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Motivations for Lifelong Learning in the
Life of Mrs. Hendrika Schuster

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Rebecca Lee Austin

May 2008

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Keywords: lifelong learning, biography, life story

ABSTRACT

Motivations for Lifelong Learning in the

Life of Mrs. Hendrika Schuster

by

Rebecca Lee Austin

As we enter the 21st century our population of elderly citizens is growing at a rate never seen before in our history. With the baby boomers retiring, society is realizing the vast potential of untapped resources. These individuals are also seeking opportunities to remain as active and engaged members of their communities.

The purpose of this study was to examine the motivations for lifelong learning in the life of Hendrika “Henny” Schuster, an 81-year-old resident of Abingdon, Virginia. Her life story is presented in a narrative form and in a thematically organized chronological format. Interviews were conducted and recorded. These tapes were transcribed and analyzed to determine themes. Additional information was collected from personal journals, scrapbooks, and newspaper and magazine articles and photographs.

The importance of family, formal educational opportunities, the influence of others, self-directed study, and involvement in community all emerged as motivating themes in her pursuit of lifelong learning opportunities. For Henny, the factors identified as barriers to her quest included the internal stressors of family, gender, culture, and educational opportunities.

Recommendations include the need to not only provide more educational opportunities for adult learners but also ensure that such opportunities are readily accessible. It is suggested that future studies look at the roles of gender and culture in regard to the ever changing populace and the global view of our world. There is a need to continue studies such as this in which older adult learners are provided opportunities to reflect on their experiences. Insight for learners of all ages can be gained from such studies.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends for all of their support and patience. My parents instilled in me the belief that anything is possible. My sisters, Donna and Patty, and my brother, Terry, have always been there for me each and every time I needed them. My friends, Lisa and Pam, always had faith that this could be done and pushed me to finish. Thank you!

This dissertation is also dedicated to Hendrika Schuster, who willingly participated in this study. Henny is an amazing woman and an outstanding role model. She is truly a lifelong learner, and her life story is a testament to all of us.

May this story stand as a reminder to us all that we can make a difference through our works no matter how large or how small.

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To my family: Without your support, none of what I've strived to accomplish would be possible. My mother and father are my inspiration and have always encouraged me to reach for my dreams teaching me that with belief and hard work anything is possible. My siblings, Donna, Patty, and Terry are a major part of my life and have given their big sister the support needed to achieve any goal.

To my friends: Pam and Lisa, my best friends, you provided a sounding board and great advice. You know my strengths, you know my weaknesses, and you know all my secrets. You're the best friends any one could ever have.

To a willing participant: Hendrika Schuster is an inspiration to me. Henny, I thank you for your encouraging words and willingness to share your story with me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We seldom make time to process even the most meaningful experiences of our lives; we just speed through them.

(Sheehy, 1995, p. 9)

The world today is one of instant access, instant information, and instant success or failure. Amidst such change it is easy to lose sight of the individual and the remarkable accomplishments he or she has made. It is only upon examination of these individuals that society can learn more about itself and meaning can be gained from these experiences.

Gross (1977) reminded us of Aristotle, who, said in 350 B.C. that “all men, by nature, desire to know.” (p. 15) This desire, this longing, can be seen in the lives of lifelong learners. Their drive to know, to understand, is quite visible. Houle (1961) countered that some people had *cacoëthes studeni*, “the desire to learn.” For them, lifelong learning meant self-directed growth; an understanding of themselves and the world. It meant acquiring new skills and powers (the only true wealth which you can never lose). It meant an investment in self. (Cross & Florio, 1977, p. 16)

According to the U. S. Bureau of Census (2000), there were over 45 million men and women age 60 or older. In education, there is a certainty – in the new Millennium, the growing population of older adults is larger than at any other point in the history of the world. These adults will bring with them a never seen before appreciation for lifelong learning. (Tomei, 1999, p. 72) What will be the barriers they will need to overcome?

