of school you hope you get a letter that says you are still here" (T-9, p. 8). But Katie's letter on that last day of school, was a lay off notice. After a summer of being "just out in a bucket, I had nothing," Katie was called back two days before school began to another school in the district. This series of events initiated a profound sense of sorrow that still haunts their professional work with children. Indeed, just recently I received an E-mail from Sylvia, "I am STILL grieving," she exclaimed (E-mail correspondence, May 9, 1997).

You see, Sylvia and Katie had worked together. They were a teaching team. Oh, not in the usual sense

where one teacher is social studies and one teacher does science and you switch classes...when we teamed, *we wanted to learn from each other*. I wanted to watch Sylvia teach science, and I couldn't do that if I just sent my kids off to her room, and she sent her kids to me. So we decided to team. We had both of our classes all together, and we taught together. (T-7, p. 4)

I was a regular visitor in their team classroom during 1992-1993 where from the first day of that year, they taught both classes of third grade students *together* in one double classroom. There was a large lively plant-filled room created by opening an orange folding door. The door, when closed, butted up to a shared enclosed coat room, which together previously separated the two rooms and, of course, those two teachers -- one of which was Sylvia. The literal fact that they opened a previously closed door and taught together is not, in itself, remarkable. A variety of team teaching situations exist in schools across the nation. The metaphorical door they opened, however, is significant. By choosing to teach together for the explicit purpose of learning together while teaching, they opened a door that generally closets colleagues away from each other and separates teachers from their own learning.

I vividly remember feeling the passion Sylvia and Katie shared for their teaching when I listened to them talk with others about their work, and when I watched them teach. Through writing about their work I have also come to understand how that passion formed the basis of their work and bound them together. It is the beginnings of their relationship, their process of coming to realize that they shared a common view of teaching, their personal determination and openness to continue to learn, their keen sense that they could learn from each other by teaching children together, and their figuring out a way to do so that I explore in this chapter.

T-E-A-M: Together Everyone Accomplishes More

Katie and Sylvia were excited, if not a bit tentative, as they folded back the door and began their experiment to teach together and learn from each other. Their professional development school proposal which outlined their

ideas for working together reflected the distinction they were trying to make between traditional team teaching and their plans.

Katie: We didn't want to teach in a traditional way, where I taught language arts and Sylvia taught science and maybe our kids rotated. You know how they do teaching like that? And, basically it helps you because you don't have to plan as much. Well, we wanted to learn from each other. So I wanted to watch her...

Sylvia: ...And, I wanted to watch her. (T-8, p. 5)

As a further point of demarcation between traditional team teaching and what they wanted to do, Katie said that traditional teaming, "just alleviates planning. It doesn't get you excited about teaching. It doesn't get you support, help you bounce ideas off, improve your teaching. It doesn't do any of those things" (T-6, p. 5). They put their ideas into a proposal, called it Co-team Teaching in the Third Grade, and delineated their goals to:

- Explore innovative ways to structure team teaching in order to make optimum use of their strengths as teachers;
- Explore innovative ways to teach by integrating science and literacy and social studies and mathematics curricula;
- Analyze the observed effect their shared teaching methods and curriculum integration have on teaching and learning for understanding;
- Explore innovative ways to involve a preservice teacher in their team; and,
- Explore the use of portfolio assessment in science and literacy. (Spartan Village PDS Proposed Plan of Work, 1992, pp. 24-25)

From the very beginning they used the word *team* to do more than describe. TEAM was their strategy, their philosophy, and the way of

classroom life they tried to establish for all. As guest speakers in a graduate course on teacher learning, they explained:

So the first day of school we had our model up, which is TEAM, T-E-A-M: Together Everyone Accomplishes More. And that was our motto for the year. We always referred to the team and we had that out every place. So that helped build the community we were trying to build. (T-8, p. 15)

Before long they included their motto in their title and called their work, "Collaborative TEAM-teaching in the Third Grade." Each word in their title had significance.

Whatever reservations they may have had about opening their orange door quickly dissipated.

Katie: We didn't really know how much we were going to work together. We said, well, we'll probably do some science units together, we'll probably do some language arts. We didn't really want to get in over our heads.

Sylvia: We wanted to leave ourselves an out if it didn't work, I think too.

Katie: Right. Well, after three weeks, we had that curtain open all day long. We just couldn't stand *not* to be together!" (T-8, p. 5)

In three weeks they managed to open both doors which, rapidly altered the structures that had previously defined their work when teaching alone. Their respect and admiration for each other and their enthusiasm for teaching together was palpable in every setting in which I observed them. As Katie said, "We just couldn't stand *not* to be together!" Part of what is so interesting about their attachment is that, to those who knew them, they seemed an improbable pair. They certainly didn't begin their collaboration on

the basis of an established friendship. But wait. Before I get into that, and describe more fully how they came to work together or what their work was like, I ought to introduce them and tell how it is they came to form their professional bonds.

Sylvia: The Making of Opportunity

Sylvia, is a late 50 something - early 60 something teacher with 25 years of teaching experience. Interestingly, however, the year she teamed with Katie was only her seventh year as an elementary classroom teacher. How Sylvia came to be a third grade teacher at Spartan Village Elementary is a story that shows her to be a determined person with a pattern of relying on her strengths in order to turn disruptions in her career into professional opportunities to grow.

Just after graduating from college with a teaching certificate for secondary physical education, science and social studies in one hand and a wedding ring on the other, Sylvia moved to California where her new husband was to complete his last year of military service. That year she got a job teaching high school physical education, the area she chose naturally as an extension of her active youth.

So at the time I went into education, I really thought that's what I wanted to do (teach physical education), because that's what I had spent my life doing. I was either outside with creatures, or I was participating in some sort of athletics, riding horses, playing golf, swimming, boating, skiing, all that kind of stuff, playing basketball, whatever. I was outdoors...I climbed trees, I went to farms and...did the outdoor chores...and cleaned stalls and took care of horses...and I worked on cars with [my father] I did all that kind of stuff. (T-1, p. 6)

While they both liked California and wanted to remain there, jobs were scarce in 1957. So they packed up and returned to her husband's former job and his home town in mid-Michigan. Initially, Sylvia was not employed. When she saw an advertisement in the paper for a position in a private school for "mentally handicapped children," she capitalized on her student teaching experiences with special education students and got the job. She taught for six months and was named the director of the school. However, when the year was over, pregnant with their first child, she resigned in order to stay home with one and soon two small children.

For five years their lives fit the predictable middle-class pattern of the times. He worked. She was a homemaker. Then things changed for a while. Her husband decided to change careers and, with her support, enrolled in a professional school. It was Sylvia, the teacher, who would provide for the family and put him through school. Sylvia created a professional opportunity for herself in an urban school. Based on her previous experiences during student teaching and at the school for mentally handicapped children, she landed a job teaching special education. The problem was that she was not certified to teach special education. She began her job as a "substitute in a regular position." As she explains it, they "gave me this classroom with the agreement that I would go back to school and get my special ed. certification," which she did, family in tow, during the next two summers (T-2, p. 7). She kept this job, which became a regular position, for five and a half years and was granted tenure. Then when her husband completed school, they returned once again to his home town where he began his practice.

Initially, Sylvia returned to the rigors of caring for her children and her home and did not seek full time employment. But, she "did a lot of

substitute teaching and realized that I really wanted to go back to teaching and decided when the children were in school full time (at that time students went home for lunch until 7th grade) I'd go back" (T-2, p. 7). And she did. In 1973 she heard about a part time Title I position "via the grapevine...and I went over and I just said to the principal, 'I really would like that job, and this is why I think I could handle it using my background in special ed'...So I got the job and I stayed there for 12 years working half-time" (T-2, p. 8). Indeed, she might have completed her career in this role were she not faced with another disruption, this time due to a change in the district's use of Chapter I funds.

When talking about that particular time, which actually ignited a whole new phase in her teaching career, Sylvia says with great befuddlement, "The personnel director had never even looked in my file. And the director of instruction came over and offered me this...you can either apply for a RHT¹ or you may go back into the general education classroom" (T-2, p. 8).

So after 19 years of teaching experience, Sylvia was in a bit of a professional jam. Not only was it true that she couldn't really go "back" to a place she had never been. It was also true that she couldn't be a reading helping teacher, because reading helping teachers return to their elementary classrooms, a position Sylvia had never held. You know, in her mid-fifties, her husband's practice well established, her children grown, herself feeling a sense of the absurdity of what she was being asked to do and being miffed that the administration hadn't even bothered to look in her file, an easier choice might have been to retire rather than re-tool.

¹ An RHT, or reading helping teacher, is a regular classroom teacher who for two years leaves her position to serve both as a building resource in reading and as an enrichment teacher for small groups of children. After the two years is over the teacher returns to the position she left.

Yet, Sylvia was still enthralled with her work and wanted to continue. It wasn't easy. After doing a lot of investigation by talking with people in the district and at the university, she decided to capitalize on this circumstance by redirecting her career, indeed, heading "backwards" in a forward direction. Her determination is evident. She was granted a one year professional leave to obtain her elementary certification.

I had to really work hard. I had to deal with a lot of the secretary's saying 'No. You can't do this.' 'No. I'm sorry you can't get into this course.' I just had to pull as many strings as I could. Well I did it. And I got back. And then I was placed over here. (T-2, p. 8)

Creating A Place To Grow

"Here," is Spartan Village Elementary, which she told me was the only school she didn't want to go to, to begin her career as an elementary classroom teacher. About her arrival she says "I was scared. I had heard about the principal...and the first year was kind of rough" (T-2, p. 8). Her principal did indeed have a reputation for being demanding. However, for now it's important only to understand that Sylvia was concerned by the tales she had heard and that for her, this became another challenge to meet. In spite of what she remembers to have been a rough first year, she describes feeling that she had made a place for herself at Spartan Village where she could grow. Her perceptions and descriptions of herself as a teacher who has learned are important to this story. It's just as important here, however, to consider that in spite of the tremendous growth she perceived, she still sees herself as needing to grow. When I asked her to talk more about the changes she has made in her teaching she replied:

Oh it's changed vastly if for no other reason than I have so much more confidence in just working with children. I don't have all the confidence I need, there's still...inadequacies that I feel. Which maybe...which maybe is one of the reasons that I'm so interested in constantly learning about teaching. Um...because I want to keep current. I become aware of areas where I'm not really as strong as I'd like to be, so that's keeps me wanting to learn more. (T-3, p. 2)

Not yet as strong as she wants to be and wanting to learn more, that's where we'll leave Sylvia right now -- thinking of her as a person who has responded to the many disruptions in her career by creating new opportunities, by stretching herself to take on new roles, by educating herself to teach in new settings, by a determination to continually re-focus her career, and finally as a veteran teacher with a background in secondary physical education, science, and special education who only recently began teaching elementary school and desires to be "constantly learning about teaching."

Katie: An Opportunity in the Making

In contrast to Sylvia, Katie in her mid 20's, began her career teaching an overflow classroom of second and third graders in a portable classroom at Spartan Village. Unlike Sylvia, there was no reluctance to join the faculty at Spartan Village. She was hired in October 1990, the Fall after she graduated from Learning Community, one of Michigan State University's alternative teacher education programs, one, in fact, that had a long history of association with Spartan Village. While Katie's preservice teaching experience had been in other schools, she had been in the building several times. In fact, she came with her classmates to observe Deborah, their math methods professor, teaching math in *Sylvia's* classroom.

While the teachers at Spartan Village were not familiar with Katie in particular, they were very familiar with Learning Community and had a good understanding of its philosophies and curriculum. Many of them worked side-by-side with professors and instructors in the program and were mentors to Katie's peers. With their knowledge of the program they could surmise that she would have had a strong background in literacy and mathematics and a penchant for professional collaboration because the program emphasized the development of collaboration and community. Actually, Spartan Village emerged as a professional development school, in part, because of this particular phase in its association with Michigan State's College of Education. It is significant that the woman who was the university coordinator when Spartan Village first became a professional development school, had also been a director of Learning Community.

Katie was substituting in her home town when she heard about the opening at Spartan Village and applied. She was considered an outstanding candidate and was offered the position. Indeed, she was also considered an outstanding teacher education student. Instructors in the program, in fact everyone who knew her, regarded her as a bright and promising teacher candidate. She excelled in her course work and in the field. Even so, there is so much to be learned during the first year of teaching and Katie recalled feeling overwhelmed during the first few weeks on the job.

When I first walked into my classroom...it was completely empty except for desks. There was nothing on the walls and there weren't any bulletin boards. I guess the first couple of weeks I just tried to keep my head above water. (T-5, p. 1)

Of course, Katie did keep her head above the flood line. But the degree to which she worked during that first year, ought not be underplayed.

Certainly she experienced things most first-year teachers cope with, such as learning the norms and procedures of the school, and getting her classroom organized for instruction. Of this time she recalled, "I was in sort of a daze in my mind. Now that I've been teaching more I realize there were a lot of things going on in my classroom that I wasn't even aware of...I remember making lists and lists of things I needed to do" (T-5, p. 1). As are many first year teachers Katie related that she was initially "totally into myself, and my classroom...consumed by just trying to figure out what I was going to do each day" (T-1, p. 7). Even so, it is interesting to hear how she characterized her relative position to veteran teachers at Spartan Village.

I thought I was going to know...all these new teaching ideas. And that I had this myth that was sort of -- I think in teacher education they do put a lot of myths in people's heads -- that all teachers are old and all teachers are burned out and they don't want to learn and they don't care and they just go to their job and whip out their notes that are on yellow, faded paper, and read through them. And I believed that. But then, when I got my job at Spartan Village, everything there was totally against that. Because the teachers there, not only did they know much more than I did about the 'new ideas' but they were trying them, experimenting with them, working with other people, talking about areas that they wanted to improve in. (T-1, p. 7)

While adjusting to her new environment, Katie noticed that teachers at Spartan Village were doing things that she had not expected teachers to be doing. While she said she "felt really intimidated when I first went there. I felt like, 'Oh my gosh, I don't know anything,'" she also recognized that something good was going on and was pleased about it.

I just thought it was really neat the way people were talking and...I never thought that that meant that they weren't good teachers, in fact, I thought 'wow,' you know, 'this is really cool

that teachers are doing this,' you know, like, exactly what you would hope teachers would do. (T-1, p. 7)

As a new teacher, observing her new surroundings and somehow recognizing that it is significant for teachers to talk together and to admit that they don't know everything, is where we'll leave Katie for the moment -- thinking of her as a new teacher with new ideas placed in a school where teachers are similarly versed in those ideas, but she, without the time or space to participate.

The Copy Machine And Some Earth Worms

A copy machine seems an unlikely place to begin a fruitful and exciting partnership. In an elementary school it is more usually the site for fleeting social chatter about up coming vacations, weather complaints and aching feet (Katie, T-1, p. 10). And earth worms seem like an unlikely thing to bring two people together, unless they are going fishing or to a communal garden. Yet for this improbable pair, the copy machine seems to symbolize the initial stages of their getting to know one another as colleagues, while worms symbolize an important transformative event.

While copy machine conversations and worms were crucial stages in their collaboration, Sylvia cites an even earlier beginning, explaining, "I sat in on two or three interviews, but she just sparked. I thought, she has to come to Spartan Village...she was very natural and very humble. I felt we have to get her here. I had no other feeling about her personally, other than that she would be wonderful" (T-4, p. 17). But, their collaboration emerged slowly over time and casual conversation. Sylvia, well acquainted with the pressures associated with a new job, gave Katie a wide berth as she got adjusted. Katie "was so busy with...first year duties...we didn't have much

time to really get acquainted." Even so, by the end of the first year they were beginning to notice similar interests in teaching. About their initial attraction to each other Sylvia told one group of teachers in a conference presentation about their collaboration, "I guess we could say it was a copy machine collaboration" (T-7, p. 2). In another presentation she explained:

We were always at school early together...and we stayed after school. Our paths often crossed. We were getting acquainted kind of at the copying machine and noticed that there were some things that she was doing that I really liked, and I was doing things that she really liked. So we were exchanging ideas and talking about maybe working together some year. (T-8, p. 3)

Gradually, during their early morning encounters in the work room, they shared things -- methods, ideas, stories and goals. Then in the Spring of Katie's second year, a spontaneous event happened that propelled them toward deliberately structuring a way to work together the following year. Katie explains this in their presentation to graduate students in a course on teacher learning.

One thing that really got us going was that this one morning after it had rained, Sylvia had come into school and I was already there and she had this big container of soil. I used to say dirt, but now I say soil. And I asked her what she was doing and as I looked closer, there were a whole lot of worms crawling around. I have always been one of those people who didn't like to touch bugs or worms or anything, and I thought oh, jeeze. But I thought, boy, I really wish I could do that because I knew that when...her kids walked in that morning they were going to be so excited, because they were going to look at worms and have chances to do that. So I started talking with her about that and how I felt guilty that I, even though I knew that that would be a good idea, I don't think I could bring myself to go out and collect all these worms. And she said, 'Oh! I'd be happy to bring the worms down to your room.' And I said, 'Oh. Really?' And she said, 'Oh. Sure.' And she had an art period, so my class came to her room while her kids were in art. And she had these girls,

boys, they were picking up the worms, putting them on the containers, they had magnifying glasses and they were making illustrations and diagrams and writing down observations and they talked about what they already knew about worms. And I was just in the back sort of as an assistant taking notes and things. And that really got me excited, because I had always felt in my first two years of teaching, that I had sort of neglected science, that there just isn't time to do everything. And there's always areas that you're really excited about so you want to spend time on those and some other areas sort of get left to the wayside and science was definitely an area that I was not doing as much as I wanted to. And there were kids in my class who, because of the worm experience, I saw things in them that I hadn't seen before. You know, their faces light up and they were so interested and they were participating in a group activity, where in a reading or writing activity, they might not feel so confident or excited. (T-8, p. 3)

At this point in their presentation I can feel the admiration and enthusiasm they have for one another and for what they did together in their double classroom of 50 third graders; their collaborative energy is infectious. As they talk together their work comes to life. Their presentation becomes a model of their collaborative effort as they co-construct the story of their becoming teaching partners. Their presentation is not rehearsed. It's not even written. The way they talk about their work, is also part of their work and they are spontaneous and genuine in the telling. Sylvia graciously follows Katie adding her part:

That's the way it is with Katie when she's working in language arts. I feel kind of the same way about things that she does with her children, which gives me an opportunity to have some experience along that line. I had never done much with poetry and Katie does a lot with poetry and this can all tie in with the whole worm activity because -- I don't know if we did it that time or not, but if we were working together now, and I had done something with worms, the next day, -- Katie would have brought in a whole bunch of poetry about worms, something to do with rain or something of that sort. And then we would go from science, and right into a poetry unit. (T-8, p. 4-5)

In fact, not too long after the sharing of the worms, Katie and her class invited Sylvia and her students to an “Amelia Bedelia” party which gave Sylvia a chance to see Katie teach. Sylvia had taken a risk by teaching in front of Katie and Katie had done the same.

**I Wanted to Learn More About the Way She *Thought*
and the Way She Got Kids Involved in Science**

Beyond Sharing and Advice

When they tell their story to a group of teachers, the energy they emit and their mutual admiration for each other is inspiring. Yet they do seem a bit the odd couple sitting there. Indeed, looking in on them from the outside one might think this a strikingly unusual partnership. While a veteran teacher and a brand new teacher might certainly be attracted to each other by a mutual passion for teaching, they do not generally seek each other out for purposes of *reciprocal* professional improvement. I’m not saying that experienced professionals don’t appreciate or even steal from the breath of fresh air attributed to those just out of school, full of ideas and enthusiasm. And, I’m also not implying that beginners don’t seek out the support and advice of more seasoned teachers. I am saying that Sylvia and Katie’s partnership was different.

It’s significant that Sylvia was never assigned to be Katie’s “buddy.” Such assignments are typical in elementary schools where the experienced teacher’s role is to socialize the new teacher into the culture and show them how to comply with policies and procedures. To be sure, Sylvia voluntarily

assisted Katie with pertinent information and shared her understanding of school norms and policy.

That first year was just a matter of how we do things. Here are the forms, this is the way we have done it. If you need any help ask me. That is all for the first year. I just gave her copies of things and it wasn't much conversation. (T-4, p. 17)

However, a partnership of inculcation or of receiving advice was neither the purpose nor the foundation of their professional partnership. Their relationship went far beyond that kind of sharing. It wasn't too long after the worm incident that they decided to try and team. From that point onward their relationship began to progress beyond the casual, albeit meaningful, chatting they had enjoyed in the copy room. As Katie said about sharing the worms, "that was sort of our peak and we said, well, next year we should get together and do something (T-8, p. 3). And they did. They moved quickly with their idea. Katie explains that they talked with the principal and, "after [they] worked politically" they got their "team room" and began making plans for the following year (T-8, p. 5).

Beyond Friendship

It should be apparent to anyone listening to them talk about their year together that they are personally close -- friends actually, who are extremely comfortable with each other. Katie describes their outward joy, "I mean, just talking about [our teaming] -- even a year later -- we just get these huge grins on our faces" (T-8, p. 5). Indeed, they did get huge grins on their faces, and they bantered back and forth, in that special kind of conversation reserved for intimate friends.

However, in spite of their friendship, or perhaps because of it, they are very clear when talking to others that they did not decide to teach together *because* they were friends or even because they wanted to become friends. They were not looking to be friends. When they talk with other teachers about their relationship and extol the benefits of a partnership in teaching, "And it's wonderful to be able to work with someone else and just sort of, she kind of picks my brain and I pick her brain and, I don't know, it's just a wonderful experience and I really would want all of you to try it" (T-7, p. 6), they make it clear that friendship ought be neither a prerequisite nor a goal of professional partnerships. They encourage others saying, "to be in a big room with two teachers and share your personal lives and be good friends, that happened out of our teaming. That was great but it's not necessary" (T-8, p. 26).

While friendship does not seem to be what propelled them together, on the other hand they also caution teachers that "you can't just say, 'Hi. What's your name? Let's team together'" (T-8, p. 18). As they have made it clear, their relationship was, in part, grounded in their desire to learn from each other. Sylvia is emphatic about her sense that, "it has been nice to have a relationship that developed from a professional standpoint, in that our teaching, what we had in common, got us together" (T-4, p. 2).

