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Storytelling & Ritual in a Suburban Elementary School
Creating a Ritual Space to Build Community, & Compassion

presented by
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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PhD degree in Anthropology

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**A COMMUNITY OF HEROES:
CREATING A RITUAL SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY & COMPASSION
IN A SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

VOLUME I

By

Penelope Lynn Owen

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract

A COMMUNITY OF HEROES: CREATING A RITUAL SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY & COMPASSION IN A SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By

Penelope Lynn Owen

This dissertation explores a possible use of anthropology publicly. It: 1] uses anthropological theory and research creatively to reframe and hopefully resolve problems in American education; 2] performs ethnography; 3] encourages elementary students to use field research methods in a hypothetical world; and 4] frames questions about history, conflict, and social change anthropologically.

This research examines whether ritual and storytelling can be adapted into a cohesive pedagogy within elementary social studies and language arts curricula in such a way that it builds students' self-esteem, creates a sense of community, and makes curricula more meaningful. Using John Dewey's assumption that students should be educated to participate in the democratic process as its goal, *A Community of Heroes* employs Bloom's Taxonomy, Gardner's research on multiple intelligences, Victor Turner's and Roy Rappaport's theories on ritual structure and function, and Michael Lambek's and Jerome Bruner's work on the construction of meaning as elements for its research design. The research: 1] critiques and examines the applicability of ritual theory on the socialization of elementary-aged students; 2] constructs and applies a pedagogy using ritual and

myth in language arts and social studies curricula in a Midwestern elementary school; and 3] explores the dialectic between ritual and myth in the formulation of meaning of curricula by students while investigating: 1] the world as perceived by elementary-aged students, and 2] how the ritual process impacts their perceptions of their world, their relations with peers, parents and teachers, and their construction of meaning.

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DEDICATION

You are a marvel.
Each second we live is a new and unique moment of
The universe, a moment that will never be again ...
And what do we teach our children?

We teach them two and two make four, and that Paris is
the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are?
We should say to them:

Do you know what you are? You are a marvel.
You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been
Another child like you. Your legs, your arms
Your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven.
You have the capacity for anything.
Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who
is, like you, a marvel?

You must work – we must all work – to make the world
worthy of its children.

Pablo Casals (1876-1973)

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And mostly, I thank all the heroes with whom I worked who believed in me unflinchingly and with an intensity that equaled my belief in them.

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PREFACE

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Since a great deal of this dissertation is based on the oral storytelling and writing of the students with which I worked, I created the following symbols to differentiation between their words and mine:

<i>single-spaced italics</i>	my words based on my field notes
single-spaced bold	ideas as recorded by an adult (either a teacher or myself)
<i>single-spaced bold italics</i>	all words and ideas written by students, parents, or seniors

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The exercises used in the basic training portion of *Community of Heroes* came from a variety of sources on acting training. Viola Spolin's THEATER GAMES FOR THE CLASSROOM: A TEACHER'S MANUAL, edited by Arthur Morey and Mary Ann Brandt, (1986) and Virginia Glasgow Koste's DRAMATIC PLAY IN CHILDHOOD: REHEARSAL FOR LIFE were critical sources for the exercises and ideas. Ordinary children's games and a variety of language exercises that I either learned in acting classes or combined into theater exercises myself during my tenure teaching acting at Lansing Community College were also sources for the exercises.

Because this research is about contemporary American culture, I have cited many references from popular culture including television news media, television documentaries, videos, and films. Because it is based on the idea of public anthropology, I have attempted to write it in language accessible to the public.

Chapter One:
Roots, Branches, and the Possibility of New Blooms

Introduction

In 1986, George Marcus and Michael Fischer argued that since the 1960's anthropology had been engaging in 'experimental ethnography'. This argument revived the commitment on the part of anthropologists to use their research of other cultures as a tool with which to examine the unconscious cultural choices made in their own cultures. They referred to anthropology as 'cultural critique'. Thirteen years later, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, in her Presidential Address to the American Anthropological Convention, suggested that anthropology could be used as more than criticism. Discussion of what 'public' might mean ranged from a discourse that was more publicly accessible, i.e., less dependent on academic jargon, to a commitment to making anthropology more active in solving society's problems.

In the May 2000 *Anthropology News*, Robert Borofsky proposed that one of the goals of public anthropology would be to: "address broad critical concerns in ways that others beyond the discipline are able to understand what anthropologists can offer to the reframing and easing - if not always resolving - of present day dilemmas." (Pg. 9) He also claimed that public anthropology "goes beyond today's self-imposed disciplinary boundaries. The focus is on conversations with broad audiences about broad concerns."(Pg. 9)

Since 1999, graduate students led by the leaders of the National Association of Student Anthropologists, have used the Internet to engage in a discussion of activism in the field of anthropology. *Public Anthropology: The Graduate Journal*, an on-line publication was founded in 2001. According to Eric Haanstad, the journal's first editor, it would be written and edited by students who:

seek to explore the possibilities of anthropological work that is increasingly engaged with the public. Our preliminary mission is to provide a forum for students to discuss the risks and benefits of anthropology that is accessible to public audiences as well as past or current projects and publications that seek public accessibility. (Cited from email, Eric Haanstad, 4/4/2000)

I was captivated by Haanstad's vision, because this was the reason I had returned to school. By creating a research project that engaged anthropological theory more actively in an attempt to resolve a contemporary problem of concern to the public interest, I hoped to be a part of this new vision of anthropology.

A Community of Heroes was designed to investigate ways to create a more public use of anthropology and anthropology was used in four different ways in the research. The experiment: 1] used traditional ritual structures; 2] allowed students to perform ethnography; 3] guided students in the use of anthropological research tools to investigate their world; and, most significantly, 4] used anthropological theory as the conceptual base for its model.

A Community of Heroes was an effort to synthesize ritual research and theory and apply it to concerns of American education at the elementary level. Current framing of the problem of academic success in America's schools centers on the individual student and on her or his individual intellectual achievement. This

research came at the problem of elementary education from a different perspective: the project's goal was to build a sense of community in the classroom that would increase students' desire to learn, and improve group and individual self-worth. Using John Dewey's (1916) and Paulo Freire's (see Gadotti, 1994) assumption that students should be educated to participate in the democratic process as its goal, *A Community of Heroes* employed Roy Rappaport's (1999) and Victor Turner's (1969, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1988) theories on ritual structure, function and process, Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy Of Educational Objectives* (1956, 1964), Howard Gardner's research on multiple intelligences (1983, 1989), and Michael Lambek's (1993) and Jerome Bruner's (1983, 1990, 1996) work on the construction of meaning through narrative as elements for its research design. The research: 1] critiqued and examined the applicability of ritual theory on the socialization of elementary-aged students; 2] constructed and applied a pedagogy using ritual and myth in language arts and social studies curricula in a suburban Midwestern elementary school; and 3] explored the dialectic between ritual and myth in the formulation of the student's sense of the meaning of the curricula.

Based on the structural framework of rites of passage in traditional cultures, this pedagogy had two major elements: ritual and storytelling. A liminal space was created for third, fourth, and fifth grades classes, in which students lived in a subjunctive world. Here they created heroic characters who explored possibilities for a better world by encountering the history, economics, and government of

their community, state, or country and then created their own community based on what they had learned. After each experience in the liminal world, students would write the stories of their experiences. The stories were collected into books and became a part of the history of their imagined community.

The research began in 1999 at a time when politicians across the State where the research was conducted and across the nation chose education as the battlefield upon which they would fight for political power. Politicians claimed that American students were falling behind their European counterparts. In the State's largest school system, the governor of the State was threatening to take control away from the local school board. Failing schools, vouchers, schools of choice, returning to teaching basics, standardized testing, suspension of recess, teachers' salaries, the tenure system, and inflated educational bureaucracies had all become issues of political debate around the State in the 2000 elections.

Perhaps more significant was the increasing fear of violence in public schools. In April, 1999, two teenagers attacked their classmates in a high school in Colorado. In Michigan, in November, a six-year old brought a gun to school to shot his classmate. Education was in the headlines regularly. Classroom control had become the focus of teachers' evaluations rather than student motivation. To choose to explore the ways that anthropology could serve education and to find a way into the public school system, I needed to investigate the culture of education in the District, the State, and the nation.

Part One: The Weary and Wary Teacher

Creating a new pedagogy based on anthropological theory would be difficult because elementary teachers are weary and wary of new gimmicks. Bob, a senior faculty member at the intermediate school, hates all the new 'stuff'. He says that when he was going through school it was 'Bloom's Taxonomy'¹ and cooperative learning. Then the focus shifted to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences², now it's ITI.³ For Bob, the list of new 'gimmicks' suggested by administrators is endless and frustrating because there is no 'right' answer and everything is replaced sooner or later by a new theory rather than choosing to commit to one idea and follow it. Bob is tired of feeling manipulated and undervalued. In

Teaching In America: The Slow Revolution (1999), Grant and Murray claim:

American teachers spend much more time in front of the class, but, compared with teachers in England or Japan, much less time in study, preparation of lessons, responding to a student who drops in with a problem, or collaborating with their colleagues. More instructional time does not necessarily translate into more effective teaching. Rather, it reflects the factory model of schooling, with teachers seen as at work only after they have punched the time card and are working at the production line. (Pg. 25)

I have worked a variety of jobs, and nothing has exhausted me more than public school teaching. It takes energy, concentration, alertness, and a certain charisma to be a good teacher to twenty-four young students. Teachers in the District are weary.

¹ Viewed by teachers as a hierarchy of cognitive processes. See Bloom, 1956.

² Viewed by teachers as different learning styles, See Gardner, 1983.

³ Integrated Thematic Instruction is an interdisciplinary approach to education, See Kovalik, 1997.

They are tired; teaching is exhilarating, but it is also exhausting and financially unsatisfying. On October 2, 2000 the cover of *Newsweek* asked the question: Who will teach our kids? The article claimed that by 2010 half of all teachers currently teaching will quit or retire. The *Newsweek* article also claimed that newly certified teachers are likely to quit the profession within the first five years of teaching. In a graph in the article (Kantrowitz & Wingert Pg. 40-41), the writers claim that during the economic boom of the 1990s teaching salaries increased less than any field, by 11% while business administration salaries increased by 30%. Teachers with Masters degrees, [and according to Grant and Murray 56% hold advanced degrees (1999, Pg. 13)] earn an average of \$25,000 less than professionals in other fields with equivalent degrees. After a teacher reaches forty years old, s/he will earn less than half the salary of her professional counterpart in other fields. In the State, teachers' salaries are above the national average, but the teacher-student ratio is also higher than the national average. Internationally, as reported by *The New York Times*, teachers in the United States earn less relative to the national average income compared with other member nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Total government spending on educational institutions in the United States slipped to 4.8 percent of gross domestic product in 1998, falling under the international average — 5 percent — for the first time... Because teachers in the United States have a heavier classroom load — teaching almost a third more hours than their counterparts abroad — their salary per hour of actual teaching is \$35, less than the international average of \$41 (Denmark, Spain and Germany pay more than \$50 per teaching hour, South Korea \$77).”(Wilgoren, 2001)

Based on the lack of financial motivation, there is little to motivate teachers to plunge into a new pedagogy. Besides, a majority of the teachers in the District are close to retirement age. A new pedagogy that is improvisational in its format, and possibly joyous, may be overwhelming to teachers who are ready to quit or retire and who are wary of claims of 'joyousness'.

Teachers are wary. In the State, they have become scapegoats for all the problems that confront American education. Finding teachers who would participate in '*Storyteller*'⁴ meant finding people who would not only be willing to take the risk of changing their pedagogy, but finding people who would probably do it without financial compensation.

The teachers in the District do not feel they have control of the curricula or the pedagogy with which they teach that curricula. The District's management reflects American schools as described by Grant and Murray (1999), i.e., an organization dominated by an administrative elite that is mostly male and in which teachers, who are mostly female, have little voice in the direction of their profession. In a survey of American teachers, Grant and Murray claim that "When asked what most hindered their work, "incompetent and uncooperative administrators" was the top choice checked in 1991" and "54% ...say they are "told in detail what to teach at given times and what material must be covered." (Pg. 15) Teachers are given orders and have learned to wait passively for instructions from above. Educational management mirrors industrial

⁴ The nickname the students gave the project

management in the State which is heavily industrialized. Teachers are 'line workers', not professionals.

But, unlike factory workers who work together throughout the day, teachers are often sequestered from each other. The life of a teacher in the District is isolated. Teachers spend approximately a half-hour of their workday with peers in the elementary building and, although teachers work as teams in the intermediate building, they trade classes rather than work together in the same classroom, i.e., one teaches language arts and social studies; the other, mathematics and science.

Also, classroom 'management', which appears to be defined as 'control' and which reflects a factory system, is a major concern of administrators and a major element in teacher evaluations. Creating a ritual world would be threatening to teachers' evaluations about classroom management because it defies the normal definition of control, i.e. the teacher creates the structure and lets the students *play* inside it managing themselves. The idea was risky.

The curricula that teachers must instill in their students are overwhelmingly broad in the District and in public schools across the country. Again Grant and Murray (1999) comment:

A faith in mass production and batch processing combined with programmed instruction has chopped the U.S. curriculum into too many bits and pieces. "Our curricula, textbooks, and teaching all are a mile wide and an inch deep," a Michigan State University study concluded." (Pg. 25)

This idea is supported by the District teachers who complain about the amount of facts they are required to teach at the elementary level and the abstractness of

those facts. The State has a book of required curricula for safety and health instruction in the public schools; the fourth grade State model book is three inches thick and includes a variety of safety and health issues. For example, after passing legislation that approved gambling, the State legislators discovered that its citizens were becoming 'addicted' to it, so they enacted a law that required schools to instruct children against the addictive nature of gambling. With the amount of required curricular subjects teachers are expected to teach, they become disconcerted by a new pedagogy that puts the control for the acquisition of facts into the hands of the students.

The ritual space also required a different kind of work for a teacher. The teacher must know the subject matter thoroughly and must be willing to let the students explore facts to solve problems. Although I had prepared objectives for each day's lesson, the students controlled the direction of the learning within their world. Objectives were based on learning skills rather than on learning facts. For teachers who are expected to prepare students for testing, this approach is threatening.

I needed support from the teachers. Bob, the intermediate school teacher who allowed me into his classroom for two years, had been my acting student and would be my guide through the maze of District politics while developing the experiment. During the pilot year, Bob suggested that we hold in-services to spark teacher interest. Bob and I conducted an in-service early that year. Twelve teachers came from the intermediate school almost all of whom were willing to experiment with the idea in their classrooms. We were never able to schedule an

in-service in the pilot elementary school, but one teacher became a spokesperson for the concept and Mr. Spring, the elementary principal, spoke with every third and fourth grade teacher personally. During the pilot year, we conducted a series of workshops with six elementary classes and eight intermediate classes.

Even though the teachers felt underpaid, under-appreciated, and under the control of 'factory managers', we did get more than enough teachers to sponsor the large experiment in their classrooms during the second year. Bob's observation seemed accurate when he said, "teachers are control freaks. ... They are turf freaks. The classroom is mine. I close the door and together the students and I create a world." From what I observed every teacher created a different world in their classroom based on different personal values. They enjoyed the experience of expressing their individual creativity. My observations also corroborated Grant and Murray's (1999) conclusion that:

Teachers of both genders choose teaching for the intrinsic satisfaction and joy of the work. They feel whole and connected and engaged in meaningful work in a way that many in modern society do not. (Pg. 11)

The three teachers that chose to experiment in the ritual space were each unique and creative individuals. Bob has a will of iron and knows exactly what his goals and values are both about education and about his life. He chose to participate because he wanted to prove that cooperative and active learning are the most effective strategies for learning. Michael was searching. A fourth year teacher, the only thing he was confident about is his love of teaching. He is

determined to become a master teacher someday. Liz, like Bob, is a fighter, but believes that within a classroom, it is possible to teach to each child's needs and skills. Each believed and supported the program, but, by the end of the third year, Liz had transferred to a different district, Bob was promoting his own program, and only Michael remained in the District to become the spokesperson for *Storyteller*. But his voice would be muffled by louder voices: the voices of the District's administrators.

Part Two: Politics in the District's Administration

One of the senior citizens that participated in the project believed that "*One does not need a special grant to organize such learning projects, just desire, time and effort*". But getting approval for a project that involved dramatic activities and imaginary play as the core of the pedagogy was much more difficult than this senior realized, because individual teachers did not have the power to create and implement their own pedagogy. I needed both the support of the District's administration and the support of the teachers.

The staff lunchroom in the elementary school is a place where philosophical conversations about education abound. All the teachers feel comfortable expressing their opinions; everyone is heard; and discussion always feels like analysis rather than gossip. Unlike other schools I have worked in, this is not a dark, angry, cliquish place, but rather it is a place where teachers share their concerns for their students even if they approach those concerns differently. The principal, Mr. Spring, says that to avoid cliques, he very consciously, one day,

put all the tables together in the teacher's lounge, so that there was one long table. People sit down together and conversations 'happen.'

A major concern during lunchroom conversations is the District's top-heavy bureaucracy. There are, according to most staff, far too many administrators in the District. The teachers know their job descriptions, but don't know administrators' jobs; administrators know what teachers are supposed to be doing, but no one seems to know what several administrators' job descriptions are or how they fit in the grand scheme of education. The teachers also accuse administrators of promoting particular pedagogies or book series in which they are personally invested.

According to the teachers in the lunch room, the administrators don't come into the classrooms except to occasionally evaluate the teachers; they don't help resolve the real problems that teachers experience; they avoid confronting real problems, while spending money on conferences and speakers that are 'all flash and no substance'. The teachers rarely meet the administrators' attempts to bring new ideas into the District with delight. They feel one of the problems is that administrators bring in many new ideas but they don't follow through on teaching a method so that teachers can employ the new strategies. There is a significant breach between the faculty and the administration.

But the administrators are responsible to the public and represent the decisions made in the schools to the public. Public school administrators are expected to resolve the conflicts in American values. DeTocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1831/1956), an early cultural analysis of the United

States, is a story of a culture in conflict: a culture that espouses democracy while cherishing authoritarianism; that wants equality, but defends and protects social classes; that hates tyranny but allows the tyranny of the majority. In their attempts to resolve this ideological conflict, the framers of the Constitution compromised instead. That compromise produced friction in our national values between authoritarianism and democracy, between equality and deeply stratified social classes, between individual rights and the 'tyranny' of the group, and between idealism and materialism.

Education in America reflects that conflict. The irony in America's public education is that it preaches a concern for community, espouses democracy, while at the same time, separating according to age and intelligence, practicing authoritarian management styles, and rewarding individual rather than community accomplishment. Administrators have to walk a fine line between these values with a public that demands both.

In 1837, Boston established the first public school system. The reason for the creation of public schools, described by Katz (1975) in the Boston schools, was to prepare the citizenry to participate in a democracy. When immigrants with a variety of languages came to the United States, individual city governments felt a need to teach a common language if these people were to participate in government. In 1840 Boston established a school board elected by the people to represent the needs of the community in public education, but that same year the city created a superintendent of schools. The bureaucratization of the superintendent's office effectively counteracted the power of the school board

(Katz, 1975) and established an authoritarian approach to education.

Administrators took control away from the elected boards by being the only voice to which the elected Board listened. But in the middle 1800s the public school superintendents were still guided by the idea that they were training a citizenry to participate in government.

Education in America changed during the Industrial Revolution when America saw itself competing economically with European nations. Education's focus shifted from developing an educated citizenry to creating future factory workers. Material success became the primary goal of education. The only knowledge that needed to be taught to students was knowledge that would expand the American economy, i.e. knowledge to earn a living and support corporate America. The goal of public school administrators became convincing the electorate that education was predominantly job training (See Noble, 1977).

Training people to work in factory is fundamentally authoritarian. In *A Dream Deferred*, (1991) Philip Slater sees America's public education as continuing to exhort democracy, but practicing authoritarianism. Slater believes one can differentiate between a democratic and authoritarian system through an examination of their goals, both implicit and explicit:

In democracy, the fundamental goal of education is development. For authoritarians it is obedience. What authoritarians want children to learn is their 'place' in society...Society is a series of slots and education a process of molding people to fit into those slots. (Pg. 73)

Educational institutions rarely state that they are authoritarian or that their goal is to create obedient workers. The argument is subtle. Educators explain that their

goals are to train young people for their future. This training however centers only on their *economic* future.

To incorporate a pedagogy based on anthropological research into the schools I would need the support of the District's administrators and the Board of Trustees. There were three administrators and one staff member who believed that this approach to teaching would serve the students. One was the deputy superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Jim had been active in Community Theater all his life, so he loved the idea of storytelling and theater and promoted this idea to the teachers in the District. The other system-wide administrator who was an active participant in the project was the head of Strategic Planning and Service to Community Learning. Elizabeth was committed to the children and to the concept of education and community service. Where Jim is an intellectual gadfly who loves playing with new ideas, Elizabeth is a perfectionist who will not commit to a new idea until she has thoroughly familiarized herself with the concept and has communicated it to a group of administrators and teachers who give her feedback about it. Elizabeth was our protector; her awareness of 'touching base with other administrators' kept the program safe during its existence. Mr. Spring, previously mentioned, is a close friend of both Jim and Elizabeth. The principal of the elementary school, Mr. Spring is full of youthful energy. Although he never seems completely in control of his domain, the school he leads is filled with his energy, his love of life, and his respect for the students and teachers he administers. Liz, the third grade teacher, often complained that Mr. Spring did not make firm decisions and let teachers 'get away with

inappropriate behavior', but his ability to allow freedom within the school appeared to create an atmosphere of trust among teachers and students.

All three administrators started teaching during the 1960s in an educational environment that stressed the development of the student, creative teaching methodologies, and strategies based on psychological research on motivation. All three administrators have worked in the District for almost thirty years and have come to trust and respect each other's opinions. All of them became eligible to retire during my tenure in the District. Elizabeth chose to retire at the end of the 1999-2000 school year; Mr. Spring retired after the 2000-2001 academic year; and Jim, who has worked diligently to move up the administrative ladder, hoped to become superintendent. When the current superintendent, who had been there for less than ten years, resigned to take a position in another district, Jim was asked to be the interim superintendent and will not be allowed to apply for the permanent position.

Last, and probably most important to the process, was Sancho who was Jim's secretary. Upper level administrators are all white men who are supported, both in middle management and in secretarial staff, by women. Sancho, who does not have a college degree, is the divorced mother of a sixteen year-old daughter. She knows everything about the District, can find any report, any document, and can solve any bureaucratic problem. Sancho believed in the project and volunteered her time to help work through administrative red tape. All of her work was in addition to her job and she often stayed after work to help me create the books for the project.

To gain acceptance with the District administrators and the Board, Jim asked that I write a proposal based on the District's mission statement, objectives, beliefs and strategies. The vocabulary of education in the District was: cooperation, community, tolerance and acceptance of diversity, which appeared to be as important to the administrators as improved verbal and written skills. In a brochure that the District gives to new parents who enroll their children in the schools, there were four objectives listed that were based on competency, skills training, personal goal setting and community building:

OBJECTIVE #1: By the year 2000, no less than 95% of those who graduate from [the District's] High School will meet the State standards in four core curriculum areas and receive State endorsement on their diploma.

OBJECTIVE #2: By the year 2000, each of our students will demonstrate the ability to think, problem solve, communicate and apply social skills and technological skills as measured by standards set at the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th grade benchmarks.

OBJECTIVES #3: Each student will achieve personally challenging educational goals tailored to her or his talents, abilities, and/or aspirations.

OBJECTIVE #4: Each student will contribute actively to others in her or his school and/or community

A Community of Heroes applied to all four objectives. Students worked together in dramatic improvisations; they were asked to solve problems, to debate between themselves, and to write stories based on their experience, and to make use of computers for the final drafts of the stories. Since the third objective implied that students would have some say in their own education, i.e., that the student would decide what was personally rewarding for them to learn, the hero's journey component helped students discover their personal goals and also helped them conquer blocks to achieving those goals. An increased awareness of

themselves, intellectually, physically, and emotionally, also helped students set personal goals. Basic theater activities are cooperative in nature and fulfilled the fourth objective that centered on cooperative skills and community building. The ritual experience was a democratic process that demanded that students contribute creatively to their community.

In the brochure there was also a belief statement. There were four components of that statement which included individual worth, high achievement, individual freedom and responsibility. The District's belief statement read as follows:

Every individual has intrinsic worth. Higher expectations powerfully impact achievement. Attitude, effort, and self-esteem are crucial contributors to personal success. Freedom can only be sustained when balanced by responsible actions. We are each responsible for our own choices and actions.

Again, the project supported the beliefs of the District. It increased the self-esteem of each student by helping her/him see herself/himself as a heroic individual and as problem solver. Creative play allowed students freedom of choice and imagination, but the creative play was contained in a framework that asked students to make choices that demonstrated responsibility to themselves and to others. Through their experience of their subjunctive world, students saw the relationship between their choices, their actions, and the results of those actions; they accepted responsibility for the actions of the characters they played.

The project was successful beyond any of our expectations. Students loved it and found school a pleasure because of it. Attendance went up; discipline

problems went down. An outside evaluator appraised a random sample of written papers. The results of which showed that writing improved substantially in all grades. Oral skills improved in all grades. But, by the third year, when we proposed to go into the other three elementary schools, none of the other principals promoted the program to their teachers. If the project supported the mission, goals, and beliefs of the District, was supported by students, parents, and teachers involved in it, the question was: why was the program abandoned?

Sancho's answer was short and to the point: Jim, Elizabeth and I had not gone through the proper channels; we hadn't greased the administrative wheels; we hadn't spoken to *all* the appropriate administrators. We hadn't played the politics well. Sancho felt that Jim had wanted the project so much that he had manipulated the system to get it and even though I had written explanations and justifications for the project, it hadn't been approved publicly by the Board of Trustees.

The money to fund the project was also a factor: '*Storyteller*' was not funded entirely through the District's budgeting process, but rather was 'soft' money. Elizabeth and Jim had some reserve money in their budgets, but it had not been enough to cover the entire program. I wrote several grants to fund the project and when the grants were accepted by outside agencies, the District was compelled to sponsor it. Outside funding pleased the top administration and the Board at the time, but, even though the project was very inexpensive, they did not want to spend the money to fund it completely themselves.

The most significant lack of support came from the middle managers in the administration, a group of specialists that created and evaluated the District's curricula. Since the project would only succeed if the students learned what the District expected, Jim had told me that I needed to learn the District's character clusters, language arts, science, and social studies curricula to incorporate them into the ritual format. I also had to use the books these specialists had chosen, had to follow the objectives they had approved, and had to use their evaluation procedures. Although I did all of that, I did not include these administrators in the early planning of the project and they felt 'out of the loop'. I relied on Elizabeth's knowledge of the entire curricula and didn't realize that she 'was not in charge' of that kind of decision-making. Their hostility to 'Jim's project' was expressed in a lack of support and interest in the project after it began. Although invited to visit classrooms where the experiment was being conducted, none of these middle managers, or the principals from other schools in the District, ever attended any class during the three years of the project. By the end of the project, their lack of support was palpable and damaging, but these were not only people with petty concerns. Their lack of support was also based on larger issues, on voices they were hearing that were louder than any voice in the District itself.

Part Three: The State's Politicians Invade the Schools

The voices being heard, according to Michael, the fourth grade teacher, were those of politicians in the State who were proposing fancy buildings and technology rather than good teachers and good educational strategies: "Money is being spent on 'things' rather than on 'people'." The Information Age has

created a plethora of new goals, objectives, and strategies in public school education; the technological new frontier is transforming the educational landscape. Besides the enormous variety of techniques and strategies for effective teaching that administrators and staff must sift through to create meaningful curricula, the District's administrators faced increasing demands for the 'newest' technology and funding for renovations that allow that technology to take place within the schools. The District boasted that every building had a library and a computer center, but much of the equipment was outdated, so administrators felt a need to spend money on 'things'.

Public school education has become a concern of State politicians rather than individual communities. The State's executive branch has argued that charter schools and **Schools of Choice** put pressure on the public schools to improve, so the State's lawmakers enacted legislation in support of these measures.⁵ "Schools of Choice" in the State pressure school districts to construct new buildings so that they can 'sell' their district to parents in other districts. The wealthiest suburb in the area recently built a \$44 million high school. Other districts have proposed bond issues to compete with the building in that district. The latest proposal from a local district, which asked its property owners for \$67 million in new taxes to tear down its old high school, build a new one, and renovate the middle school, was defeated. Living in a district with a good school system helps assure landowners that their property values will stay stable or

⁵ The State's teacher's unions argue that this legislation is an effort to break their union which is the strongest backer of the Democratic Party in the State and in the nation.

increase. The administrators in the District know they have to compete with other suburban schools, so during the years of the experiment, they planned and executed a school bond election. The bond issue passed in the District, but millages that support teachers' salaries were defeated in many neighboring districts and the District has a serious budget deficit for the coming year.

Charter schools are all over the news, talk radio, and advertising in the District. The District competes with charter schools that have billboards on the main road of the District promoting schools that offer parents free computers if they enroll their children or that promise to make their eight-year old more 'marketable.' The District now has a line item in their budget for marketing and has assigned several administrators the task of 'marketing' the schools. Bob, like Michael, believes money is being taken away from classrooms and teachers and used for fancy brochures, flyers, videos, billboards, and television advertising. If you ask Bob, he will tell you that the most important thing that money can buy is reduced class size. "A class of less than twenty is so much easier than a class of twenty-five."

Surprisingly, in the lunch room conversations, teachers do not oppose the idea of charter schools, but believe that charter schools could be good for the public schools because they may encourage innovation. The charter schools currently operating however appear to be far more conservative in their pedagogy and curricula than the public schools. Charter schools also present a new problem for teachers. Since teachers are now seeing students who have been passed around from one school to another and who are both emotionally

and academically behind the other students, the lunch room philosophers believe that the biggest problem with **Schools of Choice** is that they make parents 'consumers' in education. Parents can move their children from one school to another, blame the teachers for their children's failures, and refuse to accept responsibility for their role in their children's education.

With the advent of **Schools of Choice** money was simply not available for mentoring faculty in a new pedagogy. But the political debate that has had the most serious impact on the public schools has been the State's implementation of an educational achievement test during the 1990s for all fourth, fifth, eighth, and tenth grade students in the public schools. With the inception of **Schools of Choice**, parents now shop for schools and use the State tests as a criterion for the school districts they choose for their children. The price of real estate in the State's school districts have been affected by these test scores, or so teachers have been told by the administration when they argue against attempts at 'teaching to the test'. The mid-level administrators feared the project would have a negative impact on test scores and trusted their curricula and their pedagogical methods to help students successfully pass these tests.

Standardized tests have seriously damaged teacher's creative attempts in the classroom across the country. A neighboring state stopped its standardized testing when it found that students' skills deteriorated because schools were 'teaching to the tests' rather than teaching skills and meaning. In Scarsdale, New York,:

Parents and school officials in this affluent suburb, where test scores are among the highest not only in the state but also in the nation, are planning a coordinated revolt against state standardized tests, saying they have stifled creativity and forced teachers to abandon the very programs that have made the schools excel... The parents of some 100 eighth graders — a third of the class — have pledged to keep their children home from school when tests are administered in that grade next month. They are doing this with consent, and even subtle advice, from school officials, who administer the tests. (Zernike, 2001)

The New York Times ran several human interest stories on Donna Moffet, a legal secretary earning \$60,000 a year, who decided on a mid-life career change and is now earning \$38,000 teaching in a New York City elementary school.

Moffet wrote of her goals for teaching:

"I want to manage a classroom where children experience the thrill of wonder, the joy of creativity and the rewards of working hard ... My objective is to convey to children in their formative years the sheer pleasure in learning." (Cited in Goodnough, *New York Times* September 28, 2000)

Ms. Moffet, however, is teaching in a school where the major goal is to increase students' standardized test scores and where the curricula and the pedagogy are designed specifically to that end. Her mentor teacher demands that she follow the preordained lessons in the teachers' guide and says:

The beauty of these types of programs is that you don't have to think about it ... Everything is spelled out for you. All you have to do is prepare for it. (Goodnough, *The New York Times*, March 11, 2001)

The imposition of standardized testing has spurred a debate around the country that has intensified as national legislation has been proposed to test

students on a yearly basis.⁶ Over the past year, I have collected many letters from teachers from *The New York Times* editorial page, these are a sample of their tone and content:

Master teachers are frustrated and angered by the invalid uses of standardized test scores and with the public's acceptance of those who do not teach prescribing for those who do ...I am an accomplished teacher because I have the freedom to make professional decisions about the materials I use, my instructional methods and the way I assess my students. When I no longer have control over my practice to do what I know is best for my students, I, too, will leave. (Sharon Granek Guttell, Scottsdale, Ariz., *The New York Times*, June 25, 2001)

Today, the barrier to becoming a teacher is an Olympian hurdle of bureaucratic regulations, restrictions and paperwork. Once in, the new teacher is buried under the weight of administrative dictums that inhibit creative instruction. And this does not get into the issue of what a law requiring annual testing would do to the teacher psyche. (Clayton Curtiss, Orange, Conn., *The New York Times*, June 25, 2001)

...Teaching is an attractive profession only to the extent that the job itself is challenging and satisfying. The proliferation of mindless, "teacher-proof" curriculums and authoritarian management — intended to raise test scores through force and rote memorization — can succeed only in driving away the thoughtful, imaginative people who would otherwise be drawn to the excitement, challenge and infinite novelty of helping young minds grow. (Amy Stuart, Malvern, PA., *The New York Times*, June 25, 2001)

...we should all think harder about one neglected cause of the teacher shortage: the way that the imposition of uniform tests is driving many of the best teachers to give up. (Wayne Booth, Chicago, IL, *The New York Times*, July 10, 2001)

In the State, the governor has based granting scholarships to college-bound students on individual success on the State's achievement tests and budgetary allocations to schools on a school's collective test scores. Last month his

⁶ Federal legislation is currently pending that would institute national standardized testing of all students in public schools from the third through the eighth grades.

administration accused seventy-one schools of cheating on the standardized tests, but the investigation discovered no evidence of cheating, rather students had been drilled so successfully in preparation for the test questions that they all wrote the same words. A ritual space in which students are free to explore and create their own world with their own values is fighting against a mighty current in a river heading toward robotization both of machines and of our children.

Part Four: Schooling to Support the Corporate System

Although slightly embarrassed by the false accusation, neither the State nor the media questioned the concept of standardized testing. When the national cultural context in which the ritual experiment took place is examined, the idea of individuation, 'personal goal setting' for students, and community building is difficult to conceive. James Carville's comment in the 1992 presidential election "It's the economy, stupid" was correct. In that decade, the economy became the major news story. The Dow Jones and NASDAQ averages were reported daily on the major nightly news programs; CNBC started a cable station that reported stock prices all day long; and day traders who gambled on stocks for their living became a part of the national vocabulary.

The interest in the economy during the 1990s was spurred by a new technological revolution. The Internet and computer technology was the New Frontier and with it, came the need for corporations to control the direction that revolution was going. Dot.com companies were leading a revolution in business that promised freedom from corporate control; dot.com executives and their staffs threw away the 'suits'. In 1999, Jeff Bezos, founder of amazon.com, was

chosen *Time's* person of the year. But by 2001, a large number of dot.com companies had failed, replaced by corporate versions of themselves. In 2000, a president who represented the corporate Old Guard replaced the president who led the country into the New Frontier.

David Noble claims that "Each major scientific advance while appearing to presage an entirely new society, attests rather to the vigor and resilience of the old order that produced it" (1977, Pg. xvii). By the end of the 19th Century, a period that historians refer to as 'The Gilded Age', 1% of the population owned more than half of the national wealth whereas almost half of the population controlled less than 2% of the wealth. (Putnam, 2000). The Gilded Age was the result of the 19th Century's Industrial Revolution when the factory system and control of the economy became vested in large corporations. During the 20th Century, this economic inequality flattened until this past decade. The New Frontier is widening the economic gap in America's population. Corporate America, as it did in the 19th Century, is controlling the design of our technological future.

According to documentation presented in David Noble's *America By Design*, (1977) in the 19th Century, corporate leaders planned

to design America in accordance with this new perception, to create the apparatus for the corporate-sponsored progress of modern technology and simultaneously to establish the patterns of twentieth-century routine which would ensure the stability and growth of corporate capitalism. (Pg. xxvi)

Corporations controlled industrial and scientific regulations, created patents that favored corporate sponsorship, and organized university and public school

education, so that their focus was placed on training students to fit into the corporate world, i.e.:

...education was the critical process through which the human parts of the industrial apparatus could be fashioned to specifications. These human parts fell into two general categories: the skilled and unskilled workers who executed the designs of the engineers, attended the machinery, and performed the human labor of production, and the engineer-managers who designed and supervised the capitalist production process. ... "Industrial education" was the means for producing the former – a "new apprenticeship system", as it was called, to replace the moribund apprenticeship system education, was the means for producing the latter the process through which the corporate engineers could reproduce themselves. Both forms of education were promoted, in the rhetoric of progressive educational reform, as 'education for life'. The one, however, was to prepare people for the life of labor; the other to prepare people for a life of managing labor. (Pg. 168)

Since corporations were the 'consumers' of the educational products, students had to be evaluated in an efficient way, which meant standardized testing. In the area in which the District is situated, the local community college has recently defined itself as a partner of the largest corporation in the area. In so doing, it has streamlined its curricula to accommodate the needs of that corporation. The State has enacted legislation which it calls "School-to-Work" which funds school districts and community colleges that create curricula that support the corporations in the State.

This, of course, could not happen if the population of the State did not believe that the most important element in their lives is the economic success of these large corporations. In a climate dominated by a concern for economic growth and technological advancement, obedience and job training prevail in both educational philosophy and practice regardless of the mission statements,

objectives, beliefs and strategies that the District writes. The perception of technology as the uncontrollable prime motivator in history has been mystified. The general population has learned to believe that advances in technology cause social change, but change is controlled as much by the vision of the social order in which it is used as by advances in technology itself. Noble (1977) continues:

The historical process of social production embraces this reciprocal interrelationship between productive forces and social relations; in producing for itself, society is also producing and reproducing itself, its work habits, institutions, relations between people, and dominant perceptions of reality. (Pg. xix)

By 1996, James Gee and his colleagues were writing about a New Capitalism, that, although different from the structural demands of old corporate capitalism, still was attempting to control the 'design of America'. Gee (1996) claims that "there is a growing alignment between the business world in the new capitalism and various non-business spheres of interest, including schools and academic disciplines promoting school reform efforts." (Pg. 49) According to Gee, the old capitalism, that was a highly stratified hierarchical structure, i.e., management, skilled and unskilled workers, is being replaced by a corporate system that demands speed and efficiency. Middle managers are inefficient, so corporations are now espousing a new structure:

...with 'non-authoritarian hierarchy', a fitting oxymoron for our new age. In such systems many small, efficient, and self-controlled local units act in fluid, flexible, and sometimes ephemeral combinations while being *assisted* by a 'top' that cannot directly control them, nor fully understand them and their actions. (Pg. 50)

To create these semi-autonomous units, corporations need to enculturate, or indoctrinate, the student. Gee argues New Capitalist businesses want to create a new world in which people are 'reengineered' in their image by immersion into the 'New World', where both workers' viewpoints and their actual practices reflect the vision of New Capitalism:

In particular, the new capitalism will progressively recruit schools to produce suitable 'subjects' or 'citizens' for new-capitalist Discourse in general and its manifestations in specific Discourses (Pg. 22)

Gee argues that educators must resist this push towards the engineered new capitalist society. He argues that the goals of schooling as well as the goals of lifelong learning must be reassessed; that students must understand social and cultural contexts in which events take place; that they must debate the complexity of social issues; and that reflection and evaluation of experience, rather than immersion in practice must be a significant part of a student's education. Gee proposes as a possibility for a new educational experience 'learning communities':

...based on the idea that knowledge does not reside privately in individual heads but rather is situated in activities and distributed ...not divided among — mind, body, activity, and culturally organized settings. (Pg. 61)

Part Five: Progressivist Approaches to Education

This is not a new idea. During the Progressive Era, a time in which there was a plea for democratic values and a more egalitarian society than those of the Gilded Age that preceded it, John Dewey proposed the same thing as Gee. He proposed experiential learning followed by reflection, so that students understood the experience, could evaluate it meaningfully, and could proceed to

create their own future based on their reflections. Progressivism has been the foundation for an educational philosophy in which experiential learning is guided by students' needs and goals. Progressivism is relational, democratic, and developmental.⁷ Dewey had a vision for education in America (1916). He pictured it as a whole philosophical idea based on the explicitly held values of the culture. To Dewey, democracy is a much broader concept than just government. Education plays a critical role in a democratic social system:

Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education ... *A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.* [My italics](Pg. 87)

His vision of creating democratic education anywhere was burdened by his belief that : 1] parents rarely have a long term vision about the goals of education in terms of their society and 2] nationalism and its jingoistic demands challenge the social aims of education and replace them with a need to 'support' the state that fosters a belief in obedience, i.e., authoritarian education was based on the rise of nation states and the need these states have to control their populace. (Pg.94)

To promote the "best possible realization of humanity" (Pg.95), Dewey (1916) emphasized that if an individual is to live in a democracy, s/he must learn to become a participant in it. Education therefore must focus on *participation*.

Democratic education is active and participatory, but most important, democratic

⁷ No figure has proposed a more democratic approach to education than Dewey nor has any figure in American education been more misunderstood. His followers have often been misguided, and many transformed his theories into methodologies that perpetuated a stratified class system. (See Ravitch, 2000)

education is based on *experiences that have consequences*. Dewey did not propose 'doing' without purpose. Students must have goals; they must make decisions and these decisions must have consequences that are bigger than a 'grade'. Their decisions must impact their school life. Experiential learning fosters critical thinking in ways that traditional education does not. Traditional 'drill' based learning assumes that the social system is final, perfect, and an end in itself; experiential learning demands that students question the social system and 'use constructive imagination' to improve and enhance social conditions.

Active learning is requires reflection. Experiential learning demands discipline and volition on the part of the student and requires a sense of direction or goals created by the students themselves. Learning becomes an experiment in which 'discovery is the connection of things' (1916, Pg. 140). Active learning requires discipline, but discipline is internalized and is grounded on interest. "Interest and discipline are correlative aspects of activity having an aim." (Pg. 137)

Dewey believed that one of the great problems in traditional authoritarian education is the mind/body duality that views the mind and the body as separate realms. Education in a democratic society requires the destruction of that division. The process of thinking and reflection involves an understanding of connections and relationships that can only be fully understood through experience. When the mind is separated from functioning in conjunction with the body, thinking is faulty and superficial. Specifics are learned rather than whole ideas and the relationship of ideas to each other. Without bodily experience, learning involves a minimum of *meaning*. Students learn facts, but they don't

perceive meaning. By learning experientially students complete a thought process. It is through experience that we grasp meaning and we substantiate meaning through reflective thought. Experience allows students opportunities to analyze data, to create hypotheses, to reach conclusions. "While all thinking results in knowledge, ultimately the value of knowledge is subordinate to its use in thinking." (1916, Pg. 151)

The last of Dewey's ideas on democratic education relevant to this research is the relationship between play, work and education. Dewey saw the Protestant Ethic created a dangerous dichotomy between work and leisure. For the early Protestants, play had no place in education. But for Dewey (1916), play was a vital part of experiential learning:

Recreation, as the word indicates, is recuperation of energy. No demand of human nature is more urgent or less to be escaped. The idea that the need can be suppressed is absolutely fallacious, and the Puritanical tradition which disallows the need has entailed an enormous crop of evils. (pgs. 205-206)

Again, the Protestant Ethic, jingoistic nationalism, and the economic success of Corporate America are the underlying cultural values of American education. A trust in the idea that play may be a useful way to educate young people flies in the face of those values. Play, in and of itself, is wrong and has been marginalized as recess⁸. But, according to Dewey, play could, and perhaps should, be the essential quality of education.

John Dewey wrote at the beginning of the century. He proposed an educational system that would develop individuals who could: 1) participate

meaningfully in a democratic society; 2) think reflectively, 3) collect data, 4) develop hypotheses, 5) reach conclusions and 6) make decisions based on reflection. He proposed an educational system in which individuals could comprehend meaning, could see connections and relationships between actions and their consequences. Benjamin Bloom (1956) created taxonomies of learning that classified three overlapping domains of learning: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective that supported Dewey's ideas, but during the Cold War, the last two domains were ignored. Cognition became hierarchical and the taxonomy was ranked from the lowest intellectual level [knowledge recall] to the highest [evaluation] level⁹. The problem with this interpretation of Bloom's taxonomy was that educators assumed that students could not practice higher level thought processes until the lower processes were completed. Education became focused on the recall of information, but Bloom's idea was to integrate the cognitive process.

Howard Gardner [1983] expanded on more democratic strategies for education with his focus on multiple intelligences¹⁰. Gardner suggests that there are seven intelligences, but that American schools have focused on the use of only two of those intelligences, the linguistic and mathematical, which therefore favor certain students with those learning styles. If educational strategies neglect a diversity of learning styles, we continue an authoritarian, stratified approach.

⁸ legislators are currently examining legislation to limit recess in elementary schools in the State

⁹ The taxonomy could be demonstrated in the following order by: knowledge recall, comprehending information, applying that information, analyzing it, synthesizing it into new ideas or concepts, and evaluating the process. (see Bloom, 1956)

However, as much as Gardner appealed for the use of his theories to increase inclusiveness for the community of learners, his theories have often been used to espouse an individual and isolated approach to learning.

Freire (See Gadotti, 1994) and his Brazilian colleague, Augusto Boal (1985, 1995) used dramatic approaches to educating the poor for life in a democratic society. The creation of meaning has been an issue for drama educators for almost an entire century. The use of drama has been particularly popular in the British and Canadian educational systems. Hugh Mearns (1929) suggested that the use of the arts in instruction integrate a student's learning. Gavin Bolton (1984) and Richard Courtney (1989) developed comprehensive programs using performing arts in education to teach meaning.

Jerome Bruner (1990) argues that his own research on education (1962) was simplistic and assumed an educational vacuum. Bruner's educational theory now is focused on the concept of meaning (1990). Culture, he asserts, and not biology, gives shape to human life. We must learn to interpret and become involved with that culture if we are to function as members of a democratic society. Bruner proposes that the search for meaning must become the goal of our educational system and that narrative is the process through which meaning becomes accessible. Bruner believes that it is within the structure of narrative that we make sense of our lives. Narrative emphasizes human action; requires a sense of direction, or line; is aware of structure in human interaction; and has a

¹⁰ Gardner's intelligences are: linguistic, mathematical, musical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. (see Gardner, 1983)

voice. Like Dewey, Bruner believes that experiences are incomplete without contemplation. In other words, not only must students experience, but they must also reflect on, tell, or write about their experience as a story.

Bruner's search for meaning as the goal of education by understanding the cultural context in which it takes place brings anthropology into the equation. In 1986 anthropologist Peter McLaren used ritual performance as a research design to study an urban, working class, parochial school. McLaren sees the current educational system as indicative; as a place where teachers are ritual performers who he describes either as 'teacher-as-entertainer' or 'teacher-as-hegemonic overlord'. McLaren (1986) imagines a future classroom, however, where a 'teacher is a liminal-servant'. For McLaren, the liminal servant possesses attributes that bring vitality to the educational process:

... the context of lessons is transformed from the indicative [a stress on mere facts] to the subjunctive [a stress on the 'as if' quality of learning], from resistance to undifferentiated human kindness, and from within the confines of social structures to the seedbeds of creativity located within the antistructure...

She does not subordinate the political rights of students to their utility as future members of the labor force. She is a social activist and spiritual director as much as she is a school pedagogue...

[She] does not put a high priority on structure and order...She knows that she must not merely present knowledge to students; she must transform the consciousness of students allowing them to 'embody' or incarnate knowledge... (Pg. 115-117)

McLaren comes at education from a different perspective than Dewey; he uses ritual as a metaphor for education, but when examined, his goals are similar. Using the context of ritual, he wants experiential learning, play, creativity, and a democratic perspective.

In this educational framework, the ritual space is not only allowable, it is a thoroughly logical pedagogy. The use of anthropological theory and research has now been introduced as a possible way of examining education through McLaren's ritual analysis and Bruner's call to finding meaning through cultural context. Within ritual, McLaren proposes a liminal servant rather than teacher-as-performer or teacher-as-hegemonic overlord. To create a liminal servant, to use ritual theory and research to reframe and hopefully resolve problems in American education, we must inquire into the roots of traditional societies' use of it as an educational tool.

Part Six: Anthropological Roots of Educational

In many Micronesian traditional societies¹¹, children are symbolically stolen from their mothers when they begin their education. The assumption is that from the time they are stolen they are no longer children, but have now undertaken a journey to become adults. The mothers grieve the loss of their children, bury them ritually, and behave as if their child is lost forever. The children understand that they are no longer 'children'; they have begun their education and cannot 'go home' again. They must learn to be adult members of the society. The ritual separation from mother is the beginning of their education. They will stay with their peers in the bush until they are ready to return as adults. While learning to become adults in the community, they live in a liminal, subjunctive world of their own.

¹¹ See Van Gennep, 1960.

Tearing children away from their mothers at night and ritually severing the tie to childhood might seem drastic, but there are no mixed messages in it. The child **MUST** become an adult before he can participate as an adult member of the community. He **MUST** prove his worth to the community. Traditional learning structures and processes are *relational* above all else. Although the ritual teacher can be authoritarian, a sense of camaraderie grows among the members of the group that develops a sense of equality and *democratic* decision making among the participants within the ritual structure. And, even though job skills are taught, the goal of traditional ritual education is the *development* of an individual who becomes a participant in the community. So ritual education is, on balance: relational, democratic, and developmental.

If ritual is a possible way of teaching today's children, the strategy would reflect a *conjoint communicated experience*; it would be balanced in favor of relationality, democratic principles, and development. To create a ritual model, the structures and processes of traditional ritual must be examined. The idea of using ritual to resolve contemporary problems is not new. Prior to his death, Roy Rappaport, in *Ritual And Religion In The Making Of Humanity* (1999), argued that as anthropologists we must not only examine other cultures to critique the way we live, but must use our knowledge to modify our future. We must attempt to blend scientific objectivity with an argument for activist research:

The universals of nineteenth-century anthropology have been discredited in our own century ... Since then, another vision of world society has taken hold, a fragmented world of self-sufficient nation-states reflected in an ideology of cultural relativism which insists that people everywhere have a right to their own way of life, however, barbarous. This vision has become

so central to the academic anthropology of our day that Rappaport's treatise will seem anomalous. Of late it has come to be held that big, closely argued books on universal themes are out-of date. Minor essays on elusive topics, ethnography for its own sake and evasion of matters of general public concern are the norm. If this book does nothing else, it makes a claim that anthropology needs to be animated by more ambitious intellectual projects which look backwards, to be sure, but also forwards to the world we hope to inhabit in the near future." (xvii-xviii forward by Keith Hart)

Rappaport calls for the use of ritual in creating structures that will help solve global problems. He maintains that the ritual process was a necessary component in humanity's creation, i.e., without ritual, we would not have evolved as social creatures that live within a cultural context. Ritual creates us! Ritual molds our lives and without it, we are lost souls.

This research is an attempt to use anthropological expertise to *participate* in the future of our world, i.e., to adopt the successful ideas of Others and anthropological theory based on those ideas to revise and rethink contemporary problems. I am suggesting that the West, specifically the United States, can use the ritual patterns of the 'traditional Other' to improve both American education and rebuild our sense of community. I believe that within American elementary education it is possible to create a ritual process that will increase students' motivation and achievement in already prescribed curricula through a heightened sense of community, and that this process can be tested both qualitatively and quantitatively. The research does not attempt to compromise the conflict in American values. It assumes that we must educate students to live in a democratic society. The research therefore assumes Dewey's principles of educating students towards an entrance into a democratic society. These

principles include the integration of mind/body experience, the use of volition and emotion in learning, and the active/passive dialectic involved in experiential learning that promotes reflective thought, as the basic values for its construction.

The first step in the process of using ritual as pedagogy in democratic education is to understand that ritual can be secular. Grimes (1982,1990), Browne (1980), and Schechner (1993) discuss the variety of secular experiences that are contained within ritual context. Ritual, therefore, does not have to be viewed solely as 'sacred' and confined to religious ceremony.

The use of ritual techniques and strategies does not violate laws involving the separation of Church and State because ritual can be a secular process. This is not to say that something 'sacred' does not happen within a ritual experience.

Participants often explain the sense of community found within ritual experience as 'sacred' but not tied to religion. The issue of the sacredness of community will be addressed later.

Contemporary secular uses for ritual have been investigated and explored by a variety of researchers. Besides Grimes, Browne, and Schechner, Joann Kealiinohomoku (1997) researches the ways that dance, myth, and ritual facilitate personal and community transformations. Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman (1996), Paul Rebillot (1993), and Thomas Csordas (1994,1997)) investigate the use of ritual as a way of healing. Psychologists and medical anthropologists see ritual as a possible avenue for emotional, physical and spiritual healing. Thomas Csordas (1994) believes that it is personal creativity within the ritual process that permits healing. Laderman (1996) and Scheff (1979) assert that there is an 'aesthetic distance' within the structure of ritual and

drama that allow people to vent repressed emotional feelings. Jacquetta Hill Burnett (1976), Peter McLaren (1986) and Peter Magolda (2000) suggest that education can be viewed as ritual performance. Joe Winston (1997, 1999) continues that argument by saying that ritual and drama can be used specifically to foster moral education in children. David Cheal (1992) and L.C. Lewis (1998) focus on ritual, narrative and the creation of meaning in their studies. And Joseph Ginzberg (1991), Michel Meiffren (1993), and Helen Trounstone (1996) experimented with ritual space to successfully build self-esteem and a sense of community among homeless men, incarcerated youth, and troubled adolescents respectively.

Secular ritual offers a myriad of possible solutions to contemporary problems. If it is possible that ritual can be an effective pedagogy for teaching democratic education in elementary school, it is necessary first to understand ritual's *process* and *structure*. In 1968, Victor Turner argued that ritual was a dialectic process that interconnected with a community's social structure. He saw ritual as "the ever-present source which was, and is now, originating culture." [Grimes, 1982, Pg.150] Victor Turner's theories about ritual and myth stand apart from other theorists because Turner:

1. visualized ritual as potentially creative
2. broadened the definition of ritual to include a vast array of activities in contemporary culture
3. saw ritual as part of a vast social drama, i.e. as part of an evolving and changing society in which ritual mediates conflict
4. distinguished between imposed ritual experience and voluntary ritual experience in terms of its liminal or liminoid aspects

Turner's theories broadened the discussion of ritual into an exploration of creativity or conservancy, structure or process, and dynamic dialectic or reification. For Turner, ritual was a dynamic, creative, dialectical process.

Turner's terminology, especially liminality, *communitas* and social drama, have allowed theorists in a variety of disciplines to see the inherent performance aspects of their fields and to view performance activities as ritual. It is the combination of these concepts that makes a ritual pedagogy for a democratic education possible. Liminality and the inherent creativity in it allows learning that focuses on problem solving; *communitas* develops a democratic, egalitarian community; and social drama outlines a process necessary for the motivation for experiential learning and the construction of its meaning.