Adler (1956) asked the question, “What is the real end of learning?” (p. 92) It is wisdom. We would all like to be a little wiser than we are – to have a little more

understanding, a little more insight, a little more comprehension of the human situation, of the conditions of our lives, of the world in which we live; to know better the difference between good and evil. But how long does it take to become wise? The answer is, a lifetime.

Purpose of the Study

The problem that this study addressed was to determine what motivates a person to pursue continued education throughout her life and to understand why Schuster chose to continually seek wisdom. The simplest way to find out why adults participate in education is to ask them. Hundreds of local, state, and national studies have done just that. In such studies respondents were presented with lists of reasons why people might participate and asked to indicate which ones applied to them. (Merrimam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 79) This study sought to reveal more than just a list of reasons. Rather, the focus of this study is Hendrika Schuster, the individual; the lifelong learner and her experiences.

In a report entitled *Never Too Old to Learn* (1974) from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the following statement is made: “Education is, above all, part of the search for meaning in life, and life should be meaningful as long as there is breath in one’s body.” (p. 26) As the opening quotation of Sheehy suggests, individuals rarely take time to find the meaning of their experiences, yet each still seeks for understanding. This study has provided that much missed time; it has enabled the participant to make meaning of her experiences.

The Clark Foundation reports also stated that in our youth-oriented society, those 50 and over, were fast becoming a new class of disadvantaged individuals, but one

possessing a large reservoir of abilities if we could figure out how to make productive use of them. (*Never Too Old to Learn*, 1974, p. 33) This study has provided insights into the puzzle of why some persons continue to learn and to seek opportunities for learning. It has also revealed some of the barriers that have hindered such activities.

The United States is becoming a nation of adults. By the year 2005, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (Golladay, 1976), “the United States population will be dominated by persons in their middle years.” With the exception of the World War II years, children under the age of 15 have always been the largest single age group in the nation. (Cross, 1981, p. 3) Now more than ever, it is abundantly clear that the number of those who could be lifelong learners is increasing.

Research Questions

This life story reflects many of the theories proposed by the numerous studies that have been conducted concerning lifelong learning (Alejandro, 2001; Andrews, Houston, & Bryant, 1981; Hayes & Flannery, 2000; Houle, 1961). Ability and motivation to learn are established rather early in life. According to Tuijnman (1999), equipping individuals with the skills and the motivation to learn on a continuing basis implies a holistic, life-cycle view in which an early start is crucial for the cognitive, social, emotive, and physical development of children. (p. 17) This study sought to understand these motivations by examining one life story. The focus of this study is Hendrika Schuster, a woman who is a lifelong learner. This study also attempted to identify the barriers and opportunities for lifelong learning, using the following questions.

1. What were some of the early influences on Hendrika Schuster’s life that inspired her to pursue education?

2. What motivations have provided Hendrika Schuster with the desire to continually seek opportunities for lifelong learning?
3. What barriers have prevented Hendrika Schuster from taking advantage of opportunities to increase her knowledge?
4. What are the learning habits and methods that Hendrika Schuster has developed and what has been the perceived effect of these learning skills?

Significance of the Study

Cross (1981) began her book, *Adults as Learners*, by stating that the project of her book was motivated by her growing conviction that individuals living in today's world must be prepared to make learning a continuing lifelong activity. Lifelong learning is not a privilege or a right; it is simply a necessity for anyone, young or old, who must live with the escalating pace of change – in the family, on the job, in the community, and in the world-wide society.