It is important to recall that they decided to work together because they wanted "*to learn from each other.*" Their intention had always been to learn from one another. It seems that their shared commitment to become better teachers in order to better serve their students forms the foundation of their partnership. In a telling summation, Katie concludes her story about the worms saying, "I really wanted to learn more about the way she *thought* and the way she got kids involved in science" (T-7, p. 2).

However, while they discuss wanting to learn from each other by sharing a classroom and teaching together, they never aspired to be teaching clones and didn't want to become so. Rather they each saw the other as a mutual mentor, each having different kinds of knowledge and skills about teaching that they could gain from each other. It is clear that Sylvia felt she could learn things from Katie and Katie felt she could learn things from Sylvia. They discuss these things openly with others.

She [Katie] was very strong in teaching in some areas that I considered myself weak in. Maybe I shouldn't say weak, but I wanted to go on learning more about it, and that's the area of Language Arts. And in the same vein, I like science a lot and Katie had a feeling that she wanted to learn more about teaching science in a hands on approach. (T-7, p. 9)

Earlier in this presentation Katie had said similar things. She explained from her point of view that one of the things that brought them together was,

One of the areas that I had never felt very strong [in]...there are two or three areas you just naturally want to spend more time on those, and then in the back of your mind you, you're starting to say, wow, you really should be working on this, or that, and science was one of those areas that I never gravitated towards. And Sylvia, well since she was a child, has always been interested in science and nature and how things work and soil and stuff like that...(T-7, p. 2)

Yet, while a desire to learn from each other is certainly important, it is not all that brought them together. Their partnership also grew out of philosophical agreements, agreements I have more simply called, their shared passion for teaching. For example, when Katie and Sylvia reflected on their TEAM year they told other teachers,

Katie: I mean, if I had one thing to say that was so great about that year is that when every kid left that team, they felt good about themselves, as kids, as learners, as teachers, as people. And that to me is really important...and that was the philosophy that we shared, that we wanted our kids to really feel like teachers. (T-8, p. 25)

They refer to the importance of a shared philosophy again, later in the same discussion. Thinking about how teachers might discover an effective teammate if friendship is not necessarily the prerequisite, and if indeed you can't just team with anyone, a student asks: "If you were going to team again, what characteristics would you look for in another person..."

Sylvia: ...I think if it just happened naturally, there might be someone that I think could fit, but I don't know. I don't think it would ever be the same. I don't expect it to be. This was a really special experience. I don't know. I don't know what's out there...

Katie: ...I think I would take it slow. It would have to be someone that I had some philosophical conversations with and we agreed on things. Or somebody I was intrigued with, what they were doing. Um, you'd have to kind of take it all in and think about it carefully and go slow in the beginning. (T-8, p. 29)

Initially, when faced with the question, they balked at the suggestion of teaming again, Katie with a resounding, "No way!" Sylvia saying, "I don't think I would go out and look for someone to team with..." And, as they mused their response Sylvia referenced their pain saying, "We did a lot of grieving over the separation. It was very difficult. It really was. We were together once a week, but that was not enough time" (T-8, p. 28).

And so, as with all conversations we three seem to have, we move in and out of the grief; we highlight what was great, and lament that it was taken. The recollection of the joy of what was is tempered with the agony of

having had to move on before they were ready. As I know these two, I like to think of them as dynamic and determined women of different generations who, after talking informally, took a relatively simple idea, like they say, “we kind of met at the copy machine,” and realized that they really wanted to learn from each other by watching each other teach. To this point I have introduced Katie and Sylvia as individuals and as teammates. I have highlighted their personal journeys, characteristics, mutual attractions, and the beginnings of their partnership. They got acquainted gradually, over time and opened not only their doors, but their hearts to each other. But their experiences before they formed their team must be recounted more fully for us all to understand the power of their experience together. Chapter Five, like Sylvia’s decision to become an elementary classroom teacher, takes the story “backwards” in a forward direction.

Chapter 5

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING: OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN IN THE COMPANY OF OTHERS

As I discussed in the previous chapter, Sylvia and Katie got to know each other while focusing on issues of teaching and learning rather than social amenities. It is significant that Sylvia attached such importance to the conversations they shared, mornings at the copy machine. While we can't *really* know what those conversations were about, or what in particular led these two to take the first fundamental risk of showing each other their teaching -- first Sylvia, then Katie -- we can figure that they must have been substantially different from the kind of conversations that usually occur between teachers in the work room.

Katie and Sylvia constructed a professional relationship that was different than those usually found between teachers in schools (Barth, 1990; Little, 1982, 1990; Johnson, 1990). As discussed in Chapter One, given what the literature says about how teachers revert to conservative teaching practices and retreat to the safety of their own classrooms as ways to deal with the inherent uncertainties of teaching, it is interesting to think for a moment about Katie and Sylvia coming together. While they talk about their reservations and left themselves an "out if it didn't work," it is puzzling that they decided to make the already uncertain work of teaching more uncertain by entering into the unknown terrain of teaching together. Such behavior does not fit the supposed pattern. Teachers, as they are characterized in the literature (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), do not

generally create more uncertainty for themselves. Yet it appears that Katie and Sylvia did.

As their working relationship developed, each step they took seemed to be a step into new and uncertain territory. They went beyond the “friendly, cordial associations” that characterize congenial teacher talk (Barth, 1990). A risk taken. Actually, according to Little (1982), simply talking about their teaching strategies and sharing ideas could have apparently been a tremendous risk. She writes:

The cultivation of precise and concrete talk about teaching is not without risks. The more widely attempted is a language of description and analysis, the more it exposes the knowledge, skill, and experience of teachers; the more evident is the tie to (scrutiny of) classroom practice in teacher’s daily interactions with each other or administrators, the more pressing become the demands on professional competence and personal self-esteem. (p. 334)

Such risk, however, did not seem to deter this pair. They took another step. Sylvia offered to let Katie watch her teach. A risk in itself. But more significant than perhaps we realize, because Sylvia offered to teach *Katie’s* students, children Sylvia did not even know. Katie, then only a second year teacher, invited Sylvia and her class to a literacy event Katie was leading. Another step, another risk. From there, they decided to work together (a risk), began talking more (a risk), discussed their ideas with the principal (another risk), “worked politically” as Katie said, and asked the principal if she would move a teacher who had occupied, and *enjoyed* her classroom on the other side of Sylvia’s orange door (yet another risk). With the relocation of that teacher worked out, they completed a written professional development school proposal, writing their thoughts for an audience of university and state department of education people (a new kind of risk), all of which enabled them to jump into the uncertainty of teaching together (the ultimate risk).

When comparing their actions to the literature, it seems reasonable to entertain the possibility -- especially given they were not close professional friends at the time -- that, from their point of view, the steps they took were not perilous ones at all. Contrary to what Little suggests, it seems that the more Katie and Sylvia exposed their understandings of teaching to each other, the more comfortable they felt and the more certain they were that they would like to teach together. From the parts of the story shared so far, it might seem like Sylvia and Katie were teaching in the isolation and loneliness of their own classrooms until they met, became intrigued with each other, and decided to teach together. If this were the case, personal qualities and a tendency toward the exceptional might explain the contradiction. But this is *not* the case.

Sylvia had had experience with what might be considered the uncertainty of collaboration before. Her elementary teaching at Spartan Village has been peppered with collaborative teaching and learning opportunities she pursued based on her desires to improve her teaching. Furthermore, Katie's preservice teaching experiences were within a distinct context that prepared her to expect, seek out, and to participate in a particular kind of collaborative learning context. Her induction into the profession at Spartan Village was also a context within which she created new meanings about teaching and the profession, and so on. Their decision to work together and the meanings they made out of that work can be captured on one level, by looking at them as individuals. However, a fuller understanding can be gained by looking at them as individuals and what they gained by interacting with others within several contexts. In other words, looking at the collaborative contexts within which they worked and became teachers can help us understand what made their working together possible.

In this chapter then, I pick up the threads of their individual stories, first and primarily Sylvia's, then more briefly Katie's, where I dropped them in

Chapter Four. I knit Sylvia's collaborative learning experiences at Spartan Village before and just after Katie began teaching together, with Katie's emerging sense of herself as a teacher, into a pattern that reveals a context ripe with support for learning within the company of others. In this chapter, I move, as Sylvia did in her career, forward in a backwards direction.

Sylvia: Establishing Collaborative Contexts For Learning

In the last chapter we left Sylvia, the individual, on the verge of her collaboration with Katie. We left her, thinking about her as a teacher who had responded to life's circumstances in positive and productive ways, who had developed a real sense of confidence in herself as a teacher, but was not yet quite as strong as she wanted to be and desired to continue learning. Picturing Sylvia like this feels right. However, much remains to be said about how she got there. We don't really know where and how Sylvia developed her confidence as a teacher or how she developed a desire to continue learning. So, as I pick up the threads to Sylvia's story, I explore her previous collaborative experiences in which she feels she changed her "whole way of teaching."

Collaborating with Deborah: Beyond Gratuitous Support

Sylvia's first collaborative teaching partner was Deborah, a university professor of mathematics education from Michigan State. Deborah wanted to study her own elementary mathematics teaching (among other things) and looked for a teacher who would willingly share time, classroom space, students, and conversation. When searching for a site she drifted toward Spartan Village where she began her career, hired by the principal who is still there today. From here, the story of how they began working together gets a bit confusing.

Sylvia readily admits that her first years of teaching math were not as she would have liked. "I realized I was trying to teach a subject that I really felt kind of lost in" (T-3, p. 3). So, even while an apparent risk, it would make sense that Sylvia would jump at the chance to work with someone on math instruction in her own classroom. And, she did. What's puzzling about this, however, is that in the retelling Sylvia doesn't remember the subject area that Deborah had wanted to teach. She recalls:

Deborah came over and talked to all of the teachers about something she wanted to do next year, and I think it was in May, and she didn't say what area she wanted to work in or anything, she didn't give us any of that, she just kind of explained what she mainly wanted to do and that if we were interested we were to let the principal know. And I thought, "That's for me, I need all the help I can get." (T-3, p. 3)

"So," Sylvia says, she "wrote a letter to the principal explaining why I wanted to apply for Deborah's program." She recalls that she felt she "had nothing to lose and everything to gain" (T-3, p. 3).

Looking at this puzzle further it seems noteworthy that while Sylvia and Deborah had not taught together at Spartan Village, they were not strangers. "I knew Deborah," Sylvia told me, "and I admired her, and had worked with her in reading when she was doing Reading Helping Teacher." This seemed to be an important factor in Sylvia's decision. While it is clear that Sylvia wanted to know more about teaching math, she jumped at the chance to work with Deborah in whatever area Deborah was going to teach. She said, "That's for me, I need all the help I can get!" Even though, at first, she didn't recall the area in which she was going to get help. Certainly that oversight was cleared up quickly. Sylvia's recollection of their beginnings tells an important story. It seems that the personal aspects of the relationship she was proposing to enter were just as

important, if not more so, than the content to be covered. It seems that she was saying she would have welcomed *Deborah* into her classroom to work on any aspect of teaching. I believe Sylvia was saying that the relational aspect of the collaboration was the key to its development.

Relational learning: Risk or calculation. For a variety of reasons it can be difficult for teachers to invite others into their classrooms. Another teacher with whom I talked explained how complex this issue can be. Issues of role and status, concern for other, confidence level, individual personalities, and purpose come into play. When remembering how it felt to her when others came into her classroom, she mentioned several scenarios that exemplified her discomfort. When reflecting on the arrival of her co-teacher [footnote this] she said, "I was a little reluctant at first, because I still was a little hesitant that she was going to make judgments or evaluate how I was teaching." However, she was not just concerned about how she would be viewed, she was also thinking about her teaching partner, wondering whether or not the co-teacher "would be uncomfortable, or feel like she needed to do things the way I did just because we were working with the same class." Of professors she mentioned being aware of role, status and personality. While with one professor she felt "somewhat threatened." She knew she could never have in "any way taught with her observing me." With another professor she recalls,

I was still quite uncomfortable working with him because I felt still that he was the expert. But now that I've gotten to know him on a personal level, as a person, now I'm very comfortable with that situation. (T-15, p. 4)

For Sylvia, requesting someone to come into her classroom could have been especially difficult given she says she "felt kind of lost." However, it seems that this risk was minimized by the fact that Sylvia knew and "admired"

Deborah as a teacher and a teacher-leader in the district. Believing she “had nothing to lose and everything to gain” no matter what the area, speaks of trust and of the importance Sylvia placed on the “who” of the collaboration. Sylvia trusted the person of Deborah. There are two aspects of this trust. One, Sylvia trusted that she could build a comfortable relationship. And just as importantly, within that comfort, she also had high expectations that their collaboration would lead to substantive learning, that it would go beyond the gratuitous support that can characterize polite and comfortable relationships. Sylvia wrote to the principal asking that she be allowed to work with Deborah because she knew Deborah enough to trust that she would have an opportunity to learn something in a collaborative context. To Sylvia, Deborah was not just any person coming to Spartan Village looking for a classroom in which to work. She was someone with whom Sylvia was familiar and believed she could gain. However, it’s interesting to note that, just as she and Katie didn’t want to become teaching clones, Sylvia made a clear distinction between wanting to learn from Deborah and trying to become “a” Deborah. She told me,

I could watch her teach forever, she’s so fascinating, but I also realized that there’s a big difference in watching Deborah, and in doing it yourself... and I wasn’t trying to be a Deborah, but I knew she had a lot of good stuff that I wanted...and that’s the stuff that I was ready to start working on. (T-3, p. 10)

This quote is especially interesting. It summarizes part of what Sylvia seems to find important when structuring a collaborative context in which to learn from others. Katie and Deborah both seemed to have that certain mix of qualities that Sylvia looked for. I believe she had her eye out for people whom she admired, whom she believed would engage her professionally, from whom

she thought she could learn, and whom she felt were dependable and would carry their fair share of the work load.

"I could watch her forever, she's so fascinating," refers to of a kind of admiration for Deborah. Then, regarding her work with Katie, she writes in her report to the outside evaluators of the professional development school effort at MSU,

the success of our project came from our deep admiration for one another and the deep trusting relationship which we developed the prior year, mornings at the copy machine and at lunches where we continually shared teaching strategies and ideas. (Rundquist, 1995, p. 3)

Well, it's one thing to appreciate someone and another thing to believe you can learn from them. To Sylvia the right balance between intellectual engagement and an emotionally safe and supportive environment were important. She is not alone in this sentiment; other teachers at Spartan Village discussed this balance (Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992). Sylvia knew Deborah enough to trust that whatever the content was to be, she would be challenged in supportive ways. Similarly, she got to know Katie enough, "mornings at the copy machine and at lunches where we continually shared teaching strategies and ideas" to surmise that such a balance would be attainable.

Finally, Sylvia has always been clear that mutuality is important. Again, a judgment call on her part, as to whether the person will uphold their part of the relationship. Dependability is one of those issues, predictability another. Of Deborah she recalled with emphasis, "the first two years she hardly missed a day, except to have [her baby]" (T-3, p. 9). Sylvia could count on Deborah. If Deborah said she was going to be there, she was there. And her arrival, albeit not always smooth, was predictable.

This set of qualities make up the relational aspect of the collaboration Sylvia looks for when preparing to enter into a successful collaboration. It seems that the particular person is very important, however, not in the personal or idiosyncratic sense that Buchmann (1993a) discusses of teachers who have a personal orientation toward their work. Actually, Sylvia was all business as she tried to establish relationships that would assist her in her professional growth. She systematically, although perhaps nonchalantly, aimed to join the professional communities of discourse and development that Buchmann describes.

Sylvia constructed her collaborations based on her sense that she would be supported. However, she was not just looking for friendship or superfluous compliments. First and foremost she wanted to learn something. But she was also clear that she expected to learn it in a comfortable setting. As she said of Deborah, "she had a lot of good stuff that I wanted...and that's the stuff that I was ready to start working on." She was ready, and she knew Deborah, so the learning could begin. Katie, as was discussed in the previous chapter, had a way of approaching literacy that Sylvia wanted to learn more about. When their philosophies and ideas had been revealed to a certain point, when they knew a bit about each other, Sylvia surmised she would find comfort, support and challenge in the relationship. Indeed, entering in such a relationship does not seem risky at all. Rather the relationships were calculated, purposeful, and more thoroughly thought out than it might seem. In addition, Sylvia also worked in a collaborative context in the area of science. That now familiar mix of qualities was present when she initiated this relationship as well.

Collaboration in Science: I Loved The Things That She Was Doing In There

During the last year of her collaboration with Deborah, Sylvia also launched another collaboration with a graduate student in science. They knew each other in two contexts, “through the MATH project” explained Sylvia, and through the graduate student’s collaboration in science with another teacher at Spartan Village. These connections were important but introductory. Their relationship turned a corner when they “went frogging together and, you know, I loved it!” (T-3, p. 14). Literally, they went into the marsh hunting frogs together, an activity that gave each of them a glimpse of the other. In a pattern that is becoming familiar, Sylvia had some knowledge of the person and, in casually walking by the classroom she recalls,

I loved the things that she was doing in there, and I’d go in there as I was walking by, and I’d see the terrariums, and the reports and all the books and stuff that she’d brought in from the library for science. And so then we began talking, I guess about doing this, together. (T-3, p. 14)

What she could surmise from casual observations of the classroom led to a admiration of the individual’s knowledge of science content and teaching. Frogging was a special experience they shared, which helped Sylvia to believe she could learn from this person in a supportive, engaging context.

They worked together for part of the 1991-1992 school year. Unfortunately, the last characteristic that Sylvia emphasized as being important for a solid collaboration -- dependability and predictability -- was missing and their work together faded. Nevertheless, Sylvia believed she learned important things about teaching science from her. While already enthusiastic about teaching science and doing so through hands-on, or exploration kinds of activities, she was intrigued by and mentioned having learned different ways to

interact with children when talking about science. She explained, "I gained. I think more in the way she talked with kids as opposed to methods or strategies." She recalled that it was, "really interesting to hear the discussion and the way she led discussions, and that's what I wanted to be doing, like her. So that part was very helpful" (T-3. p. 14).

In addition, she seems to believe that this collaboration helped her to use text books differently in her science teaching. "I've gotten away from the book more, just used it as a resource, and she did too." It seems that having watched her partner teach, she gained some confidence that she could do similar things. "I don't know that I would have gone off like this, that far away from the science book if it hadn't been for her. But I think it's much more valuable now, to the kids. I mean, I think most of my kids are really excited about science" (T-3. p. 14). As she talked more about her teaching, it seemed that she was thinking a lot more about what it means to go beyond the text book and to have children excited about learning a particular subject matter. The fact she believes she learned from her partner is consistent with the way she described having learned from Deborah.

Learning In The Context Of Collaboration:

She Changed My Whole Way Of Teaching

In the beginning, Sylvia saw the opportunity to work with Deborah as "a fix-it sort of thing, and a wonderful opportunity for me to receive some in-service" (T-3, p. 3). As it turned out, from Sylvia's point of view she gained more than "a fix-it." She credits Deborah for many of the changes she feels she has made in her teaching. "Deborah and I talked about so many many things besides just math that it really changed, changed my whole way of teaching" (T-3, p. 3).

And just as significant as the person is the collaborative context in which they worked. Sylvia explains at a state-wide conference for alumni of Michigan State,

For years I taught by reporting to school, saying good morning to everybody, going into my room, doing my planning, shutting my door, and waiting for the children to arrive. And I would venture out for recess, I'd venture out for lunch, I would visit some in the lounge, but not until I started a collaboration did my teaching really take hold. And that's because you have someone else to bounce your ideas off of. And to share ideas. And you have two people working for the same objective. (T-7, p. 6)

The fact that she knew and admired Deborah, trusted her to help her learn, helped Sylvia reach beyond the boundaries of her own classroom and her own knowledge. She feels she gained a great deal from doing so and urged others to go beyond merely visiting in the lounge during recess and lunch breaks. She told people, "if you can just open yourself up, it's a little risky at first, you know, and become comfortable with the idea that you can't teach every subject well in the beginning...it's a wonderful experience [collaboration] and I would really want you all to try it" (T-7, p. 6). Her encouragement makes sense, because Sylvia believes that within the context of her collaborations, beginning with Deborah, that her teaching has changed vastly.

She [Deborah] opened me up so much...Oh, yes...as a teacher. Yes, she really did... She made me think about, I mean every time I asked her a question, she wouldn't give me an answer, she'd say, 'Well what do you think about it?' Or, 'Why are you asking me?' Or, 'That's really interesting. Let's talk about it. (T-3, p. 13)

Sylvia did more than just talk about learning and change in a global sense. Just as she was specific about what she learned from her collaboration in science, she was precise about what she learned from her work with Deborah and how she believes that has resulted in changed teaching practice. For example, Sylvia

described how her thinking is different and how her teaching of children has changed. According to her accounts, she experienced major changes in the way she thinks about teaching, the way she thinks about children, the way she thinks about lesson planning and preparation, and the way she thinks about instruction, and the way she thinks about her overall work as a teacher.

Describing herself as a beginning elementary school teacher she exclaimed, "I used the teacher's manual and I just looked at the book and planned from that. I didn't think much about using some of my own ideas" (T-7, p. 1). In fact, she described herself as having been

extremely traditional, I went to my cupboards and I pulled out the text that (our) district had selected to teach mathematics and science, and I looked at the objectives and I began practically with page one and looked at the center and thought this is where we ought to be half way through the year, and continued that way. (T-7, p. 1)

According to her descriptions she relied heavily on ideas that came from outside sources -- from experts, text books and teachers' manuals. She must have viewed each subject as a distinct and separate entity and therefore she taught them each according to schedule, in isolation from the other.