Ritual, or liminal, space fits Dewey's description of experiential learning: it is active, uses the body, requires volition and intention, and is based on play. Ritual is based on creative, imaginary play. Turner refers to liminal space as subjunctive, i.e. it is an imagined world where possibilities can be examined and experienced. Using VanGennep's model of the tripartite form of a rite of passage: separation, liminality, and reintegration (1969), Turner focused on the liminal space and found that its 'subjunctivity'¹² fosters creativity. It is possible that the ritual space is *a perfect place for education for democracy to take place*.

Scholars have challenged Turner's idea of ritual creativity. Critics argued that ritual space was conservative rather than creative and dynamic because it was

involuntary, i.e., because participation was required, and because ritual masters controlled the direction of the ritual.¹³ In terms of an educational model, however, none of these criticisms abrogates the use of ritual in contemporary education rather the critical arguments enhance the concept since the criticisms view the liminal space as controlled creativity that benefits the society. Therefore, within ritual space students can express themselves creatively within a crucible that molds their creativity into socially acceptable forms.

Work and play were interchangeable in traditional cultures, but Protestant values, economics, and technology created a polarity in work and play.

Education after the Industrial Revolution has almost entirely been training for work. Play has been assigned to leisure pursuits. In traditional societies (Turner, 1982) imaginary, collaborative play is both a necessary part of the creative process, and a necessary part of the educational process. Imaginary play is also a significant part of liminal experience. Experimenting within a subjunctive space allows the young person to challenge the system, to test it in safe and legitimate ways and still return as a productive, active member of the social group. Dewey makes a case for the importance of play in modern education, but play has been scorned throughout most of the 20th Century in America. In this experimental use of ritual, however, ritual is play that is involuntary, is controlled and guided by the

¹² Subjunctivity is defined here as a freedom to allow people to be ambiguous and undetermined, to play with and explore their identities and the identity of the society in which they are playing. It is a 'what if world.'

¹³ Turner's critics (See Leslie, 1970, Segal, 1983, Bell, 1992, Devisch, 1993) questioned the freedom of this creativity and proffered that ritual allowed a subjunctive space, but participants returned to the values of the social order and therefore the process was essentially conservative.

society, i.e. teachers, and is used to develop young people who can work and play in community.

Since playfulness in American schools is hotly debated, it is important to investigate play in greater depth than other aspects of the ritual process.

Psychologically, W.W. Meissner (1997), a noted psychologist and supporter of D.W. Winnicott's object relations theory, sees imaginary play in terms of mental health. He maintains that imaginary play allows the child to find a balance between his own subjectivity and an accepted objective reality. Unlike Freud, who represents a modernist approach to mental health in which one is only 'healthy' when one is free of illusion, Winnicott believed:

...illusion plays a role in the developmental transition to reality: without the capacity to utilize transitional objects and to generate transitional forms of experience, the child's efforts to gain a foothold in reality will inevitably be frustrated. Further, without continuing access to and participation in illusory experience, human life becomes impoverished and vapid, in so far as fundamental and vital human needs lack appropriate nourishment and support. (Pg. 49)

Thus imaginary play becomes a crucial part of the process of maturation into healthy adulthood. Tribal ritual that allowed community members to play with illusion and reality also helped them make sense out of the reality in which they lived.

Huizinga refers to humans as 'Homo Ludens', i.e., the playing man rather than the wise man. For Huizinga (1950), play is vital to society. It is the structure of play that he feels is important to society. Learning to play and abide by the rules of play is a necessary part of becoming civilized. Again, in the liminal space, play has rules. Subjunctive play found in ritual experience can, therefore,

not only create healthy psychological exploration for children by balancing subjectivity with objective reality, but it also can create a system of rules that guide young people into positive relational activities within a culture. Most important, play can also foster creative change in the culture itself. By playing with cultural possibilities, young people can take their world apart and reconstruct it differently; they can problem solve and explore possibilities for their future.

Along with his analysis of the liminal space, Turner also discussed the concept of 'communitas' which occurs within a liminal space. Communitas is a sense of connectedness, community, and egalitarianism that develops in the liminal space when participants are no longer assigned rigid social roles. Communitas is the essence of the *conjoint communicated experience* Dewey finds necessary to a democratic way of life.

Finally, Turner's (1974) theory of social drama suggests a process, rhythm, and line necessary for effective ritual experience. A ritual must confront and resolve a problem. He maintains that if we look at any societal crisis we will find a pattern of social drama. Within a social drama there are four parts: breach, crisis, redressive action, and either separation or reintegration. Turner's social drama is analogous to a theatrical drama. There is stasis, an inciting incident, rising action, crisis point, climax and dénouement, or resolution. For Turner, social conflict mirrors art [or vice versa]. Turner contextualizes ritual within the framework of social drama as part of the redressive action, which is equivalent to the crisis point and climax of a theatrical drama. In the redressive stage liminality

and *communitas* combine to allow creative solutions to problems and either a rebinding of the participants or termination of the participants involved in the breach from the society. James Fernandez (1986) supports Turner's idea of social dramas and the use of ritual as the redressive stage. Fernandez argues that it is through ritual, its symbols and metaphors, that we 'argue', present plans, and systems and it is through an interpretation of the metaphors of ritual that we can understand human relationships. In other words, ritual is inherently a problem-solving device. Fernandez' 'argument' image supports Turner's concept of social dramas. As an educational pedagogy, ritual can be seen as experiential, creative, and follows a narrative structure that allows discussion and leads to resolution.

Because Turner was so committed to transforming the vision of ritual from a static to an active one, he neglected an analysis of the structure of ritual and the role that structure plays in ritual experience. Roy Rappaport, writing thirty years after Turner's *The Ritual Process*, believes that ritual is the 'social act basic to humanity' (1999). Ritual is both creative and conservative, both a structure and a process; both an embodiment and a symbology; and both a universal and vital element to the development of the human spirit. What is important about ritual is not the religiosity of it, but its structure:

For the moment it is sufficient to characterize ritual as a *structure*, that is, a more or less enduring set of relations among a number of general but variable features. As a form or structure it possesses certain logical properties, but its properties are not only logical. Inasmuch as performance is one of its general features, it possesses the properties of practice as well. In ritual, logic becomes enacted and embodied – is realized – in unique ways. (Pg. 3)

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Rappaport focuses his theory on the structure of ritual. He theorizes that language is the preeminent element in making us human and that, because of the options allowed by the grammar within it, language has allowed us to explore, to imagine, to discover, and to create. But it has also allowed us to *'lie'*. Ritual is a social necessity because it *'keeps us honest'*. He argues that it is the combination of performances, which he calls *'enactments'* and ritual's formality and ability to include both self-referential and canonical information that give it the power to control its participants. Ritual builds community and commitment not through compliance, but through a sense of obligation, because once an individual has performed commitment to a belief, the commitment becomes real. This is the glue of social relationships. Ritual enforces integrity and commitment to community. Combining the creative and subjunctive process suggested by Turner and Rappaport's theory of a structure that builds community, ritual could offer a possible pedagogy for democratic education.

Based on the structural framework of rites of passage in traditional cultures, this pedagogy has two major elements: ritual and storytelling. The pedagogical strategies are based on individual and collective imagination and experience rather than placing primary emphasis on cognition. A liminal world is created in which students explore ways to build a better world by inquiring into the history of their community, state, or country and studying ways to improve their environment. Although this is inherently dramatic, it is not theatrical. There is no script. There is no audience. Theater practitioners would refer to it as

improvisation. Emphasis is placed on the discovery of felt experience based on an imagined life in different communities with different myths, symbols, rituals, celebrations, and community structure. Students learn their language arts, science, and social studies curricula as a means to make their subjunctive world work. They complete the experience by writing stories about the experiences that they have had in that world. The stories are collected into books and become a part of the history of their imagined world.

The significance of this research is not in making anthropology more accessible to the public, but rather in framing learning in an anthropological way, so that the experience of education is more tangible and so that students feel, and are, more successful in a variety of ways.

Chapter Two: The World in the Stories of Children's Lives

Introduction

Mystery writer, Sara Paretsky, writes in the *New York Times* that the creation of a story is the way that she and other writers examine socio-political agendas. Stories are a way for us to see the world: "I don't sit down to write books of social or political commentary. Both as a reader and a writer, I'm pulled by stories, not by ideas; I see the world in the stories of the people around me." (Paretsky, 2000)

Much has been written during this decade about the power of story and narrative. Jerome Bruner (1990) believes that it is within narrative that people create meaning because narrative requires agency, linearity, a sensitivity to approved human interaction, and voice, all necessary elements for constructing meaning. A psychologist, Bruner's investigation of narrative has been centered on narrative's impact on the individual psyche.

Anthropologists and sociologists have investigated the power of narrative on the collective. Byron Good (1994) talks about narrative's power to heal both individually and collectively. Michael Lambek (1993) refers to the dialectic between embodied experience and objectified knowledge. He reasons that narrative is the glue that makes experience and knowledge fuse together to form a totality that produces meaning. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow (1996) believes that in narrative life imitates art and art imitates life:

The first of these assertions is important because it indicates that stories are not told simply to pass the time or to make us feel good; stories become the models we use to shape our subsequent decisions and

behavior. The second assertion points to the fact that we tell different stories depending on what we believe and particularly on what we have heard others tell. (Pg. 294)

There is no question that stories are a channel that let us see a larger picture. More important, we invent ourselves over and over again by the stories we tell about ourselves. We see ourselves metaphorically. Through stories we create the motivations that compel us toward experience and our experiences are the pigments with which we paint our selves afterwards. Our lives are our own works of art.

Ritual provides participation, experiential learning, mind/body integration, volition, decision-making, action with consequences, and a space in which democratic community is fostered, all requirements for Dewey's democratic education. It does not, on its face offer reflective thought. But there are two components to the ritual process: ritual, that contains the elements of liminality and *communitas*, and myth, that contains the element of story-telling. Both components, ritual and myth are critical to the process, i.e., the process is a dialectic: ritual creates an exploratory space, a space that allows transformation and narrative gives meaning to those explorations which then become the basis for further experience.

Often people experience ritual and do not process it into a viable story. Creating new symbols that represent a *conjoint communicated experience* expunges the symbolic debris of past experience and reifies the new experience giving it new meaning and power of its own. According to Mircea Eliade (1958, 1959, 1991) and Carl Jung (1966), the life of our imaginations, our story-telling,

our **my**th-making, has become stagnant and vapid. We are unable to resist our **imaginary** worlds, but we have allowed ourselves to lose sight of that which is of **value** within those worlds. We have filled our lives with images and symbols that are **defiled**:

Modern man is free to despise mythologies and theologies, but that will not prevent his continuing to feed upon decayed myths and degraded images. (Eliade, 1991, Pg. 19)

We **have** only to enter a video store or turn on the television to see the myriad **ways** in which we have degraded our symbolic life. A ritual process in education **will let** children create new symbols and images from their own experience rather **than** the commercial symbols that are often decayed and without real value.

In *The End Of Education: Redefining The Value Of School* (1996), Neil Postman suggests that education has become job training. Economics and consumerism have such complete power over the American psyche that we **have** lost sight of educating our children to be productive members of a **democratic** community. We are simply training our children to use technology, **not to** understand it or think critically about its impact upon us. Postman believes **that** successful education means that a young person will:

be able to hold comfortably in one's mind the validity and usefulness of two contradictory truths. This is the source of tolerance, openness, and most important, a sense of humor, which is the greatest enemy of fanaticism. (Pg.11)

To accomplish this openness, Postman refers to narrative, but modern thinkers **have** debunked the great myths of the past. We have been told over and over

again that 'our great myths are dead'. Since science is not narrative and science has been the focus of 20th Century education, narrative has received little attention in modernist education. But our stories are what give meaning to our lives. Postman continues his argument on narrative as the source of meaning:

The purpose of narrative is to give meaning to the world, not to describe it scientifically. The measure of a narrative's 'truth' or 'falsity' is in its consequences ... Joseph Campbell and Rollo May refer to it as 'myth' ... The point is that, call them what you will, we are unceasing in creating histories and futures for ourselves through the medium of narrative. (Pg. 7)

Education should examine our narratives: those from our past and those we create ourselves. Students need to look for the meaning of those stories and learn to understand their symbols and metaphors, because it is metaphor that subtly guides and controls our destinies.

It was the idea of 'story' that led me to this research and it is through the story that intrigued me first that I became interested in the stories of the lives of contemporary children.

I was invited to be a guest scholar at a community college in a small town in northern Minnesota. As a visiting scholar I was expected to work with elementary students in the public schools. I had taught theater for almost twenty-five years, but had spent the last fifteen years working with adolescents and young adults. Still, I was not worried about returning to elementary school. But life in an elementary classroom had changed.

In most classrooms, the creative drama exercises I taught were mastered fairly easily, but in one fourth grade classroom the students could not master the simplest cooperation game. The game required that they create a human knot and then work together to make the knot a circle without letting go of hands. At first the boys refused to take the girls' hands; then one young man wouldn't hold anyone's hand; then one young man hid one of his hands; then the group announced that one girl had body odor. I was determined that they would accomplish this simple activity, so we continued for almost a half hour. Finally, I sat down and asked them to explain why they thought they were so rude to each other. They told me "Everyone is." I asked who they meant. Some said their

parents, but most talked about television shows. All of them watched Jerry Springer and thought his show was funny, but they also thought everything they saw on it was true. Their other great passion was the "World Wrestling Federation, the WWF," a program where yelling, screaming, and hurling insults is the premise. Again, they were convinced that everything they saw on television was real. After our discussion, we tried the exercise again. They eventually unknotted themselves, but only after I made several students sit out. I had never, even during the years that I had worked with incarcerated young men, met young people with a greater determination to live isolated and angry lives.

*In the same small town, I visited another classroom of third grade students where we raced through the games because the students cooperated with each other so well. I was amazed. We were doing exercises that would have been difficult for sixth grade students. Their concentration, cooperation, and willingness to share in an imagined experience were spectacular. I asked them why they thought they were so good and almost in one voice they told me, "Mrs. Meyers!" Mrs. Meyers was their teacher who sat quietly at her desk and never interrupted the exercises or interfered. I asked why again and they told me, "She tells us **stories** every day." It just didn't seem like enough of an answer, so I spoke with her. She told me that she saw herself as an average farmwoman who liked children. She realized that no one was telling children stories about how to live in a community anymore, so everyday she and the children 'clumped' together at the beginning of the day and she would tell them a story that always had a moral about living together well. Along with the students, she was convinced that the collective storytelling made a difference in their lives.*

It was the Jerry Springer show, the WWF, and Mrs. Meyers' stories that led me to this research. If Wuthnow (1996) is correct, both groups of students were listening to stories that were "constructed to reflect the deepest rules and assumptions of our cultural tradition," and those stories were becoming "the models [the children were using] to shape [their] subsequent decisions and behavior." (Pg. 294) The stories informed their experiences and then their experiences helped them define who they were.

I began to realize that if this country intends to build a democratic society we need to give young people opportunities to create stories about conjoint communicated experience out of their own adventures.

Given the importance of community as the unifying assumption of the research, it is important to understand how children today experience community. They live in a country where between one quarter to one third of the crops produced are thrown away because Americans consider them inedible. They live in a country where 'we don't own things, they own us' has become a catch phrase and some psychologists want to add a new emotional illness to the *Diagnostic And Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorders* called 'affluenza'. They live in a country where almost a third of those employed work in the fields of marketing, advertising, packaging, or in the disposal of no longer useful consumer objects (*Affluenza*, KCTS, 1997). They are growing up in a state where their major university grants a doctoral degree in packaging, but has abolished its doctoral program in religious studies. This is the world these children must not only learn to understand but also the world in which they must succeed.

They live in a world where Harris, Klebold, Kinchel, Littleton, Jonesville, Paducah are names embedded in their consciousness. Youth violence in America has now become a middle class, suburban problem. From 1994 -1999 there were 113 school shootings killing 148 people and over 70% of those shootings occurred in suburban or rural schools. (CBS EVENING NEWS, 8/10/99). Ten years ago violence was an urban, inner city phenomenon. Americans believed that problems among youth centered on inner city young people and were racial or economic in nature. Unemployment was at a record high and job training and employment skills were the answers that were most

often offered by both scholars and politicians. By 1996, however, the American economy was booming. The unemployment rate wavered between 4% and 5%, and the inner city was no longer the focus of violence among young people. Responses to violence caused by suburban young people differed from the response to violence caused by inner city young people. In terms of incarceration, the response to violence by suburban young people has not been as swift or as brutal as the response to violence by inner city youth. Since we rarely want these children to work, the instant solution can't be 'jobs' or boot camps. Discussions about the causes of this violence on multiple talk shows on both television and radio have cited the ease with which young people can get guns, violence on television and films, the use of the Internet and violent or pornographic websites found there, violent video games, or inadequate schools. The suggested solutions have been tighter gun control laws, more security measures in schools, a return to basics in public school education, and putting copies of the Ten Commandments in all public schools. The issue of isolation and the loss of a committed family or community have rarely been suggested.

But perhaps the solution to this violence would be to investigate what the "deepest rules and assumptions of our cultural tradition" are. What is the story that children experience and perceive? How does that story impact them and what stories do they tell to make sense of their own lives?

Part One: America's Story of the Individual

The perception of community in America can be examined in terms of America's covenant with individuality. Beth Conklin and Lynn Morgan (1996) refer to relationality as a way to understand the friction between individualism and participatory democracy in America. They define relationality as a 'human being's capacity to establish autonomous social relationships.' (Pg. 661)

By studying and comparing the Wari' of South America with Americans in terms of the production of personhood, Conklin and Morgan find that the two cultures are vastly different in their creation of the person. In American culture personhood is completely material, i.e., the fetus is an undeniable entity and therefore a person. For the Wari' the person 'develops' throughout their life based on their ability to relate to others. Personhood is a process, not a physical entity. In North America, the body is viewed as a material, rather than a social, entity:

Personhood can therefore be thought of as an extension of the 'natural facts' rather than an amorphous or politicized concept continually recreated through social practice ... The North American case shows how the negotiation of personhood is inextricably bound up with the power and authority of medicine and the state... The Wari' exemplify a contrasting notion of personhood as something that develops through explicitly valued and publicly recognized social exchanges. (Pg. 687)

In America, we are 'born' human; we don't 'become' human through our relationships. Our vision of ourselves is far more about our material being than our ability to relate to others.

This creation of personhood as an autonomous being from birth has created a sense of isolation. Philip Slater (1970, 1991) sees America's vision of the balance between relationality and independence weighted heavily toward independence. Slater imagines the human psyche as capable of complete Wholeness and expression of feeling. Each culture, according to Slater, represses some of these feelings so that the qualities that are valued in the culture can come forward. As a result, in American culture, three human needs or desires are frustrated: 1] the need for community, 2] the need for engagement; and 3] the desire for dependence. (1970. Pg. 5) Slater sees this respect for independence and repression of community, engagement, and dependence beginning in early infancy. He claims that independence training in America starts early¹⁴ and is possibly more severe than in any other culture in the world. By focusing on independence from the group, Americans are allowed the freedom to be competitive and indifferent towards other. "This independence leaves the individual feeling disconnected, bored, lonely, unprotected, unnecessary, and unsafe." (1970, Pg. 26)

In his later book, *A Dream Deferred*, (1991) Slater tells a much more insidious story about the impact of individualism on American culture. He asserts that Americans' love for individualism is a benefit to authoritarianism and a threat to democratic values:

Individualism may be the greatest boon to authoritarianism since the whip, and has helped to prolong it well beyond its natural lifespan. Its message

¹⁴ Babies are often separated from their mothers in the hospital and usually have a nursery of their own from the time they come home

is: "Yes, fight the system by all means – we all hate it, don't we? But you must fight it alone... It is the inability to cooperate, to negotiate actively about the things that concern us, that leaves room for –and makes necessary – the vast impersonal systems against which we rail, and upon which the individualist heaps so much impotent scorn... The individualist, in other words, is not rebelling in order to bring democracy to the people. After all, he feels as oppressed by 'the people' as he does by the tyrannical forces that control him. He is rebelling in order to become a dictator himself. (pgs 151- 152)

If Slater is right, this connection between individualism and authoritarianism is a particular irony in American society. In an effort to feel 'free' and 'independent', we have created a sense of isolation. We would rather 'lose' to an authoritarian, bureaucratic 'presence' than participate as a member of a group.

Part Two: The Story of Life in the Suburbs

Very few American researchers, or even artists, have given us opportunities to look into the world of American children, to see the world from their perspective. They have been analyzed and examined from 'above', from an adult's perspective, but we have not often been allowed to enter their world. Americans have trivialized childhood in their films and television shows. Neither the problems nor the solutions give us a realistic look at the world of American children. But the concepts are intriguing. Isn't it interesting, for example, that there are two sequels of the American film, *Home Alone*, the story of a boy, forgotten by his busy parents, who must independently save his family's possessions from two thugs who are trying to break into the family's house?

America was a frontier culture. We had a vast expansive view of our country and 'buying' land and lots of it was a way to show our financial independence, freedom and superiority to others. A sign of our material success has been our

ability to 'buy' space and privacy. Immigrants lived in tenements on top of one another. When they gained financial independence they moved to the suburbs. In the city, their porches were in the front of the house where they met and talked with neighbors. In the suburbs, a private 'deck in back' replaced the front porch.

M.P. Baumgartner, in *The Moral Order of a Suburb* (1988), states that "By 1980, about 45% of the American public lived in suburbs, compared with 30% in cities and 25% in remaining areas" (Pg. 6). In the past thirty years, the suburbs have become increasingly important to the cultural life of America. She describes suburban lifestyle as one in which few residents know their neighbors well and social distance is the norm. The suburbs are structured both physically and socially to create an environment of separation and privacy. Within the suburban home, there is an experience of independence. Very few children share a bedroom. Baumgartner suggests that 'weak ties' to other people characterize suburbia.

When describing the suburban home and family, Baumgartner explains that families rarely own possessions communally. Children 'own' their own televisions, computers, stereos, and telephones. In an interview with Diane Rehm on NPR on November 17, 1999, the Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that children spend very little time with their parents involved in shared activities. (Burrelle transcripts, 1999, Pg. 1) Watching television together was the major activity that families engaged in, but most often, parents were not watching the same shows as their children. "In fact, basically two-thirds of the kids had TVs in their room." (Pg. 2) Children are often given their own televisions and computers to resolve

any problems or conflict. Children choose their own programs and decide, for the most part, how much time they will spend using media. The decisions about time and space have become the domain of the child, and their decisions allow them to separate themselves from their families. Children are independent and isolated from both their siblings and from their parents.

Inter- and intra-family relationships are more formal. Children do not 'roam' the neighborhood. A child's life is scheduled, i.e., play has become 'training'; children are enrolled in organized play activities that are 'educational'; free play is limited; and fewer children play with one another after school and when they do, the activity is scheduled as a 'play-date'. Some of this formality and social distance among children can be attributed to the impact of the increase in working mothers over the past twenty-six years. Many children from both affluent and working class homes today are 'latchkey kids' who come home from school and stay inside until their parents return from work. (See Furstenberg & Cherlin 1991, Weissbourd, 1996)

It is Baumgartner's thesis (1988) that the suburbs that foster separation both from neighbors and from families create a sense of what she calls moral minimalism that:

encompasses a variety of responses to interpersonal problems, all of which manifest an aversion to confrontation and conflict and a preference for spare, even weak strategies of social control ... Avoidance, in particular, is an especially prominent method of managing conflict, recurring in families, friendships, neighborhoods, and among strangers.
(Pg. 10 - 11)

Avoidance creates its own strategies and problems one of which has a serious implication for young people, i.e., the atomization of people. With each person “acting as an individual rather than as part of a larger corporate group whose interests are at stake in all social dealings”, (Pg. 62) moral minimalism leaves children confused and frustrated. Often they are encouraged to decide what is morally correct for themselves as individuals. The absence of a strong community, in which values are clearly discussed, negotiated, and experienced, leave children feeling ambiguous about moral decision making. And if children don’t know what is wrong, moral minimalism also makes it difficult for them to see what is morally ‘right’:

Much theoretical and empirical work has established that generosity and kindness increase with intimacy and social cohesion. It therefore follows that groups in which people are atomized and separated from one another by a great deal of social distance – and where moral minimalism is likely – will not be very altruistic. (pgs. 131- 132)

Social intimacy and connection are the roots of tolerance, but the suburbs create a world of transience, isolation, fragmentation and indifference. The irony of life in the suburbs is that people *look* as if they live in a world that is nonviolent. Less than ten years after Baumgartner wrote, violence erupted in America’s suburban schools.

Part Three: Childhood as a Concept of Separation

Philippe Aries (1962) presents an argument about the isolation of childhood that differs from Baumgartner’s. Aries contends that it is the concept of childhood itself that led to the isolation of children from the community that we see today. In medieval Europe, there was no such thing as ‘childhood’ or ‘family’; there was

only 'community'. People worked together and played together. In the modern attempt at orderliness, the institutionalization of childhood created individual families who became responsible for their children. The family rather than the larger community became the basic social unit. Families became increasingly isolated from the community. "Everywhere it [family] reinforced private life at the expense of neighborly relationships, friendships, and traditional contacts." (Pg. 406) The notion of childhood and family created a breach in the social fabric and the significance of family increased in inverse proportion to community relationships.

The concept of family and childhood may have initiated the removal of the child from adult society, but Neil Postman (1982) credits the technological invention of moveable type and the printing press with the creation of 'childhood' and the separation of children from the adult world. Once adults could read, there was a 'secret', a 'specialness' to being an adult. Childhood was the time, after infancy, when children slowly learned the 'secrets' of the adult world that could be found in books. This meant that childhood was tied to education. Aries also argues that education created a breach in the social fabric when children were sent to priests, and separated from the community, to learn to read and write.

Viviana Zelizer (1994) adds to the idea of isolation of suburban children. Zelizer claims that work has historically been a socializer, a way of bringing children into the community of adults and in an effort to protect middle class children from work that socializing process has been taken away from most

American children. Zelizer argues that in the United States we made children 'sacred':

The term sacralization is used in the sense of objects being invested with sentimental or religious meaning. While in the 19th century, the market value of children was culturally acceptable, later the new normative ideal of the child as an exclusively emotional and affective asset precluded instrumental or fiscal considerations. (Pg. 11)

As children became 'precious' and sentimentalized, they also became useless. If they serve no practical purpose, they cannot effectively fit into the community.

Work outside the home has always been a socializer. Scholars are aware of its importance for women. Children are a precious burden. They have become 'holy' without earning their holiness. Laws against child labor may work against children's rights and power and acceptance into the community. By making our children useless, we isolate them from the adult world, take away their power, and perhaps, unconsciously, adults don't like them.

Part Four: Children and the Isolation of Divorce

BlackNight MoonLight¹⁵, a third grader, dealt with the separation and likely divorce of her parents through her third grade year. She was told that 'the family didn't make her father happy anymore, so he had to leave them.' The day after she heard this, BlackNight Moonlight changed. She never cried; she rarely talked about it, but BlackNight Moonlight never smiled. She could no longer complete her work, because it 'wasn't perfect yet' and even developed symptoms of anorexia. The impact her parents' separation was having on her was visible in

her behavior and yet, it was apparent that either her parents could not see the change in her behavior or expected her to resolve the problem herself. Teachers in the staff lunchroom often talk about the impact of divorce, separation, and single parenting on the students they teach. It is always a lively conversation, because they see it as a problem that impacts their effectiveness as teachers, but since some of them are divorced or single parents themselves, they are reticent to condemn these practices. But what is the impact of new family structures on suburban children?

David Elkind, a noted American psychologist and social theorist (1994), sees the isolation of children as a result of a philosophical and cultural value change between modernist principles and postmodern values. Modernism, which espoused progress, universality, and regularity, placed children in the center of a nuclear family that was responsible for protecting them. This protection and the responsibility for caring for children fell to the mother which meant, according to Elkind, that modernism was difficult for women, but good for their children. Divorce was frowned on because raising children was the core purpose of marriage. Women endured bad marriages to 'protect' their children and provide stability for them.

Post-modernism, according to Elkind, has created a change in the social order. It addressed some of the problems of modernist thought such as authoritarianism, racism, and the recognition that there is no such thing as

¹⁵ All the children in the study chose their own names, the significance of which often became apparent as the year progressed.

objectivity, but it has created serious problems, especially for children. Elkind predicts that the United States is returning to a medieval concept of infancy and an early autonomous adulthood. He doesn't see this change in a positive light, because *contemporary* autonomy does not give children the community support that the medieval period gave them or the family security that the modern period did.

Postmodernism has created the concept of a new family structure that allows more flexibility and freedom for adults. Stephanie Coontz, Maya Parson and Gabrielle Raley (1999) claim that "As the last decade of the century dawns, only half the children in the land were living with two married parents who had jointly conceived or adopted them. Twice as many children were living in single-parent families as in male-breadwinner, female homemaker families." (Pg. 489) Dual earners, single parents, blended families, divorced, or never married parents have become a part of the lexicon of family life.

Elkind (1994) would not dispute the change in American family structure, but he would dispute the 'positive effects' of that change. Elkind sees the postmodern American family as 'permeable'; marriages, unstable; family relationships, impermanent; and the burden of those changes are laid on children now rather than women and that burden results in anger or depression:

Like all those whose needs are not being met over the long term, postmodern children and adolescents are feeling victimized. They believe that they must suppress their own needs for security and protection to accommodate their parents' and the society's expectations that they be independent and autonomous. Like modern mothers, postmodern young people either turn their anger on themselves (for letting themselves be used) or at the world around them. (Pg. 11)

Elkind also claims that contemporary children are no longer allowed to 'play' just as they are also not allowed to work outside the home. Like BlackNight Moonlight, children find themselves in unstable, and sometimes fleeting, family relationships and are expected to understand and accommodate to the crises with which their parents struggle. They may be latchkey kids who are responsible for themselves and smaller children in the house for large portions of the day or they might be expected to 'perform', to 'train' as athletes or as academics to win success for the family. Medieval children became adults at seven, but they 'apprenticed' with adults, worked in the fields with adults, and shared adult views of the world. Contemporary children are isolated from the adult world but are expected to behave as adults.

Frank Furstenberg and Andrew Cherlin (1991), Richard Gelles (1997), Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly support Elkind's theories with hard data. Furstenberg and Cherlin document the impact of children from 'permeable' families and find that children have a much greater responsibility to 'adjust' to changes in the family than their parents do. A divided family also burdens the child financially since there is an economic downward spiral for the children and mother after a divorce. Most children whose parents divorce experience a decline in both emotional and financial security. Children often lose the stability of a permanent space and move back and forth between two places, neither of which affords them the security they had in their 'home'. Gelles' data demonstrates that children in single-parent homes are more likely to suffer both

physical and emotional violence. Wallerstein and Kelly say that divorce is often tragic for children (1980). Wallerstein and Kelly's research found that children have a very difficult time adjusting to separation and divorce emotionally. They are easily identified in school, because their grades usually drop, their ability to focus on their work effectively decreases, and they tend to withdraw from the group, observations that the teachers in the District also noted.

When parents in the Wallerstein/Kelly study were confronted with these difficulties, their response was almost universally, 'I will watch him/her, but she will have to adjust to the change'. This has also been the response noted by District teachers. The emphasis is on the needs and concerns of the adults, not the children. The children are expected to be independent and able to deal with problems on their own. Wallerstein's study has been longitudinal. Every ten years she reports on the same group of parents and children she studied in Marin County in the 70s. Her latest study shows that these adult children continue to have difficulty with personal relationships that they blame on their parents' divorce.

Part Five: The Childhood Story of Obedience

Laura Nader (1974) suggests that anthropologists should "study up", i.e., they must look at the larger institutions in which everyday life occurs to understand the extent to which our lives are being shaped by those in power. The previous chapter was an attempt to "study up", but in the process I discovered that 'up' can become a circle that returns to the stories that are a part of our everyday lives. I discovered this when James Gee (1996) wrote:

Unfortunately, a focus on children and schooling tends to obscure the role of social practices and Discourses. ... School-based Discourses are quite anomalous in this respect. Schools don't merely separate learning from participation in 'mature' Discourses: they render the connection entirely mysterious. (Pg. 15)

Gee's assumption that "a focus on children and schooling tends to obscure the role of social practices and Discourses" is part of a much bigger story about children, a story that informs the way that we view them and approach their education.

Stories about children reflect our attitudes toward them. During the three years that I worked in the schools there were three news stories that captured both national attention and the interest of the students: 1] the six-year old who killed one of his classmates¹⁶; 2] an eleven year old who killed a man by arbitrarily shooting at anyone that came out of a *7-Eleven*¹⁷; and 3] Elian Gonzales who was found on Thanksgiving in the waters off Florida when his mother tried to flee Cuba¹⁸. I suggest that these children all became conflicting symbols of childhood in America in the media. The six-year old, who is an African-American child whose family had been involved in drug trafficking, represented an innocence betrayed by a 'bad' minority family. The eleven-year old, also an African-American child, who looks older than his years and who was

¹⁶ The child came to school with a gun and shot another child because they had had a fight on the playground the day before. He was put into the foster care system.

¹⁷ This child was tried as an adult, found guilty of second degree murder, and incarcerated in a juvenile institution until he is old enough to be transferred to an adult prison

¹⁸ After a lengthy legal battle and his abduction by federal officers, this child was returned to his family in Cuba.

born in this country and raised by a single mother¹⁹, represented the continuing threat to White America by the angry Black man. And Elian, a pretty, little, white boy who was showered with gifts by his Cuban-American family in Florida, represented an innocent who needed an American childhood to thrive. These children have all been mythologized in these stories. Elian became sacred; the others became scapegoats to an adult world that neglected and abused them. Regardless of whether the creators of their stories viewed them as sacred or as scapegoats, by mythologizing children, we take away whatever power they might have as people.

The story of childhood in America is a story within a story within a story. The story of childhood in America has its roots deeply embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition, a story of childhood that is not a pleasant one, yet one we like to believe is idyllic. In 1974 Lloyd de Mause edited *The History of Childhood*, a book he claims is the first comprehensive historical study of childhood. De Mause claims the Bible is not a place to find a great deal of empathy towards children:

The first place to look, of course, is the Bible; certainly here one should find empathy toward children's needs, for isn't Jesus always pictured holding little children? Yet when one actually reads each of the over two thousand references to children listed in the COMPLETE CONCORDANCE TO THE BIBLE, these gentle images are missing. You find lots on child sacrifice, on stoning children, on beating them, on their strict obedience, on their love for their parents, and on their role as carriers of the family name, but not a single one that reveals any empathy with their needs. (Pg. 17)

¹⁹ When he had emotional problems, the mother tried to get help for him, but the system provided none

Carol Delaney (1998) furthers deMause's argument by asserting that the story told in the Bible of God's demand for total submission of children to their parents, just as their parents must see themselves as His children and submit to Him, has resulted in a justification of abuse and neglect of children throughout history. Nothing says this more concisely than John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ..." Although there is no other quotation in the gospels, i.e. Matthew, Mark, or Luke, that suggests that God sacrificed his son for the good of humanity, that assertion in John impacted the way in which Christianity has been represented in the Western world. Christ on the Cross, not Christ healing the sick, feeding the hungry, or walking among the lowly, has been the major symbol of the Christian faith. In this story, the story that guides a majority of American families, children clearly are possessions of their parents; their lives, lived at the whim of those parents.

This sacrificial story is embedded in modern storytelling. Tony Soprano, the main character in last year's Emmy-winning drama series on television, *The Sopranos*, is haunted by the life chosen for him by his family and hounded by a domineering mother. The story of obedience to the will and desires of an adult world is not only a part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. We have only to watch the nightly news to see images of children of all religions being enslaved to pay their parents debts, or confronting tanks at the behest of their parents; or carrying guns to wage wars that they may not even comprehend.

In the United States, the Judeo-Christian story guides us in another way: we do not look favorably on play as having real meaning or purpose in our lives.

According to Max Weber (1983), the rise of Protestantism not only coincided with the rise of capitalism, but Protestant beliefs also supported that economic system. Work, obedience to authority, and disapproval of play were significant elements in the Protestant Ethic. Because Protestantism is the predominant narrative in the United States, we are especially demeaning of any activity that involves pretend because we perceive it as 'play' and associate it with childhood immaturity. We revere work; we condemn play. Our religious tradition is based on lecturing from a pulpit rather than experiencing creative ritual. Rather than seeing our children as responsible, caring human beings that could possibly create a more productive and compassionate future, we view our children as creatures who we must submit to our adult will and who we must mold to our work ethic.

Part Six: Children and the Technological Revolution

DJ is in the second grade. He is performing a scene in front of his classmates for a program called "The Storyteller as Hero" which is the pilot project to test the practicality of my major research. In the scene he has moved to a new neighborhood and is having difficulty finding friends at school. His goal in the scene is to get his mother to help him with his problem. DJ walks into the scene and finds his mother unpacking boxes. He sighs and casts his eyes to the floor. DJ is 'acting' well and his classmates show their approval by giving him their rapt attention. His mother [me] asks how he is feeling and he tells her that he is sad. Then he plops himself into a chair. His whole body is downcast. His mother asks him what is the matter and he tells her that he 'doesn't have any friends'.

Mother: You have friends at home, don't you?.

[DJ pauses for a moment and then smiles slightly. He looks up.]

DJ: Yes.

Mother: Well, who's a friend at home?

DJ: The television.

[Mother is surprised because she wanted DJ to say that she is his friend]

Mother: Dylan, you don't talk to the television.

DJ: Yes I do!

Mother: *Well, the television doesn't talk to you, does it?*
DJ: *Sometimes it does.*

It took another three minutes to get DJ to agree that he knew that his mom and dad were his friends, that he could talk to us about his problems, and that we could play with him until he met some friends at school.

I was surprised at how committed DJ was to his friendship with the television, but I knew that it was very real to him because of the sincerity with which he told me about it. I also was surprised that none of the other children laughed when he said it. After the scene, I asked the class to raise their hands if they thought the television was their friend. They all raised their hands eagerly. I asked if they talked to the television and again they all raised their hands.

Children from divorced and single parent families are more likely to be latchkey kids, i.e., to return home after school to a house without an adult supervising them.²⁰ Most often they are told by their parent to stay inside until the parent gets home from work which means that a large number of children stay inside the house almost everyday, do not exercise, or play with friends, and most likely watch television, or play on the computer. It has been reported that almost 40% of fourth graders in this country come home to an empty house. (*CBS Evening News*, 9-14-2000) What has been the impact on children who are isolated from each other after school? Do they, like DJ, make the television their friend? Growing up in a time when the media did not saturate our lives, it is, perhaps, difficult for us to imagine how today's children perceive the world. Is the television really their friend? A better friend than a parent or grandparent? What connects them to the

²⁰ See Furstenberg and Cherlin, 1991 and Weissbourd, 1996

television? What is it about their relationship with an inanimate object that feels 'friendly'?

Elkind (1994) claims that even with an increase in information and communication technology, the postmodern world has lost "a sense of community and a shared view of the common good" (Pg. 25). The desire for independence, autonomy, and material success has spurred innovations in technology that are causing social change in Euro-American cultures. Isolation is not the cause of this change, rather it may be the result of a technology that allows increased isolation from one's geographic community while 'connecting' with a global community.

Theorists Anthony Giddens and Kenneth Gergen believe an overload of information and communication are transforming identity and personhood in America. Americans still foster their sense of independence and individualism, but the individual has become a reflexive project that is constantly in flux. Anthony Giddens (1991) creates a laundry list of changes in the American psyche. He says that the explosion of information in the 'late' modern age has caused a continued reflexivity that leaves us unsure of our own identities.²¹ Giddens claims that since certainty of knowledge is undermined, the explosion of information has created an environment that allows constant, and chronic, revision of a person's sense of self. The increasing reflexivity in Western cultures caused by too much information is responsible for the deterioration of traditional family and community structures. This decay impacts on the socialization of

children. Children are socialized based on “the advice and instruction of experts rather than on the direct initiation of one generation by another.” (Pg.33) He claims this lack of a secure generational framework leads to narcissism, created by a basic lack of trust, which allows us to become apathetic and lonely:

Apathy towards the past, renunciation of the future, and a determination to live one day at a time – such an outlook has become characteristic of ordinary life in circumstance dominated by influences over which individuals feel they have little or no control. (Pg. 174)

Giddens makes the world look frightening for an adult, but the lack of stability and sense of control must terrify a child, especially one that is ‘home alone’.

Most important, Giddens argues that the impact of the media on contemporary life confuses our sense of self. The juxtaposition of images, i.e. montage rather than story, leave us baffled and bewildered and without any sense of power in our lives. “Media presentation takes the form of the juxtaposition of stories and items which share nothing in common other than that they are timely and consequential” he argues, but then Giddens says:

A collage is by definition not a narrative; but the coexistence of different items in mass media does not represent a chaotic jumble of signs....They do not, of course, add up to a single narrative, but they depend on, and also in some ways express, unities of thought and consciousness. (Pg. 26)

But what may be understandable for an adult in terms of unities of thought may not make sense to a child. Understanding a collage requires abstract thinking. The elements of narrative are more concrete and linear and therefore easier for a child to understand. But images on the media are not even a collage with a

²¹ It is important here to note that Giddens ‘modern age’ is Elkind’s postmodern period.

sense of unity. On June 11, 2001 Timothy McVeigh was executed and the event was covered on all three major networks. The commercial most often run that morning on CBS sold Shirley Temple movies. How does a child make sense out of this juxtaposition? Unlike Macauley Caulkin's character, children are not 'home alone'; they are at home with the television or the Internet and cannot make sense out of the world that they see there. It isn't presented linearly. The stories are often juxtaposed with commercials on television or multiple advertising on each computer screen on the Internet. Even more baffling, children use the remote control to try to 'see' multiple stories at once and in the process nothing makes sense to them. Television rarely allows them to 'see' the message clearly, in a line; they don't understand the story, they don't know who the protagonist is or the direction of the plot, or even if there is a plot. Also, they don't control the images in the media like they do when they read. A reader *imagines* the image; a viewer is a passive observer of someone else's images, so the viewer feels a lack of personal control over the story.

John Naisbitt (1999) also ponders the impact of constant stimulation and information. Americans are, he contends, never disconnected, but the connection does not support a sense of community, it has become simply noise. "Silence nourishes thought, reflection develops wisdom, listening begets humanity. When there's no silence, there's no room for thought." (Pg. 20) The noise of these technologies, both literally and figuratively, can actually isolate humans from each other, from nature, and from themselves. Naisbitt claims that educational psychologist Jane Healy argues that "...computer use is capable of

altering the physiology of a child's brain and causing a pandemic of attention deficit disorder and depression in children." (Pg.10)

Although Healy (1990, 1998) discusses the impact of the media and technology on the cognitive aspects of human development by addressing issues of focus and concentration, her central point is the impact the computer has on the development of social relationships. Healy says that individuals become 'addicted' to the computer in the same way that they can become addicted to substances and suggests that people develop an emotional relationship with a machine that she considers alarming. Like DJ who thinks the television is his friend, both children and adults can become 'lost in cyberspace'.²² They become more bonded to the characters on their video screens than to the people in their lives.

Healy claims that a study conducted by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in 1995 found that young people feel that they do not have enough interaction with their parents or with adults. (1998, Pg. 200) She argues that:

We seem to care more about how fast our children learn than how deeply they can feel. We are increasingly dependent on abstract expert systems rather than on other human beings, and it is tempting to abdicate to technology the job of society's elders to initiate the next generation. Instead of offering children our own thoughtful companionship, we saturate them with the noisy and temporarily gratifying objects of the electronic world, hooking them on artificial stimulation and self-gratification. (Pg. 199)

Information and the new technological world have caused multiple changes in the lives of adults. Giddens believes the Self, in the postmodern world, becomes

²² The editors of *Anthropology of Consciousness* devote an entire issue (volume 8, number 4,

an ongoing reflexive project. Healy is concerned about social relationships and even brain damage, especially in children. For Kenneth Gergen (1991) massive amounts of information and our increasing ability to connect with each other through technology has caused us to lose our 'Self' completely. But Gergen believes that the Self was a Romantic concept and no longer has substance. He imagines a contemporary 'pastiche personality' that makes it "increasingly difficult to recall precisely to what core essence one must remain true" (Pg. 150). Gergen's contemporary world is filled with people so busy 'connecting' with one another that all relationships become shallow. The Self becomes superficial and irrelevant. Values lose meaning and authenticity and sincerity become trivialized. Gergen believes that saturation is inevitable, but proposes that superficiality can be transformed into positive experimentation.

In the fifth and sixth grade classes where I work, I asked students to raise their hands if they had ever lied to anyone. Every one of them raised their hands without any sense of shame. I asked them to raise their hands if they lied and knew that the lie would hurt another person. Almost all of them raised their hands again and again without any sense of shame. In a world where authenticity is no longer valued, honor is also not valued. But if independence and autonomy are cultural values, then wouldn't it be a critical part of autonomy to have an ongoing sense of 'personhood'? If you have to 'go it alone' wouldn't it be nice to imagine that you are 'going it alone' with someone who is real and honorable?

December, 1997) to this subject.

Gergen speaks of the importance of relationality. He sees it within the context of narrativity. He focuses on the power of narrative in the saturated society. Narrative becomes a major theme in many of the theoretical works on contemporary American culture. History only exists in the form of narrative. Storytelling is a collective and communal event in which the Self is created through mutual agreement on the story.

But if narrative is the basis of relationality in our lives and a significant part of the creation of community, then a critical question becomes: who controls the story? The question of control is a major theme in the history of childhood, because, of course, children have never had significant control of their lives. They participate in the story. They must adapt to the story as the adults around them play with it, but they don't have a significant voice in it. And who becomes responsible for a story created by the media that is only a montage of images that leave children unaware of the logic of the story or how they fit into it?

Part Seven: The Stories of the Children Who Choose to be Heroes

I am on a quest to make anthropology more active, i.e., to find the connection between ritual experience and education, between ritual and individual and group creativity, and between ritual and sense of community, and to use those connections to try to resolve a contemporary social problem. It is my hypothesis that ritual is not simply a conservative structure that locks people into a managed existence, but rather ritual may provide an opportunity for both individual and community growth and change. Ritual can be used in secular situations in ways that will open the participants to their own uniqueness and vitality and also build

community. For McLaren, the liminal servant in schools is utopian. This research is an attempt to discover if a ritual space in a public school setting can build a democratic community and concurrently foster real learning.

The setting where this experiment will take place is on the edge of suburbia outside a major industrial center in the upper Midwest. The city is the home of several divisions of a major automobile manufacturer and most of the economy of the city is dependent on the automobile industry, but is not totally dependent on one industry.²³ Although the District is neither completely urban, suburban, or rural, but has elements of all of these populations, it is predominately suburban and fits the description of suburbia as described in the PBS program called "*The Sprawling of America: The Fat of the Land*" (May 30, 2001). There is no town, there is no center, there is no geographical community, and there is very little communal transportation. There are only homes outside the central city and shopping malls along the two major streets of the District. The District lies in three counties and is usually ignored by all three, because it is not the center of any of the counties. It butts up to a major automobile factory on its eastern edge and extends into small farms to the west and south. The majority of the population of the District is middle or working class. Homes in the District range from as low as less than \$50,000 to as high as \$500,000. There are several low-income housing projects. People of all ethnic backgrounds live in the District including the area's largest Asian population. Many moved there for the schools and to get away from the inner city. The District serves approximately 3,275

students. It has seven school buildings: four elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school.

The research was conducted in one elementary building that houses kindergarten through fourth grade and in the intermediate school that has all the fifth and sixth graders in the District. Since there is no town center for this area, the District sees the schools as 'the heart of the community'. Its mission statement, written on all its stationary and brochures, reflects that: "As the heart of the community, [The District] has as its mission educating and preparing each student to achieve her or his academic best, to develop character, and to contribute as a member of our global society by committing our staff, students, and resources to excellence in education through rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, and attention to individual needs in partnership with the family and our diverse community." The research experiment mirrored that mission. I worked with one third, one fourth, and one fifth grade classroom for an entire year. I worked in the fourth grade for a second year so that I could monitor whether permanent learning took place among eight students and mentor one of the teachers to guide the project in the future. I spent two afternoons in the third grade; two mornings, in the fourth grade; and three afternoons in the fifth grade each week. I had three mornings a week for planning and meeting with administrators, so I worked a workday that was equivalent to the teachers.

The students who, with their parents, have agreed to participate in the experiment reflect the values of suburban life described above. Almost 90% of

²³ The city also houses a major university and state government.

the students I taught had their own private rooms. (Only two of the fourth graders share a room with another sibling.) In an anecdotal survey, less than half of the students said that they sat down to dinner with their parents on a regular basis. Only 12% said they ate dinner together every night without watching the television while they were eating. Almost 50% of them had their own televisions, stereos, and computers and some even have their own phone, some with their own private line (these students are between the ages of eight and eleven). My experience in a middle class Midwestern suburban community supported Baumgartner's data from a much richer New York suburban area.

Consumerism has become a way to qualify and quantify love for some of these students. Skeeter is in the fourth grade. He is the only child of a single mother. On his birthday, Skeeter passed his treats out to the class and then announced that his mother loves him *because* she has spent a thousand dollars on him. He then verbalized a list of the things that she has bought him. Other students standing nearby began to make lists of the things their parents bought them to prove that they had parents that love them too. This is not a wealthy district. Most parents in the district define themselves as 'middle class workers' and yet their children define their parents' love for them in terms of material possessions rather than an emotional connection.

The students also did not appear to be openly upset by another major issue: they are often alone. When the fourth graders were asked to write about their daily activities, only two of the twenty-one said that they regularly played with other children after school. The boys' favorite activities were: video games,

watching television, and practicing basketball. Only two boys referred to a commitment to a team sport, although others also played on sports teams. The fourth grade girls were equally isolated from each other after school, but were more involved with helping their mothers. Three of the girls' mothers run daycare in their homes and these girls talked about playing with the younger children when they would get home from school. All of the girls said they helped their mothers at home. None of the boys mentioned this, which is not to say that they don't help, but rather that it wasn't significant to them. A substantial number of the students seem to go home to empty houses. They didn't use those words, (I assume because they have been told not to tell this), but refer to "coming in and locking the door and letting the dog outside in the backyard." Fifth graders, when asked about their daily routine hardly mentioned shared social activities other than organized sports. Most fifth graders, both male and female, were involved in organized sports such as baseball, basketball, soccer, or hockey. Their answers about their daily activities were: video games, television, napping, reading, and exercising. The fifth grade girls said they spent a lot of time on the phone. I could never get a clear and honest picture of what the third graders did after school.

There was no mention of shared imaginary play on a regular basis by any grade level at the beginning of the research. The fourth grade girls wouldn't admit they played dolls until I said that I loved dolls then they all admitted to playing with them, and even brought in their dolls for recess on rainy days, but most of the girls played dolls alone at home rather than with one another. Our rainy day play was the first time that some of them had played dolls with others.

When we played with our dolls however, there was no shared space, no invented world. We just showed each other our dolls and looked in catalogues about what we could *buy* for them. For the boys, video games were their only outlet for imaginary activities. They understood the games and the imaginary world invented by someone else, but they did not invent their own worlds. Almost all the third and fourth grade boys traded *Pokemon* cards, but I never saw any of them play *Pokemon* together imaginatively. Until near the end of the year I did not see anyone playing imaginary games outside at recess in the third or fourth grade. Fifth graders, who did not get recess often, would occasionally take the world invented inside their classroom onto the playground.

There were sixty-eight children who, with their parents, volunteered to participate in the experiment. Every participant volunteered to be a part of this experiment. Both students and their parents were given an explanation of the process and together they committed to participating. They were looking for a different way to learn. Many of the students were considered active learners, some were diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, some had problems with dyslexia. Their parents hoped that this pedagogy would ease their child's difficulties in the classroom, but only a few of the children were classified as 'special needs children': two had physical handicaps, one was an ESL student, and one had emotional problems. The fifth grade had an equal distribution of male and female students but in the third and fourth grades, there were twice as many boys as girls. There was a cross-section of ethnic groups within the third and fourth grade classrooms, but the fifth grade class was predominately white. Since I did not

find that the problems the children confronted were based on their ethnic backgrounds, but rather on their social and emotional experiences at home and at school, I am not identify them in terms of their ethnicity.

In the third grade class, there were originally twenty-three eight-or-nine-year-old students²⁴, fifteen boys and eight girls. The class could be divided into three groups who demonstrated the following emotional patterns: 1] students dealing with divorce who are passive, 2] students dealing with divorce who are openly angry, and 3] students who are afraid. In the third grade, over half of the students come from single parent or broken homes. BlackNight MoonLight is the smallest child in the class. In the second grade she was a bubbly, feisty little girl, but by the time she was in the third grade her father decided to leave the family and her mother had to go to work. BlackNight MoonLight was in the middle of what appeared to be a divorce. She no longer smiled and although she was an exceptionally bright student, she rarely completed her work because she never felt it was good enough. After she had her first experience in the ritual space where she journeyed to a magical land, BlackNight MoonLight wrote:

I had this box and it grew one day into a place! I found a door. So I went inside it. I went in and you would not believe what I saw! I was in a whole different world! It was beautiful! So I wandered around. And I saw a lot of signs saying 'Danger! Look out!'

I had a radio that sang anything you wanted it to sing. I still have my phone at least. I will call home now. 911-00-24. R-r-r-r-ing.

"Good! It's ringing."

"Hello, this is the [Smith] residence. I'm sorry we can't get to the phone right now. Please leave a message." Beep!

"Hi! Mom, I NEED YOUR HELP! This is me. Bye."

So I hung up. It was getting dark...

²⁴ One student left in the middle of the year

BlackNight MoonLight's story within her imaginary world tells us what she was worried about more clearly than any observation of mine ever could. She was scared and there was no one there to help her.

BlackNight Moonlight is not the only student who faced disruptions in her family life in the third grade class. A significant number of the students, especially the boys who were dealing with changes in their family structure, were openly angry. Richard was the only child of a single parent for seven years. Last year his mother married and now Richard has a very strict stepfather and a little brother who 'cries all the time.' Although he was one of the smallest boys in the class, Richard fought almost all the time both on the playground and in the classroom. When asked to try to resolve conflict in a different way, Richard couldn't think of any solution that wasn't violent.

Weight gain seemed to be a way that students dealt with their emotional stress and anger in the third grade. The King of Colors, who was dealing with a difficult divorce, was overweight and couldn't make friends in class. Coco was the King of Colors' nemesis. Both children are very bright; both come from broken homes; both spend a great deal of time with their grandmothers; both were often angry with other students; and both were over-weight. The King was not an easy child: he was demanding and needed constant attention from his teacher and classmates. Coco often whined and tormented her mother and grandmother by refusing to go to school. She also had difficulty making friends in class. Although Coco and the King of Colors were similar in many ways, they

were constantly fighting with each other. For Coco, the King of Colors and several other overweight children in all three classes, food seemed to answer their problems. Almost all the overweight children had trouble getting along with other children. It would be easy to blame the others, but I did not see open cruelty on the part of the 'average' student towards these students. I saw that the student of average weight distanced themselves from these students. Although approximately 30% of American children are considered overweight, only 8 of the 68 students were overweight. That is about 12% and one of the 8 students was not really overweight, just 'sturdy', but would probably qualify as overweight on medical charts. There are three clear patterns about these overweight students: 1] they all have problems at home; 2] they don't seem to know how to play with other children; and 3] their parents give them more material objects than the majority of other students get.