Children born today in the U. S. are projected to have a 50% probability of living to 100. (Greider, 2005, p. 13) We can only be imagined the type of world in which they will live for the next 100 years. It is certain that learning will play a vital role in their lives. One of the most vivid truths of the new age is that no one will live all his or her life in the world into which he or she was born, and no one will die in the world in which he or she worked in his or her maturity. (Meade, 1958)

Between 1969 and 1984, the overall adult population in the U. S., meaning those aged 18 and over, increased by about 27 %. The proportion of adults participating in adult education increased by 63 % and more than twice the rate for the adult population as a whole during that 15 year period. (Courtney, 1992, p. 2) By virtually every measure

on every dimension of learning, people are now spending more time acquiring knowledge than ever before in the history of our continually learning species. (Livingstone, 1999, p. 51)

Houle (1961) stated that the desire to learn, like every other human characteristic, was not shared equally by everyone. To understand why some choose to continually and actively pursue learning is important. When older Americans do not realize their full human potential, society loses. (*Never too old to learn*, 1974, p. 67). Understanding the motivations of Hendrika Schuster may possibly inspire others to continue learning. Lifelong learning proactively encourages the development of the habit of learning in everyone in the community rather than reactively responding to specific needs at specific times. (Longworth, 1999, p. 61)

The desire to learn, like every other human characteristic, is not shared equally by everyone. But in a world that sometimes seems to stress the rewards of knowledge, it is greatly encouraged. The desire to learn seems, in fact, to pervade their existence. They approach life with an air of openness and an inquiring mind. (Houle, 1961, p. 5) What then creates this desire? What are the motivations for lifelong learners? A study of one life story may reveal some answers.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to one subject, Mrs. Hendrika Schuster. Examples from her life story will provide data for the study of lifelong learning. Creswell (1998) suggested that one challenge to biographers was that they could not avoid their own biases and values. I acknowledged this fact and I have presented, as much as possible, an accurate rendition of Mrs. Schuster's life story.

Overview of the Study

This qualitative study is presented in 12 chapters. An introduction is provided in Chapter 1, including a statement of the problem and the significance of the study in relation to the problem. Additionally, the limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed. Chapter 2 offers a review of the relevant literature providing an examination of the characteristics of a lifelong learner, the motivations for and the barriers to continual learning, and the various types of learning opportunities that are available. The methods and procedures used for conducting the study are described in Chapter 3. Mrs. Schuster's life story, the heart of the study, is provided in Chapters 4 through 11. A summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to improve practice and for further research are provided in Chapter 12.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself.

Edward Gibbon
(Houle, 1961, p. 3)

The continuing learner has existed in every age. Houle (1961) suggested that we did not need to explore every other age in a tedious search for continuing learners; every era has produced men and women with keenly inquiring minds. The works of Plutarch, Cicero, and the other Roman writers are rich with illustrations; among them are Cato learning Greek at 80, Alexander carrying the works of Homer with him everywhere, and Caesar trying to plan each day so that it would include administration, sleep, writing, and study. (Houle, 1961, p. 10)

To cope with the vast changes in technology, the economic market and society in general, individuals seek to increase their knowledge just to keep up with the world around them. Amidst all of this change is an old phenomenon that is growing in strength; lifelong learning.

What is lifelong learning? Is it a process of learning, as suggested by Hiemstra (1976), that continues throughout one's lifetime, depending on individual needs, interests, and learning skills? Hiemstra said that in general an older person had a need, a yearning and a potential for active participation in lifelong learning. Birren (1964) defined learning as a relatively lasting modification of behavior as a result of experience. He also contended that there were three aspects to a learning experience: the experience must be registered, retained, and recalled. Perhaps, the description provided by Cross and Florio

(1977) was more on target. Men and women of all ages today feel the urge to seek more in life – to shape a larger self. That quest I call lifelong learning.

Longworth (1999) proposed a learning ladder: a personal voyage from data to wisdom. He contended that lifelong learning was proactive rather than reactive, long-term rather than short-term, outward rather than inward-looking, holistic rather than fragmented. His learning ladder describes the process of learning as a means of moving upward through the following stages: data, information, knowledge, understanding, insight, and wisdom. The attainment of data and information are relatively easy. Yet, as the learner continues to move up the ladder, the goals are larger and the steps to get to each are more difficult.