I wanted to be sure...(the) children knew that now it was spelling time, now it was English, now it was science, now it was reading...I listed those things in my daily schedule...Anyway, I spent most of my time trying to coordinate the days of the week with the lessons that were in the book. (T-3, p. 2)

When I picture Sylvia planning in those days, I see her dividing the days, weeks, months -- the school year -- into discrete sections and then engaging in a kind of a paper and pencil task, the objective of which is to fill in the boxes of the planning book with page numbers from the appropriate text book. Based on her

descriptions, when I picture her classroom in those early days, I see children reading directly from the text book in a round robin fashion, answering the questions provided at the end of each section (T-3, p. 2; T-7, p. 3).

Ideas of Her Own.

As Deborah modeled alternatives to traditional math teaching, Sylvia's sense that she could use her own ideas in teaching began to develop. "At first I really felt that our district people had made the decisions about what we would teach and they were giving us a plethora of what to do with it, you know, instruction wise" (T-3, p. 3). In contrast, she described herself recently as a teacher who adapts ideas to fit *her* particular instructional intentions.

Oh, I adapt a lot, I get a lot of ideas from the text books, and from the teacher's manual. But, I rewrite a lot of them so that they relate to exactly what we're doing, and to the kids, and I try to use their vocabulary lots of the time. (T-7, p. 7)

Hearing her talk in another context about how she has "gotten away from the book more," using it just "as a resource" for her planning and teaching (T-3, p. 16) helped me see her as she has come to see herself, a teacher for whom active thinking and ideas have become the mainstays of her practice.

New ideas about children, curriculum, and self. Her planning and teaching, as she described them, seem to grow out of her mind which organizes a host of ideas in order to best focus her attention on what she sees as her primary teaching responsibility -- children and the quality of their learning experiences in her classroom and in the school. It seems that as Sylvia began to feel more comfortable using her own ideas in the classroom and became more confident working with her students, her ideas about children and how they learn certain subjects entered into her planning and her teaching. She talked about how she

thinks more about children as individuals within a classroom group instead of teaching to a group. Looking across the data, I can see that Sylvia developed a theory about how children learn, and therefore, how they are best taught, which is grounded in teaching experience, analytic discussions, and E-mail correspondence with colleagues at the university, especially Deborah, with whom she wrote a book chapter about their collaboration (Ball & Rundquist, 1993).

Far from the traditional teacher's manual implementer she described herself as being, she characterized herself more currently as a teacher who uses her own ideas about children and how they learn, curriculum and how to best help children learn it, and tries to develop appropriate activities for them. She talked about the importance of tapping student's natural curiosity, of providing opportunities for them to explore their world, to ask questions, to discover, to develop opinions and expertise, to learn. Once when talking specifically about teaching science she revealed how she thinks about children as learners, how she thinks about science curriculum, and how she sees the two coming together in an exciting way.

My kids are really excited about science...I don't want to sock them with too many concepts, I want them to explore, I want them to think, I want them to think about their world as a fascinating place, I mean, there's always something to collect, something to hold on to and to grasp. (T-3, p. 14)

This is consistent with what she and Deborah wrote about their work together and the changes that ensued for Sylvia:

Whereas earlier she saw herself as the sole source of information, she was now seeking ways to get students to share their knowledge with one another. Sylvia is amazed at what they know and can figure out. Increasingly, Sylvia defines her work as searching for

ways to 'get at the content that is *within the kids*' in a way that they will articulate it in the classroom. (Ball & Rundquist, 1993, p. 32)

A New Kind of Fun in Teaching

This shift toward a different kind of involvement with children and content, with planning and instruction, also represents a change in how Sylvia has come to view her day-to-day work. By getting more involved with children, understanding more deeply what it means to teach them, and using her own ideas to shape classroom events, she has also changed the way she experiences her work. For Sylvia, thinking about multiple things and making her own curricular decisions is a new kind of fun. The mental engagement is fun. The thinking, fun. Using her own ideas about what she wants children to experience and to accomplish while participating in an engaging activity is a creative and energizing process for her. She described herself as a teacher who relies on her knowledge of children, how they learn and who they are as individuals when making decisions about what to teach and how to go about it. And, as she exclaimed about this engaging process, "Oh, it's a ball. Oh, I love it!" (T-3, p. 16).

Upon hearing this I reminded her that she had *fun* teaching before. That as a traditional teacher she had truly enjoyed teaching and the children she taught. I asked her specifically how the "fun" had changed, how this kind of fun and enjoyment were different than what she had experienced before. She answered with enthusiasm providing an example of how she thinks about a variety of things when she is planning, how she puts her students, herself, her ideas, into the process:

I guess because we are all kind of in there together...it's really nice, it's really fun to work with kids and think about things to do with them if this should come up, and to plan knowing about their interests rather than planning for plans sake. It's really nice to

think about, 'Well yesterday so and so said,' or 'Mary Jane brought in this nest now what can I do with it to, so that I keep her interested in bringing in nests and keep other kids, don't make other kids feel like I'm giving her air time because she brought in a nest and they don't have one.' It's fascinating to think about all the different strategies you can use...(T-3, p. 16)

Thinking of students as partners in the classroom is different than she described having thought about students in her classroom before. Being able to teach with spontaneity and energy is also part of the fun. Katie provides an illustration of one of the many times she saw this happening in their classroom the year they taught together.

One day during the winter, a student brought in this huge piece of ice that he had found on the way to school. You know, I probably would have said, 'Oh, that's nice, take that back outside!' Not Sylvia. She got this big tray, put the ice, huge ice, in the middle of the room. All day long the kids would check on it and see how it was changing and what did they observe, and she would have them write in the notebook. Even though maybe that day she had planned to do something else. But because it was their interest at that moment, that was OK for science that day. (T-7, p. 5)

However, Sylvia made sure to explain that such spontaneous responses to children's' interests are neither arbitrary nor outside of the curriculum. Rather, she seems to have organized curriculum in her mind in a way that enables her draw upon it in order to teach children in ways she now thinks she ought to teach. Thus, according to Sylvia, she can capitalize on students' interests while still moving them toward the accomplishment of the objectives for third grade. As she told my undergraduates,

I have to keep the science objectives in mind. So I have to know what has to be covered, pretty much, during the year. And I can kind of direct that, but I can direct it now through their (the children's) interests and their own ideas and what they want to learn. And every so often tucking in something else. (T-5, p. 3)

This act of "tucking in something else" and moving students toward a curricular objective is, for Sylvia, the result of using her mind for a new kind of planning and teaching. In our third conversation I mentioned that when she used to plan she focused on which "pages to do, and now," I said, "it sounds like your planning is really a creative..." and before I could utter the work process she excitedly jumped in telling me,

...it's mostly in my head. It really is. There is not a great deal written down in my plan book. Whereas before I used to think, 'they ought to make this plan book bigger for me'...I mean my plan book now, lots of times, is empty when I leave here at night. And in the morning...you know, I keep a pencil and paper in my car and anytime I come up with something I jot it down, and those often become my plans for the next day. (T-3, p. 17)

Being able to plan like that takes confidence. In Sylvia's case confidence seems to be a quality in and of itself that increased over time. It also seems to be a disposition that enabled her to make the changes she reports having made. Studying Sylvia's comments I see a cycle which contributed an increased sense of confidence which enabled her to acquire new experiences that, in turn, led to an increased sense of confidence in herself as a teacher, and so on. In her presentation to undergraduates she responded to a question about lesson planning this way, "I really felt sort of lost. I didn't have a lot of confidence when I first started teaching. I felt I could fall back on what I had written down." As she continued her response she described how she came to rely on herself as teacher,

What I found out very quickly was that I didn't have time to look at what I had written down so a lot of the time that I spent was what I was doing in my own head...now I do a lot of thinking about my

teaching and about curriculum and about things that children have said and the things that they seem interested in... (T-5, p. 1)

When Sylvia talks about teaching I can feel her confidence as teacher. Indeed, whenever I talked with her or heard her speaking to others about teaching there was a sense of infectious energy and joy, of puzzling over lesson plans and children, of meeting new challenges and of becoming excited about the work of teaching. I wasn't surprised when I heard her emotional exclamation to my undergraduates, "I love teaching. I love planning. I love everything about it" (T-5, p. 5).

Collaboration: An Authentic, Relational Context For Learning About Teaching

With her partners in math and science -- collaborations that spanned five years, the last overlapping with the copy machine collaboration that was beginning with Katie -- Sylvia described having learned and having made what seem to her to be fundamental changes in her teaching. Deborah, she says, "changed my whole way of teaching" and this appears to be the case. The changes she described encompass bringing ideas of her own into her planning and teaching and thinking differently about the role of both children and curriculum in the classroom. Believing she has changed her teaching by having worked with others, she also described having become more confident in herself as a teacher. All of this leads to an increased sense of joy in just doing her work as a teacher. She is fired up about teaching, energetic and excited about what she is doing. It seems that by working closely with others in her classroom she found a professional companionship and comfort as well as challenge. It seems that her work with Deborah, in particular, felt safe. It was important to Sylvia that Deborah, "didn't criticize me because I did some of the things that I did. She just

said, 'they're important to you, and that's OK. And, I'm not going to try to change them'" (T-3, p. 13). For example, Sylvia characterized herself as being much more rigid than Deborah in terms of classroom management and behavioral issues. "I couldn't stand a lot of noise...so, we had to come to grips with how much intrusion I could stand." While they "talked a lot about it," according to Sylvia, Deborah was respectful of Sylvia's needs. Sylvia chuckled when she remembered,

she'd often say 'now you guys that are climbing under that table back there, that's sort of something that Mrs. R. and I have been talking about, whether there's really good stuff going on under that table?' But there often was, you know? So how can I dispute her? It made a lot more sense. (T-3, p. 8)

In such a context, Sylvia could feel free to express her ideas, that her ideas would be welcomed, and incorporated into Deborah's use of time in her classroom. They also worked out important issues of time and space in the classroom that made their work together peaceful.

Before she began working with Katie, Sylvia had experienced working with others in her classroom. She experienced the power of having her ideas validated rather than criticized (T-3, p. 13). From all indications it seems that Sylvia seems to thrive and learn from engagement in collaborative teaching situations. Going further, it seems that creating a collaborative teaching partnership is a professional development strategy that Sylvia employs. She seems to establish a relational learning context, a safe place to think and to explore new pedagogy, in the company of others. Sylvia's history of collaboration reveals that a trusting professional teaching partnership can be a safe place to learn more about the practice of teaching in general, about one's *own*

teaching, and about oneself as a teacher. In such a place, Sylvia could actually learn about teaching in the authentic context of her own classroom of students.

In five years of collaborating, Sylvia experienced a progression of growth. I believe that these experiences primed her to work with Katie. I believe that for Sylvia, beginning to work with Katie was, therefore, not so much of a risk as it was part of a natural progression of productive relationships. She already understood the power she felt in teaching with others. In saying this, I should not like to ignore or underplay the risk involved in moving from having a daily classroom visitor to merging two classrooms and the entire school day. The point is that for Sylvia, teaching with someone rather than teaching alone was invigorating. Teaching with another teacher energized her rather than scared her. Sharing teaching in a supportive environment was something that enriched her as a teacher, rather than making her feel that she should crawl back to the certainty of her own classroom. In fact, for Sylvia, it seems that teaching **WITH** someone provided her with more certainty than did teaching alone. Collaborative teaching, as a relational event, means that learning is a joint effort. It is not just about being together. It is not just about sharing a classroom for the sake of sharing it. It is, rather, about teaching together and thinking about that teaching, together. Sylvia experiences her involvement in educational reform as a series of relational events. She seeks out the companionship, comfort and challenge of working with others because she feels she learns by working with others.

Katie: The Specter of Isolation Hovers

In the last chapter we left Katie, the individual, on the verge of her collaboration with Sylvia. We left her, thinking about her as a creative and capable new teacher who graduated from an innovative teacher education

program that emphasized collaboration and strong subject matter teaching. While she has been aptly hired into a school that places a high value on collaboration, Katie's hands are full with first-year adjustments and she has little time to participate. Remembering Katie like this during her first year of teaching feels right. However, a few things remain to be told about that first year and about Katie as a teacher who is also getting to know herself and her professional needs if we are going to understand how and why she was open to a collaboration with Sylvia. So, as I pick up the threads to Katie's story, I look again at circumstances related to her induction into the profession at Spartan Village and think about the interaction of isolation and guilt in teaching.

Katie's perceptions of her new colleagues were fairly accurate; it "was neat the way people were talking" and how those conversations were not an indication of poor teaching, rather the opposite. They were doing "exactly what you would hope teachers would do" (T-1, p. 7). Most of the teachers at Spartan Village were teaching, or at least entertaining the same kinds of ideas about pedagogy she had been taught at the university. In fact, many of her course materials originated in pedagogical issues being explored there. And, while it was an emerging collaborative community of learners, much the way that her program emphasized, as a first-year teacher she had little time or head space to enter that community. She recalled, "I had a fairly good memory but my brain was really on overload. It's just very overwhelming." Of being at her limit she also said, "There's only so much you can keep track of and then there are things that you cannot even deal with" (T-5, p. 3). Even if she had had the time and mental energy, she may have been reluctant to jump into professional development conversations that first year. I have a vivid recollection of Katie's induction into the social part of that community. While she was engrossed in her classroom and in learning what she needed to learn about school operations, she

was dubbed “the perfect teacher” by her new colleagues and was the brunt of a long first-year of teasing. Almost certainly her nickname arose out of what *appeared* to be her seamless entrance into the school and the profession. It is notable that even while a community of collaborating professionals was emerging at Spartan Village, Katie’s first-year of teaching was isolating. In contrast to the norms for collaboration she had learned in her teacher education program, and contrary to the school’s developing norms for collaboration and support, Katie experienced a full and lonely first year.

While outwardly she might have appeared to have made a smooth transition into teaching -- and as an outward observer, I would agree -- in the isolation of her own classroom and in the isolation of her own mind, she struggled to find the elusive balance between hard work and satisfaction in teaching. I believe that this feeling was accentuated by the fact that her classroom was a portable, physically disconnected from the building. As much as she might have wanted to, she effectively had no one to share her adjustments with. Even Sylvia, who would later seek her out, thought she was doing Katie a favor and gave her a wide berth during her first year. In spite of being located in an emerging community of teachers who were modeling collaboration in the ways Katie respected, she was in effect being inducted into norms that reproduce the isolated, self-reliant teacher who does hide in the safety of her isolated classroom (Britzman, 1986). In this setting, Katie began to develop a sense of guilt in teaching. In one of our conversations she recalled,

Well, one of the things that really hit me when I first got my teaching job is that no matter how much time I put into it and how many weekends I work, and how late I stay, I could never do all of the things I wanted to do. (T-1, p. 16)

Her guilt seems to stem from not being able to accomplish all that she has set out to do, all that she would like to do:

I mean there are so many wonderful ideas in education. There are all these content areas to teach. I'd go to work and I'd think I was going to get all this stuff done and do all these things, and I couldn't and then I'd hear about another idea, I'd go to a conference and hear all these great things I could do, and I always, in the back of my mind I always felt guilty... And then the next year, even when I had the same grade, I still felt the same way. It's like I could feel good about what I was doing in math and what I was doing in social studies, but then my science would fall into the wayside, or I wasn't really doing as well in writing workshop as I wanted to be doing. (T-1, p. 16)

Within the isolation of her first year of teaching, Katie was essentially left to sink or to swim, as are many first-year teachers, in her own growing sense of frustration. But Katie's situation was slightly different. Unlike first year teachers who graduate from traditional programs, Katie learned to teach with approximately 30 others who progressed through their sequence of courses together as a cohort. She was accustomed to collegial conversations in which teaching colleagues -- other cohort members, course instructors, and classroom teachers -- examined teaching practices together, openly. As a new teacher used to talking about teaching with like minded others, the isolation she experienced was most likely particularly difficult. Granted she was isolated, in part, because of demands on her time as she pulled it all together, in part because other teachers, as Sylvia so kindly intended, "gave her a wide berth" as she got adjusted. Finally, she was isolated in part, because of the way that her colleagues were dealing with her excellence and tried to sort out her relative status location in the group. All of these things were accentuated by her placement in the portable classroom. Given all of this information, it is not far fetched to believe that, during her second year of teaching, those conversations with Sylvia -- one of

the few colleagues who had not participated much in the perfect teacher jokes (T-4, p. 17) -- at the copy machine, were less of a risk than they were a saving grace.

Chapter 6

COLLABORATIVE CONTEXTS OF SUPPORT

When Katie and Sylvia, the TEAM, presented to their colleagues at Spartan Village in the fall of 1993, they both wore navy blue pants, navy blue three-strap Birkenstocks, and a T-shirt with their motto silk-screened onto it -- TEAM: Together Everyone Accomplishes More. It was kind of corny. It was kind of cute. It made me sad. It was classic Katie and Sylvia. They sat side-by-side at a manila table, still wanting to teach together but not able to, sharing highlights of their previous year and how they hoped to keep their collaboration alive from their classrooms across the district, Sylvia still at third grade, Katie now teaching fifth. It was at this meeting, the fall after Katie and Sylvia's team year ended, that I first heard Katie exclaim "the guilt is back." I knew immediately what she meant and my heart sank. Katie, the talented novice with a sophisticated vision and high expectations that she could get there, had felt the power of a guilt-free year of teaching. In her new school she was beginning to experience profound isolation and the loss of support for her teaching.

While they were teaching together, Katie and Sylvia both felt a sense of accomplishment and completeness. Together they felt they could cover curriculum more creatively and more fully than either of them could have ever done alone. Together they felt they were able to connect with more students in important ways than either of them could have managed alone. Together they believed they handled daily distractions and transition times in ways that kept the children focused on learning. In Katie's words,

I could look at the kids in my class and feel like I was giving them all that I could give and Sylvia was giving them all she could give and together we were giving them so much more than we could ever give on our own. And that felt good. (T-1, p. 17)

Very importantly through the processes of their giving to children -- discussing their plans, their instruction, their students' thinking, etc. -- they gave to each other, creating an ongoing authentic opportunity to develop professionally. They both believe they grew more by teaching together than they ever could have grown in the isolation of their own classrooms. Katie and Sylvia constructed a shared context for teaching and learning that provided them with personal, professional, and structural support in a way that energized and sustained their efforts. Amazingly, in contrast to how teachers talk about never having enough time or energy, Katie and Sylvia actually felt that by working together they actually created more time and had more energy than they ever had when teaching alone.

As I write this chapter about their work and the characteristics of support that seem to have made it such a positive experience, I picture them, side-by-side in their navy blue, literally beaming, as they talk with their Spartan Village colleagues from the school and the university. Recalling them in this setting symbolically previews the rest of this chapter which discusses the broader contexts of support as well. I take this path because in order to understand more fully the possibility for and the significance of their work it must be considered, not just in terms of the support they provided for each other, but within the larger contexts of support provided by the school community, including the principal, and the larger professional development school reform taking place within and outside of their school.

The Foundations of Collaborative Support

When Katie and Sylvia first opened the folding door they noticed it had been installed backwards. It opened toward the chalk board, making it impossible to use the center space between the rooms for instruction. It took them a week or two to get that straightened out. Likewise, it took them a while to meld their management systems, to work out the logistical kinks, and for children and parents to get used to the arrangement. It also took some time to develop a sense of comfort in their shared teaching. Katie corrected herself in sharing a memory of their initial days saying,

I never felt intimidated, or, I mean, that's not true, I mean, I did sometimes, but I always wished, you know, that I could be better at science discussions and different things like that, areas that she was [good in.] But we kind of went into it like that, and I always felt really comfortable, like, teaching in front of her and asking her questions. (T-1, p. 17)

Sylvia also, as confident as she had become over the years, had her moments of doubt: "Yeah, we were sharing a lot. And there were times when I felt pretty inadequate in certain areas. Oh gosh, I'm going to have to blunder my way through here, I don't know at all about this" (T-8, p. 19).

However, in reality it didn't take long for Katie and Sylvia to start feeling a sense of accomplishment and completeness. In their TEAM setting, Katie felt she had taught to the best of her current ability and was able to grow professionally. Sylvia felt more complete in that she took another step toward excellence. She was already becoming much more confident in her math and science teaching. She made connections in what she was learning about teaching from one subject area to another. After having watched Deborah do hands-on math activities with students in order to generate

interest as well as to promote different ways for students to interact with the particular question at hand, Sylvia began thinking of how to do that in her own teaching, in math as well as in science. Once she explained that as her “mathematics teaching began to change” she “realized there was value in” hands-on activities. She thought that “the children really would be highly motivated to do something that perhaps they hadn't done before” and in science that might mean she could actually let them, for example, “handle a worm” (T-7, p. 2).

As noted in the previous chapter, changes in her teaching were reflected in her growing confidence in using children's ideas as the basis for meeting curricular goals and lesson preparation. Feeling she had grown in her previous collaborations, Sylvia took the next step toward excellence -- a collaboration with Katie in which she could learn more about teaching literacy. The sense of completion they felt came, I believe, from the way in which they constructed the patterns of support that motivated and sustained them. They found personal and professional support for each other within the supportive structure of the collaboration they created.

Opening Doors and Opening Minds: Creating Physical and Organizational Structures of Support

In one of our conversations Katie pointed out that “when you are teaching alone there just isn't enough time or energy” (T-8, p. 7). Certainly many teachers would agree. One way that teachers have traditionally found time in their day is to team teach. Theoretically, time is generated because teachers are responsible for fewer subject areas. However, as I pointed out in Chapter Four, Katie and Sylvia did not want to reproduce that pattern. Granted, learning does take time and they were wondering how to find more

of it. However, their emphasis was on creating opportunities to learn not on manufacturing more time. Interestingly, they fashioned an innovative structure of team teaching¹ in which they could learn from each other in a variety of ways, and also found that by sharing the workload in different ways, they actually spawned additional time and energy.

Sylvia pointed out that teaching itself, seemed to become much more manageable when there are two. Even though you've got twice as many kids, dividing those chores, um, it just worked a lot better for both of us (T-8, p. 8). Katie explained that their structure of work helped them to generate more energy.