Fear seemed to be a part of many of the third grade students' lives. The Captain is small boned and seemed to be afraid of everything. He had gone to four schools in the past four years: a public school, home school, a charter school, and now was back in the public schools. He spoke so softly that no one could hear him. The teacher never called on him because of his fear, but he was terrified even when he raised his hand himself to speak. When he started to speak, he would stutter and tear up. Finally words would not come and he would give up. Combo, who would eventually be The Captain's best friend, is a very tall, well-built boy who appears to be around twelve years old. He is a refugee from Bosnia. His parents speak very little English and at six Combo began

representing the family to the outside world. Combo could not make eye contact, his eyes darted around the space when he spoke and he would rock in his chair until he would regularly fall to the ground. Both boys, one small, one large, exhibited nervous ticks that could be attributed to fear.

There were twenty-three students in the third grade class. Each of them was unique. Each had her or his special problem that needed to be confronted daily. Prior to the ritual experience, as a class, their most obvious problem was they do not know how to work together as a group. Teasing and put downs were an everyday occurrence and the solution to problems within the group was either telling the teacher or punching each other. Some of their problems would seem enormous even in the eyes of adults; some, like ownership of space and property within the classroom, may seem minor, but in the eyes of these students, they were weighty and a heavy burden to bear.

Life in the fourth grade class was less openly troublesome. Although this class had the same proportion of boys to girls, i.e., thirteen boys to eight girls, there was originally four less students in the class.²⁵ The percentage of students who come from broken or single parent homes was not as high as in the third grade. Slightly more than half of the children come from **dual parent** families. If there was a problem that was apparent in the fourth grade at the beginning of the year it was the ratio of boys to girls in the class and the aversion the boys

²⁵ We started with nineteen students and all the teachers in the project believed that any less than twenty students is an easier class to teach. Michael had 19 students; Liz, 23 students; and Bob had 24 students at the beginning of the year. Bob's class was the most stable. No one left the

expressed toward the girls. The boys refused to work with the girls, made faces, and whined if they had to sit next to them. Two thirds of the class were boys. In September, the boys in the fourth grade had difficulties socially. They didn't play well together; they had poor impulse control; they wouldn't listen to each other; they cried if they didn't get their way. Several of the boys used prescribed drugs for attention deficit problems. At the beginning of the year, the girls were the opposite. They appeared to be a 'perfect' little group. They worked quietly together AND they never raised their hands or took charge in class. They were demure. If a boy punched or pushed them, none of them ever told or fought back. Like the Tar Baby, they just seemed to absorb the punch.

There were five distinct student groups in the fourth grade: the loners, the comics, the athletes, the ADD boys, and the girls. The girls played together and although one girl is very quiet, she was never excluded. There were so many more boys in the class and their presence so dominated the space that one almost thought that the girls banded together for protection. Cooperation and congeniality were watchwords for the girls.

It was the boys that formed cliques, teased one another and excluded each other. There were two conspicuous cliques in the class: the athletes and the 'funny' boys. The rest of the boys were loners and the loners were often teased by the other boys. By the end of the first week of school, Jimmy was regularly fighting with other boys. Junior, one of the comedians, cried when partnered with

class and since Bob had his maximum number of students, no one joined the class during the year.

Jimmy. Jimmy's eyes are deformed. Apparently, he was born without eyelids and had several operations to create lids, but his eyes are strange looking. Since he started kindergarten he has had difficulty getting along with other children. He played alone on the playground. Taz, an athlete, regularly harassed Jimmy. All the boys harassed Jimmy. One day, Taz held his foot on Jimmy's chair so he couldn't sit down. Jimmy pushed Taz's foot away. Taz pushed Jimmy. The teacher, Michael, saw them at this point and both boys got in trouble. Michael left the room for a moment and I was put in charge of resolving the problem. Each boy had his own version of the incident. Taz said that no one ever liked Jimmy. Jimmy didn't defend against this statement. He casually explained, "It's okay. I have learned to play by myself." I told Jimmy that must hurt and he admitted it did. Taz just sat there. Compassion was not a factor here. We decided that we would start fresh. Jimmy thrust his hand out. Taz resisted touching Jimmy, but since he obviously couldn't go to lunch until he shook hands, he took Jimmy's hand and a deal was struck. Jimmy, however, continued to play alone. He was not the only boy in the class that played alone on the playground at the beginning of the year. Johma and CO8 also played alone.

The boys medicated because of ADD were also likely to be loners. Rocky has been diagnosed with an extreme case of attention deficit disorder. Last year he was medicated so much that I hardly noticed him; he never participated; he never played. He seemed to be constantly staring into space. This academic year his parents decided to reduce his medication. Even though there was every indication that he is intelligent, Rocky was reading below the second grade level.

He was very hostile to his classmates and loved to poke at them while the teacher wasn't looking. He fidgeted all the time and couldn't sustain interest in class assignments. Besides his diagnosed ADD, Rocky had moved five times in the past six years. He said, "When I was three I had a hundred friends, but every time I move I have less friends and now I hardly have any friends." Okinawa also takes prescription medicine. His mother and father are divorced. His mother has had several boyfriends over the past years. Okinawa is athletic and played with the athletes until he would lose his temper, which happened frequently at the beginning of the year. The other boys teased him until he would respond violently. Then they would race to the teacher to tell on him. His rage would be so intense that he never seemed to find words to defend himself against their accusations and would be sent to the principal.

The group that I call the Comedians frustrated Michael, their teacher, but they could create a lively classroom and made me laugh. They are all very bright, but couldn't resist talking and, while waiting to be called on, usually stood up and even jumped up and down. Their answers had little to do with the question that was asked. There were three comedians in the class and they were almost always in trouble for small infractions of the rules. Their desks were messy, so they often misplaced their papers. They were usually the first to complete their assignments but the quality of the work was never as good as it could have been. Often their papers were turned in wrinkled or ripped.

Skeeter, Taz and Nick are good friends. They are friends because they are good athletes and played together on the playground at recess and at lunch. No

matter what sport they played they are coordinated, graceful, and so were successful members of their team. In the fourth grade, the problems the students confronted were more social than emotional. They were less impacted by problems at home than the third grade students and more affected by their lack of social skills at school. They wanted friends but didn't know how to make, or be, friends.

The fifth grade class did not reflect the social or emotional problems faced by the third and fourth graders. The percentage of students who have emotional, financial, or physical problems is much smaller than in the average classroom. Almost all of the fifth graders live in homes with two parents, even if the family is blended. Bob, the fifth grade teacher is known for his skills in the classroom and parents have worked hard to get their children into his class. Their concern about choosing a special teacher for their children is reflected in the stability exhibited by their children.

Although there were no apparent cliques in the classroom because Bob stresses community and cooperation, there were three patterns of social behavior in the class: the loners, the eccentrics, and the socially adept. There are five students who were loners. They either had emotional problems or problems at home that influenced their lives at school. Ripto was adopted when he was three. His earliest memories are of a very violent and disruptive home. Throughout elementary school he has threatened other children, or his teachers, with his violent fantasies. When he was in the fourth grade, he drew violent pictures of a child brutalizing a teacher with a knife and sent them to his teacher.

At the beginning of the school year, Ripto either wore black or came to school in a costume: the fatigues of a soldier, a tuxedo, or a black leather jacket. Often he would raise his hand to talk about a world that no one else saw or understood. Ripto was in therapy. On one of the first days of school, Ripto's adoptive father came to class to meet Bob. Together with a school counselor they developed a strategy to help Ripto work successfully with the other children in his new school. There were three girls who seemed to be loners. Sheminye, Menopy, and Miss Priss are 'different'. I cannot tell you how or why they are 'different'. I could not see it, but the children seemed to find them 'odd'. They worked well enough with other students, but didn't seem to bond with any of them or each other. And there was Carlos. Since Carlos' mother and father separated, he had become the 'man of the house'. Often Carlos missed class to help his mother. He rarely completed his in-class, or homework, assignments. He liked to run rather than walk and was often in trouble for moving too quickly through the halls.

Like the fourth grade, there were two very distinct large groups of boys in the fifth grade class: the athletes and the eccentrics. The athletes played on every team and worked well with each other and with other students. They didn't appear to be a clique because they never excluded others and never teased anyone, but they liked each other most. They are witty and bright and loved to play games that they could win. There was one boy who was clearly an eccentric who belonged to the athlete group. While, in the ritual space, the rest of the athletes named themselves Bob, Todd, Jim, Joel, and Happy Dude, he called

himself Bartholomew Perkins and created characters who were always nerds who felt like outsiders.

The eccentrics gave themselves names like Saffron. They were a group of four boys two of who were exceptionally quiet and two who were constantly in trouble for talking or cracking jokes. They were intensely close to each other and all of them were deeply interested in intellectual pursuits outside of school: one knows an extraordinary amount about World War II; another, the Civil War; the other two love computers.

There are nine girls who would be considered 'cool' by any standards: they are bright, assertive, athletic, and extremely socially adept.

So these were the would-be heroes and their community in which they lived. At the core of the story that I am about to tell is the following problem: American contemporary culture is 'saturated'; it is 'shallow'; and it forces children to 're-create themselves' before they have even grounded themselves in a sense of self. If these are givens, is it possible that if children participate in a ritual experience, where they are contributing members of society free to explore their community's history and where they examine the heroic adventures of their own families, could children claim their own voice to 'tell their own stories' 'in their own words' and could those stories give meaning to their lives and help them build relationships in their community?

In the fifth grade classroom there was a poster that described the elements of a story. The students learned that a story must have a title, a theme, a setting, characters, a problem, the events, a climax, and a resolution. The description,

the stasis, which is the beginning of the story, must include the setting and the characters and the problem must be clearly a part of the characters' lives. We have met some of the characters; we have seen where they live and the problems that they face. Now we will move to the middle of the story: the problem and the events that follow it. Could the students share a journey and return from their quest with rewards that they could share with their community? Would this be a true heroic journey? They had participated in stories told and controlled by others. Now could they live and write a story of their own?

Chapter Three: Inside a World of Their Own

Introduction

Whether we use the pattern for story or the pattern for drama, both structures create a setting, or a stasis, where we meet the characters and the world in which they live. It does not become a story, or a drama, until the characters become aware of the problem that surrounds them, and they try to do something about it. Like Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*, the students needed to leave what was familiar to them to journey into the unknown to find a resolution to their problems. Since story is about line, agency, and voice, it is inevitably about process, i.e., it is about the direction and struggle that any heroic journey takes. This story began with my desire to make anthropology more useful to the general public and the students' and teachers' willingness to risk failure to journey into a *world of their own*.

My journey started when I decided that I could combine educational and anthropological research and theory to create a liminal space in an elementary school classroom. I wanted to examine the possibility that there is a structure and process within ritual that is inherently creative, that develops both individual and group creativity, a sense of self worth, and relationship to community, and that can be applied to the initiation, i.e., education, rites in any culture including our own. There were three components of ritual process that had to be examined in the experiment: 1] the process and structure of the ritual itself; 2] the development of *communitas* within that space; and 3] the narrative grounding of the experience that the students would have.

Ritual needed to be visualized not as a structured, stylized, static, repetitive event, nor as a Freudian symbol of neurotic behavior, but as a process in which there is a structure where participants feel safe to explore their world creatively both as individuals and as a community. For Ronald Grimes (1982), ritual can be not only secular and creative, but it can be originated anywhere and by anyone:

Rituals occur. They do not merely recur... Rituals are not 'givens' because we just as surely create them as we receive them from traditions and revelations. Ritualizing is the action by which we mediate what is given and what is made, what is involuntary and what is chosen. (Pg. 57)

Mediation between what is given and what is created, what is involuntary and what is chosen sounded like a wonderful definition of democratic education.

Theater practitioners know that every *scripted* production is reinterpreted with a new cast, with a different artistic team, with a different technical staff. Even if a replacement actor repeats the same words and actions of a former actor, he will change the experience of a production. Theater productions 'occur'; they don't 'recur' just as rituals 'occur' and ritual, because it is not scripted, allows more flexibility.

In ritual performance, there is a structure within which certain things must happen but there are a variety of actions and words that may be used within the structure. In other words, ritual is more improvisational than formal theater and it is in this improvisational quality that ritual might become applicable to Dewey's theory of education. Grimes also suggested the basic structure for a learning ritual. He perceived Turner's theory of ritual as inherently dramatic:

Turner's dramatism depends on perceiving the similarities among dramatic performance on stage, ritualistic enactments, and public crises. These have

in common: 1] the playing of roles, 2] the use of rhetorical style speech, 3] an audience, 4] knowledge and acceptance of a single set of rules, 5] and a climax. (Pg. 147)

If ritual is dramatic, it is based on physical experience, action, and performance and would involve the integration of the mind, the body, the emotions and the will that Dewey suggests was necessary for democratic education.

Most important, ritual is a process that not only allows reflection, a cognitive tool necessary for Dewey's process, but also is, by its structure, reflective. According to Bobby Alexander (1991), ritual is an undefined state where time and space are "out of the ordinary in order to reflect on an ideal of community and to create, sometimes through routine and sometimes experimentation, the experience of community" (Pg. 24). Ritual allows both cognitive and experiential reflection because it can transform a concept into liminal play. Ritual can only be useful in education if there is a reflective component to it. Simply 'playing roles' or 'playing history' would not be a total learning experience. Students must be able to reflect on their experience. They complete the reflective segment of the experience in the creation of narratives that will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The idea of using ritual to transform lives is not a new one in contemporary America. Jerzy Grotowski has attempted to transform the sterility of modern theater in which an audience *observes* human behavior as if they were scientifically inspecting specimens into a ritual process in which actors and audience engage in *participatory* experiences that are transformative. Sam Keen, Paul Rebillot, Jeanne Huston, and Stanislav Grof are also currently doing these ritual processes with adults throughout the country among others, all of

whom have their own approach to the use of ritual. Alexander (1991) claims that Grotowski:

sees human exchange as unsatisfying existentially, as diminished by a society that blocks directness and genuineness in everyday life ... Grotowski is interested in the possibilities theater holds for creating more open-ended and genuine interchange than the social routines that serve expediency." (Pg. 112)

Alexander believes that Grotowski has contributed to a reinvestment in the conception and uses of ritual in Western culture.

Since there have been contemporary experiments in the secular uses of ritual, the questions became: Could teachers quit being ritual performers and become liminal servants? Could a ritual space in education allow active participation, decision-making, and problem solving for both individuals and the community? Could ritual be the basis for a democratic method of instruction and could it be used to build a democratic community? And could ritual theory be a way in which anthropological theory became more public.

Again, I return to the concept of public anthropology. In the research, anthropology became public, accessible and activist in a variety of ways. In *A Community of Heroes* public anthropology was used in four different ways. It: 1] used traditional rites of passage; 2] performed ethnography; 3] guided students in the use of anthropological research tools to investigate their world; and 4] used anthropological theory as the conceptual base for the pedagogical model.

Activist research assumes a lack of objectivity, i.e., there is a presumption of bias, because activism moves towards change some kind of change. Therefore,

it was my intention that my research would produce democratic values, would increase relationality, and would develop a participatory citizenry.

It was my goal to use anthropological tools to build a democratic community. There is a common point where education, ritual, and narrative intersect: community. Education that centers on training can be individual, but education focused on development of democratic values requires communal experience. Ritual cannot exist without formal, public, communal enactments (Rappaport, 1999) which means community²⁶. And narrative can exist in individual experience but to communicate conjoint experience a community must mutually accept a narrative.

The research project lasted three years. There was a pilot program the first year to find participants²⁷ and a post-experiment program during the third year. During the experimental year students lived and wrote their own personal adventure as heroes, enacted the heroic adventures of the historical figures in their social studies curriculum, and learned techniques from anthropologists and historians, so they could uncover heroism in their own families and among community members. All this was done within the context of a ritualized subjunctive world. The post-experiment follow-up ran one year in one fourth grade class to test the experiment's reliability. The follow-up included eight third grade (now fourth grade) students who had participated in the original

²⁶ Private rituals are considered habits or neuroses

²⁷ See pages 9 -10

experiment and sixteen students who were new to the process. The follow up year also trained one faculty member to act as a champion for the project.

The following is the chronology of the experiences the students had in their subjunctive worlds:

CHRONOLOGY OF LIFE IN LIMINAL WORLD

Third Grade

September - October	Basic Training
November	The Creation of an Imaginary Community
November - December	Personal Heroic Adventure & Writing Assignment
January - February	Adventures in Local History
March - early April	Reading Historical Novels & Writing Assignment
April	Learning How to Do Research: History and Anthropology
April	Interviewing the Immediate Family Members
May - mid June	Making the Imaginary Community Work: Government, Law, Economics & Leisure

Fourth Grade - First Year

September	Basic Training
October	Landing on Imaginary Planet & Heroic Adventure
November	Reading Heroic Novels & Writing About Personal Journey
December - February	Adventures in State History
February	Reading Historical Novels & Writing About History
March	Choosing a government, laws and taboos
April	Interviewing Family Members about Coming to America & Writing Assignment on Heroic Adventures of Family
May - mid June	Making the Imaginary Community Work: Emphasis on Economics and Government

Fourth Grade - Second Year Additions

April	Saving the Planet: Learning the Scientific Method
May - mid June	Honoring Their Pledge

Fifth Grade

September	Basic Training
September-October	The First People & Learning How to Write a Newspaper
November-December	The Europeans, and the Heroic Quest
January	Minor Crisis, Reading a Novel Learning Story Structure & Writing a Heroic Story
February	The Europeans Fight for Power
March	The Europeans Come to the New World &

April	Writing Historical Diaries and Journals
May	Interviewing & Videotaping Senior Citizens about Heroic Youth & Writing Their Stories
May - June	The Revolution Against the English King The Continental Congress

Part One: Basic Training

I return the idea of Micronesian²⁸ societies where children are symbolically stolen from their mothers as the initiation into their education. The assumption is that, from the time they are stolen, they are no longer children, they will undertake a journey to become adults. They must learn to be adult members of the society. Many spend years in their liminal society where they go through a training process before they are tested. On September 7, 1999, the third and fourth grade novices came together for the first time. The fifth grade would-be heroes met on September 8, 1999. As a class they had been together for about a week, but on this day they met to start their journeys and a journey together meant preparation. Like the heroes of old, these heroes needed to develop skills if they were to succeed on their journeys. As heroes, they needed to imagine that, like the children in traditional societies, they had left home to become adults, adults who would work together to create a democratic world. They needed to imagine they were children no longer.

As McLaren's liminal servant, it was my job to: 1] create their ritual learning space, 2] invent the ritual structure in which the heroes would play, and 3] train the heroes so they could work within that space. Before the students could enter the ritual world, two things had to be done: 1] the ritual space had to be

protected, continuously available, and honored, and 2] the students needed to be trained to be able to create a conjoint imaginary world.

The ritual space could not be in the classroom because the 'set' in the classroom is authoritarian rather than democratic. All three teachers made every effort to work against the authoritarian aspects of the classroom design. Still the individual desks are clearly 'workstations' and not only make it clear where the power lies in the space, but also are used to separate students from each other. Individual responsibility rather than community responsibility is reflected in the design of the classroom space. We had been given permission to use empty spaces outside of the classrooms. By using the project area in the elementary school and the empty band room at the intermediate school, the area had no immediately apparent institutionalized power structures and the students could function as a community rather than as individuals. The students could design this area each day. Whenever there was information that the students needed to know before they began a ritual activity, they would learn it in the classroom. Lectures never occurred in the ritual space. The ritual space was consistently used in an egalitarian way. The rules the students and teachers tacitly agreed upon before using the space were:

1. The space is considered sacred and must be clean before we start to create our world. It must also be returned to a clean, empty area when we leave each day.
2. We start and end each session sitting on the floor in a circle. Students and teachers are equal visually when seated in a circle on the floor.

²⁸ See page 36

3. We use a talking stick when we discuss issues, so there is no leader who can dominate the group including the teacher. No voice is valued more than any other until that value is earned.
4. Every student is given an opportunity to express their views based on their experience.

Preparing the space for ritual play and then returning the space to the way we found it before we began was an important part of the training. Students who work together needed to care for their own ritual space. No one was assigned tasks by the teachers; cleaning was not viewed as a position of power or of denigration and teachers participate along side students.

The training is a preparation for 'conjoint collective imagination' that would allow all students to enter an imaginary world and live in it. The training for the heroes was a series of exercises that they played for approximately two hours twice a week. Training took place in the ritual space. The training was cumulative. If a group of students did well, they moved quickly through the training. If they could not learn to cooperate, exercises were added in the area in which they had problems. The fifth graders moved through the training in two weeks. The fourth graders used all eight weeks, and the third graders took ten weeks. The third and fourth graders returned to training exercises whenever they lost their focus. This happened frequently with the third graders; rarely, with the fourth graders and happened once in the fifth grade.

The skills that they needed to develop were: 1] concentration, 2] cooperation, 3] awareness of each other and the ritual space and 4] a willingness to take risks and think creatively. Individual learning had to be replaced by cooperative learning to create an imaginary world. **Level One** training was performed by the

students silently and built individual concentration and physical expressiveness. Concentration is the core skill necessary to create an imaginary world, because students must be able to keep their focus in an imagined reality. **Level One** exercises developed students' ability to follow commands silently. Focus was on use of the body not only in an effort to engage in experiential learning, but because students concentrated more intensely during silent activities. Each exercise strengthened the skill being developed during that level, in this case concentration. During **Level One** and **Level Two** all exercises were performed in silence.

The next series of exercises, **Level Two**, required cooperative concentration and heightened awareness. Cooperation is necessary to create a conjoint experience in an imagined world and awareness of their environment and each other would allow students to react honestly and creatively to any situation. Students needed to learn to work together in close cooperation, so they started by working in dyads that were randomly selected²⁹. There were several activities that were significant to the training and used regularly to mark the progress of the participants. One of those exercises was Mirrors, and variations of it, which is the core exercise in **Level Two**. Students would face each other, choose a leader, and one would follow the other, so that it is impossible to tell who is leading and who is following. The lead was exchanged without stopping. They would become a mirror of each other. Because children were likely to move

²⁹ All partnering was random selecting. Partners, or teams, were chosen based on a number of random methods such as drawing cards or numbers.

quickly which often made them work against each other, very slow music was used to slow their rhythms and focus their movement. The music gave them a rhythm to follow so partnering was easier and the connection, stronger.

Once students were concentrating and working cooperatively with each other rather than taking orders, they moved to **Level Three** exercises in which they developed awareness, imagination, and problem solving skills. Awareness involved using all their senses to become more sensitized to each other and their environment and, of course, exercises that developed their imaginations and sense memories would allow them to enter their own world more fully. During this level, students began to speak to each other for the first time.

Level Four of their training developed large group collective imagination which would be used in the ritual space and would also develop their storytelling skills, necessary for the reflective component of the experiment. Students began to develop these skills by participating in an exercise called Build A Story. Based on a need to use listening skills and the elements of story, this exercise increased their ability to create a collective story while developing cooperation, listening skills, and imagination. The adults did not critique the collective stories, because the goal was to get students to enhance their own ability to evaluate themselves rather than seek evaluation from adults. In the third and fourth grades, books were created based on the Build A Story exercises. These books were used to reinforce the elements of story, to develop the narrative portion of the experience, and to model revising and editing skills. More than rules about discipline, more than the exercises they played together, in all grades, the *story*

they told together unified them. The finished product of collective stories made them a team proud of their joint effort.

Level Five continued the development of individual awareness, built trust within the group, and continued to develop oral and written skills. The last cooperation and awareness training exercise was Give-and-Take. This exercise added to students' cooperation and awareness, and awakened students' aural and physical expressiveness. The exercise is difficult because it requires awareness on the part of every person in the space. One person would create a sound or movement. Only one person is allowed to move at a time. The group is coached to either "take the sound and movement away" by creating their own movement or "give the sound and movement to another" by waiting until the sound and movement is given to them by the person moving. To move one at time based on these directions requires totally awareness of one another. Once the sound and movement had been taken or given, the person who 'had it' would then transform it into their own sound and movement. Probably the most difficult of all the training exercise, this exercise requires students' awareness of everything everyone else does. It also asks them to respond to the sounds and actions of others, play with that response and transform the response into a unique expression of their own. Students started using this exercise in small groups and moved to larger groups until the whole class was working together. Give-and-Take helped students cooperate and learn to take turns without a leader, built nonverbal communication, responsiveness, and creativity. Although this exercise was very difficult, it became one of their favorite exercises.

The last level, **Level Six**, developed collective problem solving and creative thinking. The game that would become a metaphor for problem solving in their future world was a game called Cross-Over, or Knots. The class is divided into two groups. Each group stood in a tight circle, crossed their arms in front of themselves, and then each student took hold of two different people's hands who were not standing next to them. The group looked like they were completely knotted together. They then tried to get themselves untangled without releasing their hands. This game was also used to teach different leadership styles including autocratic, aristocratic, and democratic leadership. For example, students would get unraveled with one person giving directions, with a small group giving directions and with everyone trying to solve the problem. This was their first lesson in government. The students learned that democracy only worked when people listened to each other.

The last skill that the students needed was the ability to imagine collectively and play together in an imaginary world. If they were to live in a subjunctive world as an entire class, they needed to build this shared imagination. Students entered an imaginary world individually. Each grade level had a more complex and complicated story about the world they had to explore. Third graders were told that anything can happen; fourth graders landed on a planet in another universe, and fifth graders went back in time. Once inside, they used their senses to explore this imagined world. After some exploration, students found a partner, took the partner into their magical land, and without speaking, showed each other the world they had created. In most of the training games, students

worked as individuals or in pairs. During this level, students worked in larger teams or began to work as an entire class.

The cooperative and creative skills' training was necessary before entering the ritual space. An imaginary world required autonomy and respect from and for each other. By the end of their training, each class had developed the skills to enter their own world. There was a significant difference in the time it took to train each class: fifth graders were ready in two weeks; fourth graders, five weeks; and third graders, ten weeks. The third grade class had relied more on outside authority and were more disdainful of each other than the other classes.

Part Two: Personal Hero Stories

Before entering the ritual world, the Messenger of the Gods explained to the third and fourth grade classes that they must work as a community to live in Zandar and Zorak³⁰. They would be tested throughout their time there to see if they would be able to behave as members of a community. The third graders worried that they not be able to work together and would fail so they created some rules for themselves. The rules they expected each other to follow were:

- They must always work as a team
- They can never tell on each other
- They must help each other in their work if they are asked
- They must use active listening with each other
- They must be respectful of each others' ideas
- They must use the talking stick.

³⁰ These are the names of their imaginary worlds. Unlike their own names, I created the names of the imaginary worlds prior to their entry into them. These were real places to the students, even though they created the geography of them.

This discussion took place with very little input from Liz, the third grade teacher, or me. With a sense of commitment to the group and with a process with which they could work through their own problems they were ready to enter their subjunctive world.

To maintain the formality and order, which Rappaport (1999) suggests is a significant part of ritual, there was a process for entering their subjunctive world each time. They would first set up the design of the world for the project area. Then they entered the world in silence, dressed their character, and set up their homes silently. When everything was ready, I turned off the lights and they 'went to sleep'. When the lights came on, they awoken to do their daily chores and private rituals silently. All this was mimed. When they first spoke, it was to hear the story that binds the community together. With this ritual entry and consistent rules about teamwork, the would-be heroes were ready to begin each day in a world of their own.

The District expects that students will learn their social studies, language arts, and character clusters curricula within this subjunctive world. The third grade social studies curriculum focuses on understanding what a community is. The fourth grade curriculum centers on the State's history, geography, economics, and government, and the fifth grade studies American history from the 'first Americans' through the founding of 'the new nation'. For all grades the core idea is to understand how community works. By the fifth grade democratic principles become the focus of social studies instruction, so their imaginary world was a

way that all the classes learned the principles of community and democratic decision making.

The first step in creating a community of heroes would be creating the heroes themselves. When the students first entered their subjunctive worlds, they would work as individuals and their first use of anthropology would be going on a traditional rite of passage journey as described in anthropological research. Each student would have to go on a personal vision quest³¹ to earn her, or his, right to enter the community. In all three grades, the first thing that we had to do was find out what heroes were and what they did. A storyteller was invited to tell heroic stories and a philosopher came to talk about myths. After hearing stories and listening to the history of heroes, the students' collective definition of heroes was that they have to 'leave home' to take an emotional, physical, intellectual, or spiritual risk. They had to confront their greatest fear and conquer that fear and they had to share their reward with their community. Each grade level had a more difficult heroic challenge. The third graders created characters with bits of cloth and only had to learn how to live together in a community. Their journey took five two-and-a-half-hour class sessions. The fourth graders also used the

³¹ The vision quests were structured searches for personal vision found throughout pre-Columbian Native America. In its most basic form, a vision quest involved an individual alone in the wilderness, spending a number of days fasting and seeking spiritual power/vision for life. In most societies, the vision quest was part of a youth's ritual passage into adulthood. In some societies both boys and girls went on vision quests, in others only boys. Often, a young woman's seclusion took place inside a special lodge, rather than in the wilderness. For some groups, the vision quest was solely a ritual of puberty, a rite in which a young person acquired his or her lifelong spirit guardian. Among other peoples, particularly in the Plains, anyone might seek supernatural guidance in a quest at any critical point in life -- or simply quest periodically as a spiritual discipline. The quest held the greatest significance for young men training to be warriors: Without a spirit guardian, no man survived many battles. Tapestry: The Institute for Philosophy, Religion, and the Life Sciences, Inc., 2000, Also see Benedict, 1934

cloth, but had to find the tension in their own bodies to create their enemies and would have to care for a planet devastated by other immigrants who had come before them. Their hero's journey took two class sessions. The fifth graders not only added the use of character masks to create their heroes, but their journeys began in medieval Europe and status roles were arbitrarily assigned to them as part of the creation of their characters. These heroes became the people who journeyed to the New World. Their vision quest journey took one session.

Using bits of scrap material, the students dressed themselves; with the masks and the cloths they changed their body positions. They were heroes: some moved with the strength and power of warriors or the grace of a princess, some hid behind their cloths like mysterious strangers, some were old and wise, some were children. The magic of their transformation by simply putting on a piece of cloth or wearing a mask was perceptible when their physicality changed. They perceived themselves differently, so both held themselves and spoke differently.

One of the major elements of this project is the power of narrative in the learning process, so to honor that principle I will use students' stories as examples of the ways that anthropology is used in the classroom.

David is in the third grade. He is in the middle of his 'hero's journey'. Over the past few days he has created a hero from a piece of cloth and his own imagination. He pulls on a magical rope and the magician [me] threatens the heroes, "If you drop the rope for even a moment, or fall from your mountain, you will never get to go on your quest or find your vision."

David grasps the imaginary rope tighter and pulls on it with the sensory awareness of a mime artist. He never gives up or loses his concentration. When it is time to announce the prize he has discovered at the end of the rope, David

stands very tall and exclaims, "I've found a box of lost souls." David knows all the details of the imagined story about how these souls were stolen.

Then the magician tells the heroes that the sorcerer gave them an opportunity to see what it was that they were seeking; they have held it for a moment and it disappears. David shouts out, "I've lost my soul! I've lost my soul!" The next day the heroes will have to go on a quest to find what they value and will have to confront their antagonist.

The next day David is emotionally charged when he comes into the ritual space. He has always been highly volatile and easily frustrated. He takes heavy doses of Ritalin everyday and still his behavior is unpredictable. David is unable to function today because he can't remember how he dressed his character. He begins to cry. David cries often. I tell him to calm down or he won't be able to play ... I also remember how he used his piece of cloth, so I dress the character telling him that I won't dress him again and won't put up with his crying.

Out of more cloth, chairs, and tables the students and I create a land of adventure. I place the students around the room to begin their quests ... on top of mountains, by the 'river', in caves. I try to place David in a cave. He balks; he cries. He says the cave is too small even though I can fit into it easily. I tell him to stand in a corner of the room. He thinks I am punishing him and confesses that he is upset because his mother's boyfriend is leaving the apartment and is taking all the toys that he bought for David and his brother with him. I don't know how to respond. I simply tell him I was just trying to find a different place for him to start the quest. He stops crying and starts the game.

No one is allowed to speak. Everyone is on a separate quest. They play the hero, the hero's enemy, and an animal that helps them on their quest. David, like all the other students, is placed in a different position, as if he were a statue, and is told to take his cloth to create a costume for the antagonist who was keeping the hero from his goal. Using the same cloth, they dress this character. David's body changes drastically. He stands taller, walks more stiffly, and contorts his body strangely.

The enemies control the land. They move around as if they own it. They study each other. They growl, groan, hiss, laugh or shout. The enemies have a party. David's antagonist is one of the more powerful villains. He 'dances' his anger at the thought that the hero is coming to steal the thing that he is protecting. He talks about what he will do to the hero if he tries to take the lost souls.

The room looks chaotic and I fear that the principal, Mr. Spring, will walk in, be shocked at my apparent lack of management, and stop the exercise. The principal does come in. He smiles and says, "They look like they are all focused." I look around and he's right! The children are completely absorbed in their own adventures. Each student is concentrating on his or her own story. There is no conflict, no talking, and no accidental abuses of each other's personal space.

When the hour is over, all the students have found a way to conquer their hero's enemy. They have obtained their quest. David is elated! "I found my soul,"

he announces proudly and continues to tell anyone who will listen after class. "I found all the souls!"

In the weeks that follow David writes a magnificent story about his journey. The story is fifteen pages and is filled with the details of his imaginary journey. David is now a hero and, soul undiminished, he will live as a hero through the rest of the year. As a hero, David never cries, never whines, never complains. He is a hero and knows exactly how a hero should behave.

In the above story, David went on a traditional vision quest. His goal, like that of young men participating in rites of passage in some Native American traditions, was to find the way that he would individually (see Benedict, 1934, Campbell, 1968) serve his community. Using the imagery of a heroic quest, David transformed his image of himself as a scared victim into one of a competent community member. Throughout the rest of the year he saw himself as a hero.

These characters and journeys had great personal significance to the students who created them. A pattern that became apparent in their characterizations was their interest in their own cultural history. In the third grade, the African-American students started the year by choosing to sit with and play with each other. Within several days, however, students seemed to be unaware of ethnicity. They were more aware of physicality and grace than race. But when they created their heroes, African-American students, except Grace who is bi-racial, imagined themselves as a hero who came from an African country. Some Asian, Latina, and Hindu students also created heroes that reflected their cultural heritage.

The rewards that the heroes sought also revealed their personal fears and dreams. The quests mirrored Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1968) with amazing accuracy. The third grade students, who were most likely to still be

concerned with survival and security, most often sought food, clothing, shelter, the warmth of the sun, money, good parents and good teachers. By the fifth grade, sixteen out of twenty-four students sought friendship that mirrors Maslow's need for belonging, and fourth graders found either ways to protect their security or friendship. But the special needs students often searched for much weightier prizes: respect, peace of mind, 'a mother that loves me', and courage. With their rewards to share with others, they had accomplished their individual journeys and were ready to enter the community of heroes.

Part Three: Performing Ethnography

Once on Zorak the fourth graders realized that they could swim, ride horses, eat together, tell stories, climb trees, swing on vines, play with the animals, and read. They also quickly became aware that there were no televisions, radios, phones, video games, Pokemon cards, electricity, alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs. There were no malls, or stores, or money, or computers, except a laptop that Alissa Bockwood had brought with her. There were no soft drinks, or MacDonalds, no toys, and no restaurants. They were on their own.

Now they were heroes in a world very different than their own. They would write their adventures and it would become a part of their history. Geography, government, history, economics, diversity, and change were the core ideas that the heroes would learn in their own world and they would learn it using the second element of public anthropology: they would perform ethnography. They would return to before the recorded history of their State to explore how people lived then and how they interacted with other groups when they immigrated to the area and they would use that experience to create the governing principles of their own world.

They first had to define community for *themselves*. The composite definition in all three grades was “a community is a place where people live, work, play, and create together ... and share and help each other.” To make their communities work, they would need jobs, laws, government, and entertainment.

Since a community was a **place**, the heroes needed to learn about geography first, so they needed to create a clear vision of the geography of their imaginary worlds. They studied maps to learn how to make maps of their own world. Studying classroom maps, they saw that there were five elements that are important to all maps: a title, a scale, a compass, and a legend, or key, and symbols. They learned the compass directions. Then they made maps of their own worlds. In the third and fourth grades, those maps were always mounted in the ritual spaces. In the fifth grade, the places changed so frequently that we would draw them on a blackboard in the space.

In the third grade class, we also included several science lessons by returning to the Animal Kingdom. Each hero had either been given, or had chosen, an animal³² that would help them with their quest. Using classroom references and the Internet, third graders researched their animals. They discussed the geography that is necessary to sustain the habitats for the different animals, drew those elements on the maps, and placed the animals in the appropriate places. Their next adventure when they returned to Zandar was

³² The students portrayed their own hero, enemy, and the animal by changing the way that they used their cloth as a costume

to meet their animal friend in its natural habitat. Using the map, we created a space that looked like the Animal Kingdom in the project area:

The Messenger transported the heroes into the Animal Kingdom, but placed them at a great distance from the habitat of their animal. They were told that before they got to their animal they had to explore all the other spaces in the Animal Kingdom and meet other animals. Students moved around the space without speaking, without guidance from adults, and without relating to each other in any way. At each place, they stopped to relate to the animal, sometimes with fear, sometimes playfully. When they met the animal from their hero's journey, they spent time with it, and then were guided to either release their wild friend from its obligation to help them or keep it with them. They all released their animals and watched as the animals moved freely in their own worlds. The heroes then shared their adventure with another person and wrote their adventure in their journals.

Freeing their imaginary animal helpers into the wild was one of the more touching moments all year.

All grades had to gain an understanding of different forms of government. Third and fourth graders had to choose the kind of government they would have in their communities. Fifth graders had to enact the governments of different cultures. To familiarize students with the concepts, within the classroom space I taught lessons as an autocratic teacher, had a select group of students help me teach another lesson on grammar to explain aristocracy, and allowed the students to work together to learn democratically. The younger students loved to 'play' at autocracy. They liked to sit up straight; to 'act' as if they were scared; to stand to speak and address me as 'ma'am'. The fifth graders resented the autocratic teacher even if it was in a make-believe world. They openly resisted. As the autocratic teacher, I taught manners. The third and fourth graders loved 'etiquette'. Being polite as part of a game was great fun for them, but there was

little evidence that they transferred it into regular classroom activities. Saying 'please' and 'thank you' was a part of history to them, but not a part of their everyday life.

When it was time to decide on their government, both the third and fourth grade classes were very thoughtful in their discussions. In the fourth grade:

They were told that if they chose autocracy, The Messenger of the Gods would choose the king or queen under whom they would live. If they chose aristocracy, they would decide on the criteria for choosing the aristocrats, but The Messenger would have to approve that decision. If they chose democracy, they would have to decide whether it was majority or consensus, direct or representative. They were told that they would have to write laws. They were told that if any government showed a lack of order, the gods would destroy their village. Their discussion went on for an hour-and-a-half and was lively. They all sat around a big table. At first they were organized and everyone got a chance to be heard. There were 13 for democracy and 6 for aristocracy. NO ONE WANTED AUTOCRACY. Alissa was the most vocal spokesperson for the aristocrats. Tom spoke most eloquently for the democrats. He talked about aristocrats being able to come into your home and take everything and kill you if they chose. Jay gave a great speech about having an uncle who lived in an autocratic country and how difficult it was. The town members had to reach consensus. The vote changed again and again; people would change their minds but the difference consistently had a span of five people. Alissa and Junior were the only aristocrats who never switched their vote. The discussion got heated and out of control. I gave them 'the talking stick' that the third graders used and they instantly controlled themselves and continued the discussion. Five minutes before the end of the class I told them that those that wanted an aristocracy could have it, i.e. the village would split in half. There were eleven democrats and eight aristocrats at that point. (Some students were absent). The democrats, led by Jay and Cwisa, had to decide on the kind of democracy they wanted. They chose consensus and direct democracy. They created two laws: no one can kill or steal. The democrats worked famously together. By the end of the day Okinawa had become the person who organized the decision-making process; Jay continued to be the most creative problem solver; and Cwisa quietly kept track of all the decisions and laws that they had agreed upon.

The aristocrats did not start out as well. They chose Alissa and Junior as their aristocratic leaders because they fought for aristocracy the longest. There were already problems. Junior was being silly because he was an aristocrat and started being abusive and belligerent, so the Messenger 'killed' him. He cried great sobs, but was willing to return reincarnated as a peasant. The group thought Alissa just 'wanted to be the boss', especially when she named the town

'Bockwood', her last name, but she really lost them when she decided that the females would be aristocrats and all the males would be peasants. Alissa lost control of the men. They refused to listen to her or follow her orders. She lost a great deal of her social capital while the democrats were gaining it.

In processing the experience, we talked about the mistake that the aristocrats made. We talked about ways aristocrats could choose to set up their government and about aristocratic selection by 'birth', by 'talent' or by 'work'.

The democrats allowed the aristocrats to change their government. The next day, Alissa told the people of Bockwood that she had reconsidered and that people would earn the right to be aristocrats. She would choose those who worked hardest for the town. Nick became one of the leaders of the community and never lost his position.

It was in the debate over governing styles that the attitudes in the class changed. Students in cliques took different positions in the debate about governance and friendships didn't matter. Cwisa and Alissa Bockwood were on opposing sides. Skeeter and Nick, who were best buddies eventually stayed together, but during the discussion process, they changed sides without being conscious of each other's feelings.

The most fascinating change to occur as a result of the discussion about governance was that girls and boys began to work together and live together for the first time. The issue that seemed to be the greatest problem in fourth grade was gender awareness and discrimination between the students. Friends were important in the fourth grade and boys and girls were very conscious that there was a difference between them. The girls would play with the boys, but the boys seemed to appear 'weak' if they played with the girls. Up to this point in the year, I had never seen boys and girls playing together on the playground or during

indoor recess. A boy would play alone rather than join the girls. Now boys and girls chose to work together based on the ideas they believed. Alissa was the only girl who argued for aristocracy. She didn't seem to care that she would be working only with boys, but by the end of the discussion she had one other girl and got another girl who was absent the day of the debate to live in her village. Cwisa, Okinawa, Jay and Tom became friends as they worked together in their democratic community.

When their governments were in place, the Messenger of the Gods told the heroes they were going to be sent back in time to learn how to create their community by becoming other people who tried to form communities.

Experiencing the State's early history was done using different colored index cards which meant the cost of this part of the experiment was less than \$3.00.

There were three different concepts the cards represented. 1] **Social capital cards** expressed the ability the group had to keep their own community alive and well; 2] **Trading cards** reflected how interwoven cultures became; and 3] **drug problem cards** were given to communities who became addicted to whiskey, a strategy that the Europeans used to get land from the Indians in the State. A well-organized community that solved problems, told their origin story every day, participated in daily rituals and daily activities, and listened to each other with respect earned social capital cards. The groups traded with index cards of different colors. Each group assigned one person who was responsible for all of their cards and the cards were guarded painstakingly. Once the Indians were tricked into taking the whiskey trading card, they had to draw a 'drug problem'

card each day. The problem cards included betrayals, killings within the tribe, accidental deaths, and arguments that might cost the tribe both people and social capital. Drugs made it almost impossible for the Ottawa, who joined the French traders, to succeed.

First students had to do research so they could play their different roles. They first studied the Ottawa and the Huron, two nations that lived in the State, but had very different cultures. Once they had decided on their Indian names and heard the creation stories, they returned to the ritual space, but this time it was the State in the 1600s. They made a map. The Ottawa lived in the northwest; the Huron in the southeast. The Huron were richer, so they got more cloth and more furniture with which to build their village.

The Indians' first task was to build their homes while abiding by the governing structure of their community: the Hurons, aristocratically, the Ottawa, democratically. The democrats knew the Ottawa had consensus democracy, so decided to choose chiefs who were experts in different areas. They listened to the advice of the experts. Cwisa, who was now Bright Sunlight, was a builder, so she was the expert and organized the construction of the village each day. The Ottawa worked together without ever arguing amongst themselves. Bright Sunlight would make a suggestion and they would all agree before they did anything. Their home took longer to make than the Hurons, but there were no arguments and the house was quite beautiful. They put a round table in the center of the house, put the cloth on it and it became their storage space. They all slept in a circle around the perimeter of the house.

Women ruled the Hurons. The boys had great difficulty taking orders from the girls and the girls kept expecting me to solve their problems with the boys. Their house was built quickly and was also lovely. It had individual sleeping compartments or rooms. The Hurons would fight over who got to sleep where.

Next the tribes woke and went to the river to meet Mother Earth (a role I play) where the shaman (Nick, who was now Wise Otter) read their creation story. Mother Earth told them that to learn the story of their people they must be still. She also told them they were about to go on a hunt and to kill an animal they must learn perfect stillness and cooperation. The tribes returned to their villages to do their daily chores and prepare for the winter: harvesting their crops, fishing, and gathering nuts and berries in the woods.

AND THEN THE HUNT: I am the deer,(because Mother Earth provides for her children). There are eleven Ottawa; they have to hit (tag) the deer eight times. The Ottawa went first. They all hid. If they moved at all, as the deer, I would hear them and retreat. I did that once. Then they surrounded me. Bright Sunlight did the best job for the Ottawa, because her concentration is better than any of the other students. She watched the deer's moves and placed herself strategically to tag me on my back when I was chasing another tribe member. They killed me. Five hit me, but were injured (tagged) in the process and three of them hit me and got away. They thanked the deer for allowing them to kill it; they cut it up and dried the meat and carried it home. The Huron also successfully killed their deer.

When winter came, the village that had worked the most effectively together and had garnered the most social capital survived. Because they did not behave in an orderly way and did not respect each other as well as the Ottawa, Mother Earth destroyed the Huron village.

The Hurons now became the Europeans who traveled to the New World.

Cwisa's [Bright Sunlight's] story is an example of what Victor Turner calls "performing ethnography". Turner (1987) claims, "Cognizing the connections, we fail to form a satisfactory impression of how another culture's members 'experience' one another. For feeling and will, as well as thought, constitute the structures of culture ..." (Pg. 139) Here is an excerpt from her story, in her own words, about the coming of the Jesuits and the French traders:

One morning we got up and ate. When we went outside these people were there. They wore long black robes. They looked funny.

"Why you come?" I said. They said, "Owoon bomo boom boom na fa wa."

"What?" I said.

They taught us their language. Then they said, "We are French priests." Then they said, "Do you want tools?"

"What kind?" I said.

"Bows, and arrows and spears of metal."

I took the rest of the Indians into the longhouse to talk. We agreed that if they wanted to give us tools, it was fine with us. We went back outside and they gave us tools. Then the French priests said, "Do you know about the Father?"

"No." I said, "But we know about Mother."

"Well," said the French Priests, "Father lives in Heaven and sometimes we call Father 'God'."

"What's Heaven?" I said.

"Heaven is where you go when you die."

"Oh." I said.

Some of the Indians believed in the Father but I didn't. We let the French priests come in our longhouse. We were talking to the French priests when I looked outside and there were these other people there. All the Indians and the French priests came outside.

"Why are you here?" I asked.

"We came to do some trading," they said.

"And who are you?" I asked.

"We are French traders."

"What you trade?" I said.

"We will give you guns for furs," they said.

All the Indians and the French priests came back inside. We agreed that if they gave us one gun for each person in the tribe plus powder and ammunition we would give them half our furs, but we would keep the meat. When they gave us the guns they slipped in whiskey. After a little while we loved whiskey and would do anything to get more. The French traders controlled all of us ... at least all of us who weren't controlled by the French priests.

When the English came, they wanted possession of the land. It was almost inevitable that the cultures would go to war. The war was conducted with blindfolds and in silence. The groups could strategize about how many people they would send into the field at any time and whether they would kill their enemy or take prisoners. A prisoner was more valuable to them than a dead enemy, because the group with the most people would win the war and prisoners were counted as a half a person. The Ottawa and the priests, who did not fight, won because they maintained their social capital and their people. The French and the addicted Indians were more skilled fighters and strategists than the English, but like the French in history, they won in the West, but lost in the East, and politics cost them the territory.

The French beat the English; the Ottawa were decimated because of the drug problem; the French priests won converts because of the war. The French didn't understand when the English took the fort just like the French in the State didn't understand in 1763. Bright Sunlight lived through the whole thing. She was always the political leader and had to watch as her tribe was destroyed by alcohol. Pere Marquette and Pere Parler successfully converted many of the Ottawa; Running Wolf became a Catholic with great gusto and religious fervor. Fire Bird writes:

We had to go west. I, Fire Bird, became a buffalo hunter. Big Pika was also a buffalo hunter. Blue Flower plants blue corn. Bright Sunlight was supposed to lead us West. Flaming Falcon was the shaman. He is always supposed to read the story about Mother Earth to the people. Magic Snake was the medicine man. He also went West. So the Indians went West very sad because they practically destroyed Mother Earth. She told us to go West. We are always supposed to listen to Mother Earth and so we went out West very, very sad.

The English took over the land where we Indians used to live. I was especially very sad because I love Mother Earth.

Nothing was scripted. The idea was not to reenact history exactly but to face problems similar to those confronted by the people in their social studies books. Each cultural group was given goals to achieve and different students portrayed different roles within their community, so their personal objectives would also differ. The students used maps to create their homes; they studied different forms of government to learn how to create their world; they wrote laws and invented social taboos appropriate to the culture. They read historical novels, their social studies books, and used the library and the Internet to research the lives of the people that they would play. But more important than their cognitive research, the students had a lived experience of different cultures. Cwisa and the other Ottawa 'felt' what the world was like for the Ottawa before the Europeans came. They then 'felt' the complexity of dealing with people whose motives and goals differed from theirs; they used their will to try to manage the

invasion of strangers into their world; and they experienced the pain of leaving their home. The French priests felt how hard it was to convert the Indians; the French traders learned how to manipulate to gain control of the natives; and the English settlers experienced the isolation that came with wanting sole possession of the land. Culture is not described; diversity is not proselytized: it is experienced. Students felt the problems that arise when several cultures come together and later in the year, as heroes, they used this experience to design their own community and resolve conflicts among themselves.

Part Four: Using Anthropological Tools & Methods for Research

In the fifth grade, the students used this pedagogical structure, i.e., performed ethnography, to study the founding of America, from the 'first peoples' to the 'founding of a nation'. Their world was far more complex than the third and fourth grade worlds, because their social studies curriculum was much more specific and demanding³³. There was a significant emphasis on learning history, rather than skills, so their world mirrored the world on the North American and European continents. First, the entire class became six different Indian nations from across the continent. They set up villages, traded with each other, and met at intertribal councils. They then became vassals and serfs in England, France, and Spain ruled by autocratic kings³⁴. Then half the class became explorers for

³³ Also Bob had a background in theater, so he helped lead them in their imaginary play as a actor.

³⁴ The kings and queen were portrayed by Bob, the teacher, and two parent volunteers, who had been actors, so the students could feel the subjugation experienced under autocracy. Parental support was excellent in this room.

their kings and the Pope while the others returned to play three of the six native nations:

Amy was chosen as the leader of the Iroquois nation. Women were the decision-makers among the Iroquois and Amy led them with assurance. That is, she did until she met James Noble, the French trader who was once a serf but had earned his King's respect and journeyed to the new land. Noble promised to give the Iroquois nation guns, but instead gave them whiskey and addicted them to it. Now the French trader controlled Amy's tribe.

Once the students had performed ethnography the third element of public anthropology, i.e., using anthropological tools for research, became a part of their worlds. All classes invited guest speakers to give presentations to them about how anthropologists and historians collect data. After their demonstrations, the third and fourth graders studied each other's portrayal of local and State history. The third and fourth graders became historians. The third graders set up their Indian village and the fourth graders studied them. The dead lay on the ground and the story had to be investigated from that point backwards. The fourth grade went into the third grade project area to study and interview the settlers and the Potawatami; the third graders repeated the process in the fourth grade world. The fifth graders worked as anthropologists. They used anthropological research methods to study a different cultural group. Half of the class imagined themselves as anthropologists. They had been the Europeans who traveled to the New World. Now they would see the impact they had had on the Indians they met from a different perspective. As anthropologists, they would visit the Iroquois, Cherokee, and Ottawa villages that had been built out of pieces of cloth, chairs, music stands, and tables in the band room.

The villages are set up and the tribes pursue their daily activities and rituals in silence. They plant their crops, hunt, fish, pray to their gods, and treat the earth, their Mother, respectfully. The anthropologists, who are divided into three teams, enter the space. They have all been told that anthropologists need to listen sensitively to their informants. The team who meet the Cherokee are invited to a feast and are treated well. They learn that the Cherokee's first European visitors were Jesuit priests who taught them to use metal tools and converted them to Catholicism. The Ottawa were less friendly. The Ottawa had encounters with the English, the French traders, and the Jesuits. Each tried to manipulate them, so the Ottawa were distrustful of everyone. They hid half of their tribe in case the anthropologists were violent. Only the tribal leader would speak to the strangers and he only said a few words before he asked them to leave.

When the anthropologists came to the Iroquois village, Amy, the chief, stood before them and screamed at them in gibberish. She would not let them enter her village. She hates all outsiders because of what James Noble and the French traders have done to her people. The anthropologists sit outside the village and write quietly about what they observe, hoping that someday they will be invited inside the village.

Amy's story is an example of the use of anthropological tools in an elementary classroom. Students learned interviewing skills by studying the people they had created in their liminal space. In their subjunctive world they practiced using anthropological research methods on each other. In so doing, the students became aware of cultural differences and the concept of point of view.

That was their practice interview; they would use these skills again for a more powerful assignment³⁵. In all three grades, after they had returned from experiencing history, the Messenger of the Gods told them that they had to find out more about heroism in everyday life if they were to understand how to live heroically on a daily basis in their subjunctive worlds. Third and fourth grade students interviewed their parents or grandparents. Third graders simply had to

³⁵ This section of the project will be described in greater detail in Chapter Six

find one heroic adventure that a family member had had. Fourth graders had to find out how their family immigrated to the State or to America³⁶. Fifth graders interviewed local seniors about living through World War II or the Depression³⁷. All interviews were videotaped and submitted to the local library. Students ran the video cameras for each other and then took their data and turned it into a historical story.

Part Five: A Test of Integrity & Compassion

After the interviews, the fifth graders returned to their world to discover that George III, the English king, (played by Bob, their teacher) had begun to house his soldiers in their homes and confiscate their property without their permission. Some Northern settlers were even thrown into his jails without a trial or an explanation of the crime they were accused of committing. The students had created three major areas in the ritual space: New England, the Mid-Atlantic colonies and the South which were then subdivided into separate colonies. Students in each geographic area did not have to work together completely, but they were connected by geography. People in the same colony, however, had to agree on all decisions they made. Each student had drawn a card that gave them their colony and told them whether they were loyalists, rebels, freed slaves, or slave owners, and gave them their personal goals. The South had the most wealth so they would get the most tables, chairs and material.

³⁶ Parents, especially those who were first generation immigrants, were very pleased to have an opportunity to tell their stories to their children and have them videotaped.

The Revolution, of course, followed, but not without great debate. The Southern colonies were much less willing to rebel than the Northern ones because the King made them believe that he 'liked' them and would protect them. After the Revolution, the heroes, who represented all thirteen colonies, became their colony's representatives to the Continental Congress. It was during this convention that I discovered a problem in the process. Each student knew his or her individual goals. In Virginia alone, the three representatives had far different goals: one wanted a Union, one man one vote (not allowing slaves to vote but counting them in the census), and wanted to protect slave owners; another wanted the colonies to remain separate, wanted to protect the rights of slave owners, and wanted the South to form a federation; the third wanted to rejoin England.