Because for me and my teaching day I have ups and downs. There are times when I'm really raring to go and really excited. And there are other times when I'm just exhausted and I'm wondering, "Oh my god, how am I going to get through the rest of the day?" But when you're sharing teaching the way we were doing, maybe for that day, Sylvia was working on the science and I maybe did the math lesson and then we taught reading together and then the writing, we were just taking turns and sharing; I didn't feel that exhaustion or that guilt. (T-8, p. 7)

By sharing the teaching load through a combination of rotational lead teaching and support they believe they really were able to accomplish more. Katie happily told me when, "the year ended, they [the children] got all we had to give" (T-6, p. 4). In part, they believe that this had to do with the

¹ As school began 24 children were assigned to Katie and 24 to Sylvia. The first day they entered through their respective coat room doors into what they thought would be their classroom and their teacher, only to find the open door and all of their peers. While they all shared the team room, as it were, Katie and Sylvia kept their sides somewhat distinct, with their own desks, supplies and teaching materials there. They set up student desks on each side of the room and met together in the center for whole group instruction. While the children were generally mixed for most subject matter teaching, they did maintain a "home room" kind of identity as well. They still traveled to music, art, and gym in their original groups. And while each teacher had input, they each did report cards and parent conferences with their original groups as well.

continual sharing of ideas. Sylvia talked about being able to do more in part because,

we just sort of bounced off one another. And we continually kept each other pumped up and full of ideas. You know, two heads are better than one. Well, four hands are too, and four feet, we can get twice as much accomplished in that length of time. (T-8, p. 4)

In their talk to the graduate class they are pressed on the issue of time. The instructor asked them, "You didn't actually increase the number of minutes that existed? Sylvia response: "Well no." Katie's response: "We increased the content" (T-8, p. 8). For example, Sylvia explained:

One of our goals in working together ... [was] making what I call a transition. Like, reading into poetry or reading into math. And I always felt that was a time when we lost time in the classroom, a time when I need to sort of spin my wheels. I can't change real easily. And that's when [I] had problems. The desk banging, you know, all that stuff. (T-8, p. 10)

But when they were teaching together transitions were smoother. "The one that was not teaching would be ready to just move in" (T-8, p. 10). They believe they covered more content during the year, in part because of this. Katie's example related how they could handle disruptions more easily. If a parent comes in, or if a student needs some individual attention for whatever reason, "when there are two of you, you can do that. And it's so much easier to settle things right then or to help them out" (T-8, p. 8). Katie went on to explain that whoever is teaching just keeps on going, the lesson continues and the problems are solved before they blow out of proportion.

Britzman (1986) discusses how the physical isolation of teachers in schools is reinforced by the organizational patterns of teachers' work, which

intensifies the “valorization of individual effort” (p. 448). In such settings, she explains, it is virtually impossible for teachers to discuss their practice with each other because it would reveal that teachers don’t know as much and are not as certain about their practice as they come to suppose they ought to be. Katie and Sylvia altered the traditional physical structural pattern that keeps teachers within the confines of four enclosed classroom walls. But, they did more. Breaking through walls doesn’t by itself guarantee that teachers will break out of unflappable individualism. However, Katie and Sylvia didn’t hide their uncertainty, their desires to learn, or their opinions of each other. They pushed on the boundaries of traditional isolation by creating both physical and organizational structures that supported their innovations. The structures of support they created are important. They form the base upon which Katie and Sylvia could burst through the barriers of personal and professional isolation to generate more energy, and spawn more feelings of accomplishment as they went. As Sylvia said of working with Katie,

I think you need to be willing to admit that you don’t know everything, you’ve got to have an open mind about it. You’ve got to be willing to take criticism. Katie is very up front sometimes. She’ll say no, I don’t want to do that. I don’t like that idea. Or, I don’t think that will work. You’ve got to be ready to say, I don’t think it will, I’d like to try it. Or, maybe you’re right, let’s trash that idea. So you just, you’ve got to be open and you’ve got to be willing to share your thoughts and let people inside and I guess I felt very comfortable doing that with Katie.
(T-8, p. 19)

This is very much in contrast to what Britzman describes. By opening their doors to each other, by opening their minds to each other, they created new patterns that both supported and fed into their collaborative work in a generative way.

"It's Like Having a Safety Net All the Time:" The Relational Aspects of Collaborative Support

Katie and Sylvia arranged their physical space and developed an organizational structure that supported their work together. As described in the previous chapter, they had also made sure that the relational aspects of their collaboration were in place. Beginning, for Sylvia, during Katie's interview, drawing on conversations at the copy machine, moving through the worm stage, and on to the Amelia Bedelia party, they established a mutual sense of admiration. They knew enough to know that they wanted to learn from each other, and had established a sense of balance between the safety they felt and the risks they could take. Finally, they also ascertained that the other was dependable and predictable. With the physical, structural, and relational aspects of their collaboration in place, their work together took off. Katie did have a guilt-free year and Sylvia was fulfilled in a way she had not been fulfilled as a teacher before. "I just never knew I could have a relationship like this with another teacher" she marveled. Of teaching together they both exclaimed, "It's like having a safety net all the time. Someone that you really trusted to help you out" (T-8, p. 19).

Undergirded by a strong and dependable safety net of support, these teachers had a sense of boundless energy to put toward their work and the learning they describe is significant. The ensuing enjoyment of teaching and of each other became an inextricable bonus which enhanced and likewise fed back into their collaboration, to form an even stronger base upon which to launch more learning. They created a generative pattern that both maintained and contributed to a cycle of energized ongoing learning and enjoyment in teaching. Four key characteristics contributed to the generative

pattern of learning they experienced: Authentic feedback and conversations; keeping a focus on children; learning and excitement; and, the acceptance and expression of emotion in teaching.

Authentic feedback and conversations. In several contexts Katie discussed the importance of the interactive nature of their work together. They established an ongoing dialogue about their teaching that began at the copy machine during 1991-1992 and still continues today. Part of what helped Katie as they built their relationship, was the opportunity for authentic and supportive feedback -- something teachers do not usually get at all. Katie pointed out how this was important to her.

When I'm teaching by myself I never focus on accomplishments, I'm always focusing on what I need to do next. It's very rare that I'll say, "That was great unit." or, "What a great lesson." I'm usually saying, "I need to plan." "What am I doing in math?" "I didn't do this today." or, "I didn't do that." At least when Sylvia and I work[ed] together, we were there for each other to say things like, "That is such a great idea. That was a wonderful lesson." Just the positive feedback alone. Really the only time, in a traditional school, when you get feedback is when you're being evaluated. And that isn't necessarily a real positive time. You're usually nervous, you're kind of on a show. And it's really not your true teaching...whereas with Sylvia, we [gave each other feedback]. (T-8, p. 8)

The difference Katie indicates between positive and evaluative feedback is a central point. So, too, is her indication about the frequency of feedback. In an evaluative context, feedback tends to have a summative rather than a formative quality. Moreover, feedback, of any kind, is rare. The typical pattern is three visits by the principal during the year in which you are evaluated -- usually every third year. Evaluative feedback also, as Katie indicates, is not given in an authentic context. Yes, it is true that instructive and helpful feedback can and often is offered during teaching evaluations.

However, the evaluative nature of the feedback, does tend to encourage the teacher to put on a “show,” which diminishes the authenticity of the teaching. Feedback given after evaluative sessions do not have the same kind of powerful impact on teaching and learning as do the ongoing supportive conversations by individuals who share the context. When two people share the context, they share an intimate sense of it and see each other in the reality of it. They share the dailiness, the good, the bad. They both know the children and the curriculum. As Sylvia and Deborah point out in their book chapter about their own collaboration, the opportunity for ongoing conversations about the variety of things that go on in the classroom -- curriculum, students, pedagogy, assessment, etc., -- provide “ongoing contexts for learning and articulating what we are learning” (Ball & Rundquist, 1993, p. 37). Sylvia and Katie were able to participate in ongoing discussions grounded in shared understandings of the context. Much of the time, their conversations were about students and pedagogy.

Keeping a focus on children. Another crucial aspect of the generative nature of the support they created when they crashed the personal and professional barriers of isolation was their focus on children. While the primary focus of the relationship, I have explained, was on their learning from each other, it was about learning that would somehow benefit the children they teach. The year they taught together in a collaborative environment, Katie was able to meet her expectations in this regard. She said, “You know, these kids are really getting so much. You know, they’re getting everything I want to give them and more. And they’re having it in an environment where they always have someone to talk to.” (T-1, p. 17). Of their year together, Katie also said, “That year we were together, man! I used to go home and think, ‘Boy are those kids lucky. They have so much fun!’

Everyday there was something new. And it was just such a great place to be" (T-8, p. 6). The sense that they were connecting with children was fundamental to them. Katie provided many examples of how they managed to do this together, better than they could have done it alone. For example, she mentioned, "Everybody needs different things. Well, we were able to give them twice as much...when kids were having problems, different problems, they would go to different teachers. So I think it opened up a wider experience [for them]" (T-8, p. 11).

She also reflected that she and Sylvia, "bring out different things in children." She explained that a child assigned to her might actually do better with Sylvia, and vice versa. She was very pleased how this worked out in their team setting, where students could spend more instructional and interpersonal time with the teacher who brings out the best in them, no matter to whom they were first assigned. Katie gave me an example: There was a boy assigned to her that, she said, "drove me crazy. But, he connected with Sylvia around science. He wants to be a scientist. 'I'm going to be a scientist!'" he announced one day in class. Katie explained,

Sylvia brings that out in him. In science I used the text book. I plan it out, give information, and I teach that way in science because I'm not comfortable in science. I feel like I'm supposed to have the answer. Sylvia gives him chances to talk about issues, theories, ideas in science, in groups, with the whole class, with her. By myself, I'd feel guilty. All four of those kids who really love science are in my class. (T-23, p. 5)

Keeping children in the center of their work was a key to their professional growth and to their energy and excitement. It helped them to keep focused on what they were doing and why. They were not distracted by thinking of their involvement in the reform effort as social mobility through

relationships with people at the university. While considerate of them and while participating in the governance of the PDS, they were not distracted by university issues or concerns. They had a non-wavering understanding that teachers teach children subject matter, about being human, and processes of inquiry that led to greater understandings of the great wide world. Their focus on children was part of their purpose, part of their support base, and part of what made the work energizing and exciting. It gave them grist for their shared conversations and is certainly part of what enabled them to learn. And, according to both Katie and Sylvia, they did learn from each other during their collaboration.

Excitement and learning. Both Katie and Sylvia talk about their learning from each other, most always couched within the energy of excitement. One comment that Katie made is probably my favorite quote in this study. She joyfully explained her own excitement as a learner watching how Sylvia gets the children interested in science, "I mean she even got me turned on to science! I really enjoy teaching science now" (T-7, p. 4). Reveling in this same kind of excitement in one of their presentations, she even brought me into it, and in reality, my excitement did match hers:

Katie: Kids were bringing in bird nests, rock collections, things they found on the way to school. "Mrs. R. Look at this rock I found!" And, she would be so excited about it. It's just so exciting to see.

Sylvia: Katie gives me a lot of credit.

Katie: No! It's true, really! It's true, Janet?

Janet: Even we started to bring in nests and things for Sylvia.

Katie: We do! We do!

Janet: I found two nests and I thought, "Oh great! I can take them to Sylvia and she'll tell me about them." (T-8, p. 5)

Sylvia often sang Katie's praises as well. At one point in their presentation to master's students, Katie had been explaining how Sylvia develops science curriculum by starting with what children are interested in, and merging that with grade level curriculum. Katie was describing how Sylvia used an immersion approach to science instruction. Sylvia piped in:

That's the way it is with Katie when she's working in Language Arts. I feel kind of the same way about things that she does with her children, [which gives me] an opportunity to have some experiences along that line. (T-8, p. 3)

In the midst of their excitement and their conversations about teaching and their teaching, they demystified parts of teaching for each other. They observed and tried things that allowed them to learn. "From Sylvia," Katie said, "I think I know what teaching for understanding is" (T-23, p. 5). And more directly, she attributed improving her science teaching to their working together, "Well, I definitely have improved in science...My science teaching did improve." Katie followed up this statement of fact with a long involved story that exemplified her felt success teaching science the way Sylvia does. Finally, Katie discussed a plethora of learning for which she credited Sylvia:

I learned a lot from her, a lot about cooperative learning, a lot about ways to talk with parents, a lot of, just little things that are really important that maybe in the beginning I thought weren't very important, but they are important. (T-8, p. 24)

Although Sylvia does not provide as many examples of how she feels she learned from Katie, she cited a few. Sylvia explained the year after they worked together, "Oh, I am doing a lot of the Katie things...A lot of the stuff I

learned from Katie" (T-4, p. 11). And, perhaps more importantly for Sylvia than concrete examples of things learned is that a part of the ongoing conversation was still operating in Sylvia's mind even after they stopped working together and therefore talking together on a daily basis. She said later in the same interview, "I think about Katie a lot and sometimes I think, how would Katie handle this?" (T-4, p. 14). I presume that Katie did a similar kind of self-talk the year they were collaborating. She explained: "There were times in the day, even though we weren't together, that I would think to myself, what would Sylvia do in this situation, or what would she say?" (T-8, p. 24).

Finally, Sylvia pointed out the mutual give and take of their learning which was an important part of the experience for her. In her written PDS evaluation report she stated, "I was able to take advantage of opportunities for my own professional growth as well as create opportunities for the professional growth of others" (Rundquist, 1995, p. 1).

Learning together in their shared context and the excitement it generated fed into their relationship. They learned. They became excited about their learning. They became joyful. They shared. They challenged each other, and so on. Teacher learning was an outcome of their collaboration. Additionally, the fact that learning was possible, became part of what sustained them and kept their energy high. The freedom they felt to express themselves emotionally also played an important role as both an outcome of their relationship and part of what supported and sustained them.

The acceptance and expression of emotion in teaching. In the supportive context of their collaborative conversations Sylvia and Katie could

risk and share. They cared for each other and they took care of their relationship. Sylvia stated:

Katie would not do anything to hurt me. I really believe that and I wouldn't do anything to hurt her either. If I ever think that I had done anything like that I want to talk to her about that. Sometimes I am very direct with what I say. I have such respect for her... If I ever had that feeling [that I hurt her] I would want to clear that up right away. (T-4, p. 2)

With safety and trust as a foundation, they were able to care for each other and their relationship in a way that enhanced their learning relationship. In their presentation, a graduate student asked them how they managed situations when they did not agree. Katie responded by revisiting their original purposes and how those figured into any disagreement they had:

Fundamentally important is that [we] came together by choice...with the underlying assumption that [we] were together to learn from each other. So if somebody was doing something different, it was more about, why did you do it that way, maybe I can learn from her if she tells me why she did it that way, other than saying, "Why did you do it that way, you jerk." It was a continued atmosphere of trying to learn from each other which made a big difference in the way those discrepancies were dealt with. (T-8, p. 28)

With care and concern as background to the ever-present atmosphere of learning, they were able to open themselves up more and more. They shared. They gave and received feedback in an authentic context. They felt a sense of satisfaction with their professional work. They got closer personally, which led to more sharing about teaching. They shared of themselves, personally, in a respectful professional manner. Sylvia highlighted this sense of sharing when she said, "we were literally sharing everything. We were sharing our moods, our supplies, our family situations, how we came to school in the

morning, how we went home. We were sharing everything" (T-8, p. 19). To some, the depth and range of their bond could go beyond what it means to be a professional. A brief examination of "professional" could be helpful here.

Generally, discussions about teaching as a professional activity revolve around content delivery, assessment, subject matter and curriculum, management issues, student diversity, etc. These issues reflect the organizational structure, or grammar of schooling (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), that emerged out of the elite's concern for maintaining social dominance (Collins, 1979). This organizational structure, has, as Acker (1991) describes, its own "logic" that plays out in concrete forms and norms. Work rules, contracts, directives, expectations, documentary tools, etc, are examples of what she means. The organizational logic, which she defines as the "ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures" (p. 168), serves to rationalize the nature of teaching in schools. The traditional structures of schooling support a model of technical rationality and control, which downplays the role of emotion in the professional world of teachers and in the classroom. Acker theorizes and argues for an organizational logic, or structure, that would support and value alternatives to the traditional hierarchical model. Katie and Sylvia created such an alternative within their own collaboration. They recognized the need for and supported emotional expression. In contrast to Acker's (1991) dense prose, Katie got to the heart of the issue regarding the need to bring the personal together with the professional, she said simply, that its "kind of a personal thing, the way you teach" (T-8, p. 19). Buchman (1993a) also argues for the integration, rather than the exclusion, of the person in the formation of the professional role, but cautions that, "being oneself is not enough." She goes on to say further that "rules, norms, and external standards alone cannot account for moral action in teaching."

Rather bringing the professional and the personal together means that the professional “must be lodged concretely in someone’s head and heart” (p. 156).

And it was that way with Katie and Sylvia. With their relationship grounded in their professional purpose, the personal and the professional became harder and harder to separate. As they got closer -- or because they got closer -- a range of emotional expression (the personal) about teaching and during teaching (professional) was accepted². This became a particularly unusual and important aspect of their work together which also expanded the base of their collaborative context of support.

Increased energy seems to be only one of the products of emotional expression. A member of the graduate class in which they were speaking, pushed them to describe how they created more energy. They described the importance of, not only the expression of emotions, but also that such expression was mutually understood and accepted. Being able to emote, in part, gave them energy:

Katie: Sometimes you just need to have an adult you can kid around with. Sometimes you just get wrapped up and you need someone to talk to but you can’t really go home and talk to your significant other about it, because they don’t understand. And if you talk to another teacher, they’re having their own problems and we were right there together...and sometimes our joking was just teacher jokes.

Sylvia: Sometimes I’d cry.

2

Buchmann (1993a) makes it clear that simple talk about pedagogy is not necessarily an indication of a “professional role” orientation. Teachers can certainly talk about their teaching from a “personal” stand point, or “role.” Membership in the professional community, at large, is an essential element of those who develop a professional role orientation.

Katie: Sometimes the kids were involved in the joking. We did a lot of, Mrs. R. Did you just see what...such and such. It was just fun.

Sylvia: Oh, it was wonderful.

Katie: It was just really exciting. It made the teaching so much more, a lot more...energy.

Sylvia: It helped to generate energy, plus we were holding each other up. That gives you energy too. If you're feeling good about yourself and what you're doing, you're going to have more energy, I think. And we felt so good about what we were doing. (T-8, p. 10-11)

Their dialogue revealed the connections between emotional expression as an outlet and the acceptance of it as part of the based of support they created for themselves and their work. They could laugh. And, as Sylvia slipped into the conversation, they could cry. Katie also mentioned her sense of feeling accepted on an emotional level when she said, "I never felt like I had to impress Sylvia. If I started crying, or felt frustrated, or didn't feel good about something I was doing, that was okay" (T-8, p. 19). They accepted each other as professional teachers and as human beings that emote. For them, being accepted at this level was an empowering feeling. Sylvia also explored the significance of crying and acceptance in her book chapter with Deborah. They wrote about tears as an important aspect of building a supportive collaborative relationship (Ball & Rundquist, 1993). Katie and Sylvia also shared their emotion with the students through joking with them and being genuine in their expression of feelings. For example, there is a part in the children's novel, Dear Mr. Henshaw, that saddened Sylvia so much that she had to stop reading it to the class. She was crying too hard.

The significance of the role of emotion in their professional relationship can be best described in terms of its absence. When Sylvia and

Katie were separated they both experienced a range of profound emotional pain that did influence their professional energy and focus. I will discuss this issue more at the end of this chapter.

Why All This Bother About Emotion, Energy, and Excitement in Collaboration

The fact Katie and Sylvia could express their emotion together in the framework of their collaborative relationship is significant. It was a feature of their work that became an important part of what sustained them. Yet, I am concerned about the skeptic's sense of doubt regarding the importance of emotion, energy and excitement in their teaching. Since they seem to be the crucial elements that supported and sustained their work, I will discuss them now, through an intermingling of two lenses: The lens of teacher isolation, and the lens of innovative teaching practice, such as the kind called for in the current educational reforms.

Ayers (1995) argues that teacher isolation is "sometimes defended as a precious and guarded autonomy, but it can easily turn to disconnection and burnout" (p. 63). Certainly teacher burnout, disconnection and discontentedness are issues of importance when considering their effects on such things as teacher motivation, teaching and learning in classrooms, and the energy and ability to connect with children. Shared emotion is part of what enable people to be connected -- to form attachments -- which, says Deal (1990), is a "fundamental human tendency...Attachments bring happiness and fellowship; they confer status and power; they head off loneliness. But in the most profound sense, attachments create meaning, without which people lose their existential orientation, their will to go on. They lose 'heart'" (p. 134).

Indeed, isolation from others is mankind's most severe punishment. It separates humans from other humans. It removes one of our own from ourselves. Separation from others cuts off humans from that which essentially makes them so -- social interaction and the meanings that are created within it. Isolation is used to break down will, or to bring someone into line with norms and expectations. Several words in our vocabulary describe this human act in its various levels of significance: Shun, "time-out," silent treatment, lock away, solitary confinement, etc. To some, isolation is a more severe form of punishment than is the release of death.

Certainly we don't isolate teachers to punish them. However, when thinking about isolation and teaching, there is an interesting paradox to examine: As adults, teachers are isolated from other adults by the structure of schools (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and by the cultural norms of interaction (Britzman, 1986; Little, 1990). As discussed in Chapter One, it is said that when teachers are left to manage the inherent uncertainties of teaching practice alone, teachers resort to traditional practices. This explanation only accounts for part of the problem of isolated teachers and teaching. It ignores the emotional impact of isolation on the teacher in terms of self-doubt, discouragement, burnout, etc. Such arguments also ignore the possible impact of those emotions on teacher-student interactions. Without motivation, interest, energy, excitement, etc., it is difficult for teachers to move forward into new realms.

According to the current educational reforms, teachers will be expected to change their teaching in ways that assume collaboration in a system that isolates them from their would be partners. For example, the reforms push for teachers to use cooperative teaching methods for a number of reasons. Yet, the organizational and structural norms for professional development in

schools currently discourages collaboration among teachers. As Little (1990) points out, "Collaborative efforts run counter to historical precedent, tending to be unstable, short-lived, and secondary to other priorities" (p. 187). Several opposites are interesting to consider here: Isolation implies disconnection, detachment, solitude, loneliness, separation, and aloneness. However, the standards based reforms suggest instruction that is grounded in connection, attachment, collaboration, collegial interactions, sharing, openness, etc.

Examples embedded in practice abound. Hawkins (1974) discusses the importance of building respectful human relationships with children in and around subject matter of mutual interest. To do so requires connection. He explains that "no child...can gain competence and knowledge, or know himself as competent and as a knower, save through communication with others involved with him in his enterprises." Hawkins is clear that without such connection between human beings formed through authentic interaction, "there is no content for the context, no figure and no heat, but only an affair of mirrors confronting each other" (p. 52).

To develop such "heat" teachers must make connections with, between, and among students and *subject matter* -- an important point that I will return to momentarily -- yet, teachers do not have the opportunity to feel connected to each other, or to model what connection might look like between teachers and other teachers, for students. It is significant that Katie and Sylvia connected through their mutual interest in learning about teaching. Teaching is, after all, a subject matter for teachers. They, as I and Thou, created heat, or energy by sharing this topic. And, it is also significant that Katie and Sylvia connected around the subject matter they taught. "I mean, she even got me turned on to science" speaks volumes. Katie's science teaching changed, not simply because she watched Sylvia teach and then

reproduced what Sylvia did. Katie's teaching of science changed because Sylvia engaged Katie in *science*. And, Sylvia's math teaching didn't change just because she watched Deborah's strategies and tried to copy them. Remember, Sylvia was very clear about not wanting to "become a Deborah." Sylvia became engaged in the process of learning more about math instruction because, through watching Deborah teach, she became interested in *math* (Ball & Rundquist, 1993). Only when teachers become excited about subjects can they truly engage students in the mutual creation of "heat." Katie and Sylvia's work together shows the generative quality of such excitement and learning when it is grounded in emotion.

The Generative Quality of Collaborative Work

Within the walls of their joint classroom Katie and Sylvia overcame many of the obstacles of isolation. They created physical and organizational structures in ways that enable them to support their work together. They moved walls and created spaces in which to work together with some 44 children. They organized their instructional day and week in ways that enabled them to work together effectively and to find more joint planning and thinking time. Making changes to the physical and organizational spaces that closets teachers away from each other allowed them to develop the relational aspect of their work together. In overcoming the desultory effects of being personally isolated and deprived of like-minded human contact during the working day allowed them to develop a professional friendship out of which emerged a more solid foundation that both nourished and propelled them into further growth, which allowed them to challenge the traditional ways in which teachers are also isolated even from the profession to which they belong.

They created a fascinating context for their work in which spending time created more time, the exertion of energy created more energy the emotional costs of working so closely together gave them a solid relational foundation upon which to take more professional risks. I call this quality in their relationship, generative.

By generative, I mean that which is expended, such as energy or time, doubles back and in a modified form, becomes that which supports or sustains on going growth. This is a bit different from the ends becoming the means. This is because, the qualities that, in Sylvia and Katie's case, became part of the means for their continued work, had not been ends in the first place. For example, in Chapter Four I describe how friendship had never been a goal of their relationship. Even so, while working together they formed a deep and abiding relationship that became part of what both fueled and supported their continued work.

Likewise, the creation of more time and energy were not the goals of their work together. However, in working together, as they spent time and energy to accomplish their goals, the excitement they generated as they grew to be closer, the enjoyment and senses of accomplishment they felt in their teaching, the joint meeting of their goals, produced for them the feeling of having more time and energy.

Their work together can also be characterized by an interesting balance between collaboration and autonomy. As stated, when they worked together, they were collaborating colleagues. They were not teachers teaching in isolation and they benefited from this structure. As a pair, however, they could have recreated many of the problems associated with teacher isolation were it not for the larger professional contexts in which they worked, to which they contributed, and from which they found support for their

continued work. Those contexts, which are described in the next three sections include the context of leadership created by the school principal, the school culture of collaboration found within the walls of Spartan Village, and the PDS context of educational reform.

**Multiple Contexts of Support: School Leadership, School Norms,
and the Professional Development School Reform**

The Context of Leadership: Rumor, Reputation, and the Reality of Support

In chapter four, I mentioned that Sylvia was not pleased when she learned of her placement at Spartan Village. District-wide rumors about the principal's toughness concerned her. Indeed, Sylvia was not the only incoming teacher to experience this sense of doubt about working at Spartan Village. As I listened to other teachers I learned of their hesitations about transferring from other schools and their first encounters with the principal. One talked about being transferred to Spartan Village during a year-long internship program. Her first placement was a particularly difficult personal situation and was moved to Spartan Village to get a fresh start. She reflected about the move, however, "it felt like out of the fry pan and in the fire for me". When she completed her internship she was offered a position and remembered about her years of teaching there, "We had staff meetings at eight o'clock in the morning, and sometimes if you were a minute late, she would write that up and it would be in your file. *'She did not play'*" (T-10, p. 14). Another teacher recalled "being scared" and asking for advice about how to deal with the principal before being transferred there. She heard encouraging words from a colleague and was told she would do fine at Spartan Village because, she's "pretty careful about following the rules, at least making it appear that way" (T-14, p. 10).

I too have stories about the principal's toughness and about the two years it took me to gain her trust. I agree, she did not play. There were things that she was tough about that seemed bothersome at the time, and in retrospect, silly. For example, she continually monitored the parking lot making sure that only those who taught in her building parked in that lot. She knew the cars of her teachers. When she spotted one in the lot that did not belong, she would not rest until she learned who the driver was. As more and more people come in and out of the school to do PDS work, parking became more and more of an issue and verbal reprimands were issued in public meetings and privately. For those of us working to gain a sense of belonging in the school, such reprimands were difficult to understand. They seemed to contradict the lofty rhetoric we lived by. After all, we were there to help create a new kind of institution in which people from schools and universities worked side-by-side on the problems of the education. As partners in such important work it seemed we should be able to park side-by-side too. There were also other issues--certainly some with a great deal more significance and some with even less.

But this principal was a stickler for details, policies, and rules. She was in command of her building and let anyone and everyone know it through reprimands and statements that asserted her power, and various other means that often seemed counter productive to the shared goals we were trying to reach. She was the undisputed leader of the school who stated her opinions, laid out her expectations, and demanded (in subtle ways) that teachers follow her lead. It seemed a bit of a confusing contradiction that she would often come to PDS meetings and listen without so much as a passing comment, allowing those in the meeting to chart the course, determine how to reach their goals, and how to evaluate their progress. Over time I have come to see

both her hands-on and her hands-off stances to be supportive and appropriate given her goals as a leader.

One teacher said of the principal, "I got to know [her] pretty quickly and she was kind of tough when I first came in and interviewed with her and everything, but she became more relaxed after that and it's been fine ever since" (T-14, p. 10). This same teacher compared her with other principals she had worked for saying, "There have been some principals who have gotten in the way a little bit in that they've been very structured, not [her]. She's been pretty supportive of the way I've taught" (T-14, p. 9). However the story that helped me see beyond the tough veneer was told by one teacher who described part of her interview with the principal.

Now [the principal] might appear to the other people, at first, to be like a very efficient administrator, and all this, [but] you know what convinced me that I wanted to work here? The question she asked me in my interview: "Are you comfortable hugging kids?" And I thought, I've got to be honest I'm probably not going to get this job. And I said, "Yes, if a kid's in need, I'll give them a hug." She goes, "Good. That's what we need at Spartan Village." I like this lady! I was sort of scared about her, because I had heard she was the toughest principal...but the question that was important to her was, "Are you comfortable hugging?" (T-17, p. 17)

This conversation helped me see something I had not seen before--the idea that, in her building, children, and teaching them well, were to come first. Looking at the power of her leadership through a lens of care, rather than through the more traditional lens that links power and authority with oppression and lack of autonomy, I have come to equate her "toughness" with dedication and support for her teachers rather than as simply the exercise and maintenance of her own power (Noblitt, 1993).

Looking through a lens of care rather than through a lens of power, I see the principal's hands-on, hands-off leadership style, not as confusing and counter-productive, but as helpful. Looking back at my experiences now I seen a different principal and a different kind of leadership than I had while immersed in the work. For example, at Spartan Village, the principal made sure that children came first by doing her best to ensure that her teachers were free to do the work of teaching. It took outsiders, such as myself, a while to gain her trust. While enduring my waiting period, anxious to begin working directly with the teachers, I saw my initiation period as a time where the principal was simply exercising her authority and control, making sure I knew that she was in charge. Looking at what it took to gain her confidence and develop a productive working relationship with her through a lens of care, I see a different picture altogether. First of all, the principal had no reasons to be insecure about her authority. She was, without question, the woman in charge of her domain. However, before she and I could work together well, she needed to make sure that my work in her school would be supportive rather than distracting her teachers from doing their best work with children. When she saw that I too was an advocate for her teachers and children I became her colleague and she virtually left me alone to do my work in her school.

Why all that worry about the parking lot? That was the principal making sure that when her teachers who worked in more than one building (such as the music teacher) drove in, they would be assured a parking place, could get inside easily, and begin their work with children prepared and on time. She also could monitor the safety of the children and staff by noting whether someone she didn't know had come into the building without signing in.

The hands-on, hand-off leadership style I mentioned before, I believe, is a crucial foundation of support for Katie and Sylvia's work, as well as all of the professional development activity that went on in the building. The hands-on part kept her informed, allowed her to support whole-school efforts, and to be instrumental at both the school and district levels in bringing about some important changes. It provided us all with a sense that the principal was supportive and that she would go the extra mile when an extra mile was necessary. The hands-off part provided ample spaces for individual teachers and faculty members to pursue their own interests in their own ways. While the principal might have been patrolling the parking lot to make sure all visitors were approved and accounted for, she also gave a wide berth to those of us working toward educational reform in her building. As long as, in her mind, children and teachers came first, she welcomed people in the building that could provide learning opportunities for her teachers. And, while valuing state and district level school improvement policy, she deeply understood and supported the potential of professional development that starts with teachers' interests and needs rather than with mandates.

The principal, her commitments, and the ways in which she led were important elements of support for Katie and Sylvia, as well as for the whole PDS effort taking place at Spartan Village. The principal made it clear to everyone that she put a priority on children's well being and their learning. She also worked diligently to, not only, protect teachers' time so they would not be distracted from doing quality work with children, but to help to create time through their extended day and co-teacher plans so they could focus on projects that were also becoming near and dear to their hearts.

Katie and Sylvia benefited from her leadership. They flourished within the structures of support she helped arrange for them, for example, they had an hour a week of co-teacher time during which they could work on their planning, their PDS reports, etc. They also enjoyed the autonomy they had to pursue their work. While frustrated at times by, what appeared to them, a lack of deep understanding or appreciation on her part for what they were doing, they also enjoyed the freedom to define and pursue excellence on their own terms.

Katie and Sylvia created a collaborative structure of support for themselves and were supported by the hands-on, hands-off leadership style of the principal. The principal also had an impact on the normative culture of the school and how all the teachers collaborated. This culture of cooperation and working together at the school level was also an important element of support for Katie and Sylvia's work. They gained from it and they contributed to it as well.

Spartan Village: The School Culture of Collaboration

While Katie and Sylvia established a collaborative team that enabled them to overcome the effects of being isolated as individual teachers, they did so within a larger collaborative context of teachers working toward similar goals. At Spartan Village, problems often associated with isolation in the literature, such as, burnout and stagnation, conservatism, presents, teaching decisions grounded in personal reasons rather than in professionally based justification (Buchmann, 1993a), and a defending of isolation through arguments that valorize autonomy (Britzman, 1986) were not problems, if they did exist, that stemmed from teacher isolation. Being isolated from colleagues at Spartan Village was the anomaly. Not collaborating with

another teacher, university faculty member, or a graduate student was a conscious choice made and so stated by colleagues. So, while the few teachers who isolated themselves were respected by their colleagues from a distance, they were also suspect. Various plans to recruit those peers into professional development projects of one kind or another were continually discussed.

In this and the following section I look at the broader context of support that surrounded Katie and Sylvia's work in order to examine the ways in which their collaborative work was linked to , not only larger contexts of support, but to a context that kept them from being a collaborative pair, working together yet isolated from other professionals and from the profession of teaching.

According to those who worked at Spartan Village Elementary School, the school was a place where teaching ideas were discussed. The faculty and staff worked together; they readily asked each other for help or advice when they felt they didn't know something or wanted clarification. Seeking advice from one another regarding pedagogy was common. Contrary to Britzman's (1986) claim that teachers see it as a weakness when other teachers seek help or advice, Katie explained this culture at Spartan Village this way:

At Spartan Village it was common that teachers would say things like, "This year our gold mine is to learn more about this...." or, "I feel this is an area that I need to improve in." And people wouldn't look at that teacher and think, "Oh jeeze, she really doesn't have her act together..." they would respect a person for that. (T-8, p. 7)

And until she was transferred to her new school she had "never known it to be any different (T-1, p. 7). It is a stark contrast to the way in which Katie felt pressured not to reveal her questions in front of colleagues at her new school. Indeed, whereas at Spartan Village teachers talked together

and made their questions and insecurities known; at her new school Katie felt pressured to clam up. One teacher “loved to poke fun at me if I forgot something. I still make comments like ‘Oh gosh. I’m having so much trouble with this unit,’ and he’ll look at me like, ‘Boy, she’s a big flake,’ you know, that type of thing. And he would never say that” (T-1, p. 8).

At Spartan Village talking with each other about *teaching* is the norm, whereas at her new school, Katie observed that while teachers seem comfortable discussing things they are not expected to know about, new things, such as portfolio assessment, they “rarely talk about actual teaching” (T-1, p. 8).

Finally, at Spartan Village teachers knew what other teachers were doing, trying, and thinking about in their classrooms. As Katie noted, “with that restructured time, and setting aside days to have sharing and conversations, I felt, you know, I really had a good idea what different people were doing” (T-1, p. 9). Yet at Spartan Village, teachers talking together about their interests was not limited to designated sharing times. We all worked together in various configurations of teams and committees regarding issues of teaching and learning, teaching education, and school organization and management. Such activity brought us together in collaborative project teams, such as Katie and Sylvia’s, as well as study groups, focus group, School Improvement teams, restructured time committee, proposal and end of year report writing groups, Spartan Village-PDS governance, and whole school meetings where we all looked at our teaching of science and literacy and planned a whole school science and literacy conference, to name a few. Naturally, such meetings were informed by what teachers were working on in their classrooms. Katie explained why such sharing was as important to her, “because if you’re interested in doing something you can say, ‘Well, so

and so, are doing something like that, I can go talk to them'" (T-1, p. 9). This kind of open working environment contrasts starkly with what Katie found at her new school, a place where she says, "I have no idea what they're doing...right now three or four of us are all probably trying to do the same thing and we don't even know it" (T-1, p. 9).

But at Spartan Village they did know what was going on. Therefore, there was a more reciprocal quality to Katie and Sylvia's work than might first appear. The danger of them becoming a collaborative team, only to be isolated from the rest of their colleagues and vulnerable to reproducing their own idiosyncratic work -- together -- was non-existent within the collaborative context of Spartan Village. Even while working so closely together, they were part of something bigger to which they contributed and from which they also learned. In this case, as contexts of support for Katie and Sylvia's work, the place where Spartan Village the "elementary school" ends and Spartan Village the "PDS" begins is very difficult to pinpoint. The differentiation can primarily be seen in terms of resources and range of influence. When Spartan Village became a PDS resources to work together increased. Therefore, every teacher who wanted to participate, could. Building upon the normative culture that was in place, the PDS began to thrive, bringing in knowledge, generating knowledge, and disseminating what was learned.

Multiple Layers of Learning: The Professional Development School Context of Educational Reform

As university coordinator of Spartan Village School, I worked to facilitate our school's transformation from an ordinary public elementary school into a PDS. According to the Holmes Group whose report,

Tomorrow's Schools (1990), outlined the set of principles and guidelines that guided our work, a PDS is,

not , just a laboratory school for university research, nor administration school...nor...just a clinical setting for preparing student and intern teachers. [It is] all of these things together: a school for the development of novice professionals, for continuing development of experienced professionals, and for the research and development of the teaching profession. (p. 1)

In other words, a professional development school was to be a new kind of educational institution formed by combining the talents and knowledge of those who teach with those who study teaching. By working together, it was supposed that these two groups could create powerful new understandings about K-12 teaching and learning, about the life-long education of educators, and about educational reform, than either group could contribute to the profession alone. Thinking of a Venn diagram, this new institution, the PDS, is in the middle where the circles overlap. The PDS was to merge certain aspects of the school and the university. Contextually speaking, Katie and Sylvia's collaborative work fit within the middle of these two circles. They were supported by it and contributed to it as well. Many other projects were also going on at the same time that fit within the merging of the school and the university (Table 1).

Speaking in terms of support for Katie and Sylvia, the PDS context provided many things. For one, it provided some consistent planning time by way of our co-teacher. This important time met two vital criteria teachers did not have to write lesson plans for the co-teacher and, instruction time was not compromised as it can be when substitute teachers provide it. Depending on the degree to which teachers were involved in PDS projects, the co-teacher was a regular part of classroom's instructional day or week. She planned her

**Table 1- Spartan Village Professional Development School
Project Timeline**

PDS Project Year	Whole School Efforts	Collaborative Projects	Restructuring & Organization
Year I	• Launching the PDS effort • Summer Institute • TE	• Math & TE, 3rd Grade (Sylvia & Deborah) • Math & TE, 4th Grade	• Strategic Planning Team
Year II	• Science: Weather • TE • Community Awareness • Visitors	• Math & TE, 3rd Grade (Sylvia & Deborah) • Math & TE, 4th Grade • Math and TE, 5th Grade	• Extended Friday Lunch Meetings • Substitutes • Strategic Planning Team
Year III	• TE • Community Awareness • Visitors	• Math & TE, 3rd Grade (Sylvia & Deborah) • Math and TE, 4th Grade • Math & TE, 5th Grade • Science & TE, 1st Grade • Science & TE, 1st & 4th • Literacy & TE, 2nd Grade	• Monthly Meetings • Substitutes • Strategic Planning Team

Table 1 continued

PDS Project Year	Whole School Efforts	Collaborative Projects	Restructuring & Organization
Year IV	• Study Groups: • Integrated Subject Matter Teaching • Children's Learning • Learning From Practice • ESL • Visitors • TE	• Math & TE, 3rd Grade (Sylvia & Deborah) • Math and TE, 4th Grade • Math & TE, 5th Grade • Math & TE, 1st Grade • Science & TE, 4th Grade • Science, 1st Grade • Science, 1st Grade • Science, 3rd Grade (Sylvia & Grad. Student) • Literacy & Fine Arts Music/Art • Science & Art, 3rd Grade • Writing, 3rd Grade	• Reallocated Time Plan providing Friday meeting time beyond contract Substitutes • Strategic Planning Team
Year V	• Science & Literacy Focus • Teacher Ed. Students • Visitors • Dissemination	• Science & TE, Multiple Groups • Collaborative Team Teaching in the Third Grade, (Katie and Sylvia) • Math, 4th Grade • Writing Workshop, 4th Grade • Math, 1st Grade • Math & Science, 1st Grade • Literacy & ESL	• Reallocated School Week providing Friday afternoon meeting time, beyond contract • 2.5 FTE Co-teachers • Substitutes • PDS Council

Table 1 Continued

PDS Project Year	Whole School Efforts	Collaborative Projects	Restructuring & Organization
Year VI	• Science & Literacy Focus • TE • Visitors • Dissemination	• Science & TE, 5th Grade • Science & TE, 1st Grades • School Organization • Math, 4th Grade • Literacy & ESL & TE • Organization & Collaboration (Katie & Sylvia) • Teaching Practice Study Group	• Reallocated School Week: meeting time, beyond contract • 2.0 FTE Co-teachers Substitutes • PDS Council

own lessons based on conversations with the teacher. In some cases, she had responsibility for an entire area of the curriculum, in others she provided enrichment activities. During the year that Katie and Sylvia collaborated they had on hour a week of co-teacher time. The principal also helped them arrange for more time by organizing a schedule of special area classes so both classes would be gone at the same time, which was no easy task.

In addition to time, PDS resources connected teachers at Spartan Village to other professionals in schools such as theirs, to university faculty and graduate students, as well as to professional subject matter knowledge, to teacher education, and to current reform issues through a state-wide network of PDS and a coordinator who reminded them of the institutional support for their work and urged them to take full advantage of it in all of its multiple layers. In the abstract the multiple layers of support and the impact that had, going in both directions, can get confusing.

One of the most amazing things about the PDS context of support in which they were working was that Katie and Sylvia could start out with a relatively simple idea -- to get together, to teach together and to learn together

-- and this idea could grow. Then the positive energy that was generated from the excitement of their learning together was contagious. In the PDS, there were many places to which they could contribute as well as from which they could gain. One of the places their energy went was to me. I loved to listen to them talk about teaching because I could get excited again about some of the things I had forgotten about, or had stopped caring about.

More noteworthy, however, were the multiple layers of learning generated from them. For example, I was teaching an undergraduate introductory class to teaching. And I couldn't get my students to engage in a good discussion. My students were accustomed to lectures and prepared for class as they might prepare for a lecture rather than for active participation where opinions and ideas could be shared and expanded upon. Frustrated, I began reflecting on my own teaching and wondered how I could teach them how to have a classroom discussion. I wanted my students to learn from each other in much the same way that Katie and Sylvia's third graders learned from each other. So I talked to Katie and Sylvia about it. I observed their teaching more systematically and discussed it with them. They helped me to project how their ideas may or may not work with undergraduates.

So I was learning about teaching from watching them teach the way they were learning about teaching by watching each other teach. Later they came to my class with their student teacher to talk with my students about their work together. So far, I learned something from them. The undergraduates were able to learn something from them, their student teacher was part of the learning, and they were learning from each other. They were also learning from me as my interest in their classroom discussions alerted them to the importance of student conversation, which they paid more attention to and became more strategic about facilitating.