The first topic to be debated at the Congress was **whether slavery should be allowed in the Union**. After the speeches, students conducted a preliminary vote on whether the union should be slave or free. Students then voted on whether to join the Union. The decision to form a Union had to be unanimous. Five representatives refused to join because they were slave owners. The next day's debate became very intense and the argument that viewed slaves as property and property as more important than human rights gained several more votes. At the conclusion, the Congress voted to form a Union that allowed slavery and protected the rights of individual property owners. This is what

³⁷ The fifth graders spent two hours twice a week for a month with their senior partner. They had lunches together, shared photograph albums and conversations, and made and shared a meal

happened in American history, so perhaps repetition of history is a learning experience, but somehow I had hoped that the students would have learned more about compassion through experiential learning.

The third graders had learned to live in a community and respect and care about each other. On the last day while playing outside after their ceremonial banquet, there were no fights, no arguments; they cleaned up after themselves without being asked. When I looked around, the King and Coco, who had fought much of the year, were playing quietly together on the wooden playground equipment underneath the flag Coco had made for the community. The fourth graders had become a community halfway through the year while writing their third collaborative story. When the story was typed for revision and edits, the students thought it was so good that they decided to send it, with all their other collective stories, to *Disney Productions* and *Dreamworks* to consider as animated features. They sent the letter, and then forgot about it, but from that day their experience was conjoint and joyful.

The fifth graders had always worked as a team, but somehow, they lacked compassion. I had witnessed evidence of compassion among students, but only in very small measures. One example happened during the pilot project in a sixth grader's journey:

Ryan was on a heroic journey, but his journey was different. He created a character much different than himself. Ryan is very witty, bright, and full of energy. His humor often was used to protect himself from other, bigger students. Using the masks, Ryan created an old, crippled man who was unable to move

together on the day that they videotaped their interviews.

his legs. His character lived frugally and watched as stronger characters took things from the little home that he had built.

When he pulled on the rope, his character could only use his arms. Because he quit he didn't successfully reach the end of the rope, so he didn't know what his quest was about. The magician threw him, and the other would-be heroes, into the Land of Adventure and they were off in pursuit of their quests. But Ryan barely moved. He had to crawl and didn't know what he was crawling after. The magician made them turn and meet their enemy. Ryan discovered that his enemy was Death. He stood up, took off the mask, and walked to the side of the room.

I went to him and asked what had happened. He told me that his character couldn't beat Death, so he quit. He just decided that he would die. I asked him if Death had killed him and he told me 'no', so I told him to put the mask back on and at least find out what his quest is. He put the mask back on, fell to the ground and crawled back into the space. He met a swan that helped him on his quest. I glanced at him often and he was always engaged in his story, always struggling, always crawling.

When the journey was over, Ryan was grinning broadly. He acted as if he had a secret. I asked him what he found. He told me that he found Beauty and that it had beaten Death. Ryan wrote a magnificent story that wasn't about his journey per se, but rather about an old man's struggle with disease and how he comes to terms with his own death.

By creating a character different than himself and experiencing that character's world, Ryan was learning empathy and compassion. He was learning to see the world from another's point of view and was learning these skills by using his own imagination in a safe, subjunctive space. By giving him permission to play within a liminal space, Ryan learned about both himself and others. If compassion could be acquired, then there must be a way to teach it to an entire classroom. I had spent a year experimenting with teaching a democratic pedagogy; students had learned how to work together democratically, they had improved their verbal skills, both written and oral, but they had not learned compassion. I began to wonder if there was a method I could employ in the liminal space to help students learn compassion.

In the post-experiment year with a second group of fourth graders, I invented an evil 'Other': Bert, the Evil King. Because of Bert's greed, Zorak had been ravished, the rivers polluted, the land eroded. The immigrants not only had to live successfully in a community, but they had to restore the land to earn the right to live on Zorak as heroes. Science and especially the scientific method of inquiry became an additional part of the curricula.

They came as immigrants who landed on Zorak by accident. They worked very hard to earn the right to be called heroes. They took their own personal hero's journey. They were sent back in time to see how people from different places tried to live together. They interviewed their families to find out how family members had been heroic. They met the Wizard of Zorak and learned the scientific method, so they could create hypotheses to heal the land of Zorak. They read books and wrote stories and learned about science, but that did not make them heroes.

They became heroes because they honored their promises. They wrote a pledge as immigrants to Zorak that they said regularly:

On my honor, I promise that I will work together with others to build a community on Zorak that will not use violence, but will get rid of evil in a positive way.

I promise that I will treat others in my community the way that I would like to be treated, that I will treat others fairly, respect all members of the community, and that I will help those that are hurt or disabled.

I promise that I will respect the land of Zorak, use it wisely, and will work to invent technology that will not hurt the land, but restore it so that we can all live and prosper in beauty and in health.

At the end of the year, they were tested on their ability to honor that pledge and they proved themselves to be spectacularly heroic. The community chose six heroes to confront six of Bert's minions and then Bert himself. Each villain had a secret vulnerability that, if discovered, would transform them, and the clues to those vulnerabilities could be discovered in the pledge, in all the books that the heroes had written, and in the minion's own words on the field of battle. The heroes worked together. They knew, in their hearts, they would be defeated if they broke their pledge. They treated everyone fairly, they sacrificed for others, they confronted their enemies and transformed them by their kindness and willingness to share their lives. On June 5, 2001, they returned to Earth, not as children, but as heroes.

The emphasis of an anthropological pedagogy is not placed on the acquisition of facts nor is it placed on the promotion of the field of anthropology, but rather an anthropological pedagogy emphasizes the value of relationships and the meaning within those relationships. It allows students to experience many points of view, so that they can put those viewpoints into dialogue with one another and it teaches the principles of democracy through the development of a multicultural community that they created themselves. When students play both the perceived 'good guys' and 'bad guys', they can learn both perception and compassion and they listen in a different way when others speak about their life experience. Anthropological fieldwork methodology is based on participant observation, on lived experience, and it is through lived experience as both the

Other and themselves that students can learn how to live together in a democratic society.

Chapter Four: How Their World Worked

Introduction

If the creation of a subjunctive world allows students to participate, to observe themselves, to reflect on their imagined lives, and to learn about democracy through the lived experience in a community, the question becomes: How did their world work to accomplish these goals. The rationale for this research was that anthropology could be used in ways that served public interests, i.e., it could, and should become 'public'. Chapter Three examined the use of anthropology in an elementary school: 1] as a traditional rites of passage vision quest; 2] as performed ethnography; and 3] as a way to help students investigate their world. This chapter will analyze and interpret how anthropological research and theory was used as the conceptual base for the pedagogical model.

In traditional societies, ritual and myth have been a part of educational systems that have integrated young people into the society as committed citizens for thousands of years. It has been used to develop useful, productive, and interrelated community members who lived in small, democratic communities since before recorded time. It seemed only logical that it could be used in developing citizens within a larger democratic context. Ritual creates a free space, a subjunctive space, where people can **play** with a range and a variety of possibilities. In ritual, the participant separates from her societal role and enters a liminal world where she can explore possibilities (Turner, 1969). Turner

describes the liminal space as a place where “people ‘play’” with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them” (1988, Pg. 27).

There are five major issues that need to be considered when examining how the familiar is defamiliarized and how ritual allowed students to explore, to play, to learn and to create community. These are: 1] the role of the ritual process in the education of elementary students; 2] the impact of ritual on individual creativity; 3] the impact of ritual on building community; 4] the role of the liminal servant/ritual master; and 5] the relationship between ritual and narrative.

Part One: How Their World Worked From the Point of View of Educators

If anthropology is to become more useful in public discourse, analysis of research in public anthropology must not only serve the anthropological community, but must also serve the needs of the public it addresses. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze why and how this strategy works to a lay audience, i.e., the analysis of *A Community of Heroes* must apply to the concerns of educators. An educational analysis illustrates that the use of ritual approaches learning on many cognitive levels and offers students a variety of learning styles.

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom created a tri-partite learning structure that included cognition, psychomotor and affective learning as a method to analyze the learning process. Because of the politicization of American schools that favors cognition over other types of learning, his cognitive model has been the portion of the structure most frequently used, so it will be the focus of this analysis. Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Objectives states that there are six levels of

cognition: 1] knowledge, 2] comprehension, 3] analysis, 4] application, 5] synthesis and 6] evaluation.

The use of ritual and storytelling in elementary education makes use of every level of cognition. Students acquire information (*knowledge*) necessary to create their imaginary world. Students must *comprehend* and *analyze* this knowledge to *apply* it to their communities. They continue to use analysis to problem solve collectively when the communities are confronted with difficulties. Their solutions *synthesize* the knowledge they have acquired in creative ways and in writing their stories they *evaluate* the experiences they've had.

The use of ritual space in education not only creates an environment for cognitive growth, it also addresses psychomotor and affective learning. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) acknowledges that emphasis in American schools is placed on verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical learning, but proposes that there are five other 'languages' in which people learn. These styles cut across cultural, educational and ability differences. The other five languages are: visual/spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal, musical, and kinesthetic. The use of ritual and storytelling makes use of all these learning languages. The most clearly observed learning language is the bodily/kinesthetic. The use of ritual space allows students to move while they are learning. Not only does this contradict the assumption that stillness is required for concentration which is a prerequisite to learning, but it interlaces mind, body, and emotions in a more meaningful, integrated learning experience so that students with different learning styles can be engaged. For example, several

students in the program who were being medicated for ADD or ADHD were able to reduce their level of medication because stillness was no longer required.

The most powerful argument for the use of a liminal space in education comes from Jerome Bruner (1990) founder of the cognitive psychology school in the United States. According to Bruner the cognitive revolution intended to join forces with philosophy, anthropology, history, and the arts, but, with advances in technology, cognition theory became more about what people 'know' and 'how much' they know than about the meaningfulness of human life. Bruner argues that cognitive psychology was intended to be a revolution against objectivism and behaviorism and that the revolution has been 'side-tracked'.

Bruner (1990) maintains that cognition theory began to demean human existence by ignoring 'meaning'. He claims that culture is crucial to the creation of meaning; that culture is the engine that gives meaning to our lives; and that the sole purpose of human study should be a search for how humans give their lives meaning:

This conviction is based upon two connected arguments. The first is that to understand man you must understand how his experiences and his acts are shaped by his intentional states and the second is that the form of these intentional states is realized only through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture. (Pg. 33)

If Bruner is correct, knowledge in and of itself should not be the goal of education. Rather, the focus of education, even elementary education, should concern itself with helping young people gain an understanding of what they do, why they do it, and how what they do impacts them and those around them. A liminal world, in which a culture is created, in which there is infinite possibilities

for exploration, and from which stories emanate, offers students opportunities to understand what the characters do in that world, the intentions of the characters, and the impact those intentions have on that world. This process lets students construct meaning for their lives and gives them a reason to learn.

In a society that is based on the dream of democracy, a dream that Phil Slater refers to as 'a dream deferred', creating an educational space where communal decision making leads to the success or failure of that community might someday make that dream a reality.

Part Two: The Use of Space and Movement

If the way to that democratic dream is through experiential education, and if the ritual process allows experiential learning, then its structure and process need to be clarified. In 1995 Augusto Boal, noted Brazilian director and teacher wrote:

We desecrate the stage, that altar over which usually the artist presides alone. We destroy the work offered by the artist in order to construct a new work out of it, together. A theater which is not didactic, in the old sense of the word and style, but pedagogic, in the sense of *collective learning*. (italics added, Pg. 7)

The goal of this research was to 'desecrate the stage' to create a pedagogy of collective learning. A space where students did not ritually *perform* rote memorization of facts, but discovered meaning through experiencing learning in their bodies, created community through 'collective learning', and then transformed that experience into both individual and collective 'objectified knowledge' by writing stories about their experience.

Peter McLaren (1986) wrote an ethnographic study of education from the perspective of ritual experience. In it, he addressed the debate about whether ritual within education is conservative, i.e., supports the social system, or revolutionary, i.e., allows creative change and growth for both individuals and the community. McLaren's research suggests that ritual in education is predominately conservative, that its structure is indicative and authoritarian, and is a ritual based on obedience which prepares students for work in a corporate world. McLaren believes that educational ritual is capable of being a subjunctive space based on problem solving that prepares students for life in community. My research was an attempt to test that hypothesis.

The ethnographic analyses of Ganath Obeyesekere (1981, 1990), Edward Schieffelin (1976, 1996), Paul Stoller (1996) and Nadia Seremetakis (1991) were the analytical tools used to analyze the ritual and narrative process and the relationship between structure and process in this research experiment. Obeyesekere's analysis of personal symbols was the major analytical tool used for the narrative analysis. Schieffelin's focus on the rhythm, dramatic structure, and the drive toward climax in ritual performance was the basis of the analysis of ritual as a social drama. Stoller's awareness that Western ethnographers "all too often use the eye to see what the tongue has tasted or the ear has heard" (Pg.166) was the foundation for a sensory, especially auditory, analysis of the ritual structure.

In *The Last Word: Women, Death, And Divination in Inner Mani*, Seremetakis (1991) approached her ethnography very much as a theater director might. She

visualized the ritual space in terms of the senses and the relationship the senses have to the emotional response of the participants. She effectively described the interplay of the participants. Her analysis of the impact of the use of space, the physical relationships of the people, the impact of those relationships on the ritual experience, and the staging of the event was critical to this analysis. The following mirrors her work by investigating how space, sound, and time were used by students and teachers both in the ritual world and outside it.

A major part of the analysis is a comparison of the kinesthetics in the ritual space and in the normal classroom space. Using Seremetakis' analysis of space and movement, I have defined them as 1] use of space, 2] movement patterns³⁸, and 3] physicality. I examine how often students move, why they move, where they move, how they move, and how they relate to each other in terms of learning in both the normal classroom and the ritual space.

Use of Space

The set design of the ritual spaces and the classrooms are significantly different. All three teachers, Liz, Michael, and Bob have made every effort to work against the authoritarian aspects of classroom design. Their desks are not at the front of the room, but are in corners of the room³⁹. In all three classes each student has an individual desk that is clearly viewed as 'workstations'; the fifth grade students have 'double' desks, i.e. two desks are attached to look like a table. This is an effort to work cooperatively. The students' desks are smaller

³⁸ Patterns include individual movement and movement in relationships to each other

than the teachers' desks, so it is clear where the power lies in the space. Michael laughingly tells his students that he 'is the boss because he has the big desk', a phrase which last year's group did not think was particularly funny; Bob, on the other hand, doesn't use his desk; it is used for storage. He has placed a table at the end of a group of desks and sits with the students while they are working.

Liz creates an environment in her room that is like a home. She has painted the walls in soft pastels, mostly blues, and uses lamps to avoid the use of the fluorescent lights. There is a mural of fish, a sofa, and beanbag chairs around the room, a library corner, and bulletin boards that are colorful and entertaining. Desks are placed in groups of four, but students work individually in the classroom. Students who cannot work in a group are moved, so that their desk is separate from others. Students relate to Liz as individuals and rarely raise their hand to speak. They are free to go to the project area outside the classroom when Liz isn't guiding their instruction.

Where Liz creates a 'home' for her students, mothers them, and hugs them often, Bob's room is 'spartan'. It is clean, efficient, and without clutter. He has painted the walls white with a blue-and-gold stripe for one of the State's schools. Above the blackboards are the signs that explain the rules. Every day Bob writes an inspirational quotation on the board and a brainteaser that the class works on throughout the day during their free time. Desks are placed in groups of four and the foursome works cooperatively as a team throughout the day. Teams are

³⁹ This classroom arrangement was suggested by the District's administration at an all District in-service.

changed approximately every six weeks. Occasionally a disruptive student is pulled from the group and that desk is moved to the front of the room, but this event is rare. The design of Bob's room is totally consistent with his disciplinary expectations. Above the blackboard there are five posters that are the guiding principles in the room:

1. Listen to and follow all directions the first time.
2. Come to class with a positive attitude and give good effort. Be a positive team member.
3. Use good manners when others are talking. Raise your hand; be an active listener.
4. Treat other people and their belongings and school property with respect. Be Kind.
5. Work during work periods. Use free time wisely.

The rules are clear. The vocabulary is simple. The children understand the rules without question.

Except for a poster about lifeskills and a small American flag, Michael doesn't do much with his room. Students' desks are arranged in groups of varying numbers depending on how well students work together. Michael's management of the class is the most traditional, i.e., students must raise their hands and, for the most part, work individually⁴⁰.

One problem in both the third and fourth grade classes was that both teachers used posters as one of their approaches to discipline and character development, but this appeared to be less a methodology than a symbol system. Both teachers had lifeskills posters in their classrooms. The problem with the posters was the teachers rarely referred to them and did not make them a part of

the experience of character building. The posters quickly became pretty pictures that had no meaning and were ignored. Also, a majority of the students in both classes could not define or explain the words on the posters, words such as responsibility, perseverance, initiative, and integrity.

In Chapter One, Turner's theoretical description of ritual was explained, i.e., there are two components to the *process* of ritual: liminality and *communitas*. The ritual space in this research was designed to allow students the opportunity to enter a truly liminal world. Liminality creates a subjunctive space in which participants can experience an 'as if' world, a world in which they can experiment and explore. The ritual space in this research were empty rooms with chairs and tables set along the side of the walls; it had not been designed by adults and there were no power symbols signifying difference between adults and students.

All three teachers controlled the seating arrangements in their classrooms. In the ritual space, students were the agents of the construction of their own world. They designed their own subjunctive world within the empty space each day. There were no individual desks; there were no workstations. Chairs, tables, and pieces of cloth were distributed among the groups and each group designed their village. The only posters in the space were maps created collaboratively that helped the third and fourth grade students place their villages in the space. Students designed their villages based on the power structure in that village. Democratic villages were usually designed in a circle with one large, communal

⁴⁰ Bob makes his students raise their hands, but they usually work in teams; Liz is less likely to ask students to raise their hands and students usually work individually.

room; aristocratic villages were designed with individual rooms and gave leaders more space than others, but most students in aristocratic villages had their own individual spaces, even if they were small.⁴¹ If there was squabbling within a village, the village would lose social capital, which was symbolized by a loss of furniture or the cloth with which they decorated their village.

The ritual space is 'lecture-free', but lectures were given so that the students had the information necessary to create their imaginary world. Lectures occurred prior to entry into the space in the classrooms, and students were asked to either sit in a circle or in a 'blob'.

Movement Patterns and Physical Relationship

The movement pattern in each room is different. Bob's students move in groups, usually in teams of four. From the very beginning of the year, Bob submerges the idea of individuality. Bob spends the first several weeks of class focusing on teamwork, cooperation and goal setting. He views his students as his team. He doesn't like the image of teachers as parents or attempts to make a classroom a 'home.' In his words, "Families are dysfunctional. A team can't be dysfunctional and succeed." There are very few exercises with individual winners; no manipulation is permissible by an individual that allows her to avoid participating as a member of the group. No one is given extra, or special care, because they have 'special' needs or demands. Students participate in small

⁴¹ In the fifth grade, the Iroquois, for example, assigned Saffron a cardboard box when he had the lowest status in the nation.

group timed discussions or work silently together. Students are obedient to Bob's instructions, which are specific and brief.

In the third and fourth grades, movement pattern is primarily motivated by individual needs. In the third grade students have a great deal of freedom of movement; in the fourth grade, movement is controlled by Michael; Liz allows her students greater freedom to choose when to move. In Michael's and Bob's classes, movement could be described as patterned and repetitious. In Liz's class movement could be described as unpredictable. In all three grades movement is limited and based on a schedule. When moving from one room to another, all classes form lines⁴².

All movement in the classroom requires predominately small muscle use. To use their large muscles, the elementary students are required to have a minimum of one recess a day; Bob, who works in the intermediate building, determines whether or not his students will have recess, and that decision is based on their behavior in class. At recess, students are free to choose their movement and activities, but all three teachers are responsible for discipline on the playground.

The reasons for disciplining students are a way to examine the values in the classrooms. Liz and Michael rarely reprimand students because they don't work well with others. These students are encouraged to work together, but not reprimanded for an inability to work with others. The biggest disciplinary concern in the third and fourth grade classes, during the year I was there, was physical

contact or abuse of someone else's workstation. In both classes discipline was a problem. The third graders told on each other regularly, and crises in the classroom were common. In the fourth grade, the girls were able to control themselves, rarely telling on anybody, but the boys were generally out of control, cried often, fought with each other, or told Michael about the smallest infraction of the rules by other students. Both Michael and Liz believe that the teachers are responsible for disciplining students and for solving problems among students. Bob's discipline almost always was based on whether or not students were working well together. Students did not tell on each other in his class and physical contact or abuse of each other's spaces were rarely issues. All three teachers lectured students on their behavior. Generally, students' response to the lectures about discipline was to 'tune out', i.e., students would draw pictures, doodle, slouch in their seats, rock in their chairs, and look out the window during the lectures. Although Bob lectured less about behavior, when he did talk about appropriate behavior, students did not seem to listen. They, like the third and fourth graders, lived through it and moved on.

Lectures on discipline in the ritual space were rare. The Messenger of the Gods created the structure, the frame, for the students' world, but rarely participated as an authority figure. She would call meetings, be responsible for deciding if a community was working well together and would give or take away social capital cards without speaking. The loss of social capital was usually a result of the students' lack of control when trying to resolve problems. When a

⁴² This is a District-wide requirement in all elementary schools and the intermediate school.

card was taken, students would inform each other that they had lost social capital, calm down, and would then resolve their own problems. The fifth grade worked so well together that social capital cards were not necessary, because they never lost any and the metaphor would not be useful.

Classroom 'management' is an important part of teacher training and evaluation and although university schools of education discuss the idea of self-discipline by students, the teachers with whom I spoke all felt a great deal of pressure to convey the sense that they were 'in charge and in control'. In the classroom, Michael usually stood in the front of the room; Liz sat in the center of the class; and Bob roamed the edges of classroom unless he was giving information and needed to use the board. In the ritual world, teachers were not expected to 'control' the space or the students in it. Control was vested in the students and most often teachers sat back and watched.

In the normal classroom, there was very little physical contact among students or between students and teachers; students, in individual workstations, are provided a personal bubble away from each other. The workstation is their 'property' for the year. Often in the third and fourth grade classroom, fights revolved around abuse of someone else's space. Fighting over space did not happen in the ritual space, although arguments about individual spaces occurred regularly in the aristocratic villages in the fourth grade. Fifth graders were much more capable of playing their roles and never argued about space. There were no workstations to separate students in the ritual space, so physical contact was normal. Touch was based on a need to work together. For example, the third

and fourth graders hypothesized that, while they were Indians, they could probably survive the winter more successfully if they 'slept close to each other', so they usually 'slept' in tight circles during the imaginary winter of the year.

Movement and touch were very different in the ritual community than in the classrooms both among students and between students and teachers. Both large and small muscle groups were used conjointly. Students were free to move whenever they choose⁴³; there was no adult that controlled or approved their movement. Their movement was grounded on the story at the time. Movement was based on the motivation, or intention, of the character that they were playing. For example, if they were ambassadors to other nations or villages, they would move there; if they were village leaders, they usually stayed in the village, or if they were peasants, they usually went to the farmland or the forest to tend the crops or hunt.

Students controlled each other's movement within their village. The democratic villages used a circle or a 'blob' to run meetings; the aristocrats usually worked in a linear formation that established status. Since students were acting out their social studies, language arts, or science lessons, students moved often. They mimed the work that others did in history; they hunted, fished, and farmed; they performed daily activities and rituals.

Contact between students and teachers varied in each classroom: Liz made a great deal of physical contact with her students including hugging; Michael and

⁴³ Except when they 'slept'. Sleeping was used to create a sense of time and to give students some quiet time to focus on the 'days' events' and on their strategies for the future.

Bob were carefully to avoid contact with students, although Michael would touch students if the student requested it. Bob would only 'high-five' with students or shake hands at the times when students had earned his approval. In the ritual space, contact between adults and students was again based on the story at the time and changed from the pattern in the classroom. Bob always played roles in the ritual space and was very much a part of the subjunctive world. He was very active in strategizing with his villagers and made a great deal of contact during those sessions. Liz usually played roles and her movement and touch patterns changed from her normal patterns in the classroom. Liz became less a maternal figure and more a partner. She was less likely to hug as if she was protecting a student and more likely to mirror the contact made between students themselves. Michael, who was uncomfortable with 'acting', rarely played. He would sit in a chair and watch the students and often would grade papers. His relationship pattern changed little during the ritual experience.

Physicality

A significant observation in the movement patterns in the ritual space was the physical change in posture that took place when students portrayed characters. Body posture changed substantially. The third and fourth graders played characters that were heroic for the majority of the school year. As heroes, both boys and girls would change their body position from slouched, stooped shoulders and caved-in chests, to a straighter line. Most students stood taller and carried themselves with greater dignity. In the fifth grade students played characters based on the use of masks with different expressions. Students would

change their physicality to reflect the mask that they were playing at the time⁴⁴.

Their change in physicality seemed to change the way that they approached problems.

Part Three: The Use of Sound and Language

Michael was very concerned about classroom management, especially about the level of noise in the project area. Liz and Bob rarely expressed concern about the noise, but the use of sound is another factor in the analysis of this project. Sound is analyzed here in terms of 1] the contrast between silence and sound, 2] the use of music, 3] the use of language, its patterns, the importance of naming, and a character's speech.

The absence of sound was as important in the ritual space as its presence. In *Welcome to the Monkey House*, Kurt Vonnegut (1998) tells a story about a world in which equality is the goal, but where mediocrity becomes a strategy in achieving equality. One of the ways that extraordinary people were rendered ordinary was by zapping their thoughts with sound every few moments so that they were incapable of sustained thought. Silence was not permitted, because it allowed full concentration on an idea. In the classrooms, there was very little quiet time. Each teacher scheduled a silent reading period for at least twenty minutes a day, but there was little silent time to think during curricular activities, except in Bob's class who organized learning around silent time.

⁴⁴ One young woman who was very shy created an angry mask and became the most outspoken proponent for property rights. Another young man who was usually polite wore a mask that suggested that he was cunning and his conversation became witty; his manner, shrewd and manipulative.

Entrance into the ritual space had to be silent. Students would build their villages and then the Messenger would turn off the lights and students would lay on the floor as if they were sleeping. When the lights came on, they would work silently: first doing their personal daily activities, then working with others on daily activities; the first spoken words would be the telling of the origin story or the pledge to the community. After every learning event, students would return to their villages to 'sleep' and would use silence as a time to reflect on the days' events. The silent movement activities would begin each learning experience.

Music was used in a variety of ways. It was occasionally played as underscore while the students worked silently to reflect the culture that they were experiencing. For example, when the French first came to the State, students heard a Cistercian chant; while portraying native Americans they listened to music by Carlos Nakai. Music was also used to focus students to enter the space. On days when students seemed highly agitated, they would prepare for entrance into the space by playing Mirrors to music. Music was also used to symbolize their communities. Students would select music that they thought resonated with the values of their community.

In the normal classrooms, teachers did the majority of the speaking. Students raised their hands and spoke when called on to answer questions usually about memorization of data. Language was repetitious; questions and answers were repeated frequently to reinforce memorization. Teachers asked questions to which they knew the answers. In the ritual world, language was used to solve problems and to commit to one another about their values in their communities.

Students controlled their speech patterns. Students decided who spoke, when they spoke and for how long they spoke. Information was given to help students solve daily problems in their community. Teacher-student communication was based on the premise that the adult should not ask a question to which s/he already knew the answer. Teachers did not ask questions to see if students had memorized information, but rather questions were usually asked about the students' experience. Teachers were rarely the focus of the activities or conversations, unless they were role playing significant characters in the experience.

Students began to develop a facility for speech during Basic Training exercises. Give and Take allowed students to explore sounds. The noises the students made gave them an opportunity to take risks, to have fun, and to release sounds from their bodies freely. This release of sound helped rid them of a fear of speaking. During Verbal Jousting students played with the wounds of words increasing their appreciation of spoken language. Speaking would be an important skill when working together in their world. Rhetoric and the ability to present their position to the group on any problem was an admired asset in their world.

The speech patterns of the students also changed based on the characters that they played, especially in the fifth grade, because of the use of masks. For example, a quiet student might view a mask as talkative and the character portrayed might be much more outgoing, the character would be much more likely to speak out, loudly and more often than the student herself. Behavior

would also change based on the interpretation of the mask character. The fifth grade students were good 'actors' and occasionally I would be struck by changes in behavior until I realized that they were completely 'in character'.

Naming their characters was also an important part of the creation of the characters in the ritual world. Students were never referred to by the names their parents gave them in the ritual space, but would choose a name for each character that they portrayed. Like Adam in the Bible who named the animals, naming was a symbol of control of their own world. Naming was also made important by ceremonially writing names in the Messenger's book in the third and fourth grades. The names students chose gave insight into the character and into the students themselves⁴⁵.

According to Rappaport (1999), language is one of humanity's greatest gifts, but when it is inverted into a lie, it works against the community's unity and growth. One of the assets of ritual is that it enacts language, so the performance of ritual keeps the students honest. Rappaport defines ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers." (Pg. 24) In a conservative ritual experience in education, ritual involves a repetitious recitation of words and gestures that have little meaning to the students. The ritual is controlled by ritual masters. When students entered a creative ritual experience, they controlled, or were the agents of, their own actions and behavior and were granted the right to explore

⁴⁵ Being able to remember all the names of all of the characters that each student played became a responsibility of the liminal servant which I will discuss in the last section of this chapter.

possibilities within their imaginative world within a structure that was both safe for the students and for the future of their community. I hypothesized that creative educational ritual would increase the likelihood of change in the community in ways that were productive rather than destructive. A formal structure provided a container in which creativity could be fostered. Rappaport included in his elements of ritual form: formality, encoding by other performers, invariance, or pattern, performance, ritual as a form of communication, the use of self-referential and canonical messages, and the use of symbols all of which were a part of *A Community of Heroes*.

To create a subjunctive world, it was necessary to have some rules and procedures that would assure a safe space where individuals were allowed expression of their own thoughts and feelings and the group had the agency to control their imagined destiny. I needed to make performance a way that the students committed to their ideas and feelings and where agency became the guiding force. It was the combination of the canonical and formal with the subjunctive that allowed risk taking and exploration to take place.

Part Four: The Use of Time in Their World

Time is examined here in terms of the length of time used, the concreteness of time, the way that time was structured, and the way that the use of time allowed for individuation and individual difference.

The Length of Time Used

One of the concerns of American educators is students' apparent inability to concentrate; concentration, in this case, appears to be defined as stillness and

ability to focus on the teacher. Third and fourth grade lessons are scheduled for twenty minutes each assuming that students can only concentrate for that length of time. The fifth grade class is divided into twenty-five minute segments. This schedule is less flexible than in the elementary building, because the intermediate school has arranged the faculty into teams, but the teachers do not work together in the same class, but rather exchange classes.

In *A Community of Heroes* students were focused for a two-and-a-half hour period two to three times a week. It was my hypothesis that the creation of an imaginary world in which they were active problem solvers **allowed** students to concentrate. In other words, young students can concentrate, but concentration is made more difficult when the school day is divided into disciplinary areas and when students are expected to be still and listen rather than participate actively in their learning.

The Linearity and Concreteness of Time

Grimes' definition of ritual/liminal space is that it requires: "1] the playing of roles, 2] the use of rhetorical style speech, 3] an audience, 4] knowledge and acceptance of a single set of rules, 5] and a climax." (1982, Pg. 147). In the ritual experiment, the students played roles; they used rhetoric and were expected to present their arguments and listen to others present theirs. They were each other's audience at any given time; and they agreed to abide by a single set of rules, but climax, and the importance of climax, was probably the single most important factor in the construction of the ritual experiment.

Climax is an element that is rarely mentioned in ritual experience and I submit that the creation of meaning, both for the collective and the individual, was predicated on the construction of the ritual experiment in such a way that it allowed for the experience of climactic moments. Climax is an important part of both story and dramatic structure. In drama it is defined as the highest point of action; the point where the protagonist chooses either to break or maintain her 'spine'.

Victor Turner not only discussed the liminal process, but has also discussed the idea of social drama. (1974, 1982, 1986, 1988). According to Turner, there are four components to a social drama: breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or separation from the society. Within a society, Turner argues, social dramas occur when there is: 1] a breach in the social fabric based on a conflict which can happen between as few as two people; 2] a crisis when other members of the community take sides; 3] a redress of grievances through an organized ritual; and 4] either reintegration into the society or separation from the society depending on the results of the redressive phase. A social drama mirrors dramatic structure: stasis, (prior to the breach,) inciting incident, (the breach), rising action (the crisis), climax (the redressive stage), and denouement (the return to the society or separation from it). Turner also argues that social dramas are mirrored in the format of rituals. In other words, rituals are structured to have a climactic experience.

This information about the process and structure of a social drama was used to create the experiences in the subjunctive world. There was a plotline that led to a

climactic moment; the ritual experience was structured not only to have line, but to have peaks, valleys and different rhythms within the line. The ritual was structured around a main plot with several subplots. For example, the students were trying to build a community of heroes on Zorak, so they needed to go back in history to discover what they could learn that could help them achieve their goal on Zorak. While in history, they were involved in a subplot of the main plot. Each unit was structured to have an appropriate setting, to move through a plot that occurred based on students' goals, and to reach a climactic experience. Each daily lesson plan within a unit followed a similar pattern, so that everyday the experience led to a climax and climactic experiences built on each other toward a final resolution. The speed and rhythm of each experience built as it headed toward the final climactic moment. In other words, Bruner's linearity in this ritual world was a series of 'peak' experiences.

Time did not seem arbitrary and abstract in the ritual space. In the classrooms, especially in Michael's and Liz's classes, there was no throughline and no drive towards climax. Bob had several units that he had personally created that led to peak experiences, but for the most part, the climax in most of the elementary pedagogy was testing. Students were frequently frustrated when daily lessons were not completed because of a pre-arranged schedule that demanded that students move approximately every twenty minutes to a different discipline. Timing and rhythm in the ritual space were experienced in students' bodies. Time was concrete and complete. Lessons were based on the ability to complete the assignment within the two and a half-hour period and were structured to lead to a

conclusion based on students' intentions and their problem solving based on those intentions. Students were not frustrated by the lesson because there was always a sense of completion, but the lesson led toward a more exciting possibility for the next session.

The Use of Time and Individual Creativity

To create a climax, the structure was dependent on collective and individual goals, or intentions. Again, John Dewey (1916) states that "Interest and discipline are correlative aspects of activity having an aim." (Pg. 137) The intention of the ritual space was to give students intentions for their learning experience. In the third and fourth grades, there were two ways that students decided on their individual objectives or goals. Goals were chosen 1] through the creation of characters with pieces of cloth and 2] by the job that their character had in their community (jobs were chosen by individuals with the consent of the group). In the fifth grade, students decided on their individual objectives by: 1] the creation of characters with masks; 2] the job that their character had in their community⁴⁶; and 3] the status and values of their character in their community. In all grades, the Messenger, King, or the Pope presented the possible collective goals of each community, and then, each village would decide whether they wanted to pursue those goals and how they wanted to pursue them. In other words, each learning unit in the ritual world was structured like a game that was played both collectively and individually. For example, the Iroquois wanted to be the most successful Indian nation as evidenced by the amount of possessions they accumulated.

Individually, Saffron, a low status member of the Iroquois village, wanted to improve his status. By successfully hunting and by understanding the manipulation of the French traders, Saffron was able to increase his status while improving the conditions of the Iroquois nation. There were rarely discipline problems because students had a reason to learn, a goal within the game. Because of their commitment to their own goals rather than the abstraction of 'someday you will need this', students researched the ways that other people solved similar problems. Their world was real to them; their time had movement, drive, and energy that involved them physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Because they had intentions, they pursued their goals physically and intellectually and responded emotionally when those goals were either achieved or contravened.

Ritual has been criticized for its lack of individual expressiveness, but this research suggests that ritual is not fixed and habituated, but that it allows both individual and collective creativity and responsiveness. First, the difference between individualism and individuation must be clarified. *The Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* defines individualism as " (1) a doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount; also: conduct guided by such a doctrine" or " (2) the conception that all values, rights, and duties originate in individuals." Individuation is defined as " (1) the development of the individual from the universal (2) a: the determination of the individual in the general b: the process by which individuals in society become differentiated from one another." Operationally, using these definitions, the ritual experience in this research

⁴⁶ Jobs were chosen by individuals with the consent of the group.

allowed individuation and creativity, but did not foster individualism through its use of space, time, and emotional response to their world.

Individuation occurred within the ritual space as a result of allowing the difference in students' volition, or will, i.e., their motivations provide a different experience in the ritual space. In a normal pedagogy, the motivation is determined by extrinsically created goals; in the ritual world, the students decided on their own personal goals. The experience of individuation begins with an exploration of the concept of time in the ritual space. Time is not just viewed in terms of amount of time spent, but also in terms of the ways individual students used time and its direction. According to Bruner (1990), agency, line, canonicity, and voice produce meaning. Meanings were different for each student because their intentions directed them to different conclusions.⁴⁷

Individuation and creativity was also developed through the emotional responsiveness permitted in the ritual experience. Researchers believe that emotional awareness is a primary factor in developing creativity and in building community. It was fostered in the ritual space for several reasons. Behavioral research suggests that people with a high 'emotional intelligence are more successful than people with a high intellectual intelligence (Goleman, 1994). Affective learning increases creativity (Russ, 1993, 1998). Emotional response helps build experience on which students can create meaning (Bruner, 1990).

⁴⁷ Canonicity and agency have previously been discussed and voice will be addressed in Chapter Five; that section will explore the relevance of line to both meaning and individual experience.

Gardner (1983) claims that there are a variety of intelligences among which is inter and interpersonal skills and that schools need to address these different learning styles. And Goleman (1994) argues that emotional intelligences such as self-awareness, self-discipline, and empathy, are qualities that lead to a more successful life, both financially and personally, and that those qualities can be nurtured. In the ritual space, by having successful or thwarted intentions, students experienced their learning emotionally and then had to deal with those emotions. The Hero's Journey portion of the experience allowed students an opportunity to explore themselves and their own personal goals and therefore became more self-aware. Since assignments were never required or graded ⁴⁸, students could choose whether or not they wanted their writing and their point of view to be published in the books and be a part of their world's history.

Empathy was experienced in several ways. In all grades, students experienced the lives of people from different times and different cultures. Tyler, for example, 'felt' how important it was for the Ottawa to keep their own story. The use of masks in the fifth grade gave students an opportunity to explore different personalities. They 'walked in someone else's shoes'. I was particularly conscious that students were most likely to choose a mask that was very different from their own personality. Quiet students became vocal; difficult students became gentle; honorable students became tricksters. Their subjunctive world gave them an

⁴⁸ Liz and Michael chose to use their writing from the ritual space as their portfolio assignments. These then became required, but they were not graded and they were completed prior to the portfolio submission.

opportunity to explore an emotional life far different than the ones they had chosen to present of themselves to the real world.

Thomas Scheff (1979) argues that ritual and drama allow people who participate in them the opportunity to explore their own emotional lives through the safety of emotional distance. In the ritual space, students were given the opportunity to portray characters who had real feelings, but the students felt those feelings at an emotional distance from their own feelings. They could both feel and observe the impact that those feelings had on the characters they were playing; they were simultaneously a participant and an observer, so emotions could be felt and examined safely.

Probably the most important argument for the integration of mind-body-emotion learning is the impact affect has on creativity. Getz and Lubart (1998) argued that emotions act as resonators that touch multiple parts of the brain and allow synthesis of images and concepts to occur. The interaction of mind, body, and emotions is a powerful indicator of creative thinking. Sandra Russ (1993) conducted an experiment with children on affect and creativity. In it she established the following model for creativity. The major cognitive abilities are: divergent thinking, transformation abilities, sensitivity to problems and problem identification, tendency to practice with alternative solutions, wide breadth of knowledge, insight and synthesizing abilities and evaluative abilities. The major affective processes which demonstrate creativity are: access to affect-laden thought, openness to affect states, affective pleasure in challenge, affective

pleasure in problem solving, and cognitive integration of affective material. The major personality traits important in the creative process are: tolerance to ambiguity, openness to experience, possessing unconventional values, independence of judgment, curiosity, preference for challenge and complexity, self-confidence, propensity for risk taking and intrinsic motivation. Russ also explains how affect, and one's ability to access primary processes, i.e., drive-laden feelings, increases creativity. The power of affect on the development of creativity and problem solving is significant. Students must *enjoy* their work to think creatively. In the ritual space, each of the items listed above was employed. The interrelationship of affect and physical experience to charge creative responses to problems will be apparent in the Chapter Five when students themselves give evidence to support their ability to use the above traits. Readers will also be able to evaluate the individuation that occurred among the students. In Chapter Six and Appendix B, the students comment on the pleasure they felt in the ritual space.

Individuation and creativity was dependent in the ritual space on using time based on the students' own volition and will. By setting their own individual goals within the space, they all had different experiences; by setting their own goals and either succeeding or failing to achieve them, they had emotional responses to their learning that engendered creative thinking.

Part Five: How Their World Worked to Build Community

Individual growth and expressiveness are important values in American education, but so is the ability to work in community. Another question this research raises is whether children can create a sense of community in which

there is little, or no, outside authority. Educators, and especially the critics of American public education (see Castells, et al. 1994), have questioned the public school's ability to teach democratic values within an authoritarian structure. The ritual process, according to Turner, creates a sense of *communitas* that he defines in terms of equality and democratic principles. The question that this research tried to examine was: What is it in a ritual that allows this *communitas* to occur and can it occur in an elementary school setting? To analyze the data, I needed to define community. Dennis Carlson (1994) claims that there are three American conceptualizations of community: 1] communities of interest; 2] communities that attempt to recapture a lost sense of community; and 3] communities that engage difference and diversity and attempt to work democratically. It was the third conceptualization that would become the focus of my interpretation. Carlson also argued that democratic communities would: 1] maximize participation, 2] allow divergent perspectives, 3] create an ethical and moral vision for the community, 4] break boundaries between groups and individuals, and 5] build alliances. Using Carlson's goals for a democratic community, I analyzed the ritual process by examining the behaviors of the students in the following areas: patterns of participation, patterns of friendship, patterns of work and problem solve collectively.

To explain the creation of community within their subjunctive world I must return to the difference between individuation and individualism. America has always valued difference and has referred to it as 'individualism'. It has also valued independent thinking at the expense of community engagement. The

subjunctive world created for education in America needed to balance community engagement and individuation.

A significant part of the structural process of ritual is that participants leave their societal roles behind when they enter the liminal space and within that space *communitas* occurs. *Communitas* is a word that ethnographers use often, but frequently do not examine carefully. There were no rules to follow about how one creates a sense of *communitas*. Ethnographers suggest that *communitas* is an outcome of the ritual experience that occurs only during the ritual itself, i.e., *communitas* is a sense of community among participants that may not last after the ritual has ended. Bobby Alexander (1991) gives a glowing description of *communitas*:

“Ritual liminality breaks human limits, opening up the possibility of full humanity as it thrusts humans together, affirming and creating community with one another. Turner offers more than a social theory; he constructs a model for human transformation at the highest, or spiritual level.” (Pg. 152)

Communitas is ‘the dimension ... in which men confront one another not as role players but as ‘human totals’, integral beings who recognizantly share the same humanity.” (Pg. 36)

Whether or not *communitas* is quite so spiritual, most leading ritual theorists define it as being both egalitarian and democratic. John Dewey’s definition of democracy, i.e., “a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience,” (1916, Pg. 87) may be the most coherent definition of *communitas*.

To create a sense of *communitas* within the ritual space, there needed to be a sense of equality among all players in the structural design of the ritual. As stated earlier, the structure of the ritual experience was designed to create a

sense of equality in the following ways: 1] Using the project areas, or an empty room, for our space rather than the classroom meant the area had no immediately apparent institutionalized power structures. The students designed this area each day. 2] The space had to be clean before we started to create our world each day and was returned to a clean, empty area when we left it. Therefore, each day started with students as equals each with the opportunity to experience their world differently that day. 3] We started and finished each session sitting on the floor in a circle or a 'blob'. Students and teachers were equal visually when seated in a circle on the floor. Students had a chance to process their experience at the end of each session and their understanding of their experience was as valid to the discussion as that of any of the adults. 4] We used a talking stick when we discussed issues, so there was no leader who could dominate the group. 5] For the most part, the teachers 'played' roles along with the students and never judged the quality of the students' performances. 6] Writing was not graded; there were no 'tests' based on the work done in the Storyteller Project; stories were submitted for publication as a part of a conjoint communicated experience.

Was there a feeling of *communitas* within the ritual space? Yes, definitely. It was palpable. No one gave assignments; no one was 'in charge'. Students created the space by themselves without guidance from the teachers. Designing and creating their own space was very important to the students. That does not mean that there wasn't conflict when designing and constructing the space, but

the students felt they were in control of their world and they could, and would, resolve their own problems.

I believe one of the most important components of creating a sense of *communitas* was physical contact, i.e. touch, closeness and shared, imagined experience. In the classroom, students were encouraged to protect their own space and eschew others' space. In the ritual space students were always in close proximity to each other; there was no ownership of property although aristocrats assigned sleeping spaces; and students made physical contact during imagined work and during strategy sessions.

The classes in which the teachers participated as players in the subjunctive world evidenced a greater sense of community than the classes where the teacher sat on the sideline. Michael was never a member of the community the way that Bob and Liz were. Watching was not participating in a shared, imagined world and the creation of *communitas* was based on shared, collaborative imaginary play.

Building community was also significant in the learning process of these children, because it increased their verbal skills, both oral and written. According to Healy (1990):

Language shapes culture, language shapes thinking - and language shapes brains. The verbal bath in which a society soaks its children arranges their synapses and their intellects; it helps them learn to reason, reflect and respond to the world. (Pg. 86)

Students spoke to each other regularly in their subjunctive world; they didn't simply listen to a teacher or to media; they were engaged in using language

meaningfully. They participated in debate, they used rhetoric, they brainstormed together, they exchanged ideas, they evaluated those ideas, and they decided on strategies. They were speaking to each other a majority of the time. They wrote collective stories, so that their verbal skills increased as a collective. Language, especially in the form of conversation, was a significant part of their communal experience.

Participants in a democratic society must *experience* a sense of *belonging*, a sense of *sharing* in the responsibilities, the successes and the failures of the community in which they live. They must feel as if they belong to a Whole and they are a part of that Whole. Communitas is a sense of bonding into a Whole. To Turner, communitas is:

[A]n 'indispensable human social requirement', 'an essential and generic human bond', in fact a 'basic, even primordial mode of human linkage. Communitas expresses the need for 'more direct and egalitarian ways of knowing and experiencing relationships. (cited in Alexander, 1991, Pg. 37)

If communitas is a 'social requirement', if it is 'essential' for human societies to function, then in a democratic society, it is quintessential. The problem we confront in contemporary America is that our imagery of the Whole has been something that *rules* us, that *dominates* those that live and participate within it. We do not have symbolic imagery for a sense of Wholeness in which we are equal and in which we are all responsible for one another and for the Whole.

In a democratic society, we need to create that symbol of Wholeness in which each body part is an equally important member of a functioning Whole. The heart

must be as important as the head. The students were creating that imagery for themselves.

Part Six: The Role of the Liminal Servant

Peter McLaren distinguishes between a liminal servant and a ritual master in his 1986 treatise on ritual and education, *Schooling As A Ritual Performance: Towards A Political Economy of Educational Symbols And Gestures*. A ritual master, i.e., a teacher or principal, controls the ritual performance of learning in schools. A ritual master, for example, asks questions to which they already know the answers. A liminal servant constructs a framework within which students learn themselves. In this research, creating the structure was only one of several duties of the liminal servant. The liminal servant also needed to be an observer in the subjunctive world, an arbiter of social functioning, and a model in imagining a world with the other players.

In creating the structure, the liminal servant had to construct the game in such a way that the intentions of different characters or villages created a collective conflict that led to a climactic experience. This required that the liminal servant did not just understand the textbooks, but understood the meaning behind the facts and understood the cultural context of those facts. The intentions behind historical events were more important in the creation of the social studies section of the subjunctive world than the events themselves. Science was approached through an investigation of the scientific method, i.e., the formulation of hypotheses, and hypotheses testing. Overlaying the

construction of a world in which conflicts had to be resolved was the importance of establishing and building community through the concept of social capital, which was made concrete through the use of index cards.

The liminal servant acted as observer in the subjunctive world and as arbiter of social functioning. She was 'in charge of the social capital' and gave it if students were working successfully together or took it away if they were unable to resolve conflicts among themselves. For example, liminal servant created the structure, the frame, for the students' world, but rarely participated. As the Messenger of the Gods, she would call meetings, be responsible for deciding if a community was working well together and would give or take away social capital cards, but without speaking. If students were confused about their strategy, she would play a character in their world that would help resolve their indecision without forcing a decision on them.

Playing roles within the ritual world with students was the most significant part of the liminal servant's role in the ritual space. Imaginary play is not a part of the lives of young people today. The television and computer have made students passive observers in someone else's imagination. Postman (1982, 1985) maintains that television takes the creation of the story away from the learner. As readers, one makes pictures in his or her mind; the story is a combination of the written word and the images in the readers' heads. With the advent of television, the narrative was controlled by writers and directors who create multi-textured images and controlled the focus of that image. The audience has no opportunity to use their own imaginations to create the pictures. The viewer becomes

intellectually and creatively lazy because they become dependent on someone else's version of the story.

Imaginary play strengthens a young person's decision-making skills.

Education, with the increasing use of computer and media technology, has created a learning environment for elementary students that is more and more abstract.

Students in all three classes spent time in class either working on computers or watching videos; their learning, while using these media, was visual, and did not involve the use of all their senses. Educational psychologist Jane Healy (1999) argues that computer use threatens the emotional and executive aspects most in brain development. "Many children's software programs – even nominally 'educational' ones - take responsibility for selective attention and response organization away from the child by running the show themselves" (Pg. 183). The executive aspect of the brain involves decision-making, selective attention, divergent thinking, and evaluation (also important in developing creativity).

Computers are constructed in an 'either-or' format, i.e., there is only a right or a wrong answer; they are designed to control the attention and the response of the user. The integration of mind, body, and emotional experience that is guided by students' themselves in their imaginary play not only makes their learning less abstract, but also increases the use of their own executive brain functions.

Participating in imaginary play with the students afforded the liminal servant an opportunity to model acting and establish belief in, and commitment to, the liminal world. Pretending was no longer just 'something kids do'; the use of the imagination was never silly or assumed to be easy because the adults

participated and modeled changes in physicality and voice, pursued objectives, and were intense in their pursuit of those objectives. We never pandered to the students.

Liz and Michael often worried that “the students should have every opportunity to win” and that no one should ever ‘lose’. Ironically, I would rely on a noted capitalist when responding to this fear. Bill Gates, in his book, Business @ The Speed of Thought (1999), argues that politically correct teaching deprives students of their sense of reality and claims that the world doesn’t care about their self-esteem, but expects them to accomplish something before they feel good about themselves. As the liminal servant, I played the negative characters, which not only allowed students the opportunity to be heroic, but also set the level of the playing field. As the villain, I never condescended to them. I played as hard as I could, so that they were challenged to work together and strategize among themselves as much as possible. Bob was also a wonderful foil for the students and played with intelligence and shrewdness. Whether or not the goal of education is to serve the interests of business, the ritual space allowed students the opportunity to accomplish something as long as the liminal servant didn’t treat them as if they are children.

Perhaps the most difficult task for the liminal servant was remembering all the students’ character names and to observe them well enough that their personal objectives became clear, so that students were challenged both individually and collectively. Because of the improvisational nature of the ritual world, teaching was more challenging, because, as the liminal servant, I had to trust the

structure, trust, the students, and trust myself to convey the significance behind the facts.

The idea that teaching facts and lecturing to students will have an impact on their lives is unlikely. The headline in one of the State's papers was '*D.A.R.E. Doesn't Work*'. It had studied schools in a large metropolitan area and reported that 77 out of 80 schools that had used D.A.R.E. [Drug Abuse Resistance Education] since the late 1980s showed no evidence that it had helped students stay away from drugs. This is not surprising. The question is whether we choose to teach meaning within a cultural context or teach cognitive facts. We have concrete evidence that teaching facts does not give children a sense of meaning. We can 'talk' about democracy, but if they live in 'autocracy' then they are only spitting back words that have no meaning to them. To teach meaning means engaging students' bodies and feelings. They must DO to learn meaning and DOING takes longer than SITTING and reciting facts.

The question I continue to ask myself is: if we are not teaching meaning in school where is it being taught? What values are students learning while their bodies and hearts are engaged meaningfully somewhere outside of a sanctioned place of learning? The ritual world allowed opportunities for the construction of meaning both individually and collectively in a sanctioned educational space and would give students an opportunity to voice the meanings they created for themselves in their own world.

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**A COMMUNITY OF HEROES:
CREATING A RITUAL SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY & COMPASSION
IN A SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

VOLUME II

By

Penelope Lynn Owen

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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Chapter Five: Inside a World of Their Own In Their Own Words

Introduction

After a little while we loved whiskey and would do anything to get more. The French traders controlled all of us ... at least all of us who weren't controlled by the French priests.

Cwisa explains her imaginary world to us. She understands issues of power, manipulation, and control, and her story was the way that she made sense of these ideas. Like Sarah Paretsky, Cwisa “sees the world in the stories of the people around [her]” and has always been “pulled by stories”, (Paretsky, 2000) rather than by ideas. Although Cwisa is dyslexic and her stories are notorious for their spelling errors, she writes with detail and accuracy about her experiences. Her mother insisted that she participate in the experiment because she believes Cwisa learns experientially and ‘loves to write stories’. Ideas are abstractions; television and film are abstractions; lectures are abstractions, but the students’ subjunctive world was concrete to them, and their narratives became the way that they made meaning of that world. Neil Postman (1996) says:

call them what you will, we are unceasing in creating histories and futures for ourselves through the medium of narrative. Without a narrative, life has no meaning. Without meaning, learning has no purpose. Without a purpose, schools are houses of detention, not attention. (Pg. 7)

Whether experiencing their world, telling about it, or writing its history, students felt they had a reason to learn both their social studies and language arts: they had to make their world work well and then, they wanted to tell others about the world they created.

Anthropologist Michael Lambek (1993) claims there is a dialectic between embodied experience and objectified knowledge. It is the stories that people tell after an event that make experience and knowledge adhere to each other to form a totality that produces meaning. By selecting a motif for their narratives, the students grounded their experience, and gave it meaning. Cognitive, and now cultural, psychologist, Jerome Bruner (1983) claims that the desire to tell a story determines the order in which a young child masters grammar. In other words, narrative itself *motivates* learning. And philosopher of education, John Dewey claims that reflection is a critical part of education. Since narrative both motivates and grounds experience, the narrative element of this research was a critical component of it. The evidence from the students' writing supported these theorists' ideas: narrative allowed the students time to reflect on their experience, give it meaning, and then use the narrative as the basis for their next experience.

In the District's language arts instruction, there is little attention given to storytelling or creative writing unless individual teachers added it to the required curriculum; focus is on expository writing from reading assignments⁴⁹. Again, this is an abstraction of an abstraction and has little value to the students, except to fulfill adult requirements of them and often makes little sense to them. Bruner (1990) insists that story has 'crucial grammatical constituents' that not only create grammatical sense but construct meaning:

⁴⁹ In other states, students begin to learn their writing skills in the first grade in the form of narrative. In Connecticut, for example, the State mastery tests require narrative writing in the fourth grade test.