Katie and Sylvia also presented at other undergraduate and graduate classes and made presentations at two state-wide conferences, one about their teaching of math and science, the other about their collaboration. In addition, a graduate student in science education did a dissertation in their classroom related to the ways they were teaching science.

And all of this ongoing learning was of a generative nature. What I mean by that is: Sylvia began her quest for improvement in mathematics and began a collaboration with Deborah. As Deborah taught in Sylvia's classroom she studied her practice. Another professor and several graduate students were doing similar things in other classrooms at Spartan Village. As collaborative groups as the Math Project, they discussed issues of teaching and learning in math. This changed the ways that Sylvia thought about teaching math and about teaching overall. The work Deborah did, also had an impact on her teaching of math methods at the university. Katie was in Deborah's math methods course. Then when Katie and Sylvia began teaching together, not only did they have a common language and a common set of experiences to refer to as they discussed pedagogy, Katie brought new insights back to Sylvia's classroom where, at one time they had originated. Katie and Sylvia later shared a student teacher, who had been in the same teacher education program Katie had. Katie, Sylvia, and the student teacher could discuss practice starting with a common base while learning from each other the ways in which that knowledge had been re-constructed over time as it had been modified and adapted and exposed to new sets of people. This kind of knowledge growth and re-generation was happening in Katie and Sylvia's classroom in math and in science, as well as happening throughout the school. For other professors were also involved. We all learned together. Spartan Village teachers took their new understandings and applied it to their

teaching of elementary school. University professors took what they learned and used it with their students in methods classes. Then, when those student teachers and interns (who had had those courses) brought their understandings back to Spartan Village, the understandings, could once again be reexamined and recycled. Lest we forget a very important element in this picture, the children were part of this ongoing cycle of knowledge generation, and yes, so too was the principal.

So in a way, Katie and Sylvia just started out with this, well, as they say, “we kind of met at the copy machine,” realizing that they really wanted to learn from each other and it blossomed into these multiple layers of opportunity to learn. This was the PDS context of educational reform at Spartan Village PDS. Starting with their own collaborative partnership and working outward toward the institutional support Katie and Sylvia had a great deal of support for their work. Within the walls of their collaborative partnership, that was couched within larger structures of support, they were able to focus on their teaching rather than on the distracting problems associated with isolation in the literature. Working together closely, they overcame personal isolation. By changing the structure of their classroom, and with the support of co-teacher time, and the principal’s willingness to be flexible with scheduling the arts and PE classes, they were able to overcome the problems associated with being closeted away from one another in isolated classrooms, with schedules that prevent them from having time to talk and prepare for teaching together. Finally, within the collaborative school culture of Spartan Village, which was within the collaborative professional development structure of school university collaboration, which was within a state level institutional structure that supported their forward growth as a PDS, Katie and Sylvia had access to state of the art information

about teaching and learning, about teacher education and about school organization and management. In fact, not only did they have access to it, they were helping to create it.

Chapter 7

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH CHANGE AND LEARNING: CONNECTION AND CONTRADICTION

The story I've written is one of connection and separation, of serendipity and intent, of potency and powerlessness. It is a story of contradictions that emerged from contradictions that permeate the educational landscape. As I discussed in the second chapter, three contradictory contexts that are germane to this study intersected in a particular time and place and serve to frame this story. The first is grounded in personal experience. It lies within the gulf that separated my attempts to change my practice and the lack of support I found for doing so. Indeed, moving out of my classroom in search of colleagues with whom to improve my teaching *further* isolated me from my fellow teachers who, for important reasons of their own, fought to maintain the status quo. The second contradiction, grounded in the literature, reveals a division between the formal theoretical knowledge about teachers and teaching, and the practical ways that teachers know about themselves and about their work (Elbaz, 1983). Traditionally, teachers' experiences are represented by others, for others, in realms of the educational enterprise that are removed from the realities of teachers' daily lives in classrooms and schools.

Finally, the current national educational reform context frames the third contradiction. Recent reforms funneling standards and mandates into today's schools (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) are based on conflicting demands. Not only are teachers expected to embrace and engage fully in the

acquisition of a pedagogy for the future, as it were, leaving behind the traditional technical rational delivery mode of teaching now seen as outdated; they are also expected to acquire a voice, to actively participate in the educational debate with scholars, to take on leadership roles, to work collaboratively within their schools and community, to add breadth and depth to their subject matter understandings, and to become "researchers" (Eisner, 1992). Unfortunately, as Lord (1994) submits, changes in professional development are not keeping pace. Teachers are still primarily being inserviced in content, through methods that have "little chance of achieving the broader transformations in teaching that are implied (or in some cases, prescribed) in these evolving standards documents" (p. 181-182). Further, their success with new teaching is still being measured by tests that assess children's learning in traditional ways. And finally, as Eisner (1992) explains, and every teacher knows, "typically, new expectations for teachers are 'add-ons' to already overloaded curricula and very demanding teaching schedules" (p. 612).

Now moving momentarily away from the literature toward teachers' experiences with educational change, this story is also grounded in the complexities of classroom life, the full range of emotion found in human relationships, and the heartfelt desire of two teachers to teach together in an experiment to improve their teaching. By teaching together within a normative context that supported such work, by working with other people from both the school and the university, and by expanding their roles (by broadening what it means to be a teacher) in ways that also served to help other teachers improve their teaching, Katie and Sylvia built a bridge that spanned the public and private worlds of teachers' knowledge and of teachers' lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Grumet, 1988).

In this chapter, I review pieces of their personal story and I theorize. I weave together the practical and the theoretical in order to examine what their experiences of trying to change their practice within the context of professional development school reform might mean and what it can tell us more broadly about creating opportunities for the professional growth of teachers. I move between the "everydayness" (Neumann & Peterson, 1997) of two lives in a school and life as it is described in schools as a way to manage the contradiction between the practical ways of knowing that characterize teachers' knowledge about their work and the more abstracted ways of knowing that characterize the literature on teachers and teaching (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Elbaz, 1983). I argue that given the current state of education and the need for change, as well as the current political climate of educational reform and policy making, it is crucial that the community of educators, educational researchers, and those who create policy geared toward the reform of education, change the way they think about the professional education of teachers, paying closer attention to the powerful ways in which teachers can learn from one another when focusing on the core issues of teaching and learning within the context of real classrooms.

In particular I think that educationally meaningful professional development for teachers will require that we all pay close attention to the complex ways teachers are connected to each other, to the profession, and to the work of teaching itself. Paying attention to teachers in this way will be a challenge. Certainly in today's educational climate centering professional development on the work of teaching as it is characterized by teachers, and structuring it in ways that teachers can learn from each other, is indeed, a revolutionary idea.

A Radical Idea

In the previous chapters when I described how and why Katie and Sylvia decided to work together, I wrote that they had capitalized on a relatively simple idea: To teach together to learn more from each other about teaching. By simple, I did not mean insignificant, uncomplicated, or ordinary. Rather, by simple, I meant that theirs was a straight forward, practical plan, one with clear intents and purposes. This is an important distinction to make, because, in reality, their idea was not ordinary or trivial; it was radical. Indeed, the idea that teachers can work together to transform their own practice by anchoring the focus of reform in their own questions, pertaining specifically to the realities of their own classroom experience, is a most unusual idea in the field of education. Several factors make this so.

For one, as mentioned above, most professional development activity for teachers is still grounded in outdated, technical-rational models of learning (Lord, 1994; Schon, 1987, 1991). Rather than supporting teachers as they become engaged in the important “processes of inquiry, analysis, information gathering, and other aspects of learning-how-to-learn in an engaged and critical way” (Hargreaves, (1994, p. 57) that might enable them to become more innovative and updated teachers, most staff developers explain and train teachers how to implement mandated programs. The idea that teachers might learn from each other while grounded in the realities of teaching, rather than from experts who ground their knowledge about schools and classrooms elsewhere, pushes on the boundaries of traditional staff development practices.

Second, the occupation of teaching, the organizational structures of teaching, teachers themselves, and the complexities of their work are topics predominately analyzed and described by scholars, who, while having a deep

and abiding knowledge about fields of inquiry and contributing important analytical lenses through which we can see significant features on the educational plain, are generally removed from the daily realities of classroom life (Sizer, 1988). Their lenses are not readily accessible, or even applicable to those who teach (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Third, as has been pointed out in various places throughout this work, teaching is work that is still primarily characterized by isolation. Teachers who challenge this steadfast norm by trying something innovative, are unusual, and often suspect.

Finally, the social location of teachers in the educational hierarchy makes it virtually impossible for them to emerge as professionals in their own right, who can direct the course of their own learning and contribute to the development of their colleagues, a role traditionally played by those with more status and import.

The State Of Professional Development

As a teacher of elementary grades children, I attended several inservice workshops a year. Those day-long or two-day sessions were planned to help me and other teachers from across the district to better manage student behavior, instructional materials, or student work. The one or two workshops that had anything to do with teaching and learning dealt with procedures regarding the implementation of mandated curriculum, and provided suggestions regarding how to prepare students to do well on achievement tests without teaching to the test.

Lord (1994) writes about the technical-rational epistemologies that I experienced during my teaching career, noting that such models have long been the foundation for teacher education. They

...assume that knowledge about curriculum, instruction, and assessment can be broken down into discrete elements..., noncontroversial (free of conflict, criticism, or real debate), context-independent and empirically verifiable or replaceable. Knowledge that fits this description can be transmitted by telling and is not subject to continual revision and renewal. (p. 188)

What Lord (1994) describes makes sense according to what I experienced. Each presentation we heard was polished and perfected -- an outside expert delivering answers to other people's questions, one after another, on transparency platters. In such places I felt disconnected from the event, the presenter, the ideas, my colleagues, and most certainly from the students in my classroom and the work I did as a teacher.

While many things in education seem to have changed, in general, the professional development experiences of most teachers has not. Many teachers still exchange seat time in workshops for clock-hours toward permanent credentials. Sessions generally focus on issues that enhance teachers' compliance with state mandates, such as how to interpret and address new standards and assessments and how to integrate curriculum, or on the perennial favorites, such as, the management of student behavior, how to manage students with special needs, and technology (PSESD, December/January, 1997/98). When teachers are inserviced in one-day workshop settings such as these, there is little time for teachers to actively dialogue about the particulars of their classroom with other teachers. There is little time to establish relationships with teachers that could develop into long-term professional collaborations; there is little time to think critically about what is being said. The content, even when intriguing, is most often decontextualized beyond the point of recognition. Such sessions model "teaching-as-telling" in a modern educational climate that is being heavily influenced by constructivist philosophy (Hargreaves, 1994; Lord, 1994).

Furthermore, such an approach to professional development encourages teacher passivity and complacency in an era when "teaching is", as Ayers (1995) writes, "intellectual and ethical work [that] requires the full attention -- wide awake, inquiring, critical -- of thoughtful and caring people if it is to be done well" (p. 60). Workshop settings seem to have been the predominate mode of continuing professional education for teachers. Therefore, stepping beyond to learn from each other, in classrooms, while teaching, is a challenge to the status quo.

Through The Scholar's Eyes

Another reason that it is a radical idea to think that teachers might learn from one another while working together, is because, ironically, teachers have been portrayed in the literature by the experts from whom they learn. Scholars removed from the everydayness of classroom life write about how teachers hide from uncertainty and change behind the security of traditional practice, like so many children hiding within the safety of their mothers' pleats. As articulated, certainly this line of reasoning makes sense. Traditional practice, in spite of being grounded in an epistemology of certitude, is, simply by being a practice of human improvement, fraught with uncertainty and doubt (Cohen, 1988; Fenstermacher & Amarel, 1983; Floden & Clark, 1988). Cohen (1988) even argues that, given the incredible uncertainties inherent in the nature of practice, it is smarter for teachers to find and travel the path of least resistance, tradition -- that which is generally ordained by the public, understood by the students (Cusick, 1983; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, 1986; Sizer, 1984/1985) and supported by the structure and organization of schooling itself (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Other scholars have been much more subtle. These scholars often imply through the omission of teachers' voices in their work, that even though the root cause of persistent practice can be found within the conflicting nature of practice itself (Cohen, 1988; Floden & Clark, 1988), within the organization of schooling (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Cuban, 1988) and the isolation of teachers (Cuban, 1990b; Tyack & Cuban, 1995), within the realm of teacher education, standards, and licensure (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, 1995; Darling-Hammond, Wise & Klein, 1995), and within the public's conflicting sense of the purposes of schooling that charge teachers to teach equitably and to sort at the same time (Bowles & Gintis, 1986; Elbow, 1986), the underlying and unmentioned cause can be found within the characteristics of those who choose to teach (Buchmann, 1993a, 1993b; Lortie, 1975).

While all of the complicated arguments make sense, I often wonder whether teachers actually hide from change or are driven into hiding, discouraged by the onslaught of mandates, and frustrated by the series of workshops that do not address their needs. As Ayers (1995) reminds us, to grow professionally,

teachers need to engage (in) questions of immediacy and urgency from their classrooms: What is teaching? What is learning? How do we know what we know about teaching? What is the evidence? How does it compare with other things we know? Who is being served in schools, and how? What the hell is going on in our classrooms? What does it mean for the teacher? How are the kids experiencing it? (p. 60)

While teachers might need to be grounded in the immediacy of their own classrooms in order to benefit from ongoing professional development, it is unlikely that they are going to be valued for such practical thinking by those who write about them from a distance (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

The Isolation of Teachers

The pervasive norms of privacy (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Lord, 1994), the glorification of autonomy (Ayers, 1995) and individualism, (Britzman, 1986; Grumet, 1988), the personal, professional, and organizational structures of the work of teaching (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) all serve, at least in analytical realms, to keep teachers disconnected from each other, from the profession, from the curriculum, and even from their own thoughts and questions, and therefore, from the potential for growth (Lord, 1994). So profound is the standard of teacher isolation that it is thoroughly cited by scholars as the main cause underlying almost every educational problem whether the analytical lens is personal, structural, organizational, collegial, curricular, political, pedagogical, feminist, philosophical, or an amalgamation of the possible. Katie and Sylvia's move to work together to learn from each other was certainly radical. It was a move that disregarded much of the literature that describes what teachers can and do do. Their strategy was also a challenge to what most teachers experience in their place of work (Deal, 1990; Johnson, 1990; Little, 1982, 1990). Furthermore, such empowered moves are not expected of teachers, most of whom are women on the lowest rung of the educational hierarchy.

Teachers At the Bottom of the Hierarchy

Finally, another reason I believe it is thought a radical notion for teachers to be empowered to learn from each other in the context of their own practice lies in historical issues of status and power in the educational enterprise. Teachers are at the bottom of an educational hierarchy with clearly identifiable status layers. Teaching as an occupation has been the choice of many first generation college students from rural, farm, and

working class backgrounds, women and some minorities. Drawing from such a pool, an even exchange of power and status between those who think and manage and those who practice, is further confounded by the ways in which class, race, and gender intersect in our society (Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

I laid out the above points as a way to approach the complexity inherent in thinking about the idea that teachers could select and direct the content and means of their own ongoing professional development. It is a radical idea, as well as a scary one because the collective, formal understandings that the educational community has about its practitioners working together is that it is a wonderful idea, full of promise and power, but that teachers do not rise to the occasion. Little (1990) puts words to our fears, "A lot of what passes for collegiality does not add up to much...the closer one gets to the classroom and to central questions of curriculum and instruction, the fewer are the recorded instances of meaningful, rigorous collaboration" (p. 180). Such a statement also reveals an interesting tension between what teachers say they want, what visionaries say must happen for schools to change (Ayers, 1995; Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, 1995; Lord, 1994) and what scholars say teachers actually do and are capable of doing.

Seven Points of Collaborative Connection

The story I've written here is one in which two teachers moved forward with their own goals, empowered by themselves, each other, the context in which they worked, and by individuals within that context, to direct the content and process of their own professional development. I believe their experiences with educational reform can help those of us in the educational community think about a new model of professional development. By looking at the particulars of what enabled them to succeed,

we can generalize about the professional development of teachers more broadly. Thus, in this section I examine the interplay among seven points of connection that were vital to their success. I argue that their collaboration worked because they were connected to a) each other as professional friends, b) a normative school culture that supported their collaborative work, c) the processes and products of research on the cutting edge of the professional knowledge base, d) opportunities to deepen subject matter knowledge and to think about the interaction of subject matter knowledge and pedagogy, e) their own ongoing narrative, or text, about their work together as teachers, f) other professionals as persons at various points and places in their careers as educators, and g) the core tasks of teaching within the context of their own classroom as part of the grist of their professional development.

Professional Friends

As discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, Katie and Sylvia not only established a productive working relationship, they also became close professional friends. The evolution of their relationship and the ways in which they connected to each other as women, and teachers -- as friends in a professional context -- is an important foundation to their work. As I stated in Chapter Four, friendship was not the goal or the driving force behind Katie and Sylvia's desire to teach together; rather they chose to teach together for the explicit purpose of learning together while in the midst of teaching. They each believed they could improve their own teaching by having access to -- access achieved by teaching together and talking together about that teaching -- what they admired in the other's teaching. But their relationship grew. Indeed a close personal and professional friendship emerged as a result of their working together within the educational realms they both cared deeply

about. For them, this friendship becomes an important feature that enabled them to continue taking professional learning risks.

As discussed in Chapter Five, for Katie, this professional friendship mirrored the relational learning she had come to understand in the Learning Community Program as she learned to become a teacher. The personal connection she had with Sylvia provided her with the intellectual and emotional support that enabled her to be the kind of teacher she wanted to be. For Sylvia, their professional friendship provided an authentic *means* to improve her practice. Teachers, in other words might have a desire to improve their practice. But trying to do it based on a workshop lecture in the solitude of their own classroom, with no feedback or support, is too high of an obstacle. Through their partnership, Sylvia had an authentic context and authentic purposes. For example, she knew that Katie wanted to learn more about science teaching from her. Therefore, when she was teaching, she knew she was modeling. Then afterwards, she had someone who wanted to learn from her, with which to discuss her teaching and to bounce around ideas. She also had someone to learn from. She had someone with whom to talk, to reflect on lessons taught; someone who was providing the example of teaching that they discussed together. It was their desire to become more proficient teachers that brought them together; it was their growing friendship that enabled them to get beyond the friendly, cordial talk that characterizes congenial teacher talk. It was their professionalism that enabled them to take the first risk; it was their personal connection that provided the right balance between intellectual engagement and an emotionally safe and supportive context in which to continue taking risks in teaching.

Furthermore, as I described in Chapter Six, their personal connection was pivotal to their building of a relationship that had a generative quality.

Their personal connection was not simply a by-product of their collaboration, but rather a connection that doubled back and became a source of support and sustenance for their continued work. The more they gave to each other personally and professionally, the more energized they became.

Overcoming the entrenched norms of isolation and privacy to become colleagues. It makes sense that a close personal connection, a professional friendship of sorts, would be an important part of a developing a "critical collegueship" like the fruitful collegial relationships in which teachers learn from each other as described by Lord (1994). As he argues,

Key features of professional development, in the light of national content standards, are to support teachers in their efforts to the surface these (their) questions and concerns, to help teachers expose their classroom practices to other teachers and educators, and to enable teachers to learn from constructive criticism. (p. 183)

He goes on to say that while processes for such "critical" discussions of practice are part of the normative culture between other professionals and between people in the arts, such activity "runs counter to the norms of 'privacy' that are pervasive in the teaching community" (p. 183). Indeed, it seems to me that Lord's argument is viable and important. However, I believe that if teachers are going to engage in serious critical conversations with other educators -- conversations that are meant to foster disequilibrium in something as personal to them as their teaching -- a strong personal connection between them must be established. The following three points illustrate why this is so.

First, Sergiovanni (1992) tells us that when teachers try to break with the traditional structures of practice where norms of individualism, privatism, and isolation are entrenched, they can become even more vulnerable to the critical analysis of their work by others. This tremendous

sense of vulnerability can push teachers away from further attempts at innovation, back toward familiar practices. However, a close connection with a trusted friend who is also a professional ally -- or a professional ally who is also a trusted friend -- can provide the emotional support that gives one courage to continue on a new path. Put simply, risk taking is an essential element in the process of change; trust is an essential element of risk taking; and personal connection is an essential element of trust.

Second, this is especially true for woman teachers who, the literature has shown, develop "voice" and with it a sense of their own agency through making personal connections with other woman who identify with their experience. We cannot expect woman teachers, who fundamentally make up the work force of elementary school teachers, to become active in their own professional growth if we do not provide opportunities for them to grow as persons at the same time they seek to grow as professionals. A personal connection with teaching colleagues is essential. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) looking across experiential, social class, career, and age differences in women, found that the process of developing "voice," meaning to come to know the power, and then claim the power of one's own mind, was a long journey that required active dialogue with other women. Collins (1990) takes this notion one step further. Not only does the development of voice require talking, she claims that it requires an empathetic and active *listener* who can get beyond the stereotypical understandings of another's experience and into the heart of, or the reality, of that experience. Again, using the metaphor of voice, she explains that acquiring one's voice is the same as becoming free, for finding existential freedom.

Thus, it is through rich discussions with trusted colleagues, those empathetic and knowing personal connections with others (Tannen, 1990), that one can develop into the fully empowered teacher they need to be in order to push through the boundaries of traditional school practices called for in educational reforms. It seems clear, given the incredible volume of literature that explains why teachers and teaching remains virtually the same overtime, that a sense of potency, of existential freedom, or of empowerment as described by Gilligan (1982), would be a fundamental view of self required of those who are willing to engage in the difficult, challenging, ambiguous, mostly uncertain work of changing practice. An authentic context in which teachers can develop important personal connections, trusted professional friendships that will propel and sustain them seems an important aspect of professional development that is currently overlooked. Indeed, in Chapter Six, we saw Sylvia taking on a whole new teaching persona through her work with other teachers with whom a personal connection existed and was maintained.

Finally, in this realm of personal connection, it is important to recall Chapter Six, where I compared the learning of students in classrooms with the learning of teachers in schools. I argued that the human connection between teachers and students and their mutual engagement in subject matter is the key to meaningful learning. (Clifford & Friesen, 1993; Dewey, 1916/1966; Hawkins, 1974; Paley, 1986; Schwab, 1976). Therefore, it makes sense that much of the success of teachers learning from other teachers might rest on the ability they have to form personal connections with each other as a basis for deep inquiry and critical analysis of their subject matter, which might be their teaching practice, or a subject such as how children learn, mathematics, or language acquisition.