[Narrative] requires, first, a means of emphasizing human action or 'agentivity' – action directed toward goals controlled by agents. It requires, secondly, that a sequential order be established and maintained - that events and states be 'linearized' in a standard way. Narrative, thirdly, also requires a sensitivity to what is canonical and what violates canonicity in human interaction. Finally, narrative requires something approximating a narrator's perspective: it cannot, in the jargon of narratology, be 'voiceless'." (Pg. 77)

By writing or telling their stories orally, students create meaning from their experiences. Experiential learning is not complete without grounding it in narrative. The narrative component of the experiment included oral storytelling, drawing pictures as visual aids to make the direction of the experience clear, and publishing books about their adventures. The third graders wrote four books during the year: two collaborative stories, a book of heroic adventures, and their experience in the State's history. The fourth graders wrote seven books and a newspaper: four collaborative stories, a book of heroic adventures, their experience in the State's history, and a book about the heroic adventures of their families. The fifth graders wrote three newspapers, a book of heroic adventures, journals about the discovery by the Europeans of America, and a book about the heroic adventures of senior citizens in their community.

When the students wrote the books about their experience, each student wrote their version of what happened. Every story that was submitted was revised, edited, and published. It is through the students' selection of motifs that adults can understand who the students are, what they want, what they have learned, and what is significant in their lives.

Part One: Basic Training

Language Arts in *A Community of Heroes* was based on Dewey's theory of reflection and on Bruner's and Lambek's theories that narrative constructs meaning. Before the students could write a complete story, they had to prepare for writing in the same way that they prepared to enter their ritual world. Basic Training in narration combined skill training and writing exercises. During **Level Three** of the experiential training students went on a Blind Walk. Students were divided into partners. One partner closed her eyes while the other showed her the space through the use of touch, smell and taste, if possible. The exercise built cooperation, caring, and trust along with awareness and became their first individual writing assignment. It required short descriptions. Okinawa wrote:

***It is wet.
A lot of people like to play in it.
If you're thirsty it refreshes you.
It will help you stay alive
and everything needs it.
Plants grow from it.
If you catch fish you need it.***

Students were free to write the descriptions in any style. Okinawa wrote his description as a riddle; Jay wrote a poem about his blind walk. Jay's humor infused his writing as well as his daily life on Zorak. Unlike other students' writing, Jay's poem was imaginative, but still managed to be descriptive:

***What would the world be like if I lost my sight?
Well, I was walking in the West when I met a cowboy.
I know what I look like...I have brown eyes and hat and I am green.
Green!!!
I am walking in the West and I met a cat.
I know what I look like.
I have green eyes and my fur is purple***

***Purple!!!
I was walking in the West when I ran into a tree.
I know what I look like.
I am all blue
All Blue!!!
I was walking in the West and I hit something hard!
Zig Zag!!!
You're on planet zap!***

Turner's ritual space allowed for individual creative expression and individual interpretation of the experience. Through their writing, they could express their individuality and their writing became a pathway for others into understanding each student's individual experience of their world.

Build-a-Story, which developed listening and cooperation skills, allowed the teachers to reinforce Bruner's elements of narrative (line, agency, voice, and canonicity) and the District's requirements of story elements (title, setting, characters, problem, events, and resolution). As oral storytellers, Build-a-Story helped students become more comfortable speaking in front of each other. No idea was deemed unworthy as long as it followed story form, i.e., the idea had to follow logically from the previous idea, be spoken in the same voice, and have the same character as the major agent of the story; every idea that followed story form was included.

A second exercise increased students' pleasure in the sounds of words, developed teamwork, and increased students' ability to play with words. In this exercise, called Verbal Jousting, students were divided into teams and selected words and found a person who could best convey the meaning of the word through the use of his/her voice. For example if the word selected was 'tiny' the

team would choose someone with a very small voice to say the word. The team that most successfully conveyed the meaning of their word with the sound of their voice won that round.⁵⁰ The game demands that students think creatively about the sounds of words and then select a team member that can best convey the meaning of the word with their voice. The experience of expressing sounds stimulated intellectual curiosity about language. Vocabularies increased as students collected words that were fun to say and the sounds of words became important to students when they wrote their stories because their stories would be read aloud.

Story writing, both in terms of content and style, was based on grade level, i.e., more sophisticated use of written language was expected in higher grades. In all grades, events in their subjunctive world were based on Turner's social dramas so their experiences in their world always had line, agency, and naturally followed story order. Third graders predominately followed basic story form, i.e., they collaborated on group fiction or wrote stories based on the physical experience of their imaginary world. Since the events in their subjunctive world followed story form, their experience and their narrative were reflected in each other. At the end of the year, all classes wrote nonfiction stories based on interviews. This was their most abstract writing assignment because they did not experience the story themselves. It required that they conduct an interview, organize the data, select the most interesting part of the interview, and then write

⁵⁰ I acted as judge and chose the winners. The activities challenged the students; there was evaluation in the exercises; and there were winners and losers, but students learned quickly that

it as a story. Third graders wrote very short stories that were based on their parents' heroic adventures.

The fourth and fifth grade writing was more complex. The higher graders used a variety of styles in their writing. They wrote fiction and nonfiction; they wrote news articles and journals. Fifth graders also prepared and delivered speeches during their Continental Congress. Both grades started by writing news stories in which they had to write a lead paragraph that stated who, what, when where, and why. As reporters, they watched a two-line scene performed by an adult and a student. The actors used the words as the basis for a situation that would likely appear in the news media. They then conducted interviews to discover the facts behind the scene.

Point of view was a concept that fourth and fifth graders would explore in their subjunctive world. In their newspapers they had to distinguish between fact and opinion. They were allowed to write editorials, but had to make sure that they had only written facts in their news stories. Cwisa and Alissa named their newspaper *The Fourth Grade Girls' Newspaper* where Cwisa writes:

Six Year Old Dies From a Hit and Run

September 28, 1999 Elizabeth Anderson, aged 6, got run over and it was a hit and run accident and died. The vehicle was a brown Ford Taurus. The accident happened at 11:30AM on Harriet Street in [The District, State].

Elizabeth was playing ball with her friend Sarah Blackwood, who was also six years old, when the ball went in the road. Elizabeth went to get the ball when a speeding car came and hit Elizabeth.

Sarah went in and told Amanda Anderson, Elizabeth's mother. Amanda went and carried Elizabeth out of the road, then called 911. Elizabeth laid in Amanda's lap at the hospital.

Elizabeth said, "Please tell me everything is going to be all right."

on any given day anyone could win.

***Amanda answered, "I wish I could."
When Elizabeth shut her eyes, it was 3:00AM and Elizabeth was
dead.***

As the editor of the paper, Alissa wrote an editorial:

HIT AND RUNS IN JAIL

All people who make a hit and run accident should be in jail for life. Because it is so sad that people make hit and run⁵¹. Because it's not fair to the people who get killed. Because the people who see it have to see it in their head all their lives.

The newspapers were formatted like real papers and all the papers were distributed to each student. Fourth graders also wrote newspapers about events during their time on Zorak.

Fifth graders used newspapers as their beginning writing assignment and also as a part of their "First People" social studies curriculum. Additionally, fifth graders read different kinds of newspapers, had to analyze their journalistic style and then wrote their news stories in the style arbitrarily selected from drawing one of six index cards on which were listed six different newspapers⁵². The following is an example of two different fifth grade news articles based on the same scene and interview written early in the year. The first article mirrors the writing they found in their local newspaper; the second reflects writing from *The National Enquirer*:

⁵¹ You are reading stories that were only edited for spelling and punctuation throughout the year. I would correct spelling only, because we needed to keep accurate records of their writing to evaluate improvement. At the beginning of the year, students wrote very little and often there was a lack of logical consistency.

⁵² The newspapers included two tabloids, two nationally-recognized newspaper, and two local newspapers. Students read excerpts from these papers before working on their versions.

10 YEAR OLD BOY DIES IN TIPPED BOAT

By Bartholomew Perkins

On Labor Day at 3:00 PM on Lake Michigan, Joe and Tom Anderson were out on a sailboat when it tipped and Tom drowned. It started when their mom Anna Anderson told them to come in because there was a storm coming. Then she went to their house in Saugatuck to help her husband Thomas Anderson get ready for the storm. The boys didn't come in. Once the storm hit Anna got worried, so she went outside to call her boys in. Then they tipped and little Tom drowned. Nobody was wearing lifejackets. Thomas and Anna were very sad this happened to Tom.

BOY PURPOSELY KILLS BROTHER

by Maggie Seaver

One day a little boy and his brother went out on a lake alone. The boy's name was Joe. His brother Tom went out in the boat with him. All of a sudden Joe slapped his brother and pushed him off the boat! He left his brother in the water to drown. He paddled home and told his mother that Tom fell off the boat! Tom did not come back from the lake, although people say they see a ghost of a little boy trying to swim to land. Everyday Mrs. Anderson looks at all of Tom's things and cries. Mrs. Anderson hates her son so much she made him move into the shed. Mr. Anderson moved away he was so ashamed of his son, Joe. Joe is not sorry his brother is dead. He secretly tells us he was planning for this for years! Joe loves himself for what he did!

Prior to entering their subjunctive worlds, third and fourth grade students created a story together as a way of modeling storytelling and learning story form. Using story structure, students would contribute ideas about setting, characters, problem, plot and resolution. In the third grade, Liz, the teacher, wrote the story on poster paper. In the fourth grade, a student would write it while I also wrote it on the board. Every student got an opportunity to contribute if they chose to do so, but were never forced to offer an idea. I then typed the rough drafts and returned them to the students to make revisions and edits. Students were divided into groups of four and together they worked on correcting the rough draft.

The artwork for the collaborative storybooks was completed in one of two ways: 1] When the story was ready for publication, I typed it so that there were enough pages for each student to draw a picture on one page. I then made the story into a book and made copies of the book for everyone; or 2] the book was made and distributed without drawings. Students and their parents were asked to draw the pictures to complete their own book. For the first stories we used the latter method.

The books also became reading lessons. After the books were published, we used the verbal jousting exercise to practice students' skills at reading aloud. Students then read their stories to their families. The story-modeling segment of the training built community both within the class and within families. Every child who volunteered an idea would see that idea become a part of the collective story. Most of the students were content to give an idea or two, but in the third grade, Nick, a tough, short child, who was a good athlete and therefore a part of the in-crowd, volunteered idea after idea. He was a visionary and captivated with heroic stories. His mother and the principal told us that he had gotten into a great deal of trouble in the second grade for telling lies, but 'Storyteller' sated his imagination. By the middle of the year, Nick had become a leader in the community and in the classroom.

To give a sense of the stories that the group created collaboratively and how they reflected the character of the class, the first stories collectively by third and fourth grade students are presented here in their entirety.

THE ADVENTURES OF DANIEL: CHAPTER ONE: DANIEL AND THE CROCODILE PEOPLE

October 19, 1999

Once there was a boy named Daniel who loved to eat cookies and cake and ice cream, but who hated to eat vegetables and only ate them to make his Dad happy. Daniel wore glasses and was shy. He liked girls, but whenever a girl came near him Daniel would blush and walk away.

Daniel lived a hundred years ago at the very tip of South Africa. He lived where he could see the ocean. He lived in a big house next to a lake.

Everyday Daniel played in his big back yard. He always played by himself. Daniel didn't have any friends, but he would pretend that he was Robin Hood. He imagined that the trees were all the poor people that he helped and the bushes held bags of gold that he would share with the friends that he saved.

Daniel's father was a very practical man. He was a fisherman who was always too busy working and reading his newspaper to pay much attention to Daniel. He wore glasses like Daniel, but in many ways, he and Daniel were not alike. Daniel's father didn't like Daniel's BIG imagination. He thought Daniel's imagination made him untrustworthy.

One day Daniel's father was fishing when a huge monster appeared in the center of the lake. The monster was one of the Crocodile People. Crocodile People have legs like humans, but the top of their bodies look like crocodiles. They have an eye in the back of their head and huge tails that they use to capture humans and pull them into their land under the lake. They have gigantic teeth and motorized feet that propelled them through the water. The monster, named Big Mug because he loved to eat mugs, wrapped his tail around Daniel's father and took him under the water to the Land of Oreo where the Crocodile People live.

The Land of Oreo was hidden under the lake. It was called Oreo because the ground was like an Oreo cookie. There were two layers of oil and in between them was a layer of whipped cream that was soft, but people would sink into it like quicksand and never return. The walls that contained the Land of Oreo were sticky and anyone that touched them would be stuck on them forever. The Crocodile People lived in houses made of sticks, like stilts, so that they would not sink into the quicksand. Their motorized feet moved over the oil so quickly that they never sank.

When Big Mug captured Daniel's father, he took him to a cage under the quicksand where the Crocodile People were conducting experiments on humans. The Crocodile People wanted more people like them, so they were injecting crocodile blood into humans. The cage was filled with skeletons of dead humans that hadn't turned into crocodiles. Daniel's father was chained to the wall of the cage.

Big Mug didn't want anyone to know that Daniel's father was missing. In the night he disguised himself as Daniel's father and went to live in Daniel's house. When Daniel got up the next morning, he thought

something was wrong with his dad when he saw him eating insects off the wall in the kitchen.

Then he watched as his father caught flies and put them in his mouth. And finally, Daniel saw his father take one of the ceramic mugs and swallow it whole! Something was very wrong with his father!

Daniel decided that he had to follow his father outside. His father took out his fishing pole and began to fish. As the sun grew hotter, Daniel's father took off his hat and there, on the back of his head, was a third eye! Something was really wrong! Daniel hid in a tree. When his father caught a fish, Daniel heard him say, "I'm glad that I am the Crocodile King! No one can ever beat Big Mug!"

Daniel was scared! The Crocodile King was pretending to be his father. But where was his father? What had the Crocodile People done with him? Daniel had heard stories of people who had disappeared forever in the lake. Could the Crocodile People have taken them? And were they pretending to be humans? Daniel had to find out fast! He had to find a way to save his father.

He jumped down from the tree.

"Take me to my Dad!" he demanded.

The Crocodile King looked down at him and laughing, he said, "I might take you to your father. But first, you must guess my name!"

Daniel had been listening very hard to the beast.

"The Crocodile King!" he shouted.

"WRONG!!!!!! That's a title! Guess again!"

Daniel was frightened. He tried as hard as he could to remember what he had heard ... "No one can ever beat Big Mug!" That's it.

"Big Mug" he blurted out.

"All right," Big Mug said sadly. "I'll take you to your father.

Big Mug picked Daniel up and took him to the middle of the lake. They sank into the water and soon they were in the Land of Oreo. Big Mug told Daniel to follow him, but Daniel had heard stories of humans sliding through the layers of oil and cream in the Land of Oreo, so he hid behind a bush where he looked at all the Crocodile People. They all had motorized feet. Daniel saw two little boats and put them on his feet so he could glide through the water.

When he got to the middle of the oil field, Daniel took his feet out of the boats and sank into the cage where he found his father chained to the wall.

Daniel looked around the cage and found a skeleton holding a bow and arrow. He pulled the bow from the skeleton's hands and shot the arrow through the chains and broke them in two. His father was free! But they were still trapped in the cage!

Daniel's father saw a sword standing in the corner of the cage. He picked it up and started to break the lock on the door when the sword spoke to him:

“Please take my son with you. I was not a wealthy man and I couldn’t take care of my son when I was human. I will serve you well here. I can become invisible so that no one will know that you have me. I will never be human again. Please, I used to be human like you ... take him with you.”

Father took the little boy sitting in the corner into his arms, broke the lock with the invisible sword. He and Daniel ran out of the cage and floated up to the oil field. When they reached the field, Big Mug was talking to his friends. He saw Daniel and his father with the third eye in the back of his head and turned to hit them with his tail. Father picked up the invisible sword and chopped off Big Mug’s tail. They were safe!

But Father, still holding the child and the sword, backed up against a wall to rest and got stuck there. Now Daniel would have to save them all! He grabbed his Father’s shirt and pulled with all his might. His Father did not budge, but the shirt ripped off.

Daniel was frustrated and tired. He felt like giving up. He would never be able to save his Father. Daniel fell to the ground and put his fingers into the oily earth. He found a bottle there. The bottle contained a magic liquid. Daniel’s father told him to drink it.

Daniel’s father told him to drink the potion. Daniel opened the bottle and drank the bitter liquid. It made him very strong. Daniel held onto his father and pushed them through the wall and into the lake. They were finally free and they floated home!

Now Daniel is a hero and his father trusts him! He is glad that Daniel played in the backyard and imagined that he was Robin Hood all those years. Daniel and his father go hunting and fishing together now.

Father adopted the sword’s son. They called him Robert ... Bob for short. Daniel and Bob are great friends. They play Robin Hood and Little John together now. And Daniel never feels lonely anymore. Daniel has a friend to play with everyday!

Nick’s influence on the story is clear. The dialogue literally came straight from his mouth, but every child had at least one idea that became a part of the story. There was a moment, when they first got their newly published books, that the third grade students looked for the part of the story that they told. But within minutes, they were all very comfortable with the idea that this was ‘their’ story, and that everyone had an equal share in telling it. The stories they told together unified them. They presented the books to their families as “our stories”. They were now a team that was proud of their joint effort.

Modeling became a very important tool in the fourth grade. Michael, the fourth grade teacher, did not participate in the storyboarding the same way that Liz did. The students themselves were responsible for keeping the story accurate. We made a list of the facts of the story on the board and Crystal, who was quiet and rarely gave ideas, would write a second copy of all the ideas that she had heard. Then the students would decide where they needed to add description, dialogue, detail, or additional facts. Although there were students who more frequently gave ideas for the stories, in the fourth grade the contribution of ideas was more balanced. Before the books were 'published', both grades revised and edited their work. The first story that the fourth grade wrote together reflects the wit that would be a part of their storytelling all year long:

**DOC, SING AND MOO SHOO, THE BABY MONSTER,
AND HOW CHINA GOT A GREAT WALL**

October 7, 1999

In China, there was a baby monster named Moo Shoo who lived on the top of a mountain that was covered with ice, snow and trees. Everyday Moo Shoo knocked over the trees as he walked so the trees on the top of the mountain were always little and scraggly.

Moo Shoo was taller than any building that had ever been built. He was green all over and he had hands that could transform themselves into any tool that he wanted them to be. He had 300 eyes. His mouth was invisible so children would go into his mouth without knowing where they were going and this is how he would eat them.

Before he swallowed them, Moo Shoo turned the children into Jello Bars. Moo Shoo still had his tonsils so the children would slide down his tongue, bump into his tonsils and roll down into his stomach.

Moo Shoo was born at the beginning of time and has lived ever since, but he never grew up. No matter what happened to Moo Shoo he always acted like a baby.

At the bottom of the mountain there was a village and everyday the villagers were frightened by Moo Shoo. Moo Shoo had friends in Hawaii and everyday he would roar to say hello to them. When he walked around

the mountaintop, he would cause avalanches that would come down on the village. And when he breathed, his breath was so hot that the villagers would feel the heat all the way at the bottom of the mountain.

Doc and Sing lived in the village. Their parents were very rich, but they had gone to Hawaii on vacation and had never come back. They had put money into a bank account for Doc and Sing but the children didn't know how to get it out.

Doc was thirteen and loved to play with the computer everyday. He changed his shoes each day, but Doc never changed his clothes.

Sing was twelve. She always wore the same shoes, but everyday she changed her clothes. She loved to wear fancy dresses. Sing danced in parades everyday.

One day Doc and Sing found out that the monster had eaten their best friends. The children had gone up the mountain on plunger shoes to throw stink bombs at Moo Shoo. Moo Shoo opened his mouth and the children had walked into it without knowing and had slid down into Moo Shoo's stomach. The village knew the children had been eaten because they could hear the sounds of Moo Shoo's stomach digesting children.

The next day Doc and Sing decided that they had to find their friends so they climbed the mountain in their own plunger shoes.

Doc took out his CD-Rom disc from his laptop computer and threw it into Moo Shoo's mouth. The Disc cut off Moo Shoo's tonsils and the disc returned to Doc. The tonsils slid down into his windpipe and Moo Shoo began to choke. Moo Shoo transformed his hands into hammers and performed the Heimlich maneuver. The tonsils bounced out of his throat and flew down the mountain and crushed a house in the village.

Doc and Sing brought smoke bombs and began to throw them at Moo Shoo. Moo Shoo transformed his hands into Ping-Pong paddles and sent the smoke bomb flying into the village.

Sing brought Moo Shoo water that was hot to try to warm him up. Moo Shoo was so used to the cold that the water was too hot for him and he got angry.

Sing had to think fast. She found a scraggly tree and shook it at Moo Shoo like a rattle. Moo Shoo loved the sound and the shape of the rattle. He rolled onto his back and cooed at the children. Sing kept shaking the rattle to keep Moo Shoo happy. Moo Shoo lay on his back kicking his legs and laughing with Sing.

Doc built a crib for Moo Shoo while Sing sang to the monster and shook the rattle for him. Moo Shoo was so big that Doc had to get the whole village to help build the crib. The crib was made of metal and stone and wood and everything that the villagers could find. When it was finished, it became the Great Wall of China.

The villagers were safe from everyone now and Moo Shoo became a pet that they cared for and loved. They built a gigantic bottle and fed Moo Shoo from it.

When Moo Shoo was finished with the bottle, he turned his hands into paddles and burped himself. When he burped out came all the children that he had eaten from the beginning of time and they became all the people of China. And they all lived happily ever after.

Creating the collaborative stories were joyous experiences for the fourth grade students, because, like *Doc, Sing, and Moo Shoo, The Baby Monster, And How China Got A Great Wall*, the group stories were always humorous. The collaborative stories were products of their collective creativity and products of their ability to work together to successfully problem solve. A shared activity, students worked very hard to publish the books and enjoyed sharing them with their families. As a class, the fourth graders became gifted collaborative storytellers over the year.

Modeling stories foreshadowed the experience that the students would have in their ritual worlds and reflected their feelings about the world in which they lived. There are both significant similarities and significant differences in the above stories just as there were similarities and differences in the two classes. Out of the nineteen classrooms in which the Build-a-Story process was used over the three year period, students' stories revealed a significant absence of parental support. Kids were 'home alone' even before they started their adventures. In the fourth grade story, Doc and Sing have rich parents, but their parents are 'in Hawaii on vacation' and the children can't get to the money they left for them. They have a sense their parents love them, but they just aren't around! In the third grade, the parents are home, but disapprove of Daniel's behavior. This, however, probably came from Nick whose imagination had gotten him in trouble both at home and at

school. When the students were given the first draft of the story to read, revise and edit, I had written "*Father and Mother adopted the sword's son.*" Almost every student in the class caught that mistake. "No! That's wrong!!!!" they told me. "Daniel doesn't have a mother." Since the students planned to write more chapters, I said that maybe it would be nice if he had a mother. "No!!!" They were insistent. "Daniel only has a father!" This was a story about a boy and his dad and **mother** was quickly and quietly removed from the story. But Daniel's father was judgmental and disapproving until Daniel saved him. This may be a part of a child's contradictory need for independence and need for parental support as Bruno Bettelheim (1975) describes or it may be a statement about their perception of their world.

Since the stories follow a form, they have a similar structure, but the tone of each story is substantially different. The third graders, who, as a whole, had far more instability in their lives, wrote a very serious story. Filled with monsters who are truly frightening, their story reads like a child's nightmare and reflects a general sense, that for the third graders, life is not easy. The fourth grade monster is just a big baby! The monster is easily tamed, rather than conquered and the story reads like an animated cartoon. Throughout the year, each class mirrored those stories' views of the world. The third grade was always deadly serious; every moment, every decision was filled with a sense of anxiety and imminent disaster. Any decision could be the **WRONG** decision. In the fourth grade, every moment was a new and exciting adventure that the students anticipated joyously and with very little fear.

When individual students began to write their own stories, a similar pattern was followed. First, they had the experience in the ritual space. Next, they discussed their experience with a partner. Then the entire class created a web or outline that delineated the events. Students drew pictures that visualized their experience and students wrote a rough draft. I typed their rough drafts correcting punctuation and spelling errors; and in the fourth and fifth grades I would write suggestions about their story. My comments were written as if the student were a professional writer. I spoke about metaphor and symbol, about voice and agency. To one student, I wrote: **"Seal is clearly a metaphor ... a symbol ... for something that looks like anger, so my notes are based on that idea"** and not only did the writer understand what I meant, but she rewrote her paper in a way that completed the metaphor.

Stories were never graded; the students could decide whether they wanted to use the notes I had given them. The following is an example of the notes that I wrote on one fifth grader's paper. Miss Priss, who was pampered by her parents, was always slow about turning in her stories, her writing was sloppy and she was a lazy student in her other subjects. These were my notes typed at the end of her rough draft:

You have the beginnings of a good story here, but you change person often. Sometimes you speak as 'I' and sometimes as 'she' [Your voice is in both the first and third person]. You need to tell us more about your grandma. I think that you must find your wisdom from her. Perhaps your eagle can talk and knew your grandmother when she was living, so that your eagle can speak as your grandma. You need to give your eagle a name so that I know when you are talking about her or talking about yourself. Also, you need to describe your enemy and tell us why she is your enemy and why she keeps wisdom from you. Can your enemy be the

grimy queen? I think that she could be a good enemy and you already don't like her.

And this is her final, published story:

I am here to tell you about my journey. My house had beautiful pictures in it. I love to garden. I have all kinds of flowers! I love to cook up a bit of supper! I made that grimy queen a beautiful pie with my own flowers that I hand picked from my own garden. And I didn't get any reward! I gave up my most treasured possession: the pot, the family pot, that is! I put the pie in the pot! I really, really loved the family pot!

Anyway, that grimy queen gave other people some things, but no! Not me! How rude! As my grandmother would always say to me. And the queen is rude, very, very, very rude in fact! But I don't want her to find out in any way or form that I am talking about her! My grandmother has always told me to never spread rumors or you will get into trouble.

My greatest desire is to find wisdom! I pulled on that rope and I got an eyeball which, by the way, stands for WISDOM!!!! I had chosen to go to the land of adventure. I saw my enemy there. My enemy does not walk too well. She limps and is bent over. I call her my enemy because she stole the Blanket of Wisdom.

I really wanted to go back to my land but then I thought for a minute that if I don't get the Blanket of Wisdom, I will not make my land good enough for all of us to live together.

I needed some hope, so I fought with the enemy named DeeDee. He had the Blanket of Wisdom. We kept on and on at each other. I didn't know at the moment just what to do. And then I thought of my grandma's past! I tried to imagine what she would do.

I was very sad, but I kept on trying to win the blanket from my enemy. It was quite a challenge to out do my enemy. I tried to make peace with him. I also tried to outsmart him. Nothing seemed to work, but I never quit trying.

I hope that he's satisfied! The battle was very clean, but I got cut and bruised. I was very upset that I had to do this battle. Suddenly, a cloud of dust came. An eagle named J.J. was soaring through the sky in a large white ball. I knew that he would become my helper.

As the battle went on, the eagle, J.J. helped me. We were sweating very, very hard! My eagle and I were very cut up! We needed some hope, but we were dying out there. J.J. had broken her wing! She could not go by herself. It seemed like there was no hope, but we still didn't give up.

At the end of the battle everything was quiet. My eagle was very happy. She had patched her wing with a piece of a leaf! She had gotten the wisdom blanket and then we returned home. I had learned that wisdom comes from not giving up.

We shared the wisdom with the community. I lived in a very poor house in a very poor land! I was a serf, but I had found wisdom. And that is the end of my journey.

Miss Priss incorporated some of my suggestions, but maintained the integrity of her story. I had made suggestions that were not a part of her heroic experience: the eagle did not know her grandmother and her enemy in the Land of Adventure was not the grimy queen. Miss Priss was not willing to compromise her journey in its telling. She did name the eagle, spoke in one clear voice, and included more details about her grandmother, but she chose a motif in her story that was significant to her own life; she wrote, ***“I had learned that wisdom comes from not giving up.”*** Wisdom did not belong to her grandmother, who was filled with wise dictums; wisdom was earned through her own experience.

Part Two: What Stories Tell About the People Who Create Them

As modeling was a part of the experiential ritual with Bob, Liz and I playing roles in the experience, modeling also was a strategy for students to learn storytelling and writing. Fourth graders were the most prolific collaborative writers and quickly understood story structure. They wrote collaboratively without outside suggestions. After reading Judith Viorst's *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day*, students decided that it wasn't really a story according to the school's outline for story structure. It was, rather, a series of episodes, so they decided to complete the story as a class and quickly published their second book. But it was time to move forward: the students had to be tested to prove themselves heroic.

The heroic adventures of others have often been the impetus for ritual experiences. Myth, fairy tales, and storytelling have been the subject of study for many years. William Doty (1986) has done perhaps the most extensive study of ritual and myth. Steven White and Joseph O'Brien (1999) have specifically studied how children perceive heroes and how they use heroes to tell the stories of their own lives. By reliving or re-imagining the mythic adventures of others, people learn about themselves. The research examined whether creating their own heroic adventures, their own vision quests, would allow students to learn about themselves.

There were three theorists especially important to the structure of the experience and the writing of the hero's journey stories: Paul Rebillot, Bruno Bettelheim, and Neil Postman. Postman (1996) proposed that education was successful if a young person was "able to hold comfortably in one's mind the validity and usefulness of two contradictory truths. This is the source of tolerance, openness, and most important, a sense of humor, which is the greatest enemy of fanaticism. (Pg. 11) The concept of 'holding two contradictory truths in one's mind' became a major tenet in the construction of the ritual experience of the hero's journey for all three grades. Students played the hero, the animal friend, and the hero's antagonist in their journeys. Fifth graders chose character masks and developed characters based on the mask as the hero in their journey. When they wrote their stories, fourth and fifth graders first discussed and conducted interviews with each other playing all the characters,

so they could understand the idea of point of view. Then they were asked to choose to tell the story from the point of view of one of the characters.

I created the structure of the heroic journey based on Bettelheim's and Rebillot's work. Rebillot's *The Call To Adventure: Bringing The Hero's Journey To Daily Life* (1993), a recipe book of activities that included detailed exercises for conducting a personal heroic journey, was the practical base from which I created a simpler hero's journey for elementary students. Bettelheim (1975) claims:

the prevalent parental belief is that a child must be diverted from what troubles him most: his formless, nameless anxieties, and his chaotic, angry, and even violent fantasies ... There is a widespread refusal to let children know that the source of much that goes wrong in life is due to our very own natures – the propensity of all men for acting aggressively, asocially, selfishly, out of anger and anxiety. Instead, we want our children to know that, inherently, all men are good. But children know that *they* are not always good ... (Pg. 7)

Hero journeys allowed the children the possibility to imagine and experience their greatest anxieties, to conquer them and turn the chaos of their fantasy life into order, control and completion. Writing the stories of their journeys allowed them to reflect on and examined their own personal, imagined heroism.

Before the students entered the ritual world to become heroes, they investigated heroic adventures in literature. Fifth graders read *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Since Michael was taking classes in literacy education that suggested the importance of students reading novels, we used book clubs to investigate how different people could be heroic in the fourth grade. There were four reading clubs that used books with varying degrees of difficulty. Students chose from a variety of books. All the books we chose for the clubs used the

structure of an heroic adventure, i.e. the hero leaves home, takes a risk, confronts her greatest fear, defeats that fear and returns home with a reward to share with the community. After the students had read their books, we had reading club parties in the ritual space. I became an English literata who 'simply adored literature' and would go to each club, pour imaginary tea, and discuss each novel or story with the club members. In the third grade, Liz and I read hero stories aloud to the class in the classroom and discussed with students how the author used story structure.

After the Hero's Journey experience we spent a week grounding the experience mentally in all three grades. Students first drew pictures of their adventure using the following framework:

1. Hero and his or her Description
2. The Hero's Home and its Description including Family
3. The Inciting Incident that Starts the Hero's Journey: Why S/he Leaves Home
4. The Description of the Land to Which the Hero Travels
5. The Description of the Enemy that Holds Whatever the Hero Quests For
6. The Conflict
7. The Resolution
8. The Reward and Sharing the Gift

The pictures helped clarify the story for the students and were used in this exercise rather than a writing web. In the ritual space, we created an art museum where all the artists displayed their art and visited each other. The artists told each other what their art represented. This gave the students a chance to tell their stories aloud to several different people. The pictures were then used as the grid from which they wrote their stories. Students were expected to revise

their stories, and I acted as editor to clean up their grammar and spelling.

Students were then asked to find the ways their stories had been corrected.

Their grammar and spelling improved each time they wrote a story and only the truly dyslexic students had trouble with spelling by the end of the year. The stories became the first books to chronicle the history of their imagined worlds.

It was in the creation of their stories that one can see that ritual is not fixed and habituated, but that it allows both individual and collective creativity and responsiveness. The Hero's Journey stories not only support Lambek's (1993) contention that "selecting a motif is a moral and aesthetic act" (Pg. 391), but they also give the reader insight into students' lives, their values, goals, desires and the ways that they approach problem solving. Even in their first brief adventures, the third grade students revealed what they valued. When Coco went on her first adventure, she describes a world where:

Water is candy, bubbles, cake and cookies whenever you want. You can eat your bed. Candy grows off trees and there is no school. When you play ball you can eat the ball when you are done. When you go in you do not go out. When you eat the ball a new {ball} grows back.

When the King of Colors went on his first adventure, he wrote:

I was digging in a tunnel. Then I saw some light. I did not see a monster. Then I got out of the tunnel and after a while I saw the monster! Then I got my shovel out. Then I started digging again. At one o'clock I saw some light again. Then I found a hundred people. We went back home to candy land. Everyone was so hungry, so I fed them. Then everyone started home. On the other day I got another [road].

The End.

For both Coco and the King of Colors and several other overweight children, food seemed to resolve their problems, make them heroes, and became their ultimate reward.

In his hero journey story, though, the King reveals more about his emotional life when he described his main character: ***"My name is The King of Color. I love every color, but the colors had been stolen."*** In class, The King was consistently unhappy and angry, i.e., he expressed only one color, one emotional facet: his colors had been stolen, but at the end of his journey, he shared all the colors with others. The King of Colors always wanted to give his gifts to the community. On his first journey it was food; now it was emotional variety and vibrancy. After the journey, the King would offer his ideas and share his vision of the way their world could work with other community members throughout the year. He no longer viewed himself as an outsider, and even though, he still had difficulty getting along with other students, the journey and writing about it, helped him visualize himself as a significant member of a team.

The Captain's first exploration of the Land of Adventure looked like this:

I went in a giant balloon. All over there were mirrors. I looked in every mirror and saw all the wars happening from the start to the end. Then I went further in. I saw everything in history. Then I went out and I went in everyday.

The next day I went in the balloon and I found out that aliens were real, so I took military lessons. Then I went to space and I landed on Mars. Then I found the alien. I ran from it. Then I took out my [phone] and knocked it out and I freed the world.

And for Combo, his friend from Bosnia, it looked like this:

The house [points] had tall points and bats. The treasure was buried in a secret place where the monster lives. And the monster could steal your

wishes away from you. I got where the monster was and we played a board game. He won the first time and I beat him three times. And the monster gave me the map and the key and I found the treasure. And I gave the monster some of my gold and I took the treasure home and gave everybody \$1,000,000.00

Their imaginary worlds were filled with monsters, wars, and creatures that frightened them. They dreamed that they would find security and freedom, and both saw themselves as capable of beating the aliens and monsters. Combo's pictures were also filled with horrible creatures with blood dripping from their mouths and airplanes dropping bombs. His pictures were our first clue that he was still suffering from a war he had witnessed when he was three years old.

Since writing an entire story seemed like a big assignment for third graders so early in the year, they were given the option of writing a sentence as a caption for each picture. Richard chose to write captions:

THE KING OF THE EVIL

By Richard

Home:	<i>The Map Of Zandar Is Very Big.</i>
The Prize:	<i>My Prize Is A Voice And Water Hidden In A Chest.</i>
Land Of Adventure:	<i>I Got Blown Up By A Tank In The Land Of Adventure.</i>
The Enemy:	<i>The Tyrant Chopped My Head Off.</i>
The Confrontation:	<i>The Enemy Was Winning. He Was Torturing Me.</i>
My Helper:	<i>The Bear Came To Help Me.</i>
The Resolution:	<i>I Shrunk My Size And Ran For The Chest.</i>
Sharing My Reward:	<i>And I Got My Prize. I Can Speak And I Gave The Water To The People.</i>

These simple sentences followed a clear line, had agency, voice, and order and became Richard's first real stories. This skeleton of a story revealed how Richard would solve problems throughout the year and what he valued. A year ago, Richard's mother married and he now had a very strict stepfather. Richard was bright and understood what a tyrant was; he never confronted his enemy, but

shrunk himself making himself invisible, so he could sneak around the tyrant. In class throughout the year, Richard never openly confronted a problem, but would sneak to get what he wanted.

Richard got his voice in his journey. He says, "I can speak", but it wasn't until almost the end of the year that it became clear how important Richard's voice was to him. When the community realized that they had completed every element of their definition of community except 'playing together', Richard found his voice. Since there were no televisions, stereos, radios, or computers, they had to find a way to entertain each other. Sheena and several girls danced a little bit, Tyler taught the Macarena, Combo burped the alphabet, (which entertained everyone immensely). But Richard dominated the entertainment. He was gifted. He sang country-western songs on key, perfectly memorized and with the appropriate accent. He told jokes. He did full comic routines that were truly funny. Richard, who knew in his hero's journey that he was looking for his voice, really had a voice worth finding.

Only boys wrote captions. The boys liked to 'do', but writing took stillness and at first, they just wanted to get the writing 'done'. BlackNight Moonlight, who was questing for flexibility and strength while her parents were separated, never completed her hero story. She would not allow herself to make the captions because she knew she could do better. She wrote and wrote. Her story was filled with details, with dialogue and with a clever plot, but it was never 'right'. It wasn't perfect and if it wasn't perfect, it could not be turned in. So the hero looking for

flexibility couldn't find the flexibility to deal with anything less than perfection. The book was published without her story.

Many students in the third grade were dealing with family separation and divorce and many stories were written about heroes who kept their families together. John was a very quiet student. He never spoke out, rarely raised his hand, never argued with anyone, and was liked by all the other students. He always spoke with great love about his family, especially his father. John's parents separated soon after he entered the third grade and his father moved out of the house. John had difficulty reading, was a poor student academically, and was considered a special needs student, yet he wrote one of the best stories and drew one of the most powerful pictograms in the third grade. John wrote:

My name is John. I am one hundred years old. I like to eat food. I live in a log house. I don't have a family. They died when I was eleven. Then I had to run away because I had to! And I don't own a cat or a dog...

John goes to the woods to find his family and meets his enemy, Big Cat:

***Then I said to Big Cat, "Give me my family."
"No," he said. "I won't give you your family."
Then I got a dog to help me fight Big Cat. We fought for an hour.
Then Big Cat said, "Stop!" And he gave me the family. Then we became a family...***

Big John's story is filled with love and hope. It is also important to note that John chose his father's name as the heroic character that he would play throughout the year. By naming himself "John", he remained connected, and perhaps, loyal, to his father. The heroic quest for many of the third grade students was: 'to find their parents', 'to save my brother', 'to find a family', a quest that most often was realized only in their imaginations on Zandar.

The hero journey stories revealed different values for the fourth and fifth graders. Sixteen of twenty-four fifth graders wrote stories in which they searched for friendship. The stories exposed a hierarchy of needs similar to that described by Abraham Maslow (1968): the younger students were concerned about survival, safety and security while the older students were looking for the acceptance and recognition of their peers. The hero stories also exposed the differences in relationality described by Deborah Tannen (1993) between girls and boys in the higher grades. Eleven of the sixteen fifth graders looking for friendship or love were girls; Miss Priss was the only fifth grade girl who pursued something different.

The group of girls who clung to each other in the fourth grade succeeded as heroes because they were capable of making friends. Cooperation and congeniality were watchwords for the girls. When the girls took their first journey, these excerpts from their stories reflected these values:

I blasted off of earth. I went to a freezing cold planet. The planet's name is Pluto. I felt like it was snowing. I found food and I was going to take some food back but the monster said I could not have any.

But I said, "Well, I need food for Zorak because we don't have any food."

And then I said, "Please!"

And then he said, "I guess. But can I go to the planet with you. Please."

And I said, "Yes." And then we were friends...

Hi! My name is Tineshia. I got blasted off from earth. Now I landed in the planet of Zorak. When I got stuck in some kind of guck I could hardly walk. Then something small and fuzzy was standing. Right in front of me.

Then it said, "Hi! My name is Zoktan. I live here.

And I said, "Hi! My name is Tineshia. Can you help me?"

And he said, "Yes."

"Thank you", I said.

"What do you need?" said Zoktan.

"I need to find some water, some food, and somewhere warm to sleep."

"You can stay with me and my family. We have food and water and somewhere warm to sleep..."

The alien that tried to stop me was purplish reddish, was three feet wide and the same height as me. It had big feet and big arms. It had all black eyes except for a dot of white. I ran from him but I banged him on the head. Then I looked up on my laptop I had to talk it out with him. I explained why I needed it and we became friends...

Emotion, friendship and politeness were often both the motivation and the strategy used to help the girls succeed in their adventure in both the fourth and fifth grades. Conversation was a way to solve problems for the girls and their stories were filled with dialogue. Cwisa even created a conversation with a dolphin:

...That was a big jump. I had landed right beside a little river. There was a dolphin swimming in the river. I said, "Hi! What's your name?" not expecting an answer.

The dolphin went under water and came up with a sign that said, "Splash!"

I didn't know what to say I was so surprised. I said, "How do you live?"

The dolphin went under water and came up with another sign. It said, "I live on fish in this river.

I said, "I wish you could help me with Koosha."...

Cwisa's hero character was looking for good memories, and like Cwisa herself, she had the ability to feel other people's sadness. She could see it in Koosha's, her enemy's, eyes, and in Splash, the dolphin. Her compassion and her ability to relate to others allowed her to find her treasure and share it.

Very few boys included dialogue in their stories and, if they did, it was minimal. Their stories were about plot driven, not character driven. Mastery and

competition were key elements in the boys' stories whether they were loners, who landed on isolated planets and solved problems themselves, comedians, who often fought with a sense of humor, or athletes, who usually found a teammate who would help them win:

In the year 2001, I landed on a strange, icy planet called Iceinger. It felt just like a snowstorm, and it was cold.

I found a lake, so I cracked it open and it was very cold. I had some water and I found some salt crystals and so I ate some. And then I saw a crystal.

I saw some red ice. I found a shovel and I began to dig. I found a bottle of blue fire and that was it. I threw the fire at the ice and it melted, and the crystal fell down

I got the crystal and turned around and saw a huge ice creature. It chased me until I threw the crystal at him and he fell over and melted.

I used the crystal to power up the pod and I went back to Zorak! I won!

Then I found a bird egg. Then I found a rock monster that threw rocks at me. Then we played rock, paper, scissors. I won so I took the egg to Zorak. It hatched into a magical bird that could make houses and protect us...

....Then animals started walking by me. I didn't know why so I just watched them go by. Then they all crowded around me so I was scared. I didn't know what to do. I was really scared. Then they started talking to me. I was shaking. I was freaked. Finally I knew that they were good animals. The animals were so cute. I loved them. The monkey was the cutest one. He showed me where all the water, food, and everything was...

The boys made friends with animals, but they didn't imagine talking to them and few wrote stories that involved friendship with human beings. Although one of the goals of the experience was to get students to see the points of view of both the hero and the antagonist, very few students wrote from the point of view of the enemy. Most of the students who did write from a different point of view,

especially the boys, chose to tell the story from the point of view of the animal, because they felt the animal was objective:

Hi! My name is Kermit. I'm a Siberian Husky wolf. Rocky, my master, is a big, strong man with brown, spikey hair. Rocky is six feet nine inches tall. Well, enough about him.

I used to be the Evil Wolf Major's pet. The Evil Major treated me like nothing. I mean that's scary. He kept me in a cage all the time. He even fed me moldy, doggy treats. Yuck! So I wanted out! One day I got my wish...

Only girls wrote from the point of view of the enemy. Spicy, who was always exceptionally kind, gentle, and well-groomed, was one of several girls who wrote as the enemy. Possibly, by writing as the enemy she had a chance to release some of her own anger and fears about the politics of friendships in school:

Hi! My name is Spicy and I'm one of the Evil King's monsters. I like being in Master's [Bert's] army of monsters, because I love being mean. I look like the devil. I have curly feet, pointy ears, three pointy fingers, yellow eyes, and a moon on my stomach.

Anyway, back to my story: this stupid Zara [the Messenger of the Gods] hates us, so we hate her back and we do the most sneaky tricks to her and she hates it. But the thing we hate most about her is she has all these stupid FRIENDS! that she calls heroes. And we hate it!

Alissa used the point of view of the enemy for a different purpose. Alissa, a fourth grader, was as interested in mastery as any of the boys. As a hero, she was not looking for friendship, or caring, or love. Alissa was looking for veterinary tools and the skills to use them, but she told her story from the point of view of her enemy:

Hi! My name is Anga Hosa Bockwood. My twin is Alissa Bockwood. She is also my enemy. When Alissa and I were around five, Mom put us on our own. She wanted me to go but she only let Alissa go because my Dad wanted her to go.

Now Alissa lives on Zorak. I found out that she was coming after me for the veterinarian tools and skills I had. So I ran and ran ...

...I jumped on Anga Anda [my lynx] and we ran. She [Alissa] followed me. I stopped quickly and jumped on Amanda and pulled Alissa off. Then she jumped on Anga Anda, my lynx. Then somehow it was a mystery but somehow we started talking.

We talked about when we were little how Mom favored Alissa and dad favored me. Then Alissa said, "Mom was always a big pain! She always wanted to make sure that I was okay. I hated it!"

As soon as she said that she disliked Mom I liked her!

Then I said, "I hated that you got favored by Mom. I disliked her, too."

Then she liked me because we both disliked Mom.

Now we are sharing the tools and skills we both have and we have become friends. Alissa brought me back to Zorak and from that day, I have become nice and we became best friends...

In her search for skills and mastery, Alissa, who normally solved her problems by winning, miraculously finds that conversation can solve any problem, when she discovers that jealousy over their mother has separated her from her sister.

Alissa is the youngest of three sisters. She has used her hero journey to unravel the mystery of the conflict in her own family while mastering her language arts curriculum.

A fifth grade boy wrote this last hero story. Saffron is one of the eccentrics. He is often in trouble for talking or cracking jokes, is exceptionally bright, and is often ignored by the other students. A significant part of Saffron's personal history is that one of his best friends died a year ago:

THE STORY OF A HERO

By Saffron

Hello! I am a serf named Saffron. I live with just certain items as my companions. I am very poor and most of what I get the vassals take from me. I am twenty-four, but ever since I was three I worked for the King. I have no friends and no pets. Once, the vassals gave cloth away, but I didn't get one. Not any! I wish I could get one, just one! Well, I'll never get any at all.

My house is a dump. I hate it. I barely got the house. The King almost took it away from me, but then the vassals told him that it was junk. I had a

cool home at first and it even had walls. But then a dumb vassal took it. Now I live in a box. You are lucky if you live in a real house.

One day I heard something outside. I didn't think much of it at first. But it kept coming, so I went outside. I followed it until I came to a clearing in the woods where I saw a strange animal. It had the head of a bird, the body of a fish with a shell on its back like a turtle, and the tail and legs of a monkey.

It said, "You know nothing of community. You think it is a jail. Tomorrow you shall climb to the top of the nearest mountain and from then on, you must fend for yourself." And suddenly he disappeared.

The next day, I worked all day to get supplies ready for my trip. That night I left home and climbed the nearest mountain. I climbed and climbed and climbed until I reached the top. Then the clouds parted and a rope fell. I started pulling until an unusual item fell down at the end of it. I looked inside and got zapped into another world! I opened the ball, hoping I could get home. But inside was a message that said, "Saffron! Don't go home already! Find the Water of Equality!"

So I went off to find it. What a strange world this was. Strange animals, strange trees, strange sky, strange everything! So I went to explore. After a while, I got very, very tired. So I lay down to rest. When I woke up, I saw a magical scepter laying in front of me. I picked it up and a strange creature appeared. It was carrying the Water of Equality!

"Hey," I said. "Give me that!"

I suddenly saw that he was Death! My greatest fear!

"You want to be equal, right?" he asked.

I nodded.

"Everyone is equal in death," he said.

But I shook my head, "You can do anything to us in death."

He scowled and came up and slashed at my belly! I punched one of his three heads. And so it began! He zapped me; I froze him with the magic scepter. Back and forth we fought. He melted the ice that I threw at him. He was beginning to win! Fortunately, an Emperor appeared. At first he smiled at me. Then he saw Death and frowned.

Then he turned to me and said, "I will help you."

He started to help me. This wasn't just any Emperor. He had the power to change into animals! That's when I realized he was the creature I had seen in the forest! The battle continued and with the Emperor on my side I was winning. But then, Death got a giant pig to help him. We all fought.

Suddenly the Emperor attacked the serpent's head and the, the, the thing exploded! The pig ran off like a great big chicken!

Wooosh! The Water of Equality came rushing towards us. And it was mine to share. First the Emperor and I had some. Then I opened the ball and we were on the mountain again. When we got to the village everyone was equal.

This story is presented in its entirety. It is not significantly longer than any other fifth grade boy's story and less lengthy than most girls' stories. It includes dialogue, but like the other boys' stories, it relies on physical action, mastery of skills, and physical triumph over the enemy. In addition to learning how to write a story for his language arts assignment and demonstrating a knowledge of medieval life for his social studies curriculum, Saffron accomplishes a variety of things for himself in his story. He wrestles with his inability to live in community with others; he confronts Death and is not seduced by it; and he recognizes that being treated equally will help him live successfully in a community. After his hero's journey, Saffron became a committed and purposeful member in his subjunctive world. His experience of the journey allowed him to write the story that then gave him an understanding and an awareness of how to work with other students. His experience is an example of Lambek's dialectic between embodied experience and objectified knowledge.

By the selection of the material, BlackNight Moonlight, who called home to find no one there confronts her fears of being alone; Miss Priss discovers that Wisdom comes when you don't give up; Alissa resolves her conflict with her older sister; and Saffron confronts his fear of death. As Bettelheim suggests, their hero journey stories allow them the possibility to imagine and experience their greatest anxieties, to conquer them, and then turn the chaos of their fantasy life into order, control and completion. But the stories do more than that, they suggest that the ritual space was not a rigid, fixed structure, but allowed students

opportunities to participate in a process in which they could seek answers to their own problems and become differentiated from one another.

Part Three: The Heroes Write Their History

Saffron describes his world as a serf in his hero story. For all the students, understanding the difference between the world of the native Americans and the Europeans who came to this continent was a significant part of their social studies curricula. The third graders needed to learn local history; the fourth graders needed to learn about the immigrants that came to their State and how their State developed; the fifth graders needed to learn about the founding of the republic.

According to Postman, successful education helps young people learn “to hold comfortably in one's mind the validity and usefulness of two contradictory truths.” (1996) The State and local history stories were difficult to write because most students played at least two characters, an Indian and a European, who had different views of the world. They wrote their stories as separate chapters, created an intricate web, so that they would include the details of both cultures and focused on point of view as the most important aspect of the story. Giving the narrator a clear voice was the goal for that paper. In addition, the fourth graders read historical novels and used the structure of those novels to write their own stories.⁵³

⁵³ All three teachers were involved in the overall use of the curricula in their class and Michael was especially committed to students' literacy, so novels became a large part of the language arts in the fourth grade.

Although we created a writing web to help them, the third graders vividly remembered their experiences without it and willingly did additional research. During the time with the Potawatamis, Maurecia did research in the library; Tyler found a book on Indian sign language; the Captain found a beautiful little story about the Cherokee; and Dancin' Man and his mother found stories on the Internet that Indians tell. In their stories, the third graders completely separated their experiences, i.e., the first chapter told about their lives as Indians and, if they became Europeans, the second chapter was told from the point of view of the settlers. In his first chapter Dancin' Man explains life as a Potawatami:

...We live on Mother Earth. The wind is her breath, the soil is her flesh, the rocks are her bones, and the trees are her hair. The Ancients are stupid because they killed each other. The coyote is our teacher. We can only kill the deer because they are not ancients. Each morning we listen to our story every day. Don't step hard on the earth.

We shared everything and we chose chiefs by who was good at something. We make decision by council ...

We built a longhouse for the winter. I harvested corn. I died and they prayed for me. They thanked me and they prayed that I had a good time at the hunting ground...

In the second chapter, Dancin' Man becomes Chris Hunter and tell us:

...We got the Indians language from them. We traded tools for corn. We traded guns for furs. The Indians get ammunition for ½ the furs and ¼ of the meat. I taught Indians how to shoot a gun. If we believe their religion, God would punish us. We went to war because we could not agree on religion and they would not give the land up.

The third grade stories allowed us to understand not only how the students perceived the social studies curriculum they were required to learn, but continued to give us insight into the students' experience. For the King of Colors, winning was important because he felt that he often lost unfairly. But now, he

was not concerned about the 'fairness' of the situation. Even though the Indians had won, they had chosen to leave the area to avoid more fighting, but for the King, winning was only a question about who had the land at the end of the war. He writes in his second chapter that he entitled The White Settlers:

God is more powerful. We are better than animals! Mother Earth is not real. We went to war because the Indians would not let us have the land.

By writing about their lived experience, the third grade students made sense of their social studies curriculum and began to understand the difficulties that different cultures have working together. The story was structured with a greater degree of difficulty in the fourth grade: the students had to hold two contradictory truths that they had experienced in their minds, but had to tell both the story of the Indians and the Europeans from the point of view of one character. Johma is little for his age and one of the loners. In his hero story, the Hermit, who is older and stronger, does most of the work to save Johma, but by the time, Johma writes his history story, he not only understands the English attitude toward the Indians and the French and the early history of the State:

THE INDIANS ALONE

I have arrived in Michigan from England. We are settled three miles from an Indian village. The savages are so weird. They live in huts of bark and mud. Two days after we settled I met a savage named Little Fox.

More settlers are arriving. I think it will be winter soon. I can hardly understand what the Indians say. And another thing, the Indians pray to "Mother Earth"...

In his second chapter, Johma continues to write as an Englishman, but now he is both heroic and has a clear sense of the storyline:

THE WAR

After our return from England where we reported our findings to the King, we went hiking back to camp. On the way we noticed how good the land was for building on. When we got back to camp, we found it destroyed. I thought, "By the look of the marks, I say it was Indians." Then I said aloud, "I think it was savages." So guess what we did? We decided to have a war...

Johma understood that, unlike the French, the English did not make friends with the Indians to manipulate them. They came in search of land and they brought their ethnocentrism with them. In his story, Johma imagines that the Indians capture his friend and Johma must save him.

...When I got outside I saw I had been in the storehouse. I went back inside. I saw I had knocked the Indian unconscious, so I rolled him into the corner. I went over to the closet and took out a rifle, some ball, and some powder and loaded the gun. When I was done, the guard was coming around. I hit him with the butt of the rifle and said, "That should put you out for a couple of hours," and I proceeded to look for our captured captain inside [the fort].

As I was looking around I saw some Frenchmen. I asked them where Joseph Hunter was. Seeing how fierce I was, they told me he was in the woodshed and fled. I shouted after them, "Ya' fraidy cats!"

When I got to the wood shed, I slipped inside. When I saw the guard I hit him on the head with a log. As I untied the vines on Joseph's wrists, he said, "Thanks." He handed me a letter and said, "Here. Read this. So I did.