If personal connection were the only way in which teachers found connection, well, a wonderful friendship would be the end of the story, and it would not be a story worth the telling here. However, we can learn from Katie and Sylvia's experience of learning in the context of educational reform that connection is a far more involved phenomena than the development of friendship. It is more complex than becoming mutual risk takers in a safe classroom space. The expectations and support they gave and received as members of a school culture of collaboration was an important aspect of their work.

A Normative School Culture of Collaboration

Indeed, Katie and Sylvia were connected to a normative school culture that, as I described in Chapter Six, supported their collaborative work as part of a larger picture of school-wide and state-wide educational reform. As I pointed out above, the personal and professional support they found through their work with each other was an important point of connection. Just as important were the multi-faceted ways in which they were, as individuals, and as a collaborative couple, connected to the professional climate of their school in which various models of collaborative professional development were the norm. In fact, while in many schools across the country teachers are held fast by norms of privatism, at Spartan Village teachers made a conscious effort to honor each other's professional choices, and therefore, not to pressure the one or two teachers in the school who chose to teach *alone*. Teachers believed in the benefits of working together on issues of teaching and learning.

With almost all of the teachers involved in some form of collaborative practice, collegial learning activity existed in the fabric of the school. Sharing

classroom space and responsibilities with the goal of learning more about one's teaching was the norm. School hours were restructured. Friday afternoons were set aside for collaborative group work and whole-school examinations of teaching and learning. Friday afternoons were also the formal time for each project group to present their work and findings to others in the Spartan Village community. Chapter Six opens with a scene from Katie and Sylvia sharing their collaborative work with their colleagues on a Friday afternoon.

Katie and Sylvia's connection to their school community was reciprocal. They had input from colleagues and they shared with colleagues. They participated in other collaborative groups, or school-wide activities, they served on the PDS Council, and both had school-wide leadership roles for different strands of PDS work. Thus, while Katie and Sylvia were connected as personal friends and as collaborative colleagues, they were not an exclusive pair. As individuals, and as a team, they were involved in other aspects of their school, with their other colleagues in a variety of ways. This give and take at the school-wide level is very important.

In schools where isolation and privatism are pervasive norms, two teachers might be able to overcome the effects of being personally isolated from their peers. But through their collaborative efforts they might actually further increase their own isolation from other colleagues and ideas by themselves becoming exclusive. Or, in the other direction, the pair could be further isolated because the closeness they develop is envied and they are virtually shunned.

In the literature isolation generally refers to teachers teaching alone in classrooms. If that were the only type of isolation, then establishing personal connections would be a sufficient step toward solving the many problems

attributed to being alone in the classroom. However, issues of school teacher isolation are much more complicated than that. Teachers are not just isolated from each other, *personally*. They are also disconnected from broader based collegial interaction and support. Little (1982) writes about how norms in the whole school environment influence both the informal and formal opportunities that teachers have to learn "on the job." School-wide norms of collegiality are essential. She found that teachers were more likely to engage in thinking about new ideas when in the company of other teachers who were also grappling with ideas.

Moreover, in a twist to what I stated in the previous section, Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that teachers attempting to change traditional structures of practice become more vulnerable to the critical analysis of their work by others. While a strong personal bond with another teacher is an important base toward the reduction of such feelings, a pair of teachers could still be in a vulnerable position in the group and likely to conform sooner or later. Additionally, becoming a stronger team within an unsafe school environment might simply increase the desire to be exclusive and/or the degree to which they are rejected by others. Either way they would be further cut off from an open exchange of ideas, the very support necessary for profound change to occur (Little, 1982; Lord, 1994). Indeed, increased isolation could lead to the further entrenchment of idiosyncratic teaching practice.

A tremendous segment of the literature on teachers and teacher change extol the potential benefits of collegiality and collaboration (Barth, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Johnson, 1990; Little, 1982). However, most of that literature also points out that relationships between teachers that move past logistics and into deep examinations of teaching and learning are extremely difficult to find, and where found, difficult to sustain. Indeed, such

relationships are incredibly complex. We've seen, so far, that being connected to other teachers as persons, and to a normative school culture of collaboration are important factors that might engender potential success. However, Katie and Sylvia show us that several other points of connection are necessary to develop fruitful classroom collaborations, and further analysis points to an acknowledgment that such collaborative work is more complex than has been fully appreciated.

The Processes and Products of Educational Research

It was satisfying for Katie and Sylvia to be connected as professional friends, and enriching for them to be reciprocally connected to a collaborative school culture into which their work fit. However, in terms of their overall growth as teachers, a critical point of connection was to the processes and products of educational research that was on the cutting edge of a professional knowledge base for teachers as well as on the cutting edge of what it might mean to study one's own teaching. Through a variety of experiences, Katie and Sylvia had access to state-of-the-art professional knowledge (products) and were involved in the innovative creation of that knowledge (process). Additionally, the *processes* of inquiry they engaged in as participants were also *products*. In this section I attempt to take apart and describe this particular connection to the processes and products of educational research which is, in reality, a complex interactive phenomenon with multiple layers.

Collaborative inquiry in mathematics teaching. As described in Chapter Five, Sylvia had more than one collaborative partnership over a seven year span. While for Sylvia the driving force behind these relationships was improved teaching, each collaboration was also connected to emerging research on innovative pedagogy. In each of her collaborative

projects, Sylvia *observed* and was *part of the process* of that work.

Interestingly, by participating in the process of inquiry, she both had access to and was part of what was found in that work. In other words, she participated in inquiry. Through that participation she grappled with innovative pedagogy. She contributed to findings. And, her grappling and learning was part of what was found.

A particular example would be helpful here: Recall the description in Chapter Five of Sylvia's association with Deborah, who as part of her professorial work at Michigan State was conducting research on her own daily teaching of mathematics to the third graders in Sylvia's classroom. Through this experience Sylvia was connected to the *processes* of Deborah's work as an observer and a participant in a number of ways.

First, she not only observed the inquiry first-hand, she participated in a variety of ways in that work. For example, Sylvia observed Deborah's mathematics teaching. She also observed Deborah's self-study of that teaching. Her observations were not passive. Sylvia was concurrently immersed in her own reflective inquiry of those observations. In her field notebook, for instance, Sylvia recorded what she saw and heard as well as her related questions. She made notes about the content and process of lessons, students' thinking and their representations of knowledge, mathematical concepts, her own solutions to problems posed to the class, classroom management, philosophical issues relative to pedagogical decisions made, etc.

Secondly, Sylvia was involved in the processes of research through active and ongoing dialogue with Deborah in which they explored questions that emerged from the events and issues raised in the classroom, in students' math notebooks, in their own notebooks, and in their reflections. Thirdly, Sylvia was involved in the processes of research through joint analyses that

led to new understandings, as well as the co-writing and publishing of a book chapter about their collaboration (Ball & Rundquist, 1993).

Finally, when Deborah and a university colleague, who was also teaching math in another Spartan Village teacher's classroom, were awarded a National Science Foundation grant to support their research on teaching and teacher education at Spartan Village, Sylvia began to participate in this work more formally. What is of importance here, however, goes beyond the fact that she participated in research. The nature of the project is itself significant. The Mathematics and Teaching through Hypermedia project, or as it became more commonly known, the M.A.T.H. Project (Lampert & Ball, in press), was an unusual project itself. It was grounded in the artifacts of actual practice, or the records of practice, and the analysis of those artifacts. Artifacts included such things as children's work -- the math journals in which they showed representations of their mathematical thinking -- teacher journals, problems chosen and figured, and videotapes. Moreover, the aim of the project was to examine the ways in which the first-hand investigation of practice could itself serve as opportunity for both research and teacher learning. In that sense, the very nature of the inquiry experience was very close to the kind of inquiry that Sylvia was learning to do as a teacher. Through her involvement in the research process as it was in progress she had access to the products. In fact, her growing conceptual understandings of mathematics, the processes through which teachers can conduct critical examinations of their practice by investigating artifacts of that practice, and the development of productive collaborative teaching relationships were also considered *products* of that study (Ball & Rundquist, 1993).

Inquiry as part of teacher education. Katie was similarly exposed to processes of inquiry before she and Sylvia began working together. Her initial

exposure to the processes and products of educational innovation came through a rich blend of curriculum, pedagogy, and field experiences found in her teacher preparation program. As I described in Chapter Four, Katie's experiences in the curriculum and processes of the Learning Communities program initiated her into a broad range of topics for inquiry as well as current processes for that practice-based inquiry into teaching and learning. In her courses she was able to grapple with the same kinds of instructional concepts being explored by her professors in classrooms at Spartan Village and other PDS sites. Recall, for example from Chapter Four, that Katie was a student in Deborah's mathematics education course. In this course Katie observed instruction and talked with students about their mathematics reasoning in Sylvia's classroom at Spartan Village where Deborah was teaching, conducting research on that teaching, and exploring connections among that teaching, teacher learning, and teacher education. Thus Katie, while learning to teach mathematics using constructivist rather than technical-rational methods (Lord, 1994; Schon, 1987, 1991) she was also learning to engage in a kind of critical inquiry about practice that is argued by Hargreaves (1994) as a new standard for the work of teaching.

Learning Community was an innovative, alternative teacher education program (one of four at Michigan State University at the time) that was making use of new ideas about teaching and learning. Grounded in Schwab's (1976) philosophical argument supporting the "revival of community," members of the Learning Communities program took seriously his argument that "a communicating, collaborative diversity of perspectives and propensities would yield satisfactions in the very acts of communication and collaboration, as well as material advantages perceptible to those involved. Such satisfactions and advantages are the essential nutrients of

community” (p. 243). Moreover then, with the goal of community in mind, those in the Learning Community program also took seriously his argument that to meet such aims requires

detailed consideration [of] the array of concrete methods, materials, circumstances, and human interactions which would constitute the climate of teaching and learning in which propensities toward community might form. These concrete conditions, ranging from the architectural to the interpersonal, would include the spatial and temporal arrangements by which children are brought into proximity with one another and which adults; the ways in which learning tasks are approached and attacked; the variety of persons in the classroom, the occasions for their interaction, and the ways in which they interact with one another. The concrete matters would constitute the education *means* which could actualize a learning community in which community could be learned. (p. 244)

Consequently, Katie was immersed in a small, two-year program in which she and fellow cohort members participated in a series of sequential and connected courses and field experiences that were aimed toward consistent overarching goals. In the program she developed strong ties with both professors and cohort members who served as the basis for their community of inquiry.

It is noteworthy that Katie’s teacher preparation program provided her with opportunities to immerse herself in artifacts of actual practice and in processes practice based inquiry. Traditional teacher education grounded in the linear, rational models of teaching (Schon, 1987, 1991) has little to do with the everyday immediacy of teachers lives in classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) and is often criticized for laying out the products of research for teachers to consume, rather than engaging them in the “processes of inquiry, analysis, information gathering, and other aspects of learning-how-to-learn in an engaged and critical way” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 57). In fact, The Holmes Group (1986) builds their case for educational reform, in part,

grounded in flaws found in the popular conceptions of conventional teaching that have permeated schools of education, explaining:

One simplistic version equates teaching with “presenting” or “passing on” a substantive body of knowledge. Another includes “presenting and keeping order,” and a third elaborates these views slightly to include “planning, presenting, and keeping order.” Such views assume that bright, well-educated individuals can draw on their accumulated knowledge to develop coherent, logical presentations which can be delivered and hence learned by students in orderly classrooms. (p. 27)

With this view providing a philosophical core for what has become traditional teacher education, it is rare to find either prospective or inservice teachers engaged in the processes of inquiry that lead up to the products of their study. Questions about teaching and learning that precede or emerge from authentic engagement in practice, their own or otherwise, are not part of the curriculum for most preservice or inservice teachers (Lord, 1994). The Holmes Group (1995) reiterates the need for change in the education of teachers arguing that “education students have for too long been learning too little of the right things in the wrong place and the wrong time” (p. 2).

Grappling with the artifacts of practice to learn about teaching. It is significant that before Katie and Sylvia began teaching together, both of them were simultaneously engaged in the processes of educational research. Moreover, they were also both grappling with knowledge-products, or artifacts, from that research as part of their learning about pedagogy, and in fact, their engagement in the grappling as inservice and preservice teachers was a product in itself. In other words, not only did they have access to the processes and products of educational research, they were part of the process and their engagement in learning was a product from which others could learn.

Being part of the process and being part of the product of educational inquiry was a transformative set of experiences for both Katie and Sylvia in a subtle, yet profound way. (Recall Sylvia's perceptions of her own growth and change as a teacher in Chapter Five.) In addition, through engagement in the processes of inquiry they formed the basis for a common *background* for teaching practice that went well beyond the common *language*, or lack thereof, cited in arguments that explain problems in education today. Their engagement in inquiry set a precedent. It seemed to create in them a set of the kind of "habits of mind" Dewey (1916/1966) argued for. They seemed to incorporate, as an expected part of their teaching practice, the ongoing examination of it. Not only did they share a vocabulary, which in essence is a set of words that label concepts that are the products of research conducted by others, they shared common habits of mind, a bent toward the ongoing scrutiny of their work, and a belief that their work together was a way to accomplish this.

Consequently, I believe Katie and Sylvia were able to apply inquiry-based processes to their own collaborative teaching context when they became collaborative team teachers together. They had been engaged in processes of discovery and critical reflection that they could now emulate when working together. Not only were they applying knowledge-products to their own teaching, they were also applying processes of inquiry as they puzzled their own questions. Furthermore, they were able to apply their knowledge of inquiry in other aspects of their work where they were involved in a school-wide effort to examine the use of oral literacy skills as a means to enhance students understandings of scientific concepts. In this study a science educator from MSU co-planned and co-taught a unit with them in their classroom. Previous experience enabled them to jump right into the

experience so they could take advantage of the opportunity to co-reflect, co-examine, co-modify, and co-assess their instruction together.

Such connections to research that took place inside their classroom, also took them beyond the walls of their own classroom and as such, were a vital part of their work together. To respond to the call for change in our nation's schools, teachers must move away from the efficiency models of practice that haunt the educational landscape and forward toward a pedagogy that is more appropriate for the future. Professional development must engage teachers in similar ways. By being connected to the processes and products of educational research, not only are teachers able to participate in exactly the kinds of learning processes promoted by many of the national standards, they have first-hand access to progressive practices, to critical collaborative assessment of those practices, to ideas, as well as to opportunities to increase subject matter knowledge, all of which could ensure continued motion toward improvement (Ball & Cohen, 1995; Lord, 1994).

Subject Matter Knowledge and Pedagogy

As argued directly above, Sylvia and Katie were connected to both the processes and products of educational research. Consequently, they were also connected to rich and ongoing opportunities to deepen their subject matter knowledge and to broaden their understandings about the connections between subject matter knowledge and pedagogy. This is a crucial point when considering the professional growth of teachers.

Lord (1994) explains that the intent of the national content standards is to enliven and enrich students' school experiences with subject matter learning in such a way as to deepen their understandings of it. He discusses relationships between the standards movement and implications for teachers'

professional development and makes a compelling case for the deep changes that teachers will need to make in their knowledge, not just about pedagogy, but in terms of subject matter understandings as well. He writes, "The desired changes in teaching require greater conceptual sophistication and a set of highly polished pedagogical skills that are only rarely rewarded in today's schools" (p. 182). He continues his argument describing the familiar models of professional development, that he claims, do not engage teachers deeply in important questions. Then he raises an interesting issue relative to what it might mean for a teacher to engage students meaningfully and deeply in a subject matter that she barely grasps herself. Professional development opportunities must also connect teachers to their own learning of mathematics, the sciences, history, politics, the arts, literacy, the social sciences, etc. Therefore, connection to subject matter learning was essential to the success of Katie and Sylvia's overall adventure in collaborative learning as well.

Through their connections to the processes and products of educational research, Katie and Sylvia had access, not only to state-of-the-art issues related to pedagogy and to the practice of teaching more broadly, but also to increased opportunities to engage in learning about that which they were teaching. For example, Sylvia's main concerns during the initial phases of work with Deborah revolved around her own understandings of the mathematical concepts Deborah covered with the third graders. Math was the topic of many of their weekly conversations, their Email correspondence, and Sylvia's field notes. In the early phases of their work they addressed Sylvia's own discomfort with mathematical ways of knowing and thinking and her growth in that area more than they did children's understanding of mathematics.

That came later. Indeed, in their chapter (Ball & Rundquist, 1993), they discussed how

Sylvia found herself unexpectedly engrossed in mathematical ideas. At night she would often continue working on problems that the students had been doing in class...Across the week, she kept track of the mathematics that puzzled her, and during that first year her questions frequently took up most of our weekly conversations. (p. 20)

Such conversations provided a forum for both of them to articulate their understandings: "Frequently Sylvia's insatiable curiosity offered Deborah opportunities to clarify and extend her own understandings" (p. 25).

When they began their work together, Sylvia was very uncomfortable with mathematics as a subject matter, and she was very uncomfortable teaching it. Interestingly however, as she became more *secure* in herself as "capable of learning and figuring out mathematics," (p. 25) she became *less secure* of herself as a teacher of mathematics. This is because, as she became more and more aware of the gray areas within the content of mathematics (Ball, 1993; Lampert, 1985), she became less and less sure of how to teach it. At this point in her learning, it is important to know, that she also became "increasingly focused on issues of teaching and learning, of the teacher's role, of the classroom culture" (p. 26). For Sylvia there is a relationship between increased subject matter understanding and the cognizance of pedagogy aimed to engage children in different ways with that subject matter. This is the kind of learning Lord (1994) speaks about; it is the kind of deep learning that is called for by the Holmes Group (1990), and it is the kind of engagement in subject matter outlined by many of the subject matter standards documents.

While Katie's process was different, her connection to subject matter learning was also important to her continued growth as a teacher. As

discussed previously, Katie was not comfortable with the subject matter or her teaching of science. As Sylvia was drawn to Deborah to learn more about teaching math, and in so doing, learned more about the subject of mathematics and then the teaching of it, Katie was drawn to Sylvia to learn more about teaching science, and in so doing, became more comfortable with teaching science in open-ended ways. While Sylvia's increased understanding of mathematics initially made her *more* tentative about how to engage children in the learning of mathematics, she did, as discussed in Chapter Five, eventually and with increasing confidence, resume teaching it. While Sylvia seemed to learn in a sequence, first about the subject matter of mathematics, then about teaching it in new ways, Katie seemed to learn more about the subject matter of science, herself as a learner of science content, and about teaching it in new ways, simultaneously. While Sylvia engaged in mathematics content through the context of, at least at first, someone else teaching math in her classroom, Katie seemed to learn through the actual experience of doing the work of teaching science with a partner. While I think the slight differences in their patterns of learning are fascinating to think about, and potentially relevant to broader issues of teacher learning, what is most important to focus on here is the idea that they both grew in terms of their content knowledge about a curricular area for which they must teach, and had had, serious doubts about themselves as knowers and as teachers. Their connection to, and engagement in the actual subject matter was a crucial part of their ongoing professional development as teachers.

Recently there has been much talk about the importance of increasing the subject matter knowledge of teachers (Darling-Hammond, Wise & Klein, 1995; Lord, 1994; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Certainly, it is an important aspect of teachers' ongoing learning about

their practice. Shulman (1986b; 1987) described ways in which subject matter knowledge and pedagogy, and Wilson, Shulman, and Richert (1987) discussed how that interaction plays out in the ways teachers go about their work. In fact, many of the newer teacher certification programs at universities nation-wide have changed from four to five-year programs. Students must earn a bachelor's degree in a field of study before proceeding on to earn their teaching credential. Yet, it is still unclear how we can provide inservice teachers with the kinds of in-depth and ongoing experiences in subject matter learning they will need in order to catch up and keep up with the ever expanding knowledge being produced in today's world. Katie and Sylvia show us one powerful way to go.

So far I have shown that Katie and Sylvia were connected to each other personally as a basis for their work. They were connected reciprocally to a school context that supported and encouraged their collaborative journey. They were also, very importantly, connected to the processes and products of inquiry, which for them, became a routine way of thinking about the work of teaching and situated them beautifully to add breadth and depth to their subject matter understandings. Of considerable importance to the success of their work, was the vehicle through which their work occurred, that being the ongoing narrative of their time together.

The Ongoing Narrative of Their Work

One point of connection that was vital to Katie and Sylvia's was their connection to the ongoing narrative they created together as part of their work. Let me explain: In the social sciences, feminist scholars have been rethinking and re-framing the classic, "objective" academic work that, throughout history, has defined the boundaries of knowledge in western

societies. Through the lenses of their disciplines, feminist researchers have been working to re-vision, or re-define, each field by bringing the voices of underrepresented groups into the main. By voices, here, I mean that the questions, answers, ways of knowing, understandings etc., serve as the basis for redefining the field, such as sociology (Harding, 1987, Smith, 1987).

In education an important development arising from such re-visioning, is the recognition and clearer understanding of narrative ways of knowing. Regarding teachers and teaching, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe the narrative way of knowing as one part of the "teachers' professional knowledge landscape." They write:

In this view of teachers' knowledge, teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories of those lives, retell stories with changed possibilities, and relive the changed stories. In this narrative view of teachers' knowledge, we mean more than teachers' telling stories of specific children and events. We mean that their way of being in the classroom is storied: As teachers they are characters in their own stories of teaching, which they author. (p. 12)

This idea captures an important point of connection in Katie and Sylvia's work together. As teachers teaching together they were connected to their own ongoing narrative text about their work. They were the authors of and the characters in their own collaborative story of teacher growth and change. Through this comprehensive and growing story they created and recorded in their collective memory their own collaborative history, the norms and expectations for their work together, their patterns, their goals, and their own ways of making meaning out of their experiences. Many strands of their lives and experiences as teachers were woven together in their story line. The joint creation of their professional narrative was the basis for their friendship and their work. In other words, by jointly creating their work around a shared professional vision, they connected as persons

and partners. They became close, trusted friends and colleagues because they shared this story with each other in the context of their classroom work. It was theirs to tell and to re-tell, a process, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe as an essential element of teachers' professional knowledge growth.