This is what it said: "Other French forts are ours. Finish the job. ...General"

"Okay. Then let's finish the job," I said...

Johma saves his friend and together they take the fort for the English. His story reflects his own increasing connectedness to others and his increasing sense of self-worth, an understanding of the State's history, and a ability to craft a very good story.

Alissa based her second story on the second set of novels that we read in class as part of our literature unit. She read *The Winter of Red Snow* By

Kristiana Gregory, a *Dear America* book, which was written in the form of a diary, so she used a journal to tell her story. The diary also let Alissa write efficiently.

CHAPTER ONE

PERE MARQUETTE MEETS SHINING WATER

September 1, 1634

Hi! My name is Pere Marquette. Today I met Shining Water. She is an Indian and a member of the Huron nation. This is what she told me:

She believed in Mother Earth. She said, "Our story is that our ancients were stupid because they killed each other. We know Coyote is our teacher. We know the wind is Mother Earth's breath; that rocks and stones are her bones; and her flesh is the ground, so step lightly on her; and that the trees and grass is her hair. You must not move anything. Mother Earth taught us how to pick good berries, fruits and nuts. She told us which berries, fruits, and nuts are poisonous. She told us that we must listen to her story everyday. We won't kill each other. It is against our belief."⁵⁴

We share everything. We choose chiefs by who is good at it. We make decisions by council. We have daily activities based on what our skills are..."

October 6, 1634

... "We go on the hunt now," she said to me and handed me a bow and arrow. "Hide with me. Be still and silent.

When the deer came into the circle of the Indians, we went out from our hiding spot and she said, "Attack from different sides."

I shot once. The deer got it in the heart. Mine was the last shot. Now I went to the deer and started to put it on a skin we brought. Shining Water shook her head and said, "Thank you, deer, and Mother. We thank you, deer, for the food that you give us. We thank you, Mother, for providing it."

Then we loaded the deer onto the skin and took it to the longhouse.
November 28, 1634

Before winter we must get fish, fruit, and nuts and store food. We must harvest our crops and store them. The shaman must get medicines from the herbs and plants in the forest. When Winter arrives we have gotten all that done. Now we work as a community to divide food equally.

March 1, 1635

Today Shining Water died. We saw a tree start to bud. Winter will be over soon. It has been a short winter but colder than any other winter I remember.

March 22, 1635

⁵⁴ Like Dancin' Man's story, Alissa's story reflects all the details of the world they knew as Indians and the origin story that their shamans told them each day.

Today the Indians buried those that died in the Winter. They thanked them for what they did for the community and prayed. The Indians believe these people go to the Happy Hunting ground where there are lots of animals to hunt and you never go hungry.

April 2, 1635

Today we were going to get in a canoe and paddle 1,500 miles to an Ottawa camp. Good thing Pere Tailor, Pere Parler and I have Wize Otter, an Indian, to guide us and translate. We have paddled 500 miles in one day. We will make a camp and rest...

April 4, 1635

...We said, "Do you want tools and to learn how to speak our language?"

Wize Otter said it in their language and they went in the village to discuss it.

They said, "Yes." And told us we could stay there if we followed their rules.

We said, "Yes" and they gave us jobs.

Pere Tailor and I picked berries. Pere Parler was a hunter. Now the French traders came and got some Indians addicted to whiskey. They snuck it in with the guns.

April 18, 1635

Some of the Indians do whatever the French traders say. They steal stuff. For the French it is 'good'. I hate it...

As a French priest, Alissa saw the native Americans differently than the French and the English. They were not people to be manipulated or to be conquered. Alissa, who likes facts, writes stories that reflect her drive toward success. She sees things in terms of problems that can be solved and sees herself as someone who is capable of solving them. Like all the students' stories, Alissa's stories are heroic. She not only understands history, but she sees it from her perspective of hard work and determination. Alissa began the year as a quiet, little girl who did her work and rarely spoke. In the subjunctive world, Alissa was a leader, a woman who had a vision and was willing to work to see that vision happen. But, far more important than motif, Alissa's story reflects the freedom of style and personal expressiveness that was a part of the ritual experiment. By

writing stories, Alissa exposed her artistry, her sense of lyricism, and her ability to create symbols. She beautifully conveys her understanding of death when she says, ***"Today Shining Water died. We saw a tree start to bud."***

When the third and fourth grade books were published, students read them to their families. This additional experience allowed students another opportunity to see how different people can perceive the same situation and to see their own individual differences.

In the fifth grade, their world and their writing was far more sophisticated. Their hero's journeys were part of their lived experience in their imagined world from which the Europeans ventured to come to America.

Hi! My name is Happy Dude. I am a serf and I don't like it one bit because of those vassals; those mean, rude, nasty vassals. They said that if I did exactly what they said I would be protected. So I worked so very hard. One of the very nice vassals, Julie, gave me one, not two, not three, but one piece of cloth. That was okay though.

But do you know what happened? King Quacker III had said that the serf who worked the hardest would get a nice piece of cloth, so I worked and worked as hard as I possibly could and then he just gave it to another serf, Lili. Boy! I hate that good for nothing King! Always bossing me around! Why, he even bosses the vassals around!

He said that he would protect me. Yeah, right! He won't even let me inside the castle wall. I mean how can you protect somebody if you don't put them in a safe place like in the castle wall? How Rude (with a capital R!) That King is so unfair. I just wish there was some way to make him be fair.

My home is small and I didn't have any friends. It was nice for me but it was nothing compared to the castle. It was huge! They had nice big sofas, huge beds, big dressers, tons of clothes, and I could go on and on and on. If I had gotten that other piece of cloth I would have given my old one to another serf, but I didn't get it....

Within the introduction of his story, Happy Dude explains his understanding of the monarchical system. He understands what a serf's life is like, who the aristocrats are, and the difference between both worlds. He goes in search of the

Bill of Rights. Although not completed here, it is clear that Happy Dude's story, like Saffron's, conveys a clear sense of the elements Bruner suggests give narrative the power to create meaning. There is a clear sense of agency, a sense of line and motivation, an understanding of the requirements of a good story and a clear voice.

But it is Nick, the third grader with the vivid imagination that understands that stories are how people hold their world together. Nick, who continued to tell meaningful and heartfelt stories, remained an Indian through the entire history experience. As Mother Earth, I had told the Indians many things. By selecting a motif, Nick demonstrates what he viewed as valuable. When I told them that they needed to move West to stop the fighting, Nick cried softly to himself and then wrote:

We killed five settlers and three Indians died. We won and we fought for our land, but we still had to leave for Mother Earth. She didn't want more of us to die. She told me to fish for us. She told us never to kill each other. She told us to hunt, and keep our stories.

Part Four: Using Their Stories to Create Their History

Nick knew it was important to keep their stories; he knew that it was important to treat the land and others with respect and he would use that knowledge to form his community on Zandar. Michael Lambek (1993) maintains that there is a dialectic movement between lived experience and objective knowledge. Experience, when used in narrative, is given meaning, and that meaning becomes the basis for the next experience. In *A Community of Heroes*, this dialectic relationship was witnessed throughout the year.

After the third graders experienced the coming of the settlers to their local area, after they experienced the problems the two cultures had getting along with each other, and after they wrote their stories, they applied their experience to their imaginary community. They wrote a pledge that they said every time they entered Zandar:

**We promise to keep Zandar clean.
We promise to be honest and to love Zandar and one another.
We promise that we will respect one another
and never fight among ourselves.
We promise that we will never enslave one another.
And that we will never mock our flag or our community.**

Both third and fourth grade classes wrote a pledge and said it daily. Their words informed their lives. This was a pledge that made sense to them, because it was concrete and was their commitment to each other.

Since they had learned in their social studies books that laws were an important part of community, with Liz and my help with wording, they wrote the laws under which they would live. The Laws of Zandar reflected both the personal experience of the third grade students and their experience in the history of their local community within the ritual space:

**THE LAWS OF ZANDAR
AS DECIDED BY THE HEROES OF ZANDAR
AND APPROVED BY THE MAJORITY ON MARCH 30, 2000**

Citizens of Zandar have the right to participate in the religion of their choice and the community of Zandar will never choose a religion that represents the community.

Every citizen has the right to express their opinions and their feelings on any issue. Citizens may not make threats of violence towards others or threaten the public good.

The community of Zandar, or its agents, may not enter a citizen's home without permission and may not take the personal property of any citizen.

Every citizen of Zandar, if accused of a crime, has the right to a speedy trial by judge or jury. The accused may choose whether s/he wants a judge or jury trial and the community will choose the judge or jury.

There shall be no one that forms a gang for the purpose of terrorizing or bullying other members of the community.

There shall be no violence of any kind. Any violence, including a threat of violence, will be prosecuted.

The People of Zandar will not tolerate and will prosecute any citizen who puts other citizens down with malicious intent.

The People of Zandar will not tolerate and will prosecute any citizen that pollutes or hurts the earth or the air in any way.

The People of Zandar will not tolerate and will prosecute anyone who kills anything unless it provides food for the community.

No one shall be allowed to be naked in a public space.

No one will be permitted to use drugs of any kind without a prescription from a doctor.

No one will be permitted to drive under the influence of alcohol.

No minor, that is, anyone under the age of twenty-one years of age, will be allowed to consume alcohol.

The People of Zandar will never declare war on another country unless that country has committed an act of violence on the People of Zandar.

The People of Zandar will prosecute any community member who lies about another community member and spreads that lie around the community.

The People of Zandar will not permit hunting for big game by a single individual.

Objectified knowledge informed the world that they would create. They had chosen to go to war, because neither the Indians nor the settlers would give up their religion, and the consequences for both groups had been a powerful experience for them: the Indians had to leave their land and the settlers lost most of their people. Freedom of religion became the first law that they wrote. The laws about bullying reflect a problem that they were experiencing on the playground and the laws about drugs and alcohol reflect the fears instilled in them by the schools, the media, and their parents. Students lived in their community under these laws. In the third grade, when a written law was broken, community held a trial⁵⁵. Objectified knowledge motivated lived experience.

Another example of the dialectic at work happened when I taught the fourth grade the second year. Eight of my third grade students were in the fourth grade class. Although the experience was different and more complicated in the fourth grade, when the students returned in time to learn State history, they came with a knowledge from their own past, and were wary of the Europeans who would wanted to change their story. Tyler, the smallest and most hardworking of the boys, was selected as chief of the Ottawa. He wrote:

Oh, yeah, we have some visitors too.

They call themselves the French. One group is the priests, called the Jesuits, and one group is the traders, called voyageurs.

The priests want us to believe in something else. Yeah, right! The traders want to trade with us. I'll go with the traders.

⁵⁵ I was relieved that students rarely broke the laws. The trial took two days. Liz acted as the judge. I was the prosecuting attorney. A student was the defense attorney. We had eleven jurors and everyone else, except the defendant, was a witness.

“Cough! Cough” Well, I made a mistake. “Cough, cough” and now my people are drunk. Three people: Ruby Eagle, Speedy Titan, and Little Star are mad at me and went to the priests....”

Whiskey, the French traders, and manipulation through friendship had not been a part of the third grade experience. Tyler had to help his people survive the encroachment of many different populations in the fourth grade⁵⁶. The one thing he always refused to give up was his people’s story about Mother Earth. When the English came, they declared war on the Ottawa. Because the Ottawa had whiskey in their village, they were weaker than either the French traders or the Hurons. Tyler, with heart pounding, formed alliances with the Hurons and the French and continued to refuse to give up his land or his story. His story is written with the speed, tempo, and drama of the experience he had:

We have more visitors: the English. They say they are nice, but they look mean. Trade with the English? Let me think about it! Thought about it! Na!

***One of our people got drunk and shot an English settler. DUH!
And now they want war! Well, at least we have the traders and the Huron on our side.***

We have killed two of their people. I’m going into battle, aren’t you coming too?

I think I see an English. Bang! Bang! DUH! That was one of our own people. Wait. There he is. Bang! Bang! Got him. We have seven people left. The English have two. We want to keep fighting, but they want to stop. Just let me do the talking.

“We’ll stop. Don’t give us anything. Just leave. You heard me. Leave!”

We did it. We won the war!!

We’re going to have a great life ... forever!

⁵⁶ In the third grade, there were only the Potawatami and the English settlers because they only studied their local history and the town was founded later in the State’s history. In the fourth grade, they studied State history, so learned about several different native American populations, the French priests, the voyageurs, and the English.

Tyler and the Ottawa rewrote history. They had used their objectified knowledge from the previous year's experience to change the course of history. Even though they knew that the Indians had been sent to reservations in the State or had moved to Oklahoma, they were not going to let it happen again. Their knowledge, and the meaning that knowledge had for them, became the basis of their new experience.

Part Five: Difference and Individuation in Their Own World

In the previous chapter, I spoke about the difference between individualism and individuation. Again, according to *The New Merriam Webster Dictionary*, individuation is "the process by which individuals in society become differentiated from one another". Individuation is an important step in maturation in Western cultures. Western culture appreciates difference and the ritual process has been charged with limiting individual experience, but this research has found that learning in a ritual space can allow greater opportunity for self-expression, for self-examination, and for learning in ways that are meaningful to the individual student.

Nick, Cwisa, Tyler, Happy Dude, and Alissa loved to write and wrote with ease. Saffron, Johma and Miss Priss had great stories in their heads but needed to slow down and 'persevere' to write their stories. But there were many students who were considered 'special needs' children in all three classes. These students were either diagnosed with attention deficit problems, were slow learners, or had emotional problems. Writing for them was more difficult, but like

John, if they had a compelling reason to write their stories, the results were quite striking.

Rocky has been diagnosed with an extreme case of attention deficit disorder. Last year he was medicated so much that I hardly noticed him. He never participated; he never played. He seemed to be constantly staring into space. This year his parents decided to reduce his medication. Even though there is every indication that he is intelligent, Rocky, who is in the fourth grade, was reading *below* the second grade level. He was hostile to his classmates and loved to poke at them while Michael wasn't looking. He fidgeted all the time and couldn't sustain interest in class assignments. Of his hero journey, Rocky only wrote:

I brought Books back for the New World that way the new people could read.

Rocky was the only person to bring books to the new planet. Reading and writing were clearly important to him, but because Rocky had trouble reading, writing was excruciatingly painful. Again, by selecting a motif, Rocky tells the reader about himself as much as he tells about the experience.

But in addition to his inability to read, Rocky had a great deal of trouble with the abstraction of an imaginary world. He couldn't create a sense of line out of his experience. He couldn't imagine anything that wasn't there or follow a storyline. In his first story he knows who he is and what he wants, but the rest of his story is unclear:

Let me tell you my story. I am Rocky. Who are you? I live in a tunnel. Where do you live? I have a friend named Jay. His animal and my animal are friends. They live together too. Just like us. I'm looking for books. I have to go on a journey to look for books. I'll be back in a month. I am going to Lavender Town. The monster is going to stop me. If he gets in my way and I am going to stop him.

I am fighting the villain to get through the I-fell Tower to find my books. But I have to get past him still. The gods told me that my animal is waiting for me, too.

There is some order there, but, symptomatic of ADD children, Rocky's story wanders.

During the history component, it was clear that Rocky could not follow the logic of the story. The ritual space allowed flexibility for individual learning. Michael and I decided that science would be more physically concrete for Rocky, so on Zorak, he became an inventor. Michael found a book of experiments for Rocky to read as a more concrete way to learn to read. Although he went to the world of the Indians and the settlers, Rocky wrote about something that was concrete to him. He wrote about the experiment that he planned to conduct:

CHAPTER ONE

ROCKY: THE INVENTOR OF ZORAK

My name is Rocky. I am the inventor of Zorak. I am going to invent the light bulb. I'm going to make light in Zorak.

First I'm going to use a battery and then I'm going to have a glass bulb. Then I'm going to need five-inch nails. And nichrome wire, two eight inch insulated wires and a hammer. And then I have to hammer the nails two inches apart and hammer the nails into the jar and set the battery five inches apart.

I will hook one of the wires, shred two little pieces of wire, connect one of the shredded wire and twist the wire on a nail and connect the other end to the battery and then wait a little while and then disconnect the wire and there will be light.

By having something concrete about which to write, Rocky had started to write simple sentences and placed them in a logical order. He was motivated to write,

because he wanted the other students to read about the experiment he would conduct; he wanted to contribute to the community; and he wanted a story published in the book.

But it was the family heroic adventure that gave Rocky a motivation to write a complete story. The focus of the family stories in the fourth grade was on immigration. Rocky's parents did not come to the parents' night event, so he didn't have an interview on which to base a family story. Some parents did not want to be interviewed, so students could tell a story about themselves as immigrants. There were two new students in the class so they talked about moving to a new school. We talked about the kind of courage it takes to move, when Rocky raised his hand. Rocky had moved five times in the past five years. He said, "When I was three I had a hundred friends, but every time I move I have less friends and now I hardly have any friends." I told him to write about that and he wrote eight pages!

MOVING AROUND

My mom finally made her mind up. She finally wants to move to Florida. I am happy to be moving to Florida. On the way there, I might go to DisneyWorld and go down the water slide. Moving to Florida is my 5th time moving to a new house. And moving to a different place is my fifth time.

My first place that I lived in was [...] Rapids. My house had a hottub and a swimming pool. It had a four acre yard in the back of the house. I had one dog and then I heard a scratch on the door. My dad answered the door and my dad shouted to me to come here. I ran to the door and I saw a stray dog. She looked like she was two years old. My dad let me keep her. A month later she had babies. We had to sell them. Samson, my real dog, would jump in the pool after me. I was only three years old then.

Then I moved to my other house in [...] Rapids. It had a pool. It was thirty feet long and four feet deep. I knew my friends for five years. Then I had to move. That was the bad part. But the good part is he can come over to the house I live in now. Now I have a new dog. His name is Kipper. He can't walk straight when we are on a walk.

Then I moved to my third house. But my third house was an apartment. In the back of the apartment there is a lake.

One day there was a baby duck. His mom abandoned him on the grass and I always wanted a little duck. My mom and dad let me keep him for a month. I had to take care of him, but I didn't care, because I don't mind caring for animals.

One day I saw an adult duck. I ran to my dad. He got scared for a second. I told him that a duck was stuck in the water. He ran to the neighbor. He asked if we could borrow his boat. He said yes. We ran back outside. We tipped the boat over. We paddled out a little bit. My dad got his pocketknife out and cut him loose. He was free. We stayed there for three and a half months.

Then we moved to Florida. I went to school when we got there. A month later, I went to go fishing at the pond. I didn't know that there was an alligator in the pond. That night I went to sleep. I told my mom to wake me up when the alligator man came. When I was asleep my mom woke me up. I got excited. I put on my sandals on and went outside with my mom. I saw the alligator man. We looked at his equipment. Then he got the net out. He set the net up across the pond. It took five minutes to catch it. When he tangled in the net, the alligator man dived in the pond and caught the alligator with his bare hands. He got his black tape and he taped the alligator's mouth shut. He put him in the truck. He said we could pet it.

Now I live in [the District] and I go to [The] School, but we will be moving soon.

Rocky's story may lack some transitions, but what is clear is that when a story has meaning to a student, there is a motivation to write it. The abstraction of an imaginary experience was difficult for Rocky, but he could remember in detail moving from one school to another. Moving so frequently could also be a possible explanation for Rocky's troubles with concentration. It certainly could partially explain the troubles he had reading. But for now, Rocky had two published stories: one about his own heroism; and the other, a story about how he would invent the light bulb on Zorak. By the end of the year, Rocky invented the light bulb on Zorak. He was a hero in his own life and a hero to the people of

Zorak. His individual experience on Zorak allowed him to see himself as having a significant impact on his community.

Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty in their musical, *Once on This Island*, write “our lives become the stories that we weave.” Like Lambek, they understand that our lives are our own works of art. We see ourselves metaphorically. We invent ourselves over and over again by the stories we tell about ourselves. We select from a profusion of details the events that are significant to our creation of ourselves. In *A Community of Heroes* the written stories at the completion of each unit are as important to the students’ learning as the ritual experience because the stories give the experience meaning. The stories combine factual information, lived experience, and the meaning the experience has for the students. The collaborative stories create a sense of community and extend their ability to work together. Deeply embedded in those stories are the visions that the students share of themselves and the world. The creation of their stories, as any art form, helps students to define themselves in the context of their learning and gives them, and the reader, insight into the world in which they live.

Chapter Six: A World of Their Own: Connecting with the Larger Community

Introduction

...I then traveled to the French traders. I became a trader. It was very interesting and difficult for us to stay united as a community. If we lost any respect for each other, we would lose the glue that tied the community together. We had one of the smaller groups of people. There were only five of us. Although we had one of the largest homes, and more decorative than others, we did not have a story that we all believed in...

Moe has been in *Storyteller* all three years. An exceptionally bright child, Moe thought that he understood 'the game' and since he expected to do the same things in the fourth grade, he thought that his community would surely succeed. But the fourth grade ritual experience was much more complex than the previous year. In the third grade, the students received 'social capital cards' and understood that those cards were a symbol of the viability of their community. With them, they had evidence of their ability to create a 'conjoint communicated experience." (Dewey, 1916) With them, they could acquire bridges, power plants, entertainment centers, schools, libraries, a courthouse, and even a jail. In the third grade Moe equated social capital with money; in the fourth grade, Moe understood that social capital was '***the glue that tied the community together***', a nicely crafted metaphor for a fourth grader to write! He also understood that having '***a story that we all believed in***' was a necessary element in building social capital. In the fourth grade the students were asked to make more sense of 'social capital'; if it wasn't money, but it helped the community build buildings then what was it?

L.J. Hanifan invoked the first reference to social capital in 1916⁵⁷. Hanifan referred to social capital as:

those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among individuals and families who make up a social unit. (Cited in Putnam, 2000, Pg. 19)

Social theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (1958) have used the concept of social capital to explain social cohesiveness since the 1950s. In the ritual experiment, social capital was a major concept for the fourth grade students to understand and use, and was defined slightly differently than it has been defined by social theorists. Social theorists use it as an index for social connectedness, but in the ritual world students had to earn it. To build social capital, students had to demonstrate their ability to work together well, to share with one another, and to listen to each other. Using Lambek's (1993), Bruner's (1990), Good's (1994) and Crapanzano's (1980) suggestions about the power of narrative, telling a conjoint narrative in which the community believed earned the community social capital each day. In the history component, a member of the community had to tell the origin story of the people that they became and the entire community had to honor that story. In their own world, they had to write and tell their own collective story, create their own pledge to the community, learn it, understand it, and live by it to earn social capital. And to prepare for the world of the larger community outside their own world, they had to learn the stories of their families and their

⁵⁷ This is interesting for two reasons: 1] Dewey also published his treatise on education in the same year and 2] it clearly reflects the Progressive Era that was at its height.

community. These were major elements on the social capital index so the students had to develop their own evidence of a successful community.

Choosing to make building community a primary goal of the research project was based on the supposition that social capital has been decreasing in the United States for the past twenty-five years and that community is a valuable asset to the country. Robert Putnam, in his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (2000) claims that

Of baby boomers interviewed in 1987 ...Fully 77 percent said the nation was worse off because of 'less involvement in community activities.' In 1992, three-quarters of the U.S. workforce said that 'the breakdown of the community and "selfishness" were "serious" or "extremely serious" problems in America. (Pg. 25)

Since democratic principals supposedly guide education in America, this research supports a concern expressed by a large percentage of the population.

Putnam gives evidence to support his hypothesis that social capital in America has steadily eroded over the past two generations. He cites four reasons for the loss of social capital. These reasons are: 1] globalization and the replacement of locally owned businesses by large national and multinational corporations, 2] pressures of time and money⁵⁸, 3] the effect of electronic entertainment, and, 4] generational change in which the civic-minded generation has been replaced by their children and grandchildren⁵⁹. (Pg. 283)

⁵⁸ Putnam claims that these pressures are most effected by the emergent of the two-career family and suburban sprawl

⁵⁹ According to Putnam, the last reason, i.e., the replacement of the civic-minded generation is, by far, the most important reason for the erosion of community.

Putnam, also argues convincingly that cohesiveness within a community makes people more “healthy, wealthy, and wise.” (Pg. 287) Children who live in communities with a high social capital index are born healthier, are less likely to drop out of school, less likely to die prematurely and more likely to do well academically. Adults, in those same high social capital neighborhoods, live healthier, safer, more economically productive, happier lives, and are more likely to be engaged in the democratic system. I hypothesized, and the research suggested, that if students in the experiment used and understood the concept of social capital in their subjunctive world, they could build stronger social bonds in their real world. And if the loss of social capital is predominately caused by a lack of integration with older generations, then I hypothesized that a significant portion of the ritual experience would need to include students having a “conjoint experience” with their elders.

Creating stronger social ties with the community-at-large was also a major part of the traditional ritual process. Arnold Van Gennep wrote, in his *The Rites Of Passage* (1960), that in the ritual process there are three stages: separation, liminality, and *reintegration*. In a rite of passage into adulthood, the participant separates from his or her life as a child. For example, the mothers’ mourning the symbolic deaths of their children is the child’s *separation* from childhood. The liminal experience is the participant’s time in the subjunctive space where they explore possibilities and prepare for adulthood and reintegration into the social order as adults. In traditional societies, children are often taken away for extended periods of time and return as adults who are ritually reintegrated into

society in a different role and status position. In the *Community of Heroes* ritual experiment, separation is symbolic, i.e. students still have contact everyday with their parents in their role as children. Since separation was incomplete, I hypothesized that the reintegration needed to begin within the ritual process itself, so that the students could be viewed differently by their families. As heroes students had to find '***the glue that tied the community together***' both within their subjunctive world and between themselves, their families, and their community.

Part One: Reintegration with Family

When the third and fourth grade students had been inside their own world for several months and had found '***the glue that tied the community together***', the Messenger told them they now must learn how to be hosts to their parents and families. Heroes, even young ones, had to know how to be gracious hosts to guests in their communities. This was the first step towards reintegration with their families at a different status and role. They had to learn how to share and how to be leaders. Families were invited to a *Storyteller Evening*. Fourth graders were responsible for the event and enlisted the help of the third grade students. They wanted to invite a storyteller; they wanted refreshments; they wanted their parents to participate in some of the exercises that they had learned; and they wanted to show their parents how well they could execute the exercises themselves. I invited the storyteller; the students wrote several invitations to their parents, and organized the evening. They practiced etiquette for a week before

the party. Students arrived early to make sure that someone would be there to greet the guests.

On January 26, 2000, over 100 parents, students, and their siblings attended the party in the gymnasium. From the third grade, 17 out of 22 students and their parents came and all but one family came from the fourth grade class. The students greeted their families at the door, took their coats, escorted them into the gym, made them comfortable, explained the games, and served the refreshments. Seated on the gym floor, we listened to a story together and then played **Mirrors**, **Verbal Jousting**, and **Build a Story**. The **Mirrors** exercise, played between parents and their children, was quite touching. When playing Verbal Jousting, some of the parents were very creative with sounds and words. Students assured their parents that "It was okay" if they lost, because "we'll get another chance." The climactic event of the evening was **Frontiers**, an imaginary adventure where the students and their parents entered and explored an world together.

After the party, parents and children were invited to write the stories that they had experienced, so that we could publish a book of stories about family adventures in the subjunctive world. There was an equal number of mothers, fathers, and entire families who wrote the stories. Again, Lambek's (1993) statement that "selecting a motif is a moral and aesthetic act" (Pg. 391) is evidenced in the collaborative stories written by parents and children as much as it was in the students' individual and class stories.

Junior is in the fourth grade and, most probably, calls himself Junior for two reasons: he likes being childish and/or he adores his father. Both Junior and his father see themselves as witty men. Together they wrote a story that was not only funny, but clearly explained their feelings about their experience playing Verbal Jousting:

***...And so the saga begins ...
There we were, just two family members adrift in a sea of mirrors & jousters, our moods low for losing with 'subtle' to "Engin-in-in-in-in-in!" when it overcame us! --ADVENTURELAND! ...***

The playfulness with sounds and words is apparent in their story. Their love of competition and their ability to move on after failure, qualities that the father wanted the son, who had trouble with losing, to learn, were also major themes in their story.

If competition, mastery, and playfulness are motifs in Junior and his father's story, the motif for many girls and their mothers was sociability and politeness. Sheena's story, written with her mother, is an example of sociability through the use of dialogue found in stories written by both the young girls and their mothers:

THE ADVENTURE

Once upon a time there was a little girl. She lived where there was a tyrant. Her name was Sheena. One day the tyrant told her to get a box.

"Why?" she said.

"Just go. Do what I say!"

"Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Where do I have to go?"

"To the sky in the clouds."

"Up in the sky in the clouds! Are you crazy? How am I going to get there?" Sheena asked.

"Go to the Animal Kingdom."

"Okay."

So I went to the Animal Kingdom and there I found a note. It said, "Go to Scary's house." But why did I have to go to Scary's house. Oh, well. I will go anyway.

So I went. I knocked on the dark deep cave. It echoed.

"Are you home?"

It echoed again.

"Yes, I am. Who is there?"

"It is me, Sheena."...

Sheena and her mother's story was filled with conversation. At least 90% of it was dialogue. Sheena only seems to go somewhere so she can talk to people and everywhere she goes she is polite. She always knocks on cave doors, says 'Yes, ma'am' and 'Thank you'.

The most common motif with mothers and sons was chivalry no matter what the time period. Nick, who loved to live in a world of chivalry, of dragons, and knights throughout the year, invented a world from Arthurian legend in which he protected his mother whom he named Tarah:

Hi! It's Nike again. I found Tarah, my mom. I found her in the portal that leads to the land of adventure. We fell in it. It was called dragon world. We saw dragons with all kinds of powers. I saw a big dragon that was different colors and it had a rainbow sword and I asked him to be my dragon. Tarah picked the lightning dragon as her companion. The dragon took me up to the dark knight's house to battle the Dark Knight...

Jay, who also saved his mother, was equally inventive, adventurous and chivalrous, but he imagined a world in the future not the past:

THE TECHNO JOURNEY

I led my mom into my imagination. It was a land filled with technology and adventure. The world was packed with Megabytes and microchips. We walked on a path of computer keyboards. We passed boulders that were computer monitors.

A computer mouse ran across our path and tripped my mom. She fell into a black hole screen saver. I accessed the Internet at the speed of 150 megahertz and quickly used the taskbar to reduce the screen saver timer.

Thirty seconds later, my mom was free. We quickly closed the window and returned home.

Most parents, especially the mothers, seemed to let their children save them from the perils of their imaginary worlds and then write about the adventure.

Johma and his mother wrote a unique story where point of view is played out between them and where Johma is heroic:

EXPLORING

...JOHMA: I saw a lady sitting by a tree and I asked her to join me.

MOM: The young man seemed to burst out of nowhere. He was dressed for adventure, with a shield and mace. When he spotted me, he bowed and asked me to join him in exploring this new world. We set off together to the north.

JOHMA: As we walked north, I heard a swooshing sound close above our heads. Then I caught sight of a bird-like creature. I was amazed by its size – quite small in comparison to the noise I had heard. Its color was like a rainbow and it flew at us with incredible speed, barely missing the top of our heads.

Suddenly I saw a whole flock of them. They were diving straight at us!

MOM: Johma held up his shield to protect himself and me. The rainbow birds bounced off the shield like rubber balls. Still, they came back at us again. I ducked and flailed at them with my arms, while Johma swung his war hammer of ice, which he had pulled out from within his cloak. Each time he connected with a bird, it fell to the ground, frozen solid.

JOHMA: The lady was so scared that she signaled for us to go south...

Together, they tell the story of their adventures. They share completely in creating the story just as they shared in the mutually created experience.

Parents also used their stories as a way to strengthen the connection with their children. Paige is the daughter of a single mother who rarely came to school events. She did not have a college education and struggled financially, but

writing a story of their shared experience became a gift that she shared with her daughter. Together Paige and her mother wrote:

***THE WORLD WE SAW
The sky was green
The grass was blue
The birds swam
The fishes flew
The people crawled
The snakes walked
The cats barked
The dogs talked
The trees were short
The flowers were tall
The world was strange
Behind this wall
It was kind of pretty
But nothing like home
I'm so glad
I wasn't alone***

Akneesheona, a fourth grade student, had great difficulties writing, but worked hard all the time and loved the magical world. Her parents were having marital problems and by the end of the year had filed for divorce. Both parents had come to the event, but she had chosen to go on the adventure with her father. Perhaps more than any family, their experience was focused and connected to each other. Every imagined moment was visible to anyone watching. They explored textures, smells, tastes, sounds. Their adventure was quite beautiful to watch. Her father wrote the story of their adventure and in this story, Akneesheona could feel her father's love:

***THE PARADISE VALLEY
Once upon a time in the year 2998, a girl named Rachel and her father whose name was Blake lived in Italy. Rachel was ten years old while her father was 35. One day they were on their way to an enchanted forest***

when Rachel saw an ice blue air balloon. In looking closer at the balloon, Rachel found a door and showed it to her father.

Rachel was the type who was always looking for an adventure so she entered the balloon through the door. Now her father was not quite as eager to join her so he let her investigate what was inside first. The balloon being made of ice was see-through so Blake could see Rachel and her expressions. He could not hear her or see what she had found.

After seeing that she was smiling Blake decided to go join his daughter in her adventure. Once in the balloon, he saw that Rachel found a beautiful patch of flowers and picked one to put in her hair. She also found an apple tree from which she quickly pulled down a branch and plucked an apple to eat. She motioned her father over to the tree, as they were the sweetest apples she had ever tasted. Blake agreed as he enjoyed one of the apples.

Then Rachel slowly bent down on her knees to begin digging in the ground which yielded her water from the earth. Blake bent down to taste the water also and as he did a little friend joined his side. Very slowly he cupped his hands so the little chipmunk could climb up into his palms. After petting the little animal for a minute or two he set the chipmunk in Rachel's hands so she could meet the new friend.

Just then a spider fell from the tree so Blake picked it up to show Rachel. Rachel did not like spiders so she motioned it away. Although they were enjoying their time together, Rachel and her father realized that it was getting late and they should be getting home. Not knowing if the balloon would be there forever, Rachel and Blake took a minute together to remember how wonderful everything looked in Paradise Valley. The colors were very bright and all the flowers were very beautiful. After a few minutes they decided that this was a very special time for them, as they were able to share it together. Finally realizing it had brought them closer together they decided to go back home, forgetting about the enchanted forest. Once home they realized the day had brought them closer together and they lived happily ever after.

Parents' Night was an activity that allowed families to play together at school.

They weren't there to get a report about the successes or failures of their children; work was, in fact, never discussed. They were not there to make money for the school or to see a competitive event. They were there as their children's guests; they had come to PLAY and play they did. Each family played in their own way; each family then returned home to choose a *motif* to give meaning to

their own experience of the event that would reveal their own interests and needs. This experience reintegrated the students with their families prior to their completion of the liminal phase of their ritual world. Parents were now familiar with their child's subjunctive world; they had entered it briefly and had as Blake tells us in his story ***"decided that this was a very special time for them, as they were able to share it together."***

The books the parents and students wrote together were another shared experience and the books the students wrote themselves became another way that they reintegrated with their families. Without grades or comments, parents could track their child's progress in verbal expressiveness, both oral and written, and could also learn what their child valued and what they were learning in school. The books were used as reading assignments and homework was pleasant when the stories they read were their own. The students read the books to their parents and together parents and siblings would draw pictures to fit the stories.

But a significant part of reintegration is learning the history of one's own family. Students were asked to discover how their family fit into the larger community, and how students fit into the family. As previously mentioned, an anthropologist from the University, and two historians, from the State Historical Museum, came to speak to the students about how anthropologists and historians gather information. The students practiced interviewing techniques within their subjunctive world. Then the third and fourth grade students interviewed their extended families. Fourth graders focused their interviews on

how their families came to the State and America. Approximately 66% of the parents in both classes attended a second parents' night event in late April where they were interviewed by their children. Parents, especially those who were first or second-generation immigrants, were very pleased with having an opportunity to tell their stories to their children and have the interviews videotaped. Students ran the video cameras for each other and then were asked to take the data from the interview and turn it into a historical story. When the books were written, the videotapes and the books were submitted to the local library and were put on display for several months. Again, the students were reintegrating differently not only with their immediate families, but they were providing a service to their community.

This writing assignment was very difficult for the third grade students. They had not experienced these stories with their own bodies and their families did not tell their stories in a logical, sequential order. Using Bruner's narrative format of agency, line, canonicity, and voice was much more difficult for students when they had not lived the experience themselves. Liz spent a great deal of time with the students studying the videotapes and helping them to organize the data into a sequential story. It became clear to both Liz and me that experiencing the story was a critical element in the students' ability to write a meaningful story.

Again, Lambek's (1993) contention that "selecting a motif is a moral and aesthetic act" (Pg. 391), became apparent in these stories. When the students wrote their parents' stories the stories they selected conveyed as much about themselves as the person they interviewed. The Captain, who was an avid

reader and whose family always came to activities and played together well, chose to focus his story on his mother and a book:

My mom was thirteen when Andrew Henry's Meadow was sold at a rummage sale. Her mom also sold all her short books. They were trying to make money for camping.

Then my mom started to get sad. Her mom and dad hired a book finder when mom was twenty-four years old and when I was nine months old, the book finder mailed the book to my mom's mom and dad and my mom's mom and dad mailed it to my mom...

The Captain's story reveals an entire family that not only cares for each other, but a family that cares for books as much as the Captain does.

Richard and BlackNight Moonlight wrote about their fathers. Richard wrote about a stepfather that he was finally accepting:

My dad was about thirteen years old and lived in Florida. His dad started a camping trip. There were two adult leaders and six kids. One kid found a skunk. He thought it would be fun to chase it. Then other people joined in.

My dad was yelling, "NO!!!!"

Luckily the skunk did not spray anyone.

Then my dad and the scouts got their water gear on and started to look for clams. When they got back a raccoon had bitten a hole into the adults' tent.

Then there was a tropical storm. It knocked down a tent. My dad went to get the leader and stepped in a puddle.

Then they all heard a sound like "BZZZZZZ"! Mosquitoes! They bit them bad, so they had to sleep in the car. They went to camp to find no food. AH! AH! AH! AH! So they had to go home!

Richard had not been happy with his mother's marriage, but now he was calling this man 'father', choosing to write his story, and sharing a sense of humor with him. Richard's behavior continued to improve in class. Whether it was because of his improved relationship with his stepfather or because he was living in a democracy on Zandar where there was no 'tyrant' to resist, I will never know.

BlackNight Moonlight wrote about the father that she thought she was losing. Although her father did not come to the second Parents' Night event and she could have interviewed her mother because she was living with her, she chose to write her story about her father. Her story reflects the longing she feels for her father who had moved out of the house during the school year:

... [Bryan] and [Melanie] work for [Susan] and my dad. They are all good workers especially my dad!!

The reason my dad is the best is because he is very busy and he works late. I do not like it when that happens because then I do not get a hug or a kiss goodnight. If I do not get a kiss or a hug from my dad, I get nightmares and that is bad.

My dad is amazing. He can do the splits all the way down. That's who I get my flexibility from. I get a lot of things from my dad, for instance, my dad's ears...

The fourth grade students had to focus their stories on the immigration of their families to either the United States or the State itself. Although they had to follow the canonicity of story structure, the following excerpts from the second year class reveal not only the diversity in their family backgrounds, but the uniqueness with which each approached their stories:

...My great-great-great grandma was sold to a thirty-five year old white man during slavery. She was a slave. She ran away when she was eighteen and married Henry. This way when they had kids they wouldn't be slaves. My Mom, aunts, and uncles aren't slaves either. Neither am I. That's how she saved our family!...

...My grandpa was born in Germany. His name was Lewis []. He was tall with thick hair and blue eyes. He was very strong. He only went to school until the fourth grade! His family was poor. He was sold to the neighbors for a bushel of apples! He would work for the neighbor for one year. Then he returned to his family. Germany was a hard place to live because World War I had begun.

Lewis and his family moved to the USA in hope of a better life, but life in the USA was hard also. The USA was experiencing a Depression. There was prejudice against Germans because of the war. One day someone

threw a brick at him because he was German. It hit his eye! That eye was blind after that. He had a very difficult time learning English. He had a thick accent all his life...

...My family tree has been traced all the way back to England by my grandfather. Our family came right after the Mayflower. They were landowners, farmers, and ministers. They settled in Salem, Massachusetts. They left that place just before the Salem witch trials began...

...He attended public Kilmarnock high school and played soccer for a Kilmarnock soccer team. He eventually graduated and got married to Grandma Wright whose family owned a fish and chip restaurant in Kilmarnock. They had four children and came to America with a group of people from Scotland. On the way two children died on the boat with a tragic disease. It was a sad time.

They had four more children in America. As the children grew up, Grandpa learned enough to take the citizenship test. He passed and became an American citizen. After that he became a janitor at St. Mary's Cathedral...

...Olga and Theodore wanted to come to America to get married. There was one problem: they couldn't afford to send two of them over at the same time! They both decided Olga would go first. When Olga left she knew she wouldn't see Theodore for a while. She hugged him goodbye and then hugged her parents. She knew she would never see them again. She said goodbye and never looked back. Olga arrived at Ellis Island, New York...

...I am from Bosnia. I am a Catholic. The government in Bosnia didn't like Catholics. There was a war in Bosnia. I almost got shot in the arm. Soldiers in camouflage came to our town to help....

...My dad is my hero because he never gives up hope. When my dad was born in Mississippi, he was the oldest child in his family. He wouldn't even hit his younger brother or sister or he would get whipped by his dad. When he was ten, his dad left and his mom died and my dad took care of his brothers and sisters because they were too young to work on their own. When he was fifteen, he went to the Vietnam War. He lost a lot of friends in the war. He left the army...

...There once was a boy named August Alexander [] who lived in Finland, a snowy country with mountains. He got a job on a ship when he was seventeen years old because he wanted to see the world. For three years he helped the cook on the ship.

One day when the boat was in Boston he decided to get off and stay in America...

...My family came to America on an airplane. They came to America because there was a war going on in India. The war in India is against our religion. We had a war because the Indian government was fighting with bombs, guns, swords, and they killed people. We said we want to have a war. They said, "No!" We said, "Why? Because you will keep on shooting and bombing our temples."...

...The island I came from is called Belle Island. My island is three miles by nine miles long, and it is very pretty. My Dad worked in an iron ore mine way out under the ocean. Because he inhaled the dust from the mining he got a disease called tuberculosis. My mom got it from my dad. They both got very sick and died when I was four. So my sister and I were put in an orphanage....

...William was a good man. He was my great grandpa on my Mom's side. He came from Germany as a young man to Staten Island. New York. William left Germany because of the Nazis.

The Nazis were a group of soldiers. They wanted to kill the Jews and rule the land. Hitler was the leader of the Nazis.

William left Germany because he was in danger. Hitler hated Jews. William was Jewish and that is why he left. But when he came to America, he joined the United States army that was fighting the Nazis in World War II. William fought in Europe against the Nazis....

...When he was six years old his father left home and Roy went to work as a shoe shine boy. He had two younger brothers, Russell was four and Ronald was two. He helped his mother take care of his younger brothers.

He had to work hard to get money as a shoe shine boy. He would make ten cents a day. He bought his supplies with some of the money he earned. The rest of the money went to his mother to help buy food and other things they needed....

Much has been said about the rigidity of ritual experience, but, as Rappaport (1999) points out formality is necessary to contain imagination. Within a controlled environment creativity and individuality can be expressed safely and yet, each person can experience the ritual space differently. These excerpts expose not only what each child viewed as important, but allowed them their

unique way of expressing those values within a formal structure that would be understandable to others. Their stories reflect the freedom that the ritual space gave them to find their own voice.

Placed in a collection, these stories became a positive way to explain and understand diversity in the State and in America. Without preaching diversity to the students, they could discover it themselves and understand it through experiencing each other. Diversity was expressed through the individual experiences of each family in the class and shared through conjoint communicated storytelling.

The first drafts of the immigration stories were disorganized, scattered facts. They were 'reports' not stories. One of the positive aspects of using story form is that guiding students toward effective revision did not require any lecture or negative feedback. Students were given two pieces of advice: 1] remember to use story form and 2] a hero would always do their personal best. With that advice, students revised and edited their stories and submitted exemplary work.

According to parents' responses, the family stories reintegrated students with their parents and extended families in a more positive way than prior to separation and experience in the liminal world. Jay, one of the comedians in the first fourth grade class, was always in trouble for minor infractions of behavior during regular class time. Usually he misplaced his homework, didn't complete his in-class assignments, or submitted work that was sloppy or unfinished. Jay would cry if Michael threatened to call his parents which always surprised me because Jay was such a feisty young man and his parents were always

supportive. It was while writing his family hero story that was about his father that Jay learned perseverance. Jay spent days on this story. He went over story structure again and again. He made sure he included description. This was a story about his father, his hero, and Jay was going to get it right:

FROM LEBANON TO THE USA

Lebanon is a beautiful country. It has big mountains, a beautiful shoreline, and lots of fruit trees. Lebanon is known as the jewel of the Middle East.

And in Lebanon there lived a boy named Joseph Mikel [...]. He was a little boy with black hair and brown eyes. He loved his family! He and his mother and his brothers would go to the backyard and play in the garden.

Everything was so beautiful until a civil war broke out and it was horrible. Bombs blew in the night and gunshots in the day. The garden was burned [fried is what some people would say]. The good days were over and Joseph decided to move to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the USA.

But he had not a penny in his pocket, so he worked at a market. When the war was over, he bought a ticket to the USA. It was a very long trip but he survived and landed in Pittsburgh and went to college for eight months and in that long while he wrote to his Mom and his brothers and sister.

He was not very impressed with Pittsburgh, so he moved to [the District] and he went to [the State university] only he had no money so he looked in the paper and there a boss wanted someone to work at [a] Restaurant and he got the job. He worked as much as he could. He made enough money to bring his family over one by one. First came Ed, then Samir, then Sam, then Rudy and last but not least his MOM, DAD and sister!

He went to [the community college] and met a woman named Michelle [...] and they dated for seven years until they got married and had two boys. He graduated from [the State university].

His ten year old son loves to eat and the five year old always whines. The couple will have their anniversary on the 27th of May.

Jay didn't want to disappoint his father. He was beginning to understand what he cared about; he had learned to persevere; and he still managed to include his own sense of humor. The family hero stories created a spiral effect in reintegrating students with their parents, i.e., the students saw their families as

heroic and by writing stories about their families, they had become heroic in the eyes of their elders.

Part Two: Intergenerational Reintegration

In *One True Thing* (1994), Anna Quindlen tells the story of a woman dying of cancer and the family that surrounds her. Her dying, however, is less important to this research than the way that she lived. The mother, and her group of friends called the 'Minnies', provides the 'glue that held the community together'. During the mother's process of dying, her daughter, an ambitious, young writer, comes to value the ways in which her mother served her family and her community. She learns that service is not submission; that there is a joy in working together with others to benefit a larger good.

In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Robert Putnam credits nearly half of the loss of social capital in this country to generational change. He documents the decline in civic engagement. His evidence suggests that even though all forms of civic engagement have declined in all age groups the rate of decrease over the past twenty-five years has dropped by almost half for people between the ages of 18 - 29 whereas the decrease among people over 60 has been 11%. He writes: In short, the decades that have seen a national deterioration in social capital are the very decades during which the numerical dominance of an exceptionally civic generation was replaced by the dominion of "post-civic" cohorts. (Pg. 255)

Creating an opportunity for students to interface with that civic-minded generation became a component of the ritual experience for the fifth grade

students. The experiment was constructed in a spiral, i.e. the students would repeat similar activities each year, but the level of difficulty would increase. Since the students were being tested on their ability to be community heroes, they examined historical heroes; they played out the lives of the common people who were heroic in the founding of their city, state, and nation and they explored the ways that people in their own lives had been heroic. Third grade students interviewed their parents about anything that might be heroic; fourth grade students interviewed their extended families about their immigration to either the State or America; and fifth grade students met with a stranger who had served their community or their country.

The senior citizens in the community met daily at the intermediate school building. A portion of the building had been given to a seniors' group called the '39ers'; they met for lunch after the students had eaten; played bingo regularly, cards everyday; and exercised in the pool. The schedules were designed so that the generations did not interact with each other. During my first year in the building, I watched teachers make sure that students stayed on 'their side' of the hallway, so 'they would not bother' the senior citizens. When I first proposed that the fifth grade students write stories about the seniors, Bruce, the middle-aged man in charge of the senior program, informed me that busloads of students came from other districts during the year to conduct interviews with the seniors because this was the largest seniors' group in the area. The District itself "had never taken advantage of the opportunity to learn from their own community members".

In late February, a flyer was sent to the 39ers asking them to participate in a *Living History Project*. Seniors volunteered quickly and students prepared for their time with the seniors by conducting simulated interviews as reporters, historians, and anthropologists in situations similar to the third and fourth grade classes, but with a higher degree of difficulty and sophistication.

In April 2000, students and seniors met twice a week for three weeks. They ate lunch together and shared stories; seniors brought photo albums, old newspapers, currency from other countries, letters and memorabilia to share with their student partner. On the day that the interviews were videotaped, the students and seniors made brunch together from recipes the seniors had collected from their childhoods.

During the month of May, students studied the data from the interviews, wrote, revised, and edited the stories. Their senior partners were given an opportunity to read the students' first drafts and make corrections. Some seniors were not pleased with the 'motif' selected by the students, so wrote the stories of their lives in their own words. These stories were also included in the collected stories. Most seniors were very gentle with the students and didn't complain to the students but rather found interesting ways to teach without lecturing. One man wrote his student partner a lovely letter that was included in the book; another woman guided her student partner to help her see where the story lay. Most seniors were content with the focus of the students' stories even though they were not the most significant parts of their lives.

The predominate theme selected as a motif centered on childhood during the Depression and the perseverance, effort, and kindness it took to live through it.

Students wrote:

...Now, during school, she had to rotate to learn. What I mean by that is in one classroom there were four grades: in ONE ROOM! [That's like 70 people in one room.] Each grade had a row and had maybe one hour to learn each day and they would go first line to the back, second row goes to the front and so on.

So now you know how tough it was to be around back then. You probably had to use a lot of effort. I mean A LOT!...

...During the Depression, when he was eight years old, he got 50 cents for picking weeds all day long, but his father who was working right beside [him] got a dollar. During the Depression, they had to move because their house was \$7.00 rent each month. [His] family didn't have enough money to pay the rent. The family didn't have lots of food...

...During the winter of the Depression, the kids would have to take wood and coal to school to keep the school warm. One day on her way to school the snow was so high she had to get on her hands and knees and crawl to school! Then she had to crawl back home. Talk about perseverance! She must have really liked school!...

...It sounds to you like he had an average life as a kid, right? WRONG! Ted went through a time in history when everything was depressing and that's why it's called the Depression. The Depression was when the stock market crashed and a lot of people lost their money, a lot of money! Some people went off to another place to find a job because you couldn't find work in Detroit because they had no money to pay the workers. Some people ended their lives On Purpose! One of Ted's friends, Hudson's, dad killed himself because they had lost all of their money.

Ted had some money in savings. When Ted went to summer school, he had to ride the bus. It was five cents there and five cents back. He cared so much about his family that he walked every day just to save money to buy Christmas presents for them...

Students and seniors found their own partners and it almost seemed as if similar people gravitated to each other. Saffron, the eccentric, found a senior woman who appreciated his sense of humor. She was a great comedic

storyteller and Saffron's story reflected both his humor and hers. He recounts her experiences in St. Augustine, Florida where her husband was stationed during World War II:

... One day she was doing her laundry in her bathtub [she had to do that] when she saw a big bug trying to climb out of her bathtub. She ran to the teenagers⁶⁰ and told them she had a huge bug in her bathtub. They saw it and laughed.

"It's just a little palmetto bug," they said and put it outside.

Another time, they came over and asked if they could borrow some grits. She had no idea what it was. [Neither do I!] But it was pretty common down there so she must have felt pretty humiliated.

One time, a hurricane hit and suddenly stopped. She went outside and walked. She noticed no one was out.

About three blocks from her house a man yelled, "GO HOME, LADY! IT'S JUST THE EYE!"...

Several students developed an ability to listen sensitively to stories that were both crushing and tragic and write these stories with dignity and taste:

...Eddie jumped many times during World War II and they were all successful except the last one. On his last jump as a paratrooper, his left arm was shot and his right ear got shot off. An ambulance came and took him to the nearest hospital. Later, the hospital Eddie was in was bombed and he died.

Eddie was buried at the hospital with his buddies. The army headquarters told Eddie's family what happened. They cried for a long time. Maybe Eddie went to Heaven and maybe he didn't, but he did make a choice to do his part to help the United States of America win the war....

...Martha lost her father. He had taken a rope from their swing. He killed himself that night. In the morning, Martha and her sisters and her mother were looking for him. They found him dead. Martha and her family were all very sad. They were very caring to their dad and miss him....

But sensitivity and a caring touch was a dialectical process among the students and the seniors. The seniors became caring teachers and friends to many of the students; they brought gifts to the students; wrote to them over the

Internet; and guided them through the writing process. Mike was one of a very few students in the fifth grade class who was regularly in trouble. None of his infractions were serious. He ran in the halls, was often late to school, and rarely completed his work either in class or at home, but since he was often in the time-out room, he had trouble keeping up with his work or understanding what was happening in class. His partner was a ninety-eight year old woman who seemed to see instantly that Mike liked to be hugged. Mike seemed to adore Emma; he was never absent on the days that she would share lunch and talk with him. He had never completed a writing assignment, but for Emma he wrote:

When [Emma] was a little girl about eleven years old, World War I started. The war was from 1914 - 1918. [Emma] lived on a farm when she was little. Her mother was a very good cook and the children would always ask her to make potatoes for them. During the war, the good flour and sugar that she used to make bread went to the soldiers in the war, so her mother made bread with rice flour or rye flour. It wasn't as good as the bread she usually made, but the family made do.

Back then they had to use oil lamps to see at night. There weren't any bakeries, so every mother had to bake. They baked in stoves that used wood. It took a lot of wood and they had to cut and carry it into a wood box by the stove. The stove also was used to heat the house. They had to use a lot of wood in the winter.

In those days the snow was so deep and there were no cars and they had to walk to school in the deep snow. They had to carry their lunch to school. They walked about a mile and a half to school each way. The school had all eight grades in one room. When they got home from school, they had to take their school clothes off right away and put it on a board so it wouldn't wrinkle and they could wear it the next day.

Their mom washed clothes one day a week and it took her all day long. They didn't have electric washing machines. They washed the clothes on a washboard in a washtub of hot water. [Emma] says they didn't know any other way of life. They lived and they worked. That was the life they knew.

Every night [Emma] and her sister had to go get the cow that was grazing in the meadow. One day the cow had crossed the lake. Emma was

⁶⁰ The teenagers lived across the street.

scared that the cow would drown if she crossed the lake again, but the cow swam across the lake.

[Emma] was surprised but her mother told her later, "All animals can swim!"

[Emma] is almost one hundred years old! She is ninety-eight and she not only goes to the 39ers all the time, she often is the hostess and says the prayer and makes the announcements. She is a very nice lady.

Mike probably could have written three sentences and Emma would have told him that she was pleased with his story, but, like Jay, in the fourth grade, he was writing about someone that he had come to care for and was motivated to write a good story about her.

Television and film have created 'superheroes' for young people, i.e., heroes that are bigger than life and impenetrable, but heroes that cannot be hurt, do not confront their own fears and so cannot be true heroes. By meeting a generation that confronted hardship and war, worked together, and shared the rewards of their work with their families and their community, the students heightened their understanding of the meaning of heroism and shared a conjoint communicated experience with a different generation.

Part Three: Reintegration with the World Outside

"Immigrating" was the spine around which the story the fourth grade students were living revolved, but during the year students often come and go in the public schools. During the year, three students immigrated into Michael's class and the heroes of Zorak had to find ways to help those students become a part of their world. Immigration of new students early in the year was a relatively easy

process, but student who came late in the year had difficulty adjusting into a *world of their own*.

In late April, they had to deal with emigration: Taz was leaving for a larger city in the State. On his last day in class, Zorak had a celebration. The heroes returned to Zorak, built the village, and created a bridge at the edge of the village. The Messenger came to tell them that one of the heroes must leave to explore an island off the coast; that they must send someone that they knew would be brave; and that would represent Zorak well with the new people that he would meet. To say goodbye the heroes got in a circle and Taz moved to each of them and played Mirrors with each one. Then the heroes gave Taz gifts that he could take on his journey. Johma gave him the 'knife of reliability'; Nicholas gave him wisdom; Jay gave him knowledge; and Cwisa gave him the good memories she had brought back from her hero's quest. Okinawa and Johma stood as soldiers, completely focused the entire time, by the bridge guarding the heroes. When Taz started towards the bridge, Okinawa gave him eternal friendship. Nicholas ran to the bridge, stopped Taz and gave him his imaginary pet otter, so he would have a friend with him always. The farewell celebration and the gifts that the students were willing to share, even though they were imagined, were evidence that they had become a community that worked together, played together, and cared for each other.

We created a story for Taz and sent it to him after we finished the revisions, editing and artwork. Cwisa, Tom, Jay, CO8, Nicholas, Okinawa, and Skeeter did most of the storytelling. They are always the most involved, but everyone gave at

least one idea. The story was fashioned after Judith Viorst's story, *Alexander, Who's Not [Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!] Going To Move!*⁶¹. In the first major section of the story, the students try to keep Taz from moving:

...Tom and Jay say they will stuff me in a jar like in biology so I can stay at [The School]. I always wanted to be pickled!

Junior and CO8 say they will lock me in the school Boiler Room when Louis isn't looking. I always liked that old boiler room. I wonder though what Louis will say when he finds me!

Vanessa, Akneesheona, Cwisa, and Alissa Bockwood have offered to Superglue me to the floor of our classroom. I always knew those girls liked me!

Nick, Riachu, Skeeter, and Dati have promised they will sneak over to my house and dismantle the engine to Dad's car on the night before we leave. I just love my friends!...

Eventually, like Alexander, in their story, Taz moves and adjusts to his new home just as the students hoped that he would in reality.

In their own world, students had learned to present their ideas, to work together, and to build a viable community. Their success as a community built individual and group self-confidence. As hosts and historians for their parents and for seniors in the larger community, they became comfortable speaking with adults. Taz was connecting with a world outside their own, even a world outside of the community in which they had grown up. He seemed like a real hero, leaving home, taking a risk, confronting new problems and he was going with skills that he had learned in their world.

Their confidence, in both their verbal skills, both oral and written, allowed them to have confidence in a much larger world. The fourth grade class loved to

⁶¹ Ms. Viorst's stories have been most useful in helping the students learn and understand story structure

write collaborative stories and took great pride in them, so much so that they decided to send their stories to *DreamWorks* and *Disney*. We spent half of one morning learning how to write a business letter and then the students wrote their letters using the same method used for collaborative stories. The entire time that the students were composing the letter, Alissa Bockwood was assuring them that they would never hear from anyone, but the students were undeterred.

The letter that they sent to Steven Spielberg shows not only their skill in writing, but also their ability to analyze their own work and their complete confidence in their ability to participate as equals in a world outside their own:

Hi! We are fourth graders at ... Elementary School in ... We loved your direction of *Jurassic Park*, *Lost World*, *Tiny Toons Adventures*, *Home Alone*, and all the Indiana Jones movies. We really liked your animated movies like *The Prince of Egypt* and *The Road to Eldorado*. We also think that you choose excellent music for your films.

We have written some stories that we think would make very good animated films and we think that you would be an excellent director for our stories. Our stories are very funny. Other kids would really enjoy them. We tested them with our brothers and sisters and our parents and with other kids in school. They all liked them. We think that you would make a lot of money if you made movies of our stories.

***Our stories show kids' imagination!* We made them up as a class and revised and edited them together, so all our imaginations are in these stories.**

If you like comedy, then you will love *Oops!* It takes place on an imaginary planet called Zorak. It makes you laugh. It has action! There is romance (just kidding)! There is friendship in our story! It is about a little girl who has to learn how to control her imagination and her ugly little friend who has to learn how to like himself and other people. Both of them are different than other people and they learn how to be friends. We only wrote the first chapter of this story so far, but we think that it could be a full-length movie if Emily and Caspeek have to go to the Evil Kingdom to fight King Bloodsucker because he takes Emily's father. Emily and Caspeek can learn a lot of things on their adventure in the Evil Kingdom.

We think that *Doc, Sing, and Moo Shoo, the Baby Monster and How China Got a Great Wall* would be a good cartoon for television and could be a series. This is about a big, big, baby monster and Doc and Sing who are kids. Doc and Sing save the village from Moo Shoo and build the Great Wall of China too. It is very funny. You could make this a series if you have Doc, Sing and Moo Shoo make all the amazing buildings all over the world every week. Kids would learn the funny way things got built and then someone could talk about how it really was made.

We know that you would have to talk to Judith Viorst about the rights to our next story, but *The Further Adventures of Alexander* is a continuation of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day*. It is a very funny story about what happens to Alexander when he tries to get to Australia. We think that you could make cartoons that are the 'further adventures' of really good books. That way kids would want to read the original book!

We think that our stories are very good and very funny and that they would make good cartoons for television and for the movies. We want all our names to appear in the credits!

Let's do lunch! And thank you for reading our stories and considering them for your animated films.

Tom insisted that we write, "let's do lunch", because he knew that businessmen said 'stuff like that'. Reading this letter, one can almost feel the energy in the room as all hands went up to add an idea to sell their stories. The letter is filled with bravado and great confidence in their stories.

The week before school ended, the students received a package from *Disney Productions* with a letter which said that they could not use the stories because of legal issues, but they applauded the students efforts and sent posters from their productions as gifts. Several days later we heard from Steven Spielberg's public relations person who wrote a lovely letter and also sent a poster. The students didn't care whether or not the production companies could use our stories, what was important was that they tried and were acknowledged for their efforts. We had a lottery to decide who would get the posters and of course,

Alissa, the non-believer, was the first to win a poster. Posters in hand and with all the confidence in the world the fourth graders left Zorak and the elementary building convinced that they could take on the world. Well, if not the world, at least the fifth grade.

Part Four: How the World Outside Viewed Their Own World

The students were confident in themselves, but confidence does not necessarily mean that they had acquired the skills that were required as a part of their curricula or that the outside world viewed them as skilled. I had used anthropology publicly in five different ways. It: 1] used the pattern of vision quests from traditional cultures; 2] performed ethnography; 3] taught elementary-aged students field research methods; 4] used anthropological theory and research creatively to reframe problems in American education; and 5] framed questions about history, conflict, and social change anthropologically. But that did not necessarily mean the students had acquired the skills that were required as a part of their curricula. The significance of this research, however, will not be in making anthropology more accessible to the public schools, but rather in framing learning in an anthropological way, so that the experience of education is more rewarding to the students than the normal pedagogy. The students would have to be viewed by adults as successful in a variety of ways to show that there was clear evidence that the experiment worked. The results of the year-long project were: 1] improved writing skills; 2] improved critical and creative thinking; 3] increased interpersonal and intrapersonal awareness; 4] a greater depth of understanding and ability to articulate the meaning of historical events;

5] heightened awareness of community both in and out of the classroom; and 6] a new and more effective strategy for classroom management.

The project was successful beyond any of our expectations.⁶² Students loved it and found school a pleasure because of it. Attendance went up; discipline problems went down. The project was evaluated by two of the District's administrators. Both evaluators came to all three classes several times during the year. A random sample of written papers was evaluated by an outside evaluator using samples from the beginning of the school year, the middle of the year and the end of the school year. The evaluator used the "Analytic Scoring Grid" created by an administrator in the District to evaluate students' writing. The grid evaluated the writing in four areas: 1] ideas and content; 2] organization; 3] style; and 4] conventions of writing.⁶³ Writing improved substantially in all grades with the exception of one student. Oral skills improved in all grades. The evaluator comments:

Length of stories increased as the children moved up in grade level. Stories grew from two or three paragraphs to two or three pages. It is to be noted, however, there were 3rd graders who could write 3 or more pages also.

Enthusiasm, creativity, use of language to communicate, cooperation, caring and interest are all skills I feel show growth from this program. They show up incidentally as the stories grow.

⁶² See Appendices A and B

⁶³ See Appendix A

Although the evaluator suggested that students needed to further develop their writing in three areas⁶⁴, she felt that the students' writing was far better than comparable students and suggested:

I would like to recommend a further evaluation of this program. This evaluation would include a comparison with compositions of the same level students who have not been exposed to the benefits of this program.

The evaluator completed her comments, saying:

As a counselor I have a vested interest in any program that builds not only writing skills, but coincidentally builds skills of cooperation, taking turns, and working together – what a beautiful way to learn.

Another way in which the program proved successful was in its ability to increase students' concentration. One of the problems of American education is the apparent inability students have to concentrate. In the elementary building classes are divided into twenty-five minute segments. No disciplinary area would be addressed for more than twenty minutes at a time. In *A Community of Heroes* students were focused for a two-and-a-half hour period two to three times a week. It is my hypothesis that the creation of an imaginary world in which they were active problem solvers **allowed** students to concentrate. In other words, students can concentrate, but the division of the school day into disciplinary areas does not permit concentration. When the evaluator came to the classes, she stayed for the entire two and a half-hour lesson. She writes:

⁶⁴ The evaluator felt students needed to: 1] move sentence structure from simple to more complex; 2] improve the way to end a story; and 3] edit extraneous details so there was a better flow of a story.

This evaluator feels this program is a very successful program. On my visits to the classrooms, I watched students listening attentively. When students went to the project areas to act out the stories and information given, they worked hard, they worked together, and they followed directions. The stories they wrote whether 3rd grade or 5th grade included many details which led me to believe that these boys and girls were truly invested in what they were doing.

The second evaluator appraised the program on several other levels besides writing: 1] creative and critical thinking; 2] inter/intrapersonal skills; 3] sense of community and 4] classroom management. The evaluator noted that creative thinking was exhibited:

in students' work in developing communities of Zandar and Zorak, making these "their homes", and in their writings about these experiences. The writing samples showed the increases in descriptions, details and creative voice.

The evaluator felt that she could observe increased inter/intra personal skills and a sense of community when students appeared more engaged in their world and worked "more effectively and collaboratively"⁶⁵ together. She comments:

The Storyteller Project creates its own community in the classroom ... Students report a greater sense of community and connectedness with others in their classrooms and families through participation in the Storyteller Project. Parents comments included:

- ***It gave him a sense of family***
- ***Taught them to take action and understand the importance of community***

Evaluators also examined attendance records and claimed that "students in classrooms that participated in the Storyteller Project had a higher percentage of attendance than the average attendance for the school."

The evaluation concluded that:

⁶⁵ See Appendix A

The students involved in these four classrooms⁶⁶ improved their learning and performance in all areas targeted by the Storyteller Project with some other positive outcomes as well.

The report also suggested that the project was “ an outstanding model to teach:

<i>Core curriculum:</i>	<i>writing, social studies, history, cultures</i>
<i>Character Education:</i>	<i>respect, responsibility, caring, & honesty</i>
<i>Inter/intrapersonal Skills:</i>	<i>cooperation and concentration</i>
<i>Thinking Skills:</i>	<i>critical and creative</i>
<i>Service Learning:</i>	<i>make plans, take actions, reflect & celebrate</i>
<i>Integrated Curriculum:</i>	<i>completed lesson plans for real students in real classrooms</i>

Parents were regularly invited to parent night parties and celebrations. I also sent letters with our published books to apprise parents of the activities within their children's subjunctive world. At the end of the year, Jim, the Deputy Superintendent for curriculum & instruction, sent questionnaires to the parents of all students involved in the experiment. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being strongest agreement, parents were asked to assess the program in four different ways: 1] its benefit to their child; 2] whether their child had shown significant improvement in writing and communication skills; 3] whether their child felt more connected to school and community; and 4] whether the program should be continued. 70% of the parents in the fourth and fifth grade returned their questionnaires; 36% were returned in the third grade.⁶⁷ In all grades and for all questions, there were no scores below three and most scores were fours and

⁶⁶ The fifth grade class was team taught, i.e., one teacher taught social studies and language arts to two classes and the other teacher taught math and science to the same classes, so I also worked in Bob's other class, but for fewer hours. Student writing was only evaluated in the three classrooms, but students were asked to fill out questionnaires in all the classes in which I worked.

fives. Fifth grade parents seemed most effusive about the experiment. Parents were also asked to write comments. The parents commented most often on improvement in written and oral communication, on increased creativity, self-expression and confidence, and on the enthusiasm they saw in their children for school. Although I have included the analysis of the questionnaires in **Appendix B** and included the comments in each grade, the following are excerpts that reflect the general sense of the responses:

It has given him a positive outlet for his active imagination and has given him confidence in his ability to tell stories.

It helped [her] understand the difference between fantasy and fact. She developed a concrete understanding of sentence and paragraph structure (as much as a 3rd grader can). Please continue this program. It makes a difference!

His imagination has soared, his writing skills have improved, he has been excited about learning, and he has retained more information (about forms of government, elements of a story, teamwork, etc.) than he would have in a traditional lecture format. He also learned to work with classmates he might not otherwise have chosen to interact with.

It has shown him a wonderful way to learn our state's history and economic makeup. It has been a great experience for two years, and we are very disappointed he won't have the opportunity next year! Honestly, the positives are too numerous to list in this small space.

...When this started, he had to write quite a bit right away and so got used to writing more in depth. His year-end report ...shows the strides he's made in quality and quantity in written skills. The other benefit I've noticed is how learning for Social Studies was incorporated into 'acting'. [He] retained what he learned and did well on tests because it became a real situation for him. He wasn't just learning from a book. He loved that part....

⁶⁷ Liz had moved to the west side of the State and was commuting an hour-and-a-half each way by the end of the year. A number of third grade questionnaires were lost en route along with several of the students' questionnaires.

A great opportunity to make history come alive as well as make a connection with the (39ers) seniors in the community. A terrific way to develop creativity and expression, building confidence and teamwork!

...He enjoyed the various aspects of the learning for example the Iroquois culture and lifestyles by 'becoming' one. I also was worried because he's a good writer but had lost interest and enthusiasm for it in the past year or two. He wrote and re-read his and his classmates' stories (silently and aloud to me). It's been a great success for us. Thanks! He renewed his interest in writing and enjoyed telling the stories...

The last parent speaks about her child sharing his life in his subjunctive world with her when he reads the stories to her. The ritual world allowed parents to participate in their child's education in a variety of ways that involved shared experience rather than critical analysis of the child's work. More parents came to the 'ritual celebration' events than other school activities. At these events, parents *played* with their children in their liminal world, told stories together, and shared in their children's world. School was not work for either the student or the parent and I believe this made parents more positive about the program.

At the end of the project with the 39ers, the seniors were also asked to fill out a questionnaire. When asked whether they enjoyed the experience, all respondents replied 'yes'. Seniors were also asked to respond to the following statements: 1] I liked the following things about the Living History Project; 2] I didn't like the following things about the Living History Project; and 3] I have the following suggestions to improve the project.⁶⁸ There were two answers that dominated the response to the first statement. The seniors expressed great pleasure in working

with the students and believed that the students learned a great deal from the experience. One respondent says it nicely:

It was an enrichment experience for the fifth grade interview[ers] to learn something about people and events in the 20th Century. My interviewer took copious notes and was charming and attentive.

But several seniors suggested that the experience offered them more than a chance to give a part of their lives to the young people:

Interaction with the children gave me an opportunity to review my life and realize how strong the early experiences had made me so that when life hit me with some rough times (death of my husband at age 45 with 3 children to raise, etc.) I was able to cope. Those three children have 8 college degrees amongst them.

...Working in this program brought back many memories of the past and how the world has changed. There was so much to tell and I'm sure they were unable to absorb all of it. Living in [the District] since 1929, it's wonderful how it has grown.

Lambek's dialectic between embodied experience and objectified knowledge is revealed again in the fifth graders' time with seniors. Having an opportunity to tell their stories to young people, the seniors were able to 'rewrite', to 'rearrange' the objectified knowledge about themselves with which they had lived; they were able to see themselves in a different light and proceed with that new knowledge base.

But not all the seniors were happy with the experience even though they enjoyed it and said that they would do it again. Although, as reporters, students had practiced interviewing all year and had imagined themselves as anthropologists and historians, most negative comments about the project were a feeling that the students lacked preparation to conduct the interviews, to ask

⁶⁸ The results of this questionnaire can also be found in Appendix B.

pertinent questions, and to comprehend what the seniors were saying. Two seniors referred to me as 'harried' and one senior, who had been a history teacher all her life, was adamant that everything was too rushed:

The whole project was too hurried - more intent upon results than on how to get them ... This project could easily be a full year project as it could include all the aspects of the curriculum - reading, writing, math, social studies, science - led by a creative teacher or team of teachers. I've seen it done and know its value. The result would be much more lasting and beneficial to all. One does not need a special grant to organize such learning projects, just desire, time and effort!

Much of what this senior suggested had been done, i.e., this was a year long project involving multiple disciplines, but I had not taken the time to explain the entire project to the seniors. Time was definitely a problem and finding creative teachers rather than relying on outside grants will be discussed in the next chapter in more depth.

But more important than parents, administrative evaluators, and the seniors, the students also appraised the program. All of Bob's and Michael's students completed their questionnaires; again, in the third grade, five of the questionnaires were lost. The questionnaire prepared by administrators in the District asked them to answer 'yes', 'no', or 'sometimes' and write brief explanations about their responses to the following statements: 1] I have learned a lot by working with the Storyteller Project; 2] The Storyteller Project has helped our class work better together as a group; 3] I have improved my writing skills; 4] I have learned about history; and 5] This is what I would like to say about working with the Storyteller Project. Again, there were no negative responses

and few 'sometimes'⁶⁹. In general, the fifth grade class was more analytical in their responses and more committed to the continuation of the program for my sake than the other students⁷⁰. The more 'self-absorbed' third graders suggested that we continue the project in the summer as a summer camp. Nick had an entire curriculum organized for a sleepover camp. A significant number of them also noted that the project 'made them stop teasing each other'. Fourth graders referred to the importance of community building, the cooperation skills they learned and learning to work with the opposite gender as the major accomplishments of the project for them. Even in their questionnaires, you can feel the exuberance and confidence of the fourth grade class:

Ms. Owen taught the boys to work with the girls.

The fun games we played that we didn't even think we were learning were teaching us how to work together and if we didn't work together, we would lose the game and you know, we didn't want to do that.

We made a planet called Zorak and I learned more about living in a community...

...To connect with other people and get close to my family.

I'd like to say if it keeps up, the world will become a better place a lot faster.

The fifth graders were more articulate about the project's impact on their education:

⁶⁹ This overwhelming positive response might have been caused by the teachers encouraging the students to believe that their responses to the questionnaires would be a deciding factor in whether or not the program was continued.

⁷⁰ Several of them spoke to me after they completed the questionnaires and were afraid that I wouldn't have a job.

It is a fun way to teach kids about history. It is more fun than sitting in a classroom and getting told everything. You get to act out history and do what they did. Then you get to write about what you acted out. If you want you can even compare history and what you acted out....

I'm into all the "fantasy warrior" type stuff. The Hero story was exactly that. It made me excited about writing about it because it was the type of stuff I enjoy (my battle sequence was second to none). Ms. Owen tapped my imagination and that tap pumped out great stories.

We now trust each other and can keep our focus. When acting we have to focus to stay in character. That then helps us when in the room to focus on doing right not wrong.

If you do theater along with writing, then you know what the character was feeling and what the area around them was like. It also allows you to loosen up so you can think better. I definitely improved my writing skills.

Using the criteria that the evaluators used, i.e., 1] writing skills; 2] creative and critical thinking; 3] inter/intrapersonal skills; 4] classroom management; and 5] sense of community, the students mentioned the following:

- ***I use more description***
- ***I have more ideas for longer stories***
- ***I have learned to put more feeling in my writing. I learned to put my own voice in it.***
- ***Using theater lab (acting it out). It sticks in your head because it's hands-on and fun. It allows you to loosen up and think better***
- ***When we all do the acting, that makes us really live the story and when we live the story, we get a better idea of what it's really about and those words go down on paper.***
- ***People stopped getting teased***
- ***The snake helped us by talking to each other⁷¹***
- ***We would play games that would help us have cooperation, concentration, observation and imagination***
- ***We found out that people were good in special things, like I was good at wars and problems solving***

⁷¹ The snake was a present from BlackNight Moonlight that we used as a talking stick in the third grade

- ***I'd like to say that if it keeps up, the world will become a better place a lot faster***
- ***The Storyteller Project greatly ups our self-esteem. Every time we do something good, we would receive either a physical or verbal pat on the back.***
- ***Because it's like you're learning, but you don't even realize that you're working and learning***
- ***I learned how a community works***
- ***It brought our whole class together more and I would wake up asking what day it is.***

On the last day of school, the fifth grade class gave me a journal in which each of them had written comments that were far more personal about the Project than their responses to the questionnaires that were given to the District's administrators. Saffron gave me real suggestions about how to improve the Hero's Journey. He envisioned an instrument of power for both the hero and the antagonist, and a friend and a fiend that would also be involved in the story. Bartholomew, who was a part of the athletic group, but was always unique, wrote comments that not only left me in tears, but also certainly summed up a significant goal that I had had for the Project. He wrote:

I'm really going to miss everything that we did together and just so you know, ever since you taught us about theater and writing, I have had a joy inside me for doing it.

Chapter Seven: Concluding Remarks

A World of Their Own Connects with the Larger World

Introduction

Bartholomew wrote to me confidentially to tell me that “...***ever since you taught us about theater and writing, I have had a joy inside me for doing it.***”

With so much joy expressed by the students and their parents about the project, I had hoped that the District would embrace the pedagogy, at least for those whose parents chose it for their children. But within a year after the large experiment, and with no negative feedback from students, parents or involved faculty, the program was abandoned.

With such positive results, there are a variety of possible reasons why the program was not continued. Weary and wary teachers did not want to commit to another strategy presented by administrators and then dropped. A top-heavy administration had its own agenda. The State education system was dominated by politicians and embattled by conflicting political ideologies. The national culture uses education to train young people so that they become submissive workers for capitalist corporations rather than developing students for participation in democracy. And a Judeo-Christian narrative in which children are possessions of the adult world creates a demand for obedience, so that children's innocence makes them likely sacrificial victims of that adult world. Play, expressiveness, and creativity, the core values within a liminal experience, are contraindicated in a culture that may espouse a love of children, but makes them pawns in an effort

to perpetuate old values.⁷² This was not the atmosphere into which a creative ritual pedagogy could breathe freely, but the ritual experiment itself presents implications to the field of anthropology, especially to the area of ritual studies, and makes a contribution to anthropological theory.

Part One: Ritual as a Creative Experience

Bobby Alexander (1991) suggested, “Ritual [had proven to be] a preeminent means by which the human species *grows* while social structure is the means by which it *conserves*” (Pg. 19). During this past century, anthropologists have participated in a debate about whether ritual was a conservative structure that stifled creativity and perpetuated the social order or a creative process that acted as antistructure within the social order. By wrestling with polar opposites, anthropologists have been unable to see that ritual is both conservative and creative. It protects the social order while allowing creativity and change and the structure of ritual provides a safe crucible in which individual imaginations can play together to explore options and community can grow.

The hypothesis and the data from this research suggest that ritual can be both a conservative structure and a radical process that is capable of creating a framework for educational growth in a context of social acceptability. Ritual is not fixed, but allows individual creativity and responsiveness. Ritual is capable of employing a multiplicity of intelligences and cognitive levels and the creation of a

⁷² For example, the research suggested that the students were capable, competent and as able as adults (who had not been a part of the process) to evaluate their education, but when the District’s administrators conducted student evaluations of the project, they either read those evaluations as

ritual space builds a community in which students are equal, where they learn to trust one another, and work together in significant ways. The liminal space allowed students to work together to solve problems in their own imagined world; facts were acquired not so that adults could test of students' memory, but so that students could solve problems within the liminal space. Living facts made curricular information meaningful by using them to solve problems in their world, and creating a written narrative that explained that experience. The integration of body, emotion, and intellect allowed students the freedom to use the learning style most effective for them. Individualism within the educational process, which promotes isolation and an authoritarian atmosphere, was replaced with a learning process in which students were individuated. Individual differences were apparent in their physical actions, creativity, and oral expression, both spoken and written.

It is a mistake to limit a discussion of ritual to whether or not it is conservative, but rather the ritual experience should be viewed as a dialectic between a conservative and radical process in which imagination and performance are key elements. Ritual is not simply a conservative structure that locks people into a managed existence, but rather it is the conservative structure within ritual that provides participants an opportunity to play with possibilities, to allow their imaginations creative expressions in ways that protect them and protect the social order.

'dear' or ignored them altogether. This is not a reflection on the District per se, but rather a reflection of a civilization that has demeaned the lives of children throughout its history.

Ritual can be used in secular situations in ways that will open the participants to their own uniqueness and vitality and can also build community. Conjoint imaginative experience creates a bond between participants that I believe fulfills Turner's definition of *communitas*. Ritual can be used to educate a democratic populace. For McLaren, the liminal servant in schools was utopian. This research was an attempt to discover if a ritual space in a public school setting can build a democratic community and concurrently foster learning as defined by the public and it did both.

Since there have been contemporary experiments in the secular uses of ritual, the questions I needed to ask were: Could teachers quit being ritual performers and become liminal servants? Could a ritual space in education allow active participation, decision-making, and problem solving for both individuals and the community? Could it be the basis for a democratic method of instruction and could it be used to build a democratic community? And again, each answer was 'yes'.

Ritual has always existed in public school education. In a conservative ritual experience in education, ritual involves a repetitious recitation of words and gestures that have little meaning to the students, does not engage the students' imagination, and that is controlled by ritual masters. In a creative ritual experience, students controlled, or were the agents of, their own actions and behavior and employed their imaginations to explore possibilities within their imaginative world within a structure that was both safe for the students and for the future of their community. I had hypothesized that creative educational ritual could increase the

likelihood of change in that community in ways that were productive rather than destructive. Indeed, the results were positive: students academic competence improved, their ability to work together to solve problems as a community increased, and their sense of community was heightened.

In elementary education, the creation of a subjunctive world allowed students to both participate, to observe themselves, and to reflect on their imagined lives. It was capable of helping students learn democracy through the lived experience in a community. In a similar experiment I conducted in a university level classroom involving 300 freshman students, the results were similar. The connection between the two experiences makes me believe that it is possible to create a model for a secular ritual that allows creative self-expression, builds community, and fosters learning within the context of the social order.

Part Two: How & Why Creative Ritual Worked

In the musical, *Guys and Dolls* (Loesser and Burrows, 1950), Nicely Nicely Johnson tells us that "The rhythm of life is a powerful beat, we feel it in our fingers, feel it in our feet." In the film, *Strike Up the Band*, (Gershwin & Gershwin, 1940) Paul Whiteman extends the importance of rhythm in our lives when he tells a young Mickey Rooney that all of life is about rhythm: that our hearts beat, that we breathe to a rhythm, and that we know we are sick when the rhythms of our bodies change. In my research on the use of ritual and narrative as a pedagogy to teach curricular subjects in elementary school, I believe the element of rhythm, particularly the importance of peak experience, was one of the critical components that led to the success of the project.

Creating Meaning in a Ritual Space

This research addressed two acknowledged problems in achieving academic success in elementary schools: students have difficulty both concentrating on their work and have difficulty making the association from knowledge to meaning. Jerome Bruner (1990) maintains that culture is essential to the creation of meaning, that culture is the engine that gives meaning to our lives and that the sole purpose of human study should be a search for how humans give their lives meaning:

This conviction is based upon two connected arguments. The first is that to understand man you must understand how his experiences and his acts are shaped by his intentional states and the second is that the form of these intentional states is realized only through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture. (Pg. 33)

If Bruner is correct, the focus of education, including elementary education, should concern itself with helping young people gain an understanding of what they do, why they do it, and how what they do impacts them and those around them. A liminal world, in which a culture is created that students experience, the infinite possibilities for exploration within that world, and the stories that emanate from it, allowed students to construct meaning for their lives, to evaluate their intentions and the actions resulting from those intentions, and gave them a reason to learn. The question now becomes how did that happen and can the structure be recreated to allow creativity and community in future learning experiences.

The apparent inability of students to concentrate in school is a major problem confronting American education. Psychological syndromes have been conceptualized to explain this phenomenon.⁷³ However, an examination of the normal school day suggests that concentration can be hindered by the structure itself. In the elementary building in which this experiment took place, classes were divided into twenty-five minute segments. The creation of an imaginary world in which students were active problem solvers allowed them to concentrate. In *A Community of Heroes* students were focused for a two-and-a-half hour period two to three times a week. In other words, students are capable of concentrating for great lengths of time, but the division of time into abstract disciplinary units does not permit concentration.

The Significance of Intention in Ritual

The most important factor in increasing concentration in the liminal space and in allowing students to create meaning from a knowledge base was students' *intention* to learn, to problem solve and to create a New World. With personal intentions, students were motivated to learn. These motivations created their own internal and external rhythms. Bruner's theory that meaning is created by "intentional states and that the [forming] of these intentional states is realized only through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture" suggests that the creation of an imaginary world in which students have intentional states

⁷³ See the CH.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder) website for definitions, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of ADD and ADHD
http://www.chadd.org/facts/add_facts01.htm.

within a symbolic system and in which their intentions are given real significance fosters learning. Bruner neglects, however, to examine the role that rhythm plays on the impact these intentions have on the creation of meaning.

According to Bruner [1990], agency, line, canonicity, and voice produce meaning, but Bruner does not suggest how the interrelationship of these factors create meaning or what the pattern would be that would be necessary to create meaning. In the students' subjunctive world, in both the ritual and the narrative that followed, both the group and individuals within the group, experienced all four of these elements thus giving students an opportunity to formulate both personal and collective meaning in their lives. Both collectively and individually, students were agents in the success or failure of their ritual world. Individuation occurred within the ritual space as a result of the difference in students' volitions, i.e., their motivations provided different individual experiences within the ritual space. One student, for example, was committed to saving the environment; another was interested in creating a community where justice prevailed; another, where the disabled were allowed to live equally with others. Agency was based on their personal intentions and desires.

And it is intention that creates a rhythm, both personal and collective, within the ritual. The drive to succeed, to complete the intention, made time concrete and experienced within students' bodies. Time was not only experienced as amount of time spent, but also as the use of time and its direction. Time was always goal-directed and those goals were both personally chosen and

collectively chosen. An experience built to a conclusion. The line of the experience moved up and down rather than maintaining a straight path and the line led inevitably to a peak experience

Anthropological research has neglected the significance of dramatic climax in ritual in the formulation of meaningful experience and in the experiencing of *communitas*⁷⁴. Climax is an important part of both story and dramatic structure. In drama it is defined as the highest point of action, the point where the protagonist chooses either to break or maintain her 'spine'. Victor Turner argues that in a social drama, the redressive stage is structured as a ritual and the shape of the ritual mirrors social drama. In other words, rituals are structured to have a climactic experience and within that dramatic moment meaning is felt, because the moment mirrors a social pattern. Within ritual, therefore, people can experience meaning. The creation of meaning, for both the collective and the individual in this ritual research, was predicated on the construction of the ritual experiment in such a way that it allowed the students the experience of daily peak events. There was a plot-line that led to a climactic moment; the ritual experience was structured not only to have line, but to have peaks, valleys and different rhythms within the line. The speed and rhythm of each experience built as it headed toward the final climactic moment. Because line was experienced in the ritual world as a series of 'peak' experiences, time did not seem arbitrary and abstract. It was, rather, concrete and completed.

⁷⁴ See Grimes, 1982, Pg. 147 for construction of ritual

Why Peak Experience is Important in Ritual

The ritual space gave students intentions for their learning experience. Because students had intentions, they pursued their goals physically and intellectually and responded emotionally when those goals were either achieved or contravened. The climactic structure of the ritual experience allowed students to experience their world emotionally. Acting teachers argue that emotion is a secondary response to successful or failed motivated action.⁷⁵ In *A Community of Heroes*, students' collective emotions would build as they moved toward the peak moment. During this time, students made more positive physical contact with one another, their concentration and energy were more focused and they listened to each other with increased awareness. Their energy heightened, students would *feel* the impact of the choices they had made. Since their motivations were predominately collective, their emotions were similar and that feeling of conjoint, felt experience not only helped to create collective meaning, but also created a sense of community.

The dramatic drive within the ritual experience created an opportunity for students to experience allowable emotions in the classroom. Individuation and creativity were developed through the emotional responsiveness experienced because of the dramatic nature of the ritual structure. Researchers believe that emotional awareness is a primary factor in developing creativity and that collective creativity builds community (Russ, 1993, 1998). Creativity was fostered in the ritual space for several reasons: 1] affective learning increased creativity; and 2]

⁷⁵ See Benedetti (1990), Cohen (1984), Stanislavski (1948), Strasberg(1990)

emotional response helped build experiences on which students could create meaning. In the ritual space, by having successful or thwarted intentions, students experienced their learning emotionally. Emotional response led to greater creativity.

Probably the most important argument for the integration of mind-body-emotion learning that occurs within a creative ritual space is the impact that affect has on collective creativity. The power of both climactic moments and the affect produced by them on the development of creativity and problem solving is significant.⁷⁶ An intense shared experience is capable of increasing the collective creativity of a group. This increased collective creativity was visible in the behavior of the students. The students in all three classes were, as a group, more productive than other classes. During their academic year, they produced a total of 15 books and multiple art projects.

Last, climactic, or peak, experience increases students' sense of community. When students enter a subjunctive world and work collectively toward a mutual goal, they not only heighten their creativity, but also build a feeling of community and cooperation that fulfills Turner's (1968) definition of *communitas*.

Implications for Further Study of Peak Experience in Ritual

Ritual has been criticized for its lack of individual expressiveness, but this research suggests that ritual is not fixed and habituated, but that is a dialectic between the conservative and the radical that allows both individual and collective creativity and responsiveness. I would suggest that the difference

between conservative ritual experience and ritual that Turner refers to as 'antistructure' can be assessed by whether or not the ritual allows individual and collective volition and whether that intention leads to a collective peak experience. In traditional pedagogy, the motivation is determined by extrinsically created goals; goal-driven experience is frustrated; and emotion is controlled and limited. The result is a conservative ritual experience. In the subjunctive world of this research, the students' goals were intrinsically driven; each experience led to a peak experience; and emotion was an allowable part of the experience. Individuation occurred within the ritual space as a result of the allowed difference in students' volition, or will. Their personal motivations provided a different experience for each of them in the ritual space.

Volition determines the line of the ritual experience. Time, or line, should not be viewed simply as the amount of time spent, or its direction, but also in terms of the meaningfulness of time, its abstraction or concreteness to the participants, whether time is experienced physiologically, and the peaks and valleys of the line of time. In *A Community of Heroes*, structuring ritual experience to have regular dramatic peaks fostered the creation of meaning, heightened creativity and problem solving skills, and built an emotional community among the students involved.

The interpretation of the role of peak experience in ritual offers anthropologists several avenues of exploration in ritual studies. First, could a

⁷⁶ Getz and Lubart (1998) argue that emotions act as resonators that touch multiple parts of the brain and allow synthesis of images and concepts to occur. Russ (1993) explains that affect, and one's ability to access primary processes, i.e., drive-laden feelings, increases creativity.

factory system education based on bells and whistles rather than fulfilling a need for peak experience frustrate the students under its purview and result in decreased desire to learn and increased anger at the school system? Could this frustration of intention and drive be the cause of frustration in the workplace? Could creative problem solvers structure a work place in both education and work in such a way that collective intention leads to peak moments that would increase productivity and creative problem solving?

Second, is it possible that collective, conjoint, peak, dramatic experiences offer an opportunity for sacred union to people who participate in it and that this is the experience of *communitas* to which Victor Turner referred? If so, the creation of rituals may help us find solutions to the *anomie* and frustration present in contemporary life.

But most important, an investigation of the significance of rhythm, especially peak experience, in our lives might help us understand why an aesthetic is so meaningful to us. Does an aesthetic find a rhythm that allows us to experience order and community? In conclusion, we must examine the possibility that there is a universal need for an aesthetic that creates balance, order, composition, line, and texture out of the chaos; an aesthetic that is driven by the internal individual and collective rhythms of our lives.

Part Three: The Importance of Narrative in Creative Ritual Experience

The story of American childhood is a conflicted story: it is a story in which adults expect children to be independent and autonomous earlier than most cultures expect their children to be independent. It is the story of isolation from

the adult community and from the community of their peers. It is the story of increased responsibility without apprenticeship and mentoring. It is the story of children searching for an identity through a myriad of images rather than through connection with a community. And it is a story, embedded in Judeo-Christian narrative, which, combined with a corporate capitalist narrative, teaches children how to become subject to the will of the adult world.

In the United States, the Judeo-Christian story guides us in another way: we do not look favorably on play as having real meaning or purpose in our lives. According to Max Weber (1983), the rise of Protestantism not only coincided with the rise of capitalism, but Protestant beliefs also supported the capitalist system. Work, obedience to authority, and disapproval of play were significant elements in the Protestant Ethic. Because Protestantism is the predominant narrative in the United States, we are especially demeaning of any activity that involves pretend because we perceive it as 'play' and associate it with childhood immaturity. We revere work; we condemn play. In a country, where our major story is about the authoritarian control by elders; where children are expected to be obedient; where school becomes *training* for work, it is not surprising that a pedagogy in which students 'played', in which students controlled their own subjunctive world rather than obeyed orders, might be marginalized.

But there is another interpretation of the Judeo-Christian story described by two other Christian writers:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (Matthew 10: 34-35)

In words attributed to Jesus there is a strong suggestion that the revolution he was leading was not against the Roman conquerors, but rather against the Jewish social order in which children were the property of their parents.

Kahlil Gibran (1986), another Christian philosopher, writes:

...Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you...
(Pg. 21)

If we imagine that our children 'dwell in the house of tomorrow' then our responsibility as educators is to assist them in learning the skills they will need to live in that world. James Gee, et. al., (1996) suggests that we must help students understand how social practices happen in their full historical and cultural contexts and give them the time to reflect on this knowledge. Robert Putnam (2000) argues that educators need to help students learn to build social capital that will bridge diversity and will rekindle community engagement. Using anthropological theory to create pedagogy for public elementary education makes both of these concepts possible. Ritual space fosters imagination and dramatic exploration, and myth-making coalesces those experiences into symbolic form and allows students time for reflection and the creation of meaning.

All three teachers, Liz, Michael, and Bob, understood the importance of the dialectic between experience and telling the story. Experiencing the story was a critical element in the students' ability to write a meaningful story, but writing the story gave students time to reflect on the previous experience so that they could problem solve effectively in the next experience. Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty in their musical, *Once on This Island*, write, "our lives become the stories that we weave." Our lives are our own works of art. In *A Community of Heroes* the students lived their stories and then selected from a profusion of details the events that were significant to them. Their bodies informed them about what was meaningful to them. Their written stories combined factual information, lived experience, and the meaning the experience had for them. The collaborative stories created a sense of community and deeply embedded in those stories were the visions that the students shared of themselves and their world. The creation of their stories, as any art form, helped students define themselves in the context of their learning and gave them, and the reader, insight into the world in which they lived.

The narrative also gave the adults who participated in the students' world and the readers an opportunity to see the students, not as irresponsible creatures that needed to be tamed so that they fit into our world, but as human beings who might be able to create a more caring and more productive world than their parents have given them.

In examining the role of ritual in education, my intentions were three-fold. I intended to explore whether ritual could be both conservative and radical in

terms of elementary education, i.e. whether it could provide a safe structure in which education could be a creative experience for the students. I hoped to study whether ritual allows individual difference and individual expressiveness. But perhaps most important, I was my desire to have an opportunity to see the world through the eyes of young people. Throughout this paper, I have been careful to refer to the elementary-aged participants as students rather than children. I only used the term 'child' or 'children' when used by others. It was my hope that the reader would begin to read this paper without a bias about the competency of children.

Judith Wallerstein and her associates (1980) argue that children become far more independent and capable of solving their own problems between the ages of seven and nine years old. This has certainly been supported in this study. The stories the students wrote after their experiences in the ritual space reflect a wisdom and skill that adults would see as 'beyond their years'. Miss Priss understands that she can only find wisdom through her own experience. Alissa knows how to resolve the conflict with her sister and understands that dialogue is an important skill. Saffron knows that no one can bargain with Death, that it is unequivocal. Happy Dude grasps the importance of equality in a community. Cwisa realizes the impact on a community of power and manipulation by outside forces, and Mia understands compassion.

At the end of the last year of the program, the fourth graders still had not rid their planet of Bert, the Evil King. Bert had fled to Zorak when his children captured him after he stole their teddy bears because they were filled with the

blue sand that made the kingdom rich. On Zorak, Bert had destroyed the planet trying to get rich, but the heroes had sworn that they would not use violence. Transforming Bert was a challenge for them. In the Battle of Transformation, all the heroes had been defeated except Mia and Charlie who were left to challenge Bert. The following is an excerpt from *How the Immigrants Saved Zorak*, a collaborative story that combined students lived experience in their world and imagined details about that world:

Now there were only two heroes left to save Bert, their village and the planet.

Mia was very upset. "I know that you have a good side. I know that you love your children or you wouldn't be looking at their pictures on your hands," she said.

"Okay, you can come into my castle," Bert said and Mia and Charlie went inside.

"I bet you really love your father," Bert said to Charlie and Charlie told Bert that he loved his father very much. "You see, my son, Peter, well, he loved me less than he loved his teddy bear."

"And Bert is nice!" Evil Wolf Major, the only minion left, said.

"Families take care of one another," Mia told Bert. And then she said, "We will be your family. We will be your children."

"You will? Really? Everyone? All of you will be my children?" Bert asked.

All the immigrants agreed that they would become Bert's children, but Evil Megan said that she liked Bert when he was mean, so Bert said he would only be mean to her, (it would give him a chance to be angry for fun sometimes).

Magic said she would be Bert's child only if he agreed to transform into someone who respects his children and that his children would be loyal to him and listen to him, but they would decide for themselves what was right and they didn't have to obey if they thought Bert was doing something that wasn't right.

Bert said that he agreed to all their terms. The Heroes of Zorak had won. They had not used violence, but had gotten rid of evil in a positive way.

Of course, I had spent a year playing with them and perhaps some of them were thinking concretely and imagined that I would be their parent, rather than living

within their imaginations and seeing the evil Bert transformed into a kind parent. But from their body language, the seriousness or their expressions, and the thoughtfulness with which they considered the possibility of becoming Bert's children, I believe they were truly assessing whether this was a good idea for Zorak. So, not only had they gotten rid of evil in a positive way, but they had expressed clearly their own values: they wanted a family; they wanted parents, but they intended to decide for themselves what was right. They were on the path toward living democratically.

Their stories allowed us to see these children differently. The stories the students wrote do more than help students create meaning from their learning experience, they allow us to see that the ritual space was not a rigid, fixed structure, but a space where students were given opportunities to participate in a process in which they could seek answers to their own problems and become differentiated from one another.

Implications for Further Study of Narrative Use in Ritual

The narrative in this research suggests three implications for further study by anthropologists. These are: 1] narrative is embedded in the structure of creative ritual through the climactic structure of the experience; 2] the telling or writing of the ritual experience is necessary to ground the experience meaningfully; and 3] the narratives of children's play allow us to see their lives differently. The first implication was explained in the previous section.

Narrative functions as the earth upon which meaning is grounded. It is the beginning and the ending of experience. It is concrete and helps us make sense of our lives and is a necessary component in the creation of meaningful learning.

Besides as pedagogy for elementary education, anthropologists and social activists can use ritual and narrative in a variety of ways. It is possible that by using the basic ideas of structure and process, ritual and narrative can be used in higher education⁷⁷ or as a process for healing social and psychological wounds. For example, ritual and narrative might be used at women's crisis centers or can be used in refugee camps. The possibilities of using creative ritual and narrative to help people solve personal and community problems and build their own community at same time is as unlimited as the human imagination.

At the core of this story is the following hypothesis: if American contemporary culture is 'saturated'; if it is 'shallow'; and if it forces children to 're-create themselves' before they have even ground themselves in a sense of Self, and if children participate in a story that is conceived by adults in which they have no voice, a ritual experience, where they are contributing members of their own society, where they are free to explore their community's history, and where they examine the heroic adventures of their own families, can give children their own voice to 'tell their own stories' 'in their own words' and find meaning in their lives.

Anthropology has lost track of the study of children. In the first half of the 20th Century, anthropologists focused on socialization patterns. We learned a great deal about a culture through the ways a society enculturated its children into its

⁷⁷ I have created a similar ritual world for a large integrated social science class for freshmen classes at Michigan State University.

world. I return to Gibran thought, “Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself ...seek not to make them like you...” (1986, Pg.21). Today, anthropologists are more intrigued by the study of power, and the lack of it, than the socialization of children, but they have neglected to see that at the core of socialization are issues of power.

Children are not blank slates upon which cultures write themselves. If children are allowed to create a ritual world in which they learn, the adult world can better see how children perceive their world, how they navigate that world, how well they can solve problems within that world and how they perceive the larger world to which they are expected to become productive members. And perhaps, we can see our world through the lens of an Other that rarely has been given an opportunity to be heard.

Part Four: The Significance of A More Public Anthropology

I was on a quest to make anthropology more active, i.e., to find the connection between ritual experience and education, between ritual and group and individual creativity, and between ritual and sense of community, and to use those connections to try to resolve a ‘contemporary social problem’. The emphasis of an anthropological pedagogy is not placed on the acquisition of facts nor is it placed on the promotion of the field of anthropology, but rather an anthropological pedagogy emphasizes the value of relationships and the meaning within those relationships. It allows students to experience many points

of view, so that they can put those viewpoints into dialogue with one another and it teaches the principles of democracy through the development of a multicultural community that they created themselves. Anthropological fieldwork methodology is based on participant observation, on lived experience, and it is through lived experience as both the Other and ourselves that we can learn how to live together in a democratic society. When students play both the perceived 'good guys' and 'bad guys', they learn perception and compassion. They learn to listen in a different way when others speak about their life experience. In elementary education, the creation of a subjunctive world allowed students to both participate, to observe themselves, and to reflect on their imagined lives. It helped students learn how to live in a democracy through the lived experience in their own community.

Stephen Dobyns (1997) describes an alternative set of values in education in his novel, *The Church of Dead Girls*:

Historically, we see a fraction of the population of the world taking advantage of the majority, making them ignorant consumers. They work hard at pointless jobs in order to buy the clothes, cars, and toys which they believe will make them happy. They fall into debt, become a version of wage slaves, and seek distraction in violence and sporting events. Education is minimized and the arts are discredited. The alternative is a society which values its members equally, a society which takes responsibility for its people and which acts out of that sense of responsibility, a society which works to decrease the greed, ignorance, and baser natures of its participants, instead of encouraging them. (Pg. 29)

Public anthropology, an anthropology which invests itself in a commitment to honoring humanity can participate in creating an educational pedagogy that

values its students and that helps to bring into being citizens that take responsibility for one another.

If John Dewey was correct, the way to democracy is through an education that is experiential in nature. And if it is experience that we are searching for in education, then the ritual process, in which a subjunctive liminal space is created, provides a safe environment in which to explore ideas. In a society that is based on the dream of democracy, a dream that Phil Slater refers to as 'a dream deferred', an educational space where democratic principles are fostered allows our children not just to fit into our world, but to prepare themselves for a *world of their own*.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
EVALUATION BY DISTRICT

THE STORYTELLER PROJECT
TELLING THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES
Penny Lynn Owen, Author

The Storyteller Project has been used in three separate classrooms at three different grade levels, 3rd grade, 4th grade, and 5th grade. The 5th level explored the cultures of six different Indian Nations. Many aspects of the lives of these people were explored. Students worked closely together to act out what they had learned in addition to writing about it. Creative writing samples took the form of newspaper articles, stories about the Indians, stories about European Cultures, and finally biographies written after students interviewed members of the Waverly 39ers, a retirement group.

Fourth graders invented a planet called Zorak. Since 4th graders study Michigan, a study of the make believe Zorak presented similarities to their studies of Michigan. They spent their energies developing Zorak and making it "their home". Working together to build their community was a serious part of the project. Newspaper articles, group stories, and individual stories have been written as the Language Arts segment of the 4th year project.

Third grade students worked diligently creating a community whose name was Zandar. Since the third grade curriculum is learning about Lansing, they created activities which would lead to creating their own habitat. Again, boys and girls were asked to write about what they learned and create in their own way how it all happened.

To see whether students grew and learned over the year, a process was worked out to evaluate an early sample of student writing and an end of the school year sample. Eight (8) students in each grade level were chosen using random sampling criteria. Two (2) more were chosen as alternates to be used if their writing samples were needed.

Each piece of work by the students was evaluated using the Analytic Scoring Grid, CVN, 11/96 MDE.

Three samples of 3rd grade writings were used: one from September 1999, one from January 2000, and the last one from April 2000. This evaluator found difficulty in finding samples of writing from all of the randomly picked students in the early sample. Thus, in the first sample, September 30, 1999 only seven students work was used. Total scoring was done twice: once based on 7 students and the other based on 8. Averages are given for both groups. It seemed more appropriate to try to use the earliest sample possible even though it contains only 7 students.

Evaluations for 4th grade students were done on three different writing samples: one dated 10/1999, one dated 4/2000, and one dated 6/2000. A total score and group average for each story group was found.

Materials for grade 5 were rated for 3/2000 and 6/2000. Again a total score and the average score was found for each story group.

SCORES

As one evaluates these scores we can do it both by each student and also each story group. Looking at scores for each student in Grade 3, we can see that there was only 1 student who scored higher on the first story than the last. Scoring does not give us the rational for this. One can only surmise what it might have been.

Checking both total scores and average scores for each story group we also see a gain in scores from the September stories to the April stories.

Although Ms. Owen had some misgivings about using third grade students in this project, story scores do show growth.

As we look at scores of the randomly selected 4th grade students, we also see individual growth in most students. Total scores for each project -- 10/1999, 4/2000, and 6/2000 -- also show a gain from the first story to the last story. Gain in average scores is naturally reflected here also.

We see the same things with fifth graders. Two students scores remained the same, all others showed growth. Total scores showed growth as naturally the average scores did.

An interesting concept also is the comparison between scores of all three groups of students. A concept we would expect, but it is shown here. Although each group shows growth. Total scores for 5th year students exceed 4th year students. Scores for 4th year students exceed 3rd year students. We not only see growth across the year for each student, but we can graphically show the upward growth of each grade level.

This evaluator feels this program is a very successful program. On my visits to the classrooms, I watched students listening attentively. When students went to project areas to act out the stories and information given, they worked hard, they worked together, and they followed directions. The stories they wrote whether 3rd grade or fifth grade included many details which led me to believe that these boys and girls were truly invested in what they were doing.

Sentence structure was basically good. The younger boys and girls wrote senteces using a more simple structure. As the boys and girls progress from grade level to grade level sentence structure became more complex.

Length of stories increased as the children moved up in grade level. Stories grew from two or three paragraphs to two or three pages. It is to be noted , however, there were 3rd graders who could write 3 or more pages also.

Enthusiam, creativity, use of language to communicate, cooperation, caring and interest are all skills I feel show growth from this program. They show up incidentally as the stories grow. Punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure were strong at all levels.

At each grade level details found in the writings can be used to help kids further develop their writing skills:

1. Moving sentence structure from simple to more complex.
2. Improving the way to end a story.
3. Working to deal with extraneous details so they don't interfere with the flow of the story.

In closing this evaluation, I would like to recommend a further evaluation of this program. This evaluation would include a comparison with compositions of the same level students from groups who have not been exposed to the benefits of this program.

It has been a very interesting job to evaluate these stories. As a counselor I have a vested interest in any program that builds not only writing skills, but coincidentally builds skills of cooperation, taking turns, and working together – what a beautiful way to learn.

Kay Humes
Evaluator
June 15, 2000

COMPILATION OF SCORES

A. Grade 3	9/30/1999	1/26/2000	4/30/2000
Student #1		8	13
#2	5	9	11
#3	9	9	10
#4	7	9	10
#5	10	13.5	13
#6	10.5	10	9
#7	12	9	12
#8	9	10	16
Total Scores	62.5	69.5	81
Average (Divided by 7)	8.93	9.93	11.57
Total Scores		77.5	94
Average (Divided by 8)		9.69	11.75

COMPILATION OF SCORES

B. Grade 4	10/1999	4/2000	6/2000
Student #1	16	10.5	12
#2	10	8.5	12
#3	10	14	13
#4	9.5	9	15
#5	9	8	13
#6	10	8	10
#7	4	6	13
#8	7.5	15.5	16
Total Scores	76	79.5	104
Average Scores	9.5	9.94	13

C. Grade 5	3/2000	6/2000
Student #1	12	14
#2	13	13
#3	13	13
#4	13	14
#5	15.5	15
#6	14	15
#7	9	13
#8	12	16
Total Scores	101.5	113
Average Scores	12.69	14.13

Analytic Scoring Grid

Title _____	Name _____
FCA #1 _____	Date _____
FCA #2 _____	Subject _____
FCA #3 _____	Teacher _____

(These are designed to be used in conjunction with illustrative anchor guide papers and other range-finder papers and are intended to describe characteristics of most papers at a particular scorepoint. The aim is to determine best fit; a paper at any given scorepoint may not include all characteristics.)