Katie and Sylvia's narrative included events related to their students, their attempts at pedagogical innovation, their student teacher, the PDS, and the curriculum they taught to name a few. Woven into this narrative of their public lives were private stories from their individual lives away from school and each other -- threads from their lives as women of different generations, their fears and hopes, their joys, their grief. Tannen (1990) discusses how important such dialogue is for women. This narrative talk, serves to build rapport, to strengthen ties, to engender trust, and to explore the boundaries of their lives. Hence, their narrative served to bridge the their public and private worlds, of vital importance to sense of self and role according to Grumet (1988).

However, as Clandinin and Connelly (1995) point out, teachers, through story, can do more than build a bridge that connects their public (school) and their private (personal) lives. A narrative way of knowing about their work can also help them construct a bridge that links the two worlds of theory and practice. However, they put a different spin on *theory* and *practice*, thinking of them less as epistemological concepts and more as different kinds of worlds that teachers navigate. Having an opportunity to create their own story together, rather than creating an individual and private story of classroom life, gave them a sense of power. Their classroom story was not destined to be secret (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), but shared between them and a host of others.

The construction of their narrative, thus, is part of what propelled forward, even though the demands on their time increased from the joint planning and organization they had to do to teach, as well as the additional work because their project was part of a PDS grant, and because they were involved in leadership roles within the whole-school realm of that PDS work. As mentioned in Chapter Six and described as having a generative quality, they actually felt more energy working together than they ever did teaching alone. I believe that the enormous supply of energy each of them felt, was the audible ongoing presence of their shared text. Their collective narrative was their way to verify the importance of their shared experiences (Belenky, et. al., 1986; Tannen, 1990). It was literally the energy emulating from their shared story I could see and feel when I was with them. Their shared text was the source of their ebullience when they presented their work to various groups. Such presentations were, in reality for Katie and Sylvia, another telling of their story, a telling that allowed them to "relive the changed stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 12). To this day, one need only utter a child's name, or say the words "worms" or "we made pop", or "T.E.A.M." for them to jump somewhere into the story.

The idea that teachers can connect with each other to a collective narrative about their work -- or that through a collaboratively constructed narrative teachers can connect to each other in work -- is an important concept. The *collaborative* aspect of story creation is an essential element. As was said in the beginning of this section, teachers ways of knowing in their classrooms are storied (Carter, 1993). Thus, even teachers teaching alone have a story, or a narrative, or practical, way of knowing about their classroom. However, when thinking about the important role this narrative can play in teachers' professional development, isolation can be even more problematic.

As discussed, teacher isolation has been cited as one of the most stultifying parts of a teacher's work. "What is missing in the classroom," say Clandinin & Connelly (1995) "is a place for teachers to tell and retell their stories. The classroom can become a place of endless, repetitive, living out of stories without possibilities for awakenings and transformations" (p. 13). While citing Schon's (1987) work on the reflective practitioner and thereby acknowledging that it is possible for individuals to transform themselves through a critique of their own practice, they do, however, go on to say,

...we do think that the possibilities are limited when one is alone. Teachers need others in order to engage in conversations where stories can be told, reflected back, heard in different ways, retold, and relived in new ways in the safety and secrecy of the classroom. (p. 13)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Collins (1990) would concur. She highlights that it is through the process of telling one's personal story to another who really can hear it that one can become more aware of who she is. It makes sense that only another teacher could really listen and hear the nuances of meaning from a story told by another teacher. When that story is jointly created the audience is ever-present and in the know. Such fullness in knowing and appreciating is crucial to both personal and professional growth.

So far my analysis of the role of narrative in Katie and Sylvia's collaboration and the potential role of narrative in teachers' professional growth and development, has glorified the need for teachers to talk and to share their stories with each other almost as if that were an end in itself. Perhaps my discussion suggests a false sense of simplicity, as if teachers construct a joint narrative text about their work as teachers, they become close and presto, educational reform! Certainly, I do not mean to leave this analysis here. While the construction of their own storied ways of knowing

about their classroom was an essential point of connection for Katie and Sylvia, it was in essence a kind of vehicle for some of the other connection points discussed thus far. Were narrative connection an endpoint it would be plausible for teachers to develop an ongoing text about their working together that was primarily focused on fun, or some idiosyncratic aspect of their practice but had little or nothing to do with their ongoing learning. While Katie and Sylvia's narrative certainly included private jokes, unproductive venting or complaining, secrets, shared foibles, fables, and mistakes, it was only a narrative that served them as a vehicle for learning because of the complex ways their narrative included aspects of the other points of connection discussed. It was through the exposure of their narrative, or their storied ways of knowing about their classroom that they were able to make important connections, not only, for example with the processes and products of educational research, but with the people who were doing that research. Their ongoing narrative account of knowledge was accessible to others and expanded as they included others in it. Such personal relationships with other professionals provided a richness to their work and another way to expand out beyond the horizons of their own classroom.

Personal Relationships with Other Professionals

The narrative knowledge that Katie and Sylvia constructed during their collaboration served as a point of connection with other professionals in an expanding intricate web of overlapping relationships. Their ongoing text about the core tasks of teaching in their classroom provided the grist for and reflected the ways in which they connected with other professionals. Sometimes those connections moved from the outside in (university toward

their classroom, for example) and sometimes from the inside out (their classroom toward preservice teachers, for example).

The relationships that Katie and Sylvia had with other professionals were very important to the success of their collaboration. The personal connections they established as individuals and as a collaborative team served to link them, not just to research and subject matter, but to the people who were doing work in other realms of the educational enterprise. These personal connections enabled them to "tell and retell" their classroom stories to a wider audience. It enabled others to be part of the telling and retelling as well. As such these connections seemed to broaden their focus, their roles as teachers in a broader professional community, and how they saw the bigger picture of educational reform of which their collaboration was a part. Their connections to many individuals in the larger context of the school and university collaboration called, PDS, seemed to enable them to avoid recreating the patterns of teacher isolation so endemic in schools. In other words, two teachers teaching together as professional colleagues and personal friends, run the risk of being an isolated pair in a school of isolated teachers. While, in that scenario the two teachers might overcome a feeling of being alone and might be able to create a shared classroom space, shared ideas, shared narrative knowledge, as it were, they would not necessarily, through that sharing, be compelled to go beyond the walls of their classroom space to expand on what they know. It was the power of connection to so many other *people* that enabled Katie and Sylvia access to a broader range of ideas and ways of thinking about their work together, about their subject matter knowledge and about pedagogy.

Their connections to others took place as part of a dynamic process. They shared their narrative with other people and in so doing, enriched the

story that was their own. Through personal connections with other professionals, learning that began inside their collaboration was shared with those beyond it and learning that began outside of their classroom had a way of entering their domain. In fact, their intricate web of overlapping personal connections with other professionals was almost staggering in terms of its richness. For example, they maintained relationships with approximately eight university professors and graduate students, four other classroom teachers at the school, and one student teacher in their classroom. These personal connections were maintainable because they existed within the regular structures of their PDS work, such as through PDS Council, the whole school focus on science and literacy, teacher education links between the school and the university, a study group in which they both participated, efforts made to understand and document their collaborative work in addition to my own, to name a few. The way in which Katie and Sylvia were connected to all of these other people as well as to each other changed the nature of their work together. Yes, they were collaborating together to teach 3rd grade, but they were doing so within a context that supported their work, surrounded by people and working with people that were moving in similar strands, together pushing on the boundaries of what it means to teach, what it means to be colleagues, what it means to think about and change ones teaching.

The ways in which Katie and Sylvia were connected to other people outside of their classroom made what they were doing in their classroom more open for public scrutiny. As with the nature of professorial work, we must bring our thinking out of our offices every once and a while, and put it out there for response. Katie and Sylvia were able to partake in a similar kind

of growth, through their narrative, by sharing parts of it with others, and being part of conversations about their work with other professionals.

Not only were these relationships Katie and Sylvia maintained outside of their collaborative work important for adding breadth and depth to their conversations within their classroom work, they also call into question interesting issues relative to the format, the location, and the content of the "educational debate." As I pointed out in Chapter Two, Fenstermacher and Amarel (1983) argue that teachers ought to play important roles in the educational debates because it is they were positioned to understand the day-to-day complexities of teaching and it is they who are responsible for what goes on in classrooms. The case of Katie and Sylvia provides a different model of that educational debate.

In most educational circles the "educational debate" is a phrase that refers to the formal conversations that take place where policy is crafted and mandates are made. The educational debate is about politics, power, and influence (Berliner & Biddle, 1995) and has little to do with the personalized ways in which teachers know their classrooms. The educational debate as we know it, is grounded in abstraction, that is, it is "propositional, relational among concepts, impersonal, situation-independent, objective, nontemporal, ahistorical, and generic" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 14). Katie and Sylvia, through the ways in which they were connected to place and person, participated in a vastly different, but more authentic in terms of teachers' ways of knowing about the work of teaching, educational debate. The debate they were part of was grounded in a language of "story, which is prototypical, relational among people, personal, contextual, subjective, temporal, historical, and specific (p. 14).

They formalized this debate about pedagogy and purpose, about subject matter and about understanding by bringing experts into their classroom and by leaving their classroom to present their work in formal settings to other teachers around the state. They professionalized a narrative way of knowing and debating about what teachers ought to do in classrooms to become better teachers. They made a space for their own questions within the bounds of their work and were able to raise the level of discourse by inviting others into their sphere. Perhaps in schools, teachers already hold prominent positions in the educational debate, but, teachers, still largely ignored, are not being acknowledged or heard. Perhaps, it will be a long time before they are heard, as teachers, in their storied way, as were Katie and Sylvia, are connected to the core tasks of teaching rather than to grand issues of schooling on a large scale.

Tasks Of Teaching At The Core

I have argued that Katie and Sylvia were connected to each other, to a normative school culture that supported collaborative efforts toward educational change, to the processes and products of educational research, to opportunities to think more deeply about the connections between subject matter and pedagogy, to their own ongoing narrative about their work together, and to other professionals with whom they engaged in thinking more broadly about educational issues and concerns. Each of these points of connection describe an important element of their work and explain why theirs was a rich and successful collaboration. I have shown that they were not partnered yet isolated within a school. I have explained that they had both structured and informal opportunities with others to explore teaching practices. I described how they were able to construct their own version of their story for themselves, an important aspect of what sustained them in

their work together. Now, in this section I claim that the aspect of their work that kept them focused on the work of teaching was their connection to the core tasks of teaching. The core tasks of teaching provided the focus, the grist, and the purpose of their work. The core tasks of teaching kept them grounded in their work and served to motivate their professional development.

As discussed, the narrative way of knowing is a way of *knowing*. It is a way of understanding one's experiences in the world. But what is known about, the content of the stories that are generated is of vital importance. Indeed, without a focus there would have been nothing to know. As Hawkins (1974) says, there would be "no content for the context, no figure and no heat" (p. 52). Thus, part of what made Katie and Sylvia's work successful was the fact that they were connected to the essential elements of the work of teaching. Their classroom practice was the curriculum of their professional development activity. Their understandings of subject matter, their desires to attempt a new discussion strategy, their use of journals in math and science teaching, their attempts to weave a student teacher into the framework of a collaborative classroom that was itself, only just beginning to emerge, their analysis of lessons to determine how well students had understood and where they should go with the next lesson, etc., all formed the very heart of their work.

Through their connection to the core tasks of teaching, the narrative they constructed was about the practical aspects of their teaching, their work. Indeed, *their* curriculum, as it were, was the central task of teaching, about which they crafted their narrative and connected to other professionals.

The seven points of connection analyzed and discussed here, are the key elements that characterize Katie and Sylvia's collaborative work together

and their relationships with other professionals within their school context. I have tried to weave the particulars of their story together with my own thinking and the thinking of other scholars to reveal a complicated pattern of collaborative work. Any one of the points of connection can be identified as key to the success of collaborative working arrangements for teachers. A personal connection, for example, is important for teachers who team teach in traditional settings. What is significant about this story is the intricate ways in which these connections interact and reveal a situation that is even far more complex than stories of collaborative work that point out some of the complexities (Barth, 1990; Boostrom, Jackson, & Hansen, 1993; Holmes Group, 1990; Johnson, 1990; Navarro, 1990). What is significant about this story is how, through these seven points of connection, these teachers were able to create a potentially sustainable, supportive, collaborative context that was grounded in the realities of their own classroom and through which they could push on the boundaries of their own understandings in order to grow professionally as teachers.

Promise and Problems in Connected Collaborative Professional Development

As I have discussed throughout this work, current educational reforms argue that in order to prepare children for tomorrow we need to bring models of teaching and learning into alignment with the realities of the world we live in today. It follows that if teaching and learning in schools is to change, then the professional development of teachers must also change to reflect such innovation (Ayers, 1995; Ball & Cohen, 1995; Deal, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, 1995; Lord, 1995; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Schon, 1991). The question is how. As

I have shown, the issues related to the ways teachers might continue to learn about teaching are complex. I have argued that one important, and historically omitted voice of knowledge about these issues, is the voice of teachers.

Therefore, in order to gain that perspective I looked closely at the experiences of two teachers who explored what it might mean to learn from each other by teaching together. What I found was more complexity. This time it was in the form of an intricate maze of interdependent connections that served to enable two teachers to do some interesting professional development work on their own terms. Given what I have revealed and the sense that I have made of their story thus far, it might seem a reasonable conclusion to applaud these two for their efforts, and to draw a set of celebratory conclusions about the potential and promise of collaborative teacher learning. However, such is not the case. While I certainly do commend these two particular teachers for their courage and their accomplishments, I must move away from a discussion of the particulars of their experience, in order to examine what their work might mean for the professional development of teachers more generally. When I look past their lives to make suppositions about the lives of other teachers in other schools, I see several important paradoxical issues that warrant further consideration by those who are concerned with the professional development of teachers.

Is Collaboration Connection A Viable Model For The Ongoing Professional Development of Teachers?

It is interesting to consider whether it would be possible to reproduce what Katie and Sylvia did in their classroom as a model for the ongoing professional development of elementary teachers elsewhere. Should the

attainment of such a model be a goal? Furthermore, were it possible to recreate similar circumstances, would it even be desirable? While an interesting image with which to ponder new possibilities for the professional development of teachers, as a model, its attainment, generally speaking, is highly improbable. As a model, this maze of collaborative connections is too dependent upon local details and happenstance to recreate elsewhere.

For example, their exercise in collaborative professional development was successful -- in other words they seem to have learned the kinds of things that enabled them to improve their practice in ways that are consistent with the reform they were connected to -- because they were enabled and supported by each other and a noteworthy set of people who helped connect them to) a particular interpretation of the PDS reform of which they were a part, b) the assemblage of resources that enabled the purchase of particular kinds of support, c) subject matter learning, d) innovative practices of professional inquiry, e) professional knowledge, etc. Therefore, what was possible for Katie and Sylvia would not necessarily be possible for other teachers in ordinary schools.

Ordinary and extraordinary. However, their experiences do call into question what might count as ordinary or extraordinary in schools, in teachers, and in teaching. Playing a bit with these descriptors that are often used to make distinctions between practice that is desired and that which is not, is an interesting way to imagine what change might look like. For example, certainly the complex ways that Katie and Sylvia's lives were connected to each other, to other professionals, to national and state-wide reform, to the preservice education of teachers, to subject matter knowledge, to innovative pedagogy, etc., illustrate an extraordinary phenomenon. However, I argue that these were regular teachers who simply took advantage

of an extraordinary set of circumstances. I claim that the power of their story lies within the way in which they took a simple idea, turned it into something extraordinary, and in so doing, made it part of their ordinary work. This phenomenon begs a closer look.

How is it that teacher educators can help ordinary teachers do extraordinary things that eventually become common place? This is important to consider. The nature of the changes teachers are called upon to make today require ordinary people to realize extraordinary possibilities and to convert the extraordinary into the rule. In other words, how do we all work toward changing our conceptions of what is expected of teachers such that what is exceptional by today's standards becomes the norm by tomorrow's measures. At Spartan Village, regular teachers were part of an extraordinary confluence of people, resources, timing, individual and group effort, ideas, and will that enabled them to consider new ways of thinking about their roles and the range of their responsibilities as teachers, as well as their relationships with other teachers. How can ordinary teachers in other places have access to such situations?

Serendipity and intent. It is also interesting to note that much of what Katie and Sylvia experienced was the result of happenstance. They were swept into a rushing confluence of possibility that moved them into a current of change. When thinking about the amazing web of coincidence and connection it seems unlikely that such a model could ever be repeated. Yet, there is a paradox, too, of how luck, as it were, was enhanced by intentionality and purpose. In other words, they were able to seize opportunities for their growth that might not have been taken by other teachers in other situations or circumstances. Perhaps this is a disposition which we should help teachers acquire as part of their growth. Can teacher educators "teach" teachers to take

advantage of opportunity? It does not seem a likely part of the curriculum. Even while pondering individual characteristics, we should not underestimate the power of the reform context in the school and its role in the teachers' lives.

Putting aside what I have just argued about the improbability of being able to use the experiences of Katie and Sylvia as a model of professional development for other teachers in other schools, it is still important to ask whether, were it possible, would this model even be desirable?

Problems of Power and Pluralism in Connected Collaborative Development

An essential element in Katie and Sylvia's work was the degree to which they had control over their own experiment in learning. They set their own goals. They generated their own questions and designed their own structures in which to work. It was their project. However, right away this raises interesting problems. While models of teacher development that begin with teachers' questions, are a potentially powerful method for teachers (Ayers, 1995; Bullough & Gitlin, 1995), they are also potentially problematic. It is a sign of the times to honor teachers' as knowers in their own right (Elbaz, 1983). However, Buchmann (1993b) reminds us that there are two "camps." While some researchers "recoil from much of what goes on in teachers' minds, because teacher thinking seems rarely transformative, being instead conservative, idiosyncratic, oriented toward the present, and narrowly practical, other researchers attach themselves to teachers' thoughts, even calling them theories, just because those thoughts are personal and grown in 'their own gardens'" (p. 175). If, as suggested from Katie and Sylvia's experiences, there is power in examining one's own practice by engaging in a critical examination of the artifacts of that practice, then professional

development could become, to some, a wide-open affair with few quality controls. While to others, teachers, as change agents whose thinking is honored “just because it is what it is” (p. 176), would be in their rightful seat, controlling their own destinies by overcoming their oppression as peddlers of patriarchy (Grumet, 1988). In more practical terms, while the artifacts of one person’s practice might be a stack of mind-numbing work sheets, examined through a “critical” lens that does not find them problematic, the artifacts of another teacher’s practice might be the results of innovate jaunts into inquiry learning.

In her work, Casey (1988) raises a related issue that ought be considered in this context as well. She argues for the need for teacher educators to honor the plurality of our society by honoring the diversity of those who enter teaching. “In greater or lesser degrees of clarity,” she states, “those who enter teacher education programs do have world views grounded in their previous experiences (p. 224). If this is true, which of course it is, then there is no assurance that teachers, when grounding their own professional development in their own questions, will ask questions that, if they can answer then, will move them closer to the deeper understandings of knowledge and pedagogy called for in the reforms. Much would be left to happenstance.

These issues point to two fundamental contradictions in American education. One is the paradox between finding ways to equitably honor the individual in a multicultural society, while also honoring of schools as a place to even out the playing field, as it were, in a meritocratic society that is still fundamentally grounded in hegemony. The other, is the location of power and control in education over such things as curriculum, pedagogy, standards, accountability, and, in general, teachers’ lives.

Reaching Beyond The Boundaries

I have constructed an argument that urges those involved with professional development to pay closer attention to the ways in which teachers are connected to each other, to the profession, and to the work of teaching itself, and how those connections shape their opportunities to learn. Certainly, the ways in which Katie and Sylvia experienced their involvement in educational reform in the context of a professional development school shows that there could be promise in looking toward models of teacher learning in which teachers have opportunities to engage in the collaborative examination of their shared teaching as a routine part of their everyday lives in schools. In this way ongoing professional development would not have to be the decontextualized add-on activity for which teachers claim they have no time (Eisner, 1992). Rather, were these two teachers' experiences replicable and sustainable what they did could become an ordinary part of the work of teaching for other teachers?

Knowing about these points of connection makes a difference when thinking about both inservice and preservice teacher education at broad policy levels and at the classroom level as well. In broad terms, there are implications for thinking about the structural and organizational aspects of schooling, the best allocation of resources set aside for professional growth and development, the restructuring of roles currently played by teachers, administrators, and university faculty, in the professional development of teachers and of themselves, the relationships between teacher development and research on teaching, the interactions between educational professionals from all aspects of the business of education.

Indeed, knowing about the complexities of collaboration and the interaction between collaborative relationships and professional development raises issues of restructuring the roles that academics and teachers play in terms of knowledge creation and dissemination. Teacher educators may have to move out of universities and district offices to where teachers are located and work more often shoulder to shoulder with teachers on problems of practice.

One very important thing we can learn from Katie and Sylvia's experiences with educational change in the context of educational reform, is that dynamic opportunities for professional growth and change exist within the complexities of daily life within the classroom. However, for teachers to use classroom experiences as opportunities for learning, they must reach beyond the boundaries that isolate them from each other, from professional knowledge, from themselves, and from their students' lives in order to create new structures of dailiness that include working together toward educational innovation. As Katie and Sylvia did, they may need to do so by grounding their work in a "language of story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 14).

While their classroom was the site of their professional development activity, the narrative knowledge about teaching and learning and the more disconnected propositional knowledge about teaching and learning, became one and the same. Their professional knowledge was contextualized and the knowledge that was being generated in their classrooms by those at the university was also contextualized. Indeed, this dissertation has tried to bridge those two distinctly different aspects of the "professional knowledge landscapes." It has presented a story, a narrative version of professional development, in which the grit, the meat, as it were, is enmeshed within the

stories of people and place, of time and space that constituted the personal and professional relationships between professionals in that classroom.

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