CODE: 4 - Mature 3 - Capable 2 - Developing 1 - Emerging

Ideas & Content

Author Peer Teacher

- 4 - Central idea is clear and focused; writer uses creative, insightful detail
- 3 - Central idea is clear & focused, and the writer adds basic detail
- 2 - Central idea is somewhat developed & writer includes some detail;
however, focus may shift & some details may be extraneous
- 1 - May show little or no development of a central idea, or may be too
limited in length to demonstrate proficiency

Organization

- 4 - Helps unify the piece & moves the reader easily through the text
- 3 - Apparent but may be too-obviously structured; there may be extraneous
detail which interfere with unity
- 2 - Attempt at organization is apparent although ideas may lack a sense of
wholeness
- 1 - May be lacking or may seem arbitrary

Style

- 4 - Voice of the writer comes through in rich & precise word choice &
effective use of varied sentence structure
- 3 - Writing demonstrates varied sentence structure as well as appropriate
word choices, including some engaging vocabulary
- 2 - Vocabulary is limited or inappropriate to the task; sentence structure
may be simple.
- 1 - Vocabulary is limited; sentence structure may be choppy, incomplete, or
rambling

Conventions of writing

- 4 - Text demonstrates varied use of standard writing conventions with few
errors
- 3 - Surface feature errors may occasionally distract the reader, but they
don't interfere with understanding
- 2 - Surface feature errors make understanding difficult
- 1 - Numerous surface feature errors may severely interfere with
understanding

- 6 Not ratable because completely off topic
- 7 Not ratable because completely illegible
- 8 Not ratable because written in a language other than English
- 9 Not ratable because completely blank

8, CVN, 1/96 from MDE

Overall Score

APPENDIX B

**STUDENT, PARENT, AND SENIOR
QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATIONS**

Storyteller Project Feedback

	Strongly Agree 5	4	Agree 3	2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. My child has benefited from the Storyteller Project this year	7	1	0	0	0
2. My child has shown significant improvement this year in writing and communication skills	6	1	0	0	0
3. My child has a greater sense of being connected to school and community	3	3	2	0	0
4. Please continue the Storyteller Project for my child and others in the future	7	1	0	0	0

5. The Storyteller Project has been a significant experience for my child because:

- ❖ It has given him a positive outlet for his active imagination and has given him confidence in his ability to tell stories.
- ❖ It helped Brandy understand the difference between fantasy and fact. She developed a concrete understanding of sentence and paragraph structure (as much as a 3rd grader can). Please continue this program. It makes a difference!
- ❖ The storyteller program has been outstanding for Kevin! His verbal skills re: personal expression written has blossomed! Please continue this with his class until college!
- ❖ He has learned a great deal while "playing". He really looks forward to the days that include Mrs. Owen.

Storyteller Project Feedback

	Strongly Agree 5	4.5	4	Agree 3	2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. My child has benefited from the Storyteller Project this year	11	1	2	2	0	0
2. My child has shown significant improvement this year in writing and communication skills	6	0	6	4	0	0
3. My child has a greater sense of being connected to school and community	4	0	5	5	0	0
4. Please continue the Storyteller Project for my child and others in the future	13	0	1	2	0	0

5. The Storyteller Project has been a significant experience for my child because:

- ❖ She has enjoyed the project, learned to interview, make up stories, use imagination.
- ❖ Shanna enjoys Ms. Owen very much.
- ❖ It gave him a sense of having a family.
- ❖ It gave the kids a topic to discuss among each other and their parents. Thought then to take action, understand the importance of community.
- ❖ Stuart has become more diligent in his writing skills and much more enthusiastic. Many thanks!
- ❖ She has expressed herself more in her writing skills and more communication with her writing. We really enjoyed Julia's last story. We are very proud of her.
- ❖ The Storyteller Project has been a wonderful project. Not only is it a wonderful writing experience, it has also taught social study concepts. I believe teaching through drama makes it not only fun for the children, but also uses their whole body experience to learn more completely.
- ❖ His imagination has soared, his writing skills have improved, he has been excited about learning, and he has retained more information (about forms of government, elements of a story, teamwork, etc.) than he would have in a traditional lecture format. He also learned to work with classmates he might not otherwise have chosen to interact with.
- ❖ It has shown him a wonderful way to learn our state's history and economic makeup. It has been a great experience for 2 years, and we are very disappointed he won't have the opportunity next year! Honestly, the positives are too numerous to list in this small space.
- ❖ My daughter has greatly improved her communication skills. She is much more confident. She also shows more interest in history.
- ❖ Penny, hope you can continue this throughout East Intermediate. The time and work that is put in pays off.
- ❖ Alex has enjoyed the Storyteller Project. He always looked forward to those days. I was very pleased to see his last essay of the year. He put a lot of thought into the piece.

Storyteller Project Feedback

	Strongly Agree 5	4	Agree 3	2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. My child has benefited from the Storyteller Project this year	12	4	0	0	0
2. My child has shown significant improvement this year in writing and communication skills	4	12	0	0	0
3. My child has a greater sense of being connected to school and community	4	10	2	0	0
4. Please continue the Storyteller Project for my child and others in the future	9	7	0	0	0

5. The Storyteller Project has been a significant experience for my child because:

- ❖ Jordan has thoroughly enjoyed this in school. When this started, he had to write quite a bit right away and so got used to writing more in depth. His year-end written report for class shows the strides he's made in quality and quantity in written skills. The other benefit I've noticed is how learning for Social Studies was incorporated into "acting". Jordan retained what he learned and did well on tests because it became a real situation for him. He wasn't just learning it from a book. He loved that part. I would highly recommend this to future classes even in higher-grade levels. Jordan really enjoyed Miss Penny and came home excited about what they were doing. Miss Penny was great!
- ❖ She loves to make believe and act out. She has a great mind for story telling.
- ❖ More confident in front of groups. Lots of practice writing - very beneficial! Interview with elderly person was super experience.
- ❖ On the days he had Ms Penny's class, he looked forward to going. He would also talk about it the first thing after school.
- ❖ He learns better by being directly involved in the subject.
- ❖ It has made her more confident in her abilities.
- ❖ It helps my child improve in writing and communication.
- ❖ A great opportunity to make history come alive as well as make a connection with the (39ers) seniors in the community. A terrific way to develop creativity and expression, building confidence, and teamwork!
- ❖ It has stimulated her creative abilities by encouraging her to be imaginative. Listening skills have improved as well.
- ❖ She understands how a person can use stories to learn and help retain information. We especially liked when they surveyed the 39ers.
- ❖ It helps her be more expressive.
- ❖ He learned a lot and at the same time had a lot of fun.

- ❖ Taught a lot of writing skills. Made her a much better writer.
- ❖ I think the Storyteller Project has been a great experience and appreciate that this has been available to the fifth grade students. In particular, Cameron has benefited greatly. I think it helped the transition from elementary to a new school and having older kids around who are changing classes, etc. and this creates the feeling of an "elementary" style closeness, creativity to learning. Cameron's learning style is such that this type of learning is quite appropriate for him. He enjoyed the various aspects of the learning for example the Iroquois culture and lifestyles by "becoming" one. I also was worried because he's a good writer but had lot interest and enthusiasm for it in the past year or two. He wrote and re-read his and his classmates' stories (silently and aloud to me). It's been a great success for us. Thanks! He renewed his interest in writing and enjoyed telling the stories. He was in his element with the acting component.

The Storyteller Project

Senior Questionnaire

June, 2000

1. I liked the following things about the Living History Project:

- Explaining how children my age lived not having TV, computers, etc. My school was so different than what children have today.
- I enjoyed participating in this program and enjoyed working with Michelle Weinfeld. Working in this program brought back many memories of the past and how the world has changed. There was so much to tell, and I'm sure they were unable to absorb all of it. Living in the Waverly area since 1929, it's wonderful how it has grown.
- I was surprised that the young youth were so interested about our youth, Depression, and wars; and I enjoyed working with them on their likes and things that make them happy. In all, I truly enjoyed working with David and Paul.
- I loved working with the children. They had some interesting questions. It was fun seeing their reactions to the answers.
- I enjoyed working with the children. It was most interesting to see the final story by student wrote.
- It was an enrichment experience for the fifth grade interviewees to learn something about people and events in the 20th century. My interviewer took copious notes and was charming and attentive.
- This is an excellent learning project for all concerned – teachers, students, administrators, and community personnel. I particularly enjoyed the patience and enthusiasm of both students and elders as they faced “organized” in most of their sessions together. Visiting with the students was fun and enlightening. The project director was enthusiastic and usually harried.
- It gave the students an insight to a period which was foreign to them. Many of the subjects discussed would be unavailable in a textbook. Language hasn't changed a lot, but the use and sentence arrangement may be somewhat different.
- I liked the idea of older people and children getting together one on one to talk. I think it gave the seniors a chance to reminisce and the children actually seemed interested in the subjects, though it may have sometimes been a little heavy for them. I liked the game we played where one partner moved their hand and the other followed. The children seemed intelligent, friendly, and could converse on an equal basis. I enjoyed the whole thing.
- Interaction with the children gave me an opportunity to review my life and realize how strong the early experiences had made me so that when life hit me with some rough times (death of my husband at age 45 with 3 children to raise, etc.), I was able to cope. Those 3 children have 8 college degrees amongst them.
- Thank you for sending my completed story. It is very well done. I wish I had been there Thursday to tell Amanda myself. Unfortunately, I have chronic fatigue syndrome, and a bad night will prevent me from being active the next day. I trust the party went well. I was very sorry to miss it.

2. I didn't like the following things about the Living History Project:

- The interviewees were not given much preparation in their roles; i.e. how to listen, take notes, and ask pertinent questions. The same applies to the filmmaking. My responses to questions drew blank looks. It was beyond their experience to comprehend.
- The project director was so consumed with the anticipated results that not sufficient time, thought, nor energy was spent in preparing/developing the necessary skills in the students which would result in the goals desired; e.g. developing appropriate interview questions, practice interviewing, note taking (these can all be simulated), video camera operation, and how to get effective results, and discussion of the philosophical handouts with both groups prior to just passing them out. The whole project was too hurried – more intent upon results than on how to get them (which is the essence of learning!). I did not like seeing some students overwhelmed by the tasks and expectations of the director.
- There was nothing I didn't like (except possibly the 39ers lunch).
- Difficulty of making my interviewer understand and get correct what I was telling her. Otherwise it was fun working with her.

3. I have the following suggestions to improve the project:

- It was quite a long reach for fifth graders to achieve as they had little background in history, and their role in it was not well defined. Perhaps an advanced grade with commensurate skills would be better adapted to act as interviewers.
- This project could easily be a full year project as it could include all aspects of the curriculum – reading, writing, math, social studies, science – led by a creative teacher or team of teachers. I've seen it done and know its value. The results would be much more lasting and beneficial to all. One does not need a special grant to organize such learning projects, just desire, time and effort!
- The room was large. Even though we gathered in small groups, the overall noise hampered good communication. After thinking over my life, I could have gone into more depth.
- Please tell Cameron I think he did a bang up report. I showed it to some of my children this weekend. Thank you so much for letting me be involved.
- Perhaps 5th graders are too young. Every effort should be made to get the life stories correct since they are going to be on file permanently.

	Would	Would Not
4. I would, or would not, participate in the project again.	10	0
	Enjoyed	Did Not Enjoy
5. I enjoyed, did not enjoy, the experience of working with the children.	10	0

Storyteller Project Reflections

1. I have learned a lot by working with the Storyteller Project such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
14	4	0

- ❖ Using my imagination.
- ❖ People changed their act. If students were mean, they would start to be nice.
- ❖ I have learned about communities and how to write stories.
- ❖ History.
- ❖ History.
- ❖ When I write long stories, it makes my handwriting better.
- ❖ I have learned to write better stories.
- ❖ I learned about using imagination. I learned about jobs.
- ❖ I learned about history.
- ❖ It has taught me how to write better.
- ❖ Better stories.
- ❖ I learned about the Indians and how to concentrate when we did mirrors.
- ❖ People stopped getting teased any more.
- ❖ How to write better stories.
- ❖ We work together.
- ❖ I can write a lot of stories.
- ❖ Indians that were Potawatami.
- ❖ I have learned about the Indians.
- ❖ About Chief Okemos and all of the Indian tribes, Potawatami, Ottawa, and Huron.
- ❖ I have learned about the Indians.
- ❖ I do a story; I do a game; I build my home at school; I have to do work; we can go outside.

2. The Storyteller Project has helped our class work better together as a group because:

Yes	Sometimes	No
14	4	0

- ❖ We have worked together.
- ❖ Passing the snake back and forth.
- ❖ People stopped getting teased.
- ❖ It has helped some of us with teasing.
- ❖ Work together and play together.
- ❖ We had to get along with each other.
- ❖ More kids have more friends.
- ❖ We have had a lot less problems.
- ❖ The snake helped us by talking to each other. When someone had the snake, it was their turn to speak.
- ❖ We use cooperation and concentration more since we're in Storyteller.
- ❖ It helps us work together.
- ❖ I has helped me work together.
- ❖ Some people didn't get along at first but now people get along.

- ❖ We learned to be a better group. We learned to play with one another.
- ❖ People stopped getting teased.
- ❖ She helps us as a group.
- ❖ We play games together.
- ❖ We learned to work in a group.
- ❖ We need to cooperate with people.
- ❖ It helps us get along better.

3. I have improved my writing skills because

Yes	Sometimes	No
15	3	1

- ❖ Writing stories.
- ❖ I used my imagination a lot.
- ❖ She told us that there was a beginning and middle and ending.
- ❖ I can write longer stories.
- ❖ I write a lot better.
- ❖ I write longer stories.
- ❖ I was in the project and I can write better.
- ❖ We have to write stories.
- ❖ I know how to write better stories.
- ❖ I noticed I write better.
- ❖ I learn to write my stories better.
- ❖ I write better penmanship.
- ❖ We write stories a lot.
- ❖ At first I had crappy hand writing. Now I have great hand writing.
- ❖ Reading, writing better stories.
- ❖ I have written long stories.
- ❖ Writing sentences.
- ❖ I write a little better.
- ❖ I don't think I can write good stories.
- ❖ We do our stories.

4. I have learned about history such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
13	5	0

- ❖ We learned about Lansing.
- ❖ Chief Okemos.
- ❖ The Revolutionary War.
- ❖ Indians.
- ❖ Reading about life.
- ❖ About the Indians.
- ❖ We learned about Indians. We acted it out.
- ❖ I have learned about Indians.
- ❖ About Indians and settlers.
- ❖ Potawatomis.
- ❖ The old Indians back before slavery.

- ❖ The Indians and settlers and Chief Okemos.
- ❖ What the Indians do.
- ❖ I have learned about the history of Lansing.
- ❖ The history about Lansing.
- ❖ Some history about Chief Okemos.
- ❖ The Potawatomis.
- ❖ The Indians.
- ❖ Chief Okemos and the settlers.
- ❖ About the Indians.

5. This is what else I'd like to say about working with the Storyteller Project:

- ❖ It would be cool if we had summer Storyteller.
- ❖ This summer we should have a day camp. And next year we can plan better and have a sleepover camp.
- ❖ I think there should be a Storyteller summer camp.
- ❖ I have nothing else to say.
- ❖ It is the best thing in the world.
- ❖ I think we should have a Storyteller day camp.
- ❖ They should make a camp of Storyteller time.
- ❖ Storyteller is fun. It's good working with Mrs. Owen.
- ❖ I love Storyteller because I write mysteries longer.
- ❖ Reading about people who lived a long time ago.
- ❖ A camp for Storyteller.
- ❖ A camp.
- ❖ It is fun. It is cool.
- ❖ It is fun so smile.
- ❖ A summer program.
- ❖ I liked when my lawyer got me out of jail.
- ❖ Nothing.
- ❖ Acting stories and projects.
- ❖ It is fun and cool.

Storyteller Project Reflections

1. I have learned a lot by working with the Storyteller Project such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
15	5	0

- ❖ Cooperation, concentration, observation, imagination, the French and Indian War.
- ❖ Learning how to interview people and the different wars that have gone on in the past, and lots of other things.
- ❖ Working in a community.
- ❖ I have learned about my family's history. I also learned how to cooperate with other people better. I learned concentration, observation, and also imagination and a lot of other things.
- ❖ I learned a lot about the French and Indian War and it was fun learning about it. We also learned how to work with each other really good. We also learned how to be a good interviewer and lots of other things too.
- ❖ How a community works and how to give an interview and how to work better as a group. How to make our stories better than they all ready are.
- ❖ Henry Ford did not invent cars. Ransom E. Olds did. How to interview. How to write a story.
- ❖ I learned about Mrs. Owen's family. I learned that Henry Ford was not the first one to make cars. I learned about Henry Ford's assembly line. She made us write more than ever! I've learned from other people.
- ❖ Henry Ford's assembly line and other things.
- ❖ How an aristocracy works, my family's history, French and Indian War, and how to write longer stories and much more.
- ❖ Working together, telling stories, my family, an assembly line, and concentration.
- ❖ I learned how a community works. I learned more about my family. I learned Henry Ford was not the first person to make cars and a lot of other things.
- ❖ How to interview.
- ❖ How to participate with others, how to work together, how to interview, how to use your imagination, and lots of other things.
- ❖ How to write stories.
- ❖ Cooperating with others.
- ❖ I learned about the French and Indian War.
- ❖ How to cooperate with others, how government works, how community works, how to concentrate, how to observe, and history.
- ❖ How to cooperate, our family's and Michigan history.
- ❖ How community works, how to cooperate with other people, what an assembly line is, and I learned more about my family.

2. The Storyteller Project has helped our class work better together as a group because:

Yes	Sometimes	No
15	5	0

- ❖ She taught us cooperation, concentration, observation, and games.
- ❖ We have learned how to concentrate and we have changed a lot throughout the year.

- ❖ Mrs. Owen taught the boys to work with the girls.
- ❖ We worked on cooperation games, observation, imagination, concentration games, and a lot of other ones.
- ❖ The fun games we played that we didn't even think we were learning were teaching us how to work together and if we didn't work together, we would lose the game and you know we didn't want to do that.
- ❖ Of the games we play like the assembly line, Zorak, mirrors, nots, and many, many more great games.
- ❖ She disciplines us. Cooperation games.
- ❖ Because she made Zorak and she made us work together. She taught us cooperation games and other things.
- ❖ We work in groups in Zorak.
- ❖ More people cooperate and improved their concentration.
- ❖ The games improve your skills in life.
- ❖ We would play games that would help us have cooperation, concentration, observation, and imagination.
- ❖ The French and Indian War.
- ❖ She makes us communicate with one another.
- ❖ Work together.
- ❖ How to observe other people.
- ❖ Of the group, stories made our class work better together.
- ❖ We played games that involved working together.
- ❖ We learned to cooperate with each other.
- ❖ We cooperate better, and I listen better.

3. I have improved my writing skills because

Yes	Sometimes	No
19	1	0

- ❖ I learned about Climax, I have better descriptions, and I write better stories.
- ❖ We wrote lots of stories.
- ❖ I can write longer stories. I use more description.
- ❖ Of my stories that Ms. Owen helped me write.
- ❖ I write better stories.
- ❖ Of writing stories.
- ❖ Ms. Owen taught us about setting, characters, conflict, and concentration.
- ❖ I use more description.
- ❖ She showed us what we needed to have in a real story: setting, character, problem, climax, resolution.
- ❖ By making my stories longer and adding more detail.
- ❖ I write longer stories and more description. We act it out.
- ❖ She helped me write longer stories.
- ❖ Because she made us write more and spell more things. We would act it out. She helped me write longer stories than ever, but I love to write (climax). She showed us we needed setting, characters, problems, resolution.
- ❖ I wrote a lot of stories.

- ❖ She had us do writing assignments like the news articles, and she helped us improve on what we needed to.
- ❖ We would act it out. Then we would write our story so we would already know exactly what to write before we started.
- ❖ She was always having us write reports and stories and also she would have us act it out before we wrote it. She also helped us out with description, and had us write longer stories. She told us about setting, characters, conflict, climax, resolution, and theme.
- ❖ I have better description than the beginning of the year.
- ❖ She helped me write longer stories.
- ❖ She has helped me write longer stories. We wrote more.

4. I have learned about history
such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
19	1	0

- ❖ Michigan, Lansing, Indian, family history.
 - ❖ The French priest, the French and Indian War, that Mr. Ford was not the first person to invent a car.
 - ❖ About my family and the history of Michigan.
 - ❖ Michigan, family, Indians, cars, revolution, and lots of other stuff.
 - ❖ I learned about my family's history and Indian history and Michigan history.
 - ❖ I've learned about the history of Michigan, Indian history, my own history, and many more thing's history.
 - ❖ Old stuff could be a lot of money.
 - ❖ I've learned about history such as: aviation, President and Mrs. Ford, Michigan, Motown, Civil Rights. I learned about Mrs. Owen's family history.
 - ❖ I learned Michigan history.
 - ❖ French and Indian War, family history, and the English.
 - ❖ My family's history and Indian history.
 - ❖ My family's history, Michigan history, Indian groups, cars, and more.
 - ❖ I learned about Indian history.
 - ❖ That Henry Ford did not invent the car.
 - ❖ French and Indian War.
 - ❖ My family's history and early history.
 - ❖ The French, Indian, English and Michigan.
 - ❖ Michigan history, family history, and American history.
 - ❖ We learned about the Michigan Indians.
 - ❖ Henry Ford and his assembly line, and the French and Indian War.
5. This is what else I'd like to say about working with the Storyteller Project:
- ❖ We made a planet called Zorak and I learned more about living in a community. I hope I'll be in it next year.
 - ❖ It was lots of fun because we acted out the things and we had a half day on Thursday and Tuesday. I want Storyteller next year.
 - ❖ It's fun. It has a good learning value, and I hope I do it again next year.

- ❖ It is fun and I think every kid should get to go to Storyteller.
- ❖ To connect with other people and get close to my family. It's fun and Mrs. Owen is the best storyteller!
- ❖ It's fun, sweet, cool.
- ❖ I just want to say that ms. Owen did a very good job and would like to have story.
- ❖ I really enjoyed it and want to be in it next year.
- ❖ It's a lot of fun and I enjoyed it. You will like it too.
- ❖ To be continued...I love you Ms. Owen.
- ❖ I like Storyteller and you will too and Zorak.
- ❖ This is what else I'd like to say about working with the Storyteller Project: I think that Storyteller is very fun so it should continue forever. Thanks for sharing your ideas with us.
- ❖ It is fun!
- ❖ I'd like to say that if it keeps up, the world will become a better place a lot faster.
- ❖ I think you should keep doing Storyteller because I enjoyed it and would like to do it again so I think other kids would like it too.
- ❖ I love Storyteller. I really learned a lot. It is a lot of fun. I think that everyone should get a chance to go to Storyteller. Everyone in my class said that "they loved it". I hope I can be in it next year and years to come.
- ❖ Mrs. Owen is really nice. She's a good teacher. Her and Mr. Trickey are invincible.
- ❖ It is fun! I love it! I want to be in it next year.

Storyteller Project Reflections

1. I have learned a lot by working with the Storyteller Project such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
24	0	0

- ❖ History. I remember how we did studying on Indians, puritans, English, etc. That was fun because it helped us make the right decision in Theatre Lab.
- ❖ I have learned how to write a paper better. I also learned what Indians did or might have done like cultures, religious beliefs, activities, rituals. I would like to do this next year with Ms. Owen. She is a great actor and a good acting teacher.
- ❖ Well I learned first of all a lot about England, France, and Spain. While I was in Spain, they had a couple problems. For one they couldn't get into England because of the Rocky Mountains so they couldn't wage war in England. Second is that the small little ships would be stealing from the huge boats and the huge boats couldn't go fast and catch up to the thief.
- ❖ Indian cultures: the rituals, daily activities, wars, and deals. How the Indians made deals with the settlers. How to keep concentration. How to work together. How to act in front of people. How to act with other people.
- ❖ I have learned to project my voice more. Which is either a good or bad thing depending on who you ask. I've also learned a lot about history by hearing it, then trying to act it out.
- ❖ Becoming better at writing, studying history, and using strategies.
- ❖ The order of stories; stories aren't all facts; project my voice; how to tell a story better. I'm a better writer now because I was in this program.
- ❖ Acting out stuff. Learning what stuff we used in the war. Learning about history and playing games on history and playing what it would feel like as a slave.
- ❖ What Indians do because I used to think there wasn't names of Indian tribes. I thought the Indians were just there in one group. Another thing I learned is how to be a writer.
- ❖ To be a better writer about history; all of the things: observation, concentration, imagination; to work together; to be a better story teller; what's going on in other countries; almost like everything to do with acting.
- ❖ We learned about story grammar and the difference between factual stories and stories for the reader to enjoy. We did Hero's Journeys, biographies of seniors, and news articles. Now I like to write and I'm also better at it.
- ❖ I have learned a lot about history of the world and about people from history. I learned a lot about people coming to the new world. I have also learned how to act and write well.
- ❖ I have learned how to use expression. I never acted before. This gave me the chance to act. When you are describing a story, read and act at the same time. I really haven't done any story telling before.
- ❖ Improving my writing skills and seeing the world in a whole different way. Some of the characters expressed their feelings for face expressions. I really liked all of my characters. I really enjoyed the theatre lab project.

- ❖ All about the Indians, their rituals, daily activities, etc. I also learned about the Europeans and colonists and their rituals, daily activities, etc. I found that it was much easier to learn with the Storyteller Project. I have also become a better writer and want to write more stories.
- ❖ I learned about Indians, how they felt and how they traveled.
- ❖ I learned of many abilities in theater. I've learned how to be the person I can be. I've learned that many crazy things happened in history.
- ❖ I have learned lots of new games, but more important I have learned a lot of history by playing the games. This is the first time working in theatre lab and working with Ms. Owen, and I have learned more about history than any other school year. I wish we could do this next year and maybe learn even more. Once again, I have learned a lot this year.
- ❖ I learned about the kings, about France, Spain, and England. I also learned strategies for war and how bad things happened in the New World such as weather conditions, bug problems, etc. I learned about how I have to pay attention to everything you say That in war I should listed with my ears and heart.
- ❖ I learned about history, mostly since we did colonists a lot. We got to see how if felt and learned about things that happened then.
- ❖ I learned a lot about different ways to talk and different ways that Indians do their rituals. I learned a lot about history and some people that I had never even heard of! I also learned how to write better than I could before! I think that I have improved a lot!
- ❖ I learned how hard the explorers from England, France, and Spain had it. What Indians believed in and prayed to like the hunting god or the water god. I learned different types of Indians like the Ottawa, Plains, Show Off, and the Cliffhangers.
- ❖ I learned how to write better than ever. Before I was a bad storyteller and writer but with this it helped me to use my imagination more often. I've learned that if you have cooperation, imagination, and observation, you will have a great story. Those are the three rules of story telling.
- ❖ Learning fun new games with the theatre program and learned how to write better and I have improved from that. I learned about history, all about history I learned all that staff because of Ms Owen.

2. The Storyteller Project has helped our class work better together as a group because:

Yes	Sometimes	No
22	2	0

- ❖ In acting you have to work as a group to make the scene come alive, and I think we all understood that.
- ❖ When we play games like tapeball, we work together to beat different group's scores. On group projects, we help each other. We give ideas and much, much more.
- ❖ All of us had to work together and we found out people that were good in special things like I was good at wars and problem solving. So when we played king and queens, people wanted me on their side because if we were in trouble, we were ready!
- ❖ When we did the Indians, we had to work together and that made us see that if we can work together in theater lab, we can work together in our classroom and other places.

- ❖ When we were split up into countries, we had to utilize the skills of the people on our team (thinker, warrior, etc.), and those who did that were successful and those who didn't bombed. Definitely "Yes".
- ❖ We had to strategize and think together. Everyone needed to help each other so we would figure out how to beat the other team.
- ❖ It has taught us how to cooperate and communicate better. We (my class) are communicating more so then we become better friends.
- ❖ Because everybody has to work together and we have to help each other and figure out strategies, and it's fun working together so we work as a team a lot especially down at the theater lab since we have to work together.
- ❖ Because when we first started out in the beginning of the school year, we didn't know barely anything about theatre. But Ms. Owen showed us what and how to worth together.
- ❖ Because if you are competing and you need help, nobody will help because you are competing. But I feel we would help because that's what we practice.
- ❖ Most of the time we work better as a team because we get to learn more about each other. But sometimes we get a little riled up and don't do as great.
- ❖ Yes, because acting together made us a team by knowing that you can't always win and you need to work together to act. I learned that working as a team gets the job done quicker. Acting takes teamwork!
- ❖ The theatre games are team games. One person depends on the other, and the other depends on that one person.
- ❖ Because it told a lot about who that person really is and how can I do better with other people. And we could have had just had a crummy year but the group stayed in focus. I did my part and hopefully that did their part. We are a team.
- ❖ We now trust each other and can keep our focus. When acting we have to focus to stay in character. That then helps us when in the room to focus on doing right not wrong.
- ❖ Because we're not into getting people out. We're working as a team and not against. Even in the beginning of the year, Mrs. Owen said we're a team and so did Mrs. Owen.
- ❖ We've become a better team by acting as enemies. It may be confusing, but it's true.
- ❖ The Indian, colony and European games were in groups. We had to work together to make things happen. That is one reason I liked those games. Basically the games taught us history and how to work together as a team. There are also other little games that involved teamwork, but not history.
- ❖ We all became better writers, and we all learned something about each other such as people who are faster writers, people who do and don't get homework in, and people who get into character.
- ❖ We do all of it together. If one person did it at a time, we wouldn't have learned anything. We had to do it together.
- ❖ Our class works better as a group because Penny taught us a lot about cooperation and how to work together and that helped our class to cooperate together even in class. It also helped us to work better at acting when we were all together as a union. It helped us to make better choices.

- ❖ In many games we play requires working as a group like Nots. It takes 100% from every player to get unnoted. Build a story when two people take turns adding on to one story. With those experiences, you work well with a group naturally.
- ❖ If someone has an idea and can't finish that idea, the group can get ideas to the person who is going to write the story of the animal or something. We do acting and we have to work as a team to make reality. It also helps by being able to trust the classmates.
- ❖ We sometimes get out of hand, but over all it has helped us a lot to get along. But sometimes I think the arguing makes us fall apart and lose our focus.

3. I have improved by writing skills because

Yes	Sometimes	No
23	1	0

- ❖ I think I'm a better writer now because I became the character. I knew how they felt. I knew what was inside so I could dig down deep and find everything out. That's how I got to write better stories.
- ❖ She helped me with writing papers. If I didn't know what to write, she would give me ideas. We just got done writing a paper on the 39ers. When I got my paper back that I wrote, she said mine was one of the best! Thanks for working with me Ms. Owen!
- ❖ Because using theatre lab it sticks in your head because it's hands on and fun so it's a lot easier to memorize because you played it in theatre lab and also you can get a lot more facts from just going to theatre lab and it doesn't take as much time as reading.
- ❖ She helped me think of more details and more voice to put in a story so it would be more interesting and a good story. My writing hasn't been that good of writing until this year. Ms Owen now tells me that I'm one of the best writers in the class. This project has made me like writing more than any other year.
- ❖ I'm into all the "fantasy warrior" type stuff. The Hero story was exactly that. It made me excited about writing about it because it was the type of stuff I enjoy (my battle sequence was second to none). Ms. Owen tapped my imagination and that tap pumped out great stories.
- ❖ Last year I never used to do writing reports this often. By doing theatre lab, I learned while having fun. After that we wrote about what we did and how we did it. As we practiced writing more and more, we had experience so we improved.
- ❖ I learned how to write faster without making mistakes when needed. I also learned that if I act like a certain character, I can write about him easier because I know how he feels.
- ❖ Almost every time we act, we had to write about it but that was fun. But when we had to write about something big, we had to think about it and we were graded sometimes so I worked harder and I got really good.
- ❖ I used to do a rough draft and then my final copy, but now I do more than one rough draft. When we did the project with the 39ers, that made my writing better because I learned how to write a story and not a report, and you could always do another rough draft.
- ❖ She has improved my writing skills by having us do writing projects and working with writing in theater lab.

- ❖ If you do theater along with writing, then you know what the character was feeling and what the area around them was like. It also allows you to loosen up so you can think better. I definitely improved on my writing skills.
- ❖ Yes, because she helped me write better because she had us write something and she corrected it. Then she showed the corrections to us and we knew not to make those same mistakes again. She also improved our writing by helping us when we needed help. I think that I have improved my writing.
- ❖ I never wrote stories before. I didn't even know the recipe. Theatre helped me tremendously.
- ❖ Everything that we do is a great big story. I have these thoughts in my head. At least I think that I've improved on my writing a lot because of theater (theater lab). We call it the theater lab. Writing is now more fun for me. I can now be more creative. I mean I was before, but now it is 1000% better.
- ❖ Yes, I have improved my writing because I find myself writing longer stories and enjoying that so I write more and become a better writer. Ms. Owen has helped me become a better writer by having us act (which is fun) then has us sit down and write about that fun stuff that we had just done. It's fun to write about that and so I write with great detail and have fun doing it.
- ❖ Play your character and we will get in character and write as our character and when we're done we get out of character.
- ❖ Ms. Owen has improved my writing skills by giving us various assignments of writing.
- ❖ We have written a lot of stories or news articles. That helped me and probably the rest of the class improve our writing skills. Writing helped with DOLE skills mostly and a few other things. Ms. Owen gave us a fair time to get something done which she expects good writing just like M.
- ❖ Now I know how to edit papers. To put more story in it. Before I would just put the facts in. It wouldn't be a story. But now I know how to make a story and slip in a little bit of a fact at a time. I really like to make stories. Ms. Owen actually was a miracle worker for me. She helped me do anything in writing.
- ❖ We have to write stories down. It's hard but really fun. At the end we go through it and look for mistakes. That's fun too. Sometimes we get to put them in a book. That's the funnest part.
- ❖ Before I thought that I was the best writer ever because I had a great imagination. Now when I look back at my old stories and writing pieces I go ewwww yuck! Because I know that I had improved because I was writing a lot better now than I was before. I really do think that I improved on my writing skills.
- ❖ I have written better stories since the Storytelling Project. I used to write not as good and shorter stories. Now I write well written long stories. This project helped me with my revisions. I now love to write and keep a journal at home.
- ❖ When we did all the acting that makes us really live the story and when we live the story we get a better idea of what the story is more about. I hate when kids by themselves have to make up a story. It also helps so when we have an assignment we can live it in our minds and those words go down on paper and that's the way of a good story teller.

- ❖ When you act it out you understand it more so you can write it better so you have to think, act it out, and your kids will understand it and write what happened. That's what I think.

4. I have learned about history
such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
23	1	0

- ❖ Puritans, English, French, Spanish, slaves, 10 amendments, WW2, depression. I learned the WW2 and depression from the senior project; English, Spanish and French from the King and Queen project; and puritans, 10 amendments, and slaves from the Colony project.
- ❖ The Indians acted, how government works, how the US was formed, and much, much more. I now know who found Michigan, Father Marquette. I never knew a lot of stuff, but she helped me learn it or we acted it out. My brain is going to explode with all the stuff I learned this year.
- ❖ Well, she talked a lot of the types of government and how people were not treated right. We had several interviews we wrote tons I mean tons of stories and yet it was still fun to me. We learned all about the 13 colonies and lots about voting about slavery or becoming a union which was so fun.
- ❖ When we did the Indians, I learned about the Woodland Indians mostly. I learned that how they get their firewood was to take all the bark off a tree and it would die and fall. It would be easy to cut because it was softer since it was dead. I learned that the Woodlands grew beans, corn, potatoes, and many more foods. They hunted deer, rabbit, and squirrel. The Iroquois are mean Indians. I learned many more things, but I can't list them all.
- ❖ The Jamestown colony (or other colonies for that matter). She also really taught me about how a government works (very useful), and to further deepen the experience we got to act some of it out. We learned a lot more but look at this space, jeez, it's tiny. Storyteller forever!
- ❖ Why people came over to the New World (America) in 1606. How the 13 colonies became states and what it felt like to be an Indian when the settlers came. Christopher Columbus wasn't the first person to come to America, the Vikings were.
- ❖ How different governments work and how different governments feel. I also learned all about the Native Americans and the Europeans because we acted them out and after we acted we read to compare our answers.
- ❖ Yes because we act out the history. We played Indians, princess, princes, kings, queens and all that good stuff. Then we had to write about that so it was good that we did that.
- ❖ I have learned a lot about history such as how governments work and how wars aren't people going out and killing people. It's more like how to get more money for the land or to get slaves. I also learned how people gave speeches about what they wanted.
- ❖ How different people have different religions, different beliefs, and back then women were worse than slaves. They sold girls and stuff like that and they still do.
- ❖ The Navajo, Iroquois, Cherokee, and Ottawa Indians. How different types of government work like democratic, aristocratic, and diplomatic. I also learned what a

union is and the Core Democratic Values and the amendments. I learned about kings and queens and lots of other stuff.

- ❖ I have learned a lot about history during theater with Penny Owen. I have learned things like how different types of governments work and people from history. After we learned things, we would act them out and see how it felt to do things like they did in history. I learned a lot about natives.
- ❖ In 4th grade I learned a lot. I learned how bills were turned into laws to how the United States was formed. I knew a lot of history already, but now I know about 30% more.
- ❖ Indians. She taught us where some Indians lived, acted, and hunted. In medieval times, you taught us how they worshipped, fought, and lived.
- ❖ When we act we live history again. But after someone wins the game, then it's over. After we do research on what really happened in history on what we just played and sometimes how we play, it is how it really happens in real life. I really think that we learned a whole lot of stuff this year and we had fun doing it with Penny.
- ❖ Mrs. Owen taught me what the Indians did just about every day. She taught us how scary and hard it was for an explorer like in Jamestown. How the Indians could help an explorer and hurt an explorer. How government works in the past and in the present.
- ❖ She taught me a lot about history. She talked about people who I thought were very interesting and I enjoyed learning about them. One person who she talked about was Christopher Columbus. She talked about when he sailed across the seas and how Pocahontas saved John Smith. I learned a lot more than I knew about people and different places in history.
- ❖ We learned a lot about settlers and the New World. Most of our theatre activities were on that. We did rulers of old countries like Spain, France, and England. We learned a lot about Indians, too.
- ❖ How in the 1800's kings would marry queens just to have kids (girls) and if they didn't have a girl they would kill them. One king was so crazy. He lived in France (lots of crazy people in France). He would call people peacocks. Then he would kill you.
- ❖ Kings, popes, jesuits, Indians, colonists and Europeans. Not only did we learn when we played but before we played she taught US history. She taught us famous people, what they did, kings, how many years they were king for, and a whole bunch of other stuff. That is how I learned most of the things I learned in theatre lab. I have learned a lot in theatre lab.
- ❖ Penny is the best history teacher ever. She taught us about the natives, Europeans and settlers.
- ❖ She told us about the government.
- ❖ I have learned about different types of government, how people are treated, and how our country was formed. And I remember everything she told me because it was easier to absorb and remember than reading from a textbook. She made it fun while teaching us and so I remember a lot of it. She taught me a lot and I don't know how to ever repay her.
- ❖ She had us to some games on like the army (Prince of Paris lost his hat) and the Indians, Spain, French kings/queens. We played out a lot of the characters in these

examples. I have learned things like who won from the games that we played that could give us some/a lot of information on history back in time and sometimes some history about right now. Maybe not in this day/year.

5. This is what else I'd like to say about working with the Storyteller Project:
 - ❖ It is educational, fun, and you get to move around so it's like recess in a way. Acting is important because it can teach you stuff and because you can discover something new about yourself.
 - ❖ Ms. Owen was the best and only storyteller I have ever had. If I had to choose on what was my favorite subject this year, I would have to say the Storyteller Project. It has been a great help to me with writing and acting. There is so much I want to say but it won't all fit. Just one more thing, thanks for helping me Ms. Owen!
 - ❖ It brought our whole class together more and I would wake up asking what day it is, checking what day it is, checking if it is theatre lab, and anyway it's a lot more fun to do something you want to do and have it stick in your head than not have fun and not stick in your head.
 - ❖ It is a fun way to teach kids about history. It is more fun than sitting in a classroom and getting told everything. You get to act out history and do what they did. Then you get to write about what you acted out. If you want you can even compare history and what you acted out.
 - ❖ The S.P. greatly ups the students' self-esteem. Every time we do something good, we would receive either a physical or verbal pat on the back. Oh, and did I mention it's really fun! Well it is.
 - ❖ Doing the Storyteller Project was fun because I was learning without knowing I was learning. I thought I was playing a game while learning so I keep it in my head because kids always enjoy games and remember them.
 - ❖ This project is so great because you learn so much while having fun. I think everyone should do this project because you learn a lot, have a bigger imagination, learn to cooperate, and much more, including having fun!
 - ❖ It was great. It taught me a lot about the past and the history. It was really run acting and stuff, so I thought it was a really great thing to have.
 - ❖ This is a good program because it's fun with learning and writing. Also, you learn more about imagination, observation, and cooperation.
 - ❖ Because it's like you're learning but you don't realize that you are working and learning. If I could, I'd use this theater lab as much as I could.
 - ❖ I think this is a good program for any age group because it teaches you about theater, writing, and history. I know that writing and history are important to schools, but by adding in theater it becomes more fun than work because if you can find something you like to do, you won't have to work a day in your life.
 - ❖ I feel that this is a great program to do with all people. I think that because you can tie in social studies in with acting. I also like acting.
 - ❖ I learned so much in a so fun way!
 - ❖ Because you have fun while you are acting/playing a role. I learned bundles of stuff. It is to me worth having. It ties in from education and having fun and I believe that if I'd not of had her, I would not be in m condition that I am in now. I would be getting bad grades in writing. I had lots of fun.

- ❖ First of all I'd like to say that Ms. Owen has been a great part of my 5th grade year. She has taught me a ton of information that I might not have learned without having her. Her program is great, and it is fun while learning, and I think that other kids should have this same opportunity that I had. Once again, I think her program is great and I wish I could have her again.
- ❖ Because she teaches us how to use our imagination and how to act.
- ❖ Ms. Owen is the best person ever. I hope that everyone meets her or hears about her at least.
- ❖ I think people should do this because it will teach your child a lot about history and your child will have lots of fun in it. I would also like to say that Ms. Owen is a very nice teacher. She doesn't get mad a lot. She would be great for anyone, child or adult. I would also like to say thank You Ms. Owen.
- ❖ This project is a great way to help kids become better writers and storytellers. Some parents think stories are bad for kids' heads, but stories help kids with school to make it more fun. Stories are what make kids, kids. It helped me so now when I write a note, letter, or a story, I won't worry about any problems.
- ❖ It really told my imagination to get up and smell the celbulem. It had me think. I had ideas for characters and their modern lifestyle. You get millions of ideas!
- ❖ I think this was a great idea to do it for our age, not just because it was fun. We actually got to learn how to act and learn all sorts of different things. I do think thought that you should start teaching this at our age because any younger and I really don't think that kids could quite get it. But I sure did because it helped me a lot. Thanks Penny.
- ❖ The Storyteller Project is a great project. It will teach you things you would have never known. Theater helps because you can experience what people back then experienced. This project helps people who aren't the best writers write better stories. I suggest you try it.
- ❖ It was a blast. I had fun doing and loved meeting Penny. I never knew I was a good actor. Like myself, she brought new things in my life like acting, how to write better stories, and learn more stuff about history. I hope other kids have a chance like me. It was great.
- ❖ Kids can wear themselves down at acting class. It's fun. I like it. I wish I could do it next year. My imagination came to life in this program.

Storyteller Project Reflections

- | Yes | Sometimes | No |
|-----|-----------|----|
| 15 | 3 | 1 |
1. I have learned a lot by working with the Storyteller Project such as:
 - ❖ Putting feeling in your writing improves and makes it more interesting to read. I also learned that acting takes a lot of concentration and feeling.
 - ❖ I have learned a lot about myself and my classmates like how to work and agree with them well.
 - ❖ Researching history can be very fun and hard work. Never be a communistic country.
 - ❖ I think that everybody learns a little bit at a time with each lesson. The homework also helped improve my writing skills. When you write what you experience, you write better.
 - ❖ Working with a group gets you undone faster when playing the game Nots.
 - ❖ Yes, I have learned a lot in Storyteller. I have learned how to be an actress and to be a better writer. It taught that creative thinking can be good for the mind.
 - ❖ Like there are some countries that had different rights between the people like boys v. girls. Girls can't do many things such as school.
 - ❖ How to act scenes out. How to concentrate as hard as I can. How to get along with others. How to plan wars. How to play parts (the soldier I played was an awesome guy and stubborn). How to play a role. It was a good experience to play games and I like learning.
 - ❖ I have learned how to become a better historian in the Storyteller Project and we as a group have earned more about Indians and their actual living skills, about how our rights and our comments to the Constitution are very important to us.
 - ❖ I have learned how to focus/concentrate when I am acting/storytelling.
 - ❖ History. We had learned about how people fought for their freedom and how people escaped for freedom. It was interesting.
 - ❖ How to work with other people without a fight and to take turns with projects.
 - ❖ What a democracy is, why some girls wee not able to go to school and the boys wee. Also why the boys could steal their stuff and leave the girls no where to sleep.
 - ❖ When we learned about how the women were thrown out on the streets or killed on steps, etc.
 - ❖ I have learned how to tell better stories. By telling them I can always say yes or no. I have to explain myself.
 - ❖ I have learned that things that we used to do acting with were actually going on in the real world. Our acting teachers, Ms. Penny, didn't tell us that it actually happened or is happening and I learned about that event.
 - ❖ When we had to tell a story with another person, it was hard but I learned I have to make what I say and the other person say connect.
 - ❖ How actors act, what actors do to prepare acting, why actors act.

2. The Storyteller Project has helped our class work better together as a group because:

Yes	Sometimes	No
11	8	0

- ❖ Most of the activities had you working with the class or with a partner. This has taught us to work with each person in the class.
- ❖ It helped us a little because sometimes we got to work in groups. And sometimes we got to work in teams.
- ❖ We're used to each other because we did exercises together.
- ❖ In some of the games we played, the game made us rely on each other and trust each other as a group.
- ❖ It tells us that by working together and cooperating with others, it makes it get done fast.
- ❖ We played a game where you cross your hand and you hold onto some else's hand. That taught us that you have to cooperate with each other to form a circle. At least it taught me. This is very important to know how to cooperate with each other.
- ❖ Now some people want to be a storyteller or be a writer/journalist or want to be actors.
- ❖ We had to work together in theatre lab to live in some games (war) or to have fun and learn (mirrors).
- ❖ I think all the people in my class are very smart and they just don't usually express themselves enough usually. But by acting things out, we understand things better and are able to express ourselves better.
- ❖ The storyteller project helped our class realize that even if it's storytelling/acting, it still can be true and now our class is more aware.
- ❖ In some of the games we played together like the hand game, we had to work together to untangle.
- ❖ When we did something good, she would congratulate us by saying good job and being there for us when we needed her.
- ❖ We need to always work together like in the game if knots because everyone is always talking at the same time and everyone wants to do a different thing.
- ❖ Sometimes because we still get in fights with all of the students, etc.
- ❖ Because some of us still need to work on it. I am one of those people that is my subject.
- ❖ Our class has worked better as a group because we use cooperation in the classroom and in theater lab.
- ❖ We are a very good team and we work together great. And I think when we act things out it helps us learn and understand the concept.
- ❖ Games such as mirrors help us practice cooperation which is an essential need for groups.

3. I have improved by writing skills because

Yes	Sometimes	No
12	3	4

- ❖ I wrote every time I did something like we would act something out and then write about it and I guess that helped me.

- ❖ I don't think I have.
- ❖ I have learned to express your ideas on paper and bring out all of your thoughts. Now when I have a really cool thing in my head I don't want to forget, I write it down.
- ❖ Because I was never good at writing. I just need a _____ for writing because some day I just went in and had fun and I wrote what I did.
- ❖ I try my best.
- ❖ Yes, because now I know that I have to type/write longer stories, etc.
- ❖ Of the homework you give us and how much you make us write and the amount we write and we should write neater.
- ❖ Well I didn't improve my writing skills because I always wrote like this. But something I did improve on like spelling and how to take my time.
- ❖ Before I couldn't quite explain my writing before. But now Miss Owen helped the class. I am now detailed.
- ❖ It was a lot easier to write something that happened to me than to make a story up so it was more fun to write.
- ❖ I was able to write everything I do and usually I don't ever have enough time to write out things or enough ideas to express myself through, but acting gave me enough time, ideas, and limits to write the best stories I could. Usually Mrs. Owen would notice that I have written the most out of everyone. Like for instance when we did hero's journey. My story was 18 pages long.
- ❖ Because I've never been a good writer but I learned to make a story. Just can't write it.
- ❖ Now I don't write so lightly. What that means is like not writing so short but it could be good. And also not writing like just plain sentences. They would have to be a complete sentence, not just like two words.
- ❖ I got to experiment my story before writing it which helps a lot because you know how the story goes. You know the events. You already know everything.
- ❖ I write more now than I used to write because on every Friday that we were with Miss Owen, we got to write a story for what we did.
- ❖ Mrs. Penny made us write after every lesson which got us used to the writing way. What helped me is that we wrote about things that we did so we knew what to write.
- ❖ I wrote a lot more and practice makes permanent, and I wrote stories and improved my writing faster.
- ❖ Every time we did an act, we would do an assignment. Most of the time it had to at least be a page.
- ❖ I have learned to put more feeling in my writing. I have learned to put my voice in it. I have learned to put events that help and hurt. I have learned to put my imagination on paper.

4. I have learned about history
such as:

Yes	Sometimes	No
10	9	0

- ❖ When the girls lost their rights that was revolving around history and when they never had them in the first place.
- ❖ What a coups detat is. I never knew that so I did learn a little about history I guess.

- ❖ When we did the activity of when the girls lost their rights and when we did the activity of the soldiers and the Indian people.
- ❖ Yes because we did history every day and it was very interesting.
- ❖ I didn't learn but I learned something.
- ❖ The Indian tribes where we had to find stuff about them in the band room, etc.
- ❖ Why they stole everything from the girls. Why couldn't the girls steal back the stuff they stole. I also learned about immigrants.
- ❖ The immigration from the past and how people got from one place to another.
- ❖ Immigrants. Once a historian came and taught us about history, about how people travel from all over the world to America. Why because it's a free country.
- ❖ How men/women, blacks/whites were treated differently.
- ❖ How important our rights are to us because girls got their rights taken away in acting as women did years ago. How immigrants travel from years ago and how the historians understand them. How Indian lifestyles were long ago.
- ❖ Immigration, war, Prince of Paris, serfs, masters, royalty all kinds of roles, how people hate or love the king, the rights.
- ❖ Like a day when we were talking about history she had talked about the amendments and that was about history.
- ❖ One day we came to class and we had a war about the amendments of the Constitution, the rebels against the dictator. We learned that our ancestors fought in war for our rights. Do you actually think that you were fighting for rights or for fun?
- ❖ In the old days girls had to live on the street and they could not have anything at all.
- ❖ When we played a war game that showed us what happened to the women in Afghanistan. A historian came in and taught us about what used to happen to people in other countries and how people got to America.
- ❖ Communists are people who tell the citizens what to do.
- ❖ We learned about Indians and migration. We even got to be indians to learn about them and when you're doing something fun, it's cool to learn cause you're having fun.
- ❖ I have learned about immigration, migration and wars. I have learned about indians too. All these things were important parts of history and in some cases (like that of the war between the boys and the girls which was really going on in Brazil) parts of the present. Whether it was in this country or another country, migration or war, we learned a lot about history.

5. This is what else I'd like to say about working with the Storyteller Project:

- ❖ All of the activities were fun, exciting, and educational. The thing I learned the most was concentration, and it was taught by the best teacher, Mrs. Penny Owen.
- ❖ I would like to say that Storyteller was one of the funniest experiences in school that we did. I always looked forward to Fridays.
- ❖ War taught us to find other people using other senses than sight.
- ❖ It was fun. I know we all enjoyed it and learned a lot at the same time. It has taught me that I can get in front of people and not freak out.

- ❖ Everything we did I thought was fun, and I would like to play those games again in 6th grade.
- ❖ Ms. Penny taught me/us how to be actors and actresses while learning. That's pretty cool. She taught us history while going to war. She taught us how to write better. You might think it's just another class, but it's not. It's actually fun learning how to act and write better while learning.
- ❖ I'd like to say that it was fun playing the games especially who set me ser. Also that I had lots of fun playing the war. That was lots of fun.
- ❖ This is a fun project that teaches you to use your skills, to act just to learn that is enjoyable plus writing stories is ok.
- ❖ It's a great program which like I said before it helps students learn to express themselves through writing, acting, and learning. Another thing I liked about it was that I got to miss class and learn things in a funner way and that encouraged students that learning can be fun.
- ❖ It was a lot of fun and a great experience.
- ❖ I think theater lab is a good way of learning how to act. It has made me feel more comfortable than being shy to act.
- ❖ Thank you for all the fun and laughter and that you did a good job with our brief time together. Thank you Ms. Owen.
- ❖ I really liked it but I think we should have done more stuff about history. I really enjoyed it and I would like to do it next year also.
- ❖ I liked what we did and I hope you do the same thing next year.
- ❖ It is great and it was fun. I learned a lot. I had fun and thank you for doing this for me.
- ❖ I enjoyed acting. I was going to go but that same day I have a basketball camp to go to. I'm sorry because acting was fun. I will miss you.
- ❖ I really enjoyed all of the acting we did with Ms Penny, and I like the idea of doing a theater lab. When we worked with Ms. Owen we, our class, has learned to cooperate with each other more.
- ❖ It's a fun way to learn a little without noticing it.
- ❖ It was really fun and I learned about things I never knew and acting was great. I hope you keep doing everything you did for us for others!

APPENDIX C

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF
COMMUNITY OF HEROES PROJECT**

PHOTOGRAPHS

STEP #1: A TRADITIONAL VISION QUEST



Third grade student participates in his vision quest



Fifth grade student expresses grief in the middle of her hero's journey

PHOTOGRAPHS

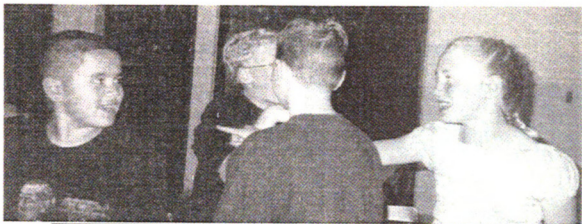
STEP #2: PERFORMING ETHNOGRAPHY



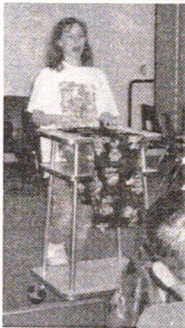
Third grade student prepares for the hunt as a Potawotami.

Fourth grade student assumes the role of Pere Marquette and brings his religion to the New World.





Colonist accuses a soldier of trespassing on her property



New Englander argues against allowing slavery into the newly- formed union



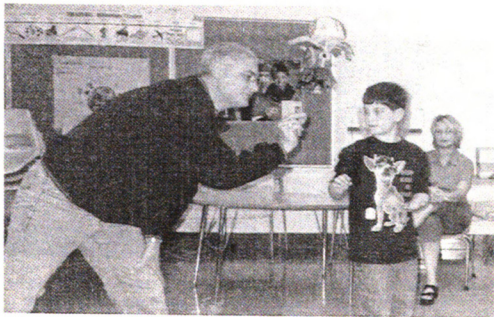
Deals are made at
the Continental
Congress

PHOTOGRAPHS

STEP #3: USING ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH SKILLS



Fourth grade students
interview the third grade
Potawatami nation



A first generation father explains his culture to his son



Seniors and students share cooking a meal together



Seniors and students share lunch and history together

PHOTOGRAPHS

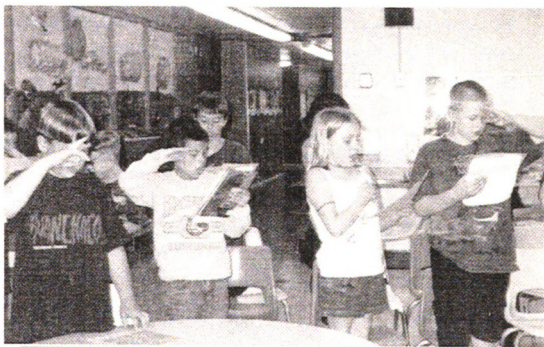
STEP #4: BUILDING A COMMUNITY



The Fourth Grade democratic community works together to decide on the jobs they will need to build their economy



The Fourth Grade aristocrats choose the work assignments that will build their economy



Third Grade students recite the pledge they wrote for their community for the first time

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