As the learner moves beyond the basic obtainment of information and data, he or she seeks knowledge. With knowledge comes understanding. The large space between these steps indicates the complexity in gaining this understanding. As the learner continues upward, the next step is insight. For the learner, he or she has gained the capacity to discern the true nature of any situation. The ultimate goal is to obtain wisdom; the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting. Wisdom is the most difficult to reach.

The position on the learning ladder is never fixed or constant. For each learner, there will be moments and situations in which the ultimate goal has been obtained. There will also be times and circumstances when the learner will be unable to progress higher or may be forced to go back down the ladder to obtain more information or data before being able to continue the climb upward.

Gross (1982) provided five key statements concerning lifelong learning. He states lifelong learning:

1. Is a personal, existential challenge to each of us, not just a rubric for certain educational activities
2. Is a perennial humanistic ideal, not merely a new educational concept
3. Takes diverse forms, not one pattern
4. Is an international movement, not an American invention
5. Is both individual and communal, not just one or the other. (pp.21-23)

What drives this interest or need for lifelong learning? Hiemstra (1976) identified three major forces. The first of these can be described simply as the rapidity and constancy of change. The changing nature of our society requires virtually all citizens to gain new skills and intellectual orientations throughout their lives. (Hesburgh, Miller, & Wharton, 1973) Barriers such as cultural, economic, and social are being reduced physically as well as electronically via the Internet and continued computerization of everyday activities. Thus, the number of persons achieving lifelong learning is increasing. (Timbs, 2003)

A second major force, one certainly related to the first, is the continuous march by many adults toward occupational obsolescence. In our complex society, job requirements are continually changing so that many employed persons must change their skills as often as five or more times during their working careers. (Hesburgh et al., 1973, p. 10) According to various reports, U. S. employers increased employee education spending by 24 to 32 % in the past decade. (Alejandro, 2001, p. 15) Additionally, more businesses require employees to obtain certifications, licensure, and endorsements reflecting the increasing demand for a highly qualified workforce. Since the 1970s there has been a quantum leap in advocacy for “lifelong learning” in most advanced capitalist societies. The increasingly pervasive general assumption is that people will have to intensify their

learning efforts in order to keep up with the rapidly growing knowledge requirements of a new “knowledge economy.” (Livingstone, 1999, p. 50)

The third force that has helped create the interest in and need for lifelong learning is the change in lifestyles or value systems affecting so many people. Some may call it increased leisure time, a movement toward self-actualization, or the “back-to-earth” interests. Cross (1981) suggested that learning for recreation and leisure was the most rapidly growing field of study for adults.

There are a wealth of studies dealing with participation in adult education... they all pursue a single general theme, the effort to discover the characteristics of those people who are served by one or more the established institutions or associations. (Houle, 1961, p. 5) Merriam and Cafferella (1991) suggested that the question of why adults did or did not participate in learning activities is one of the most researched topics in adult learning.

One of the earliest efforts to explain participation in lifelong learning was presented in a monograph by Harry Miller in 1967. Miller attempted to link the motivational needs hierarchy of Maslow’s theory (1954) with Lewin’s (1947) force-field theory. According to Maslow’s hierarchy, fundamental needs of survival, safety, and belonging had to be met before status, achievement, and self-realization needs could be addressed. In applying this scheme to adult education, Miller hypothesized that adults from lower socioeconomic classes would participate for job-related and basic skills reasons; whereas, participants from higher social classes would seek education to satisfy achievement and self-actualization needs. This tendency was also related to one’s place in the life cycle – younger people would be more interested than older people in achieving economic security and establishing a social network for belonging needs. Not

until later in life can one attend to self-actualizing needs. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 226)

Characteristics of Lifelong Learners

Who are these lifelong learners? Verduin, Miller, and Greer (1986) suggested that the learning interests of adults were very diverse, due to the individual nature of each of them within their own environment. Gailbraith (1991) also agreed and asserted that adult learners developed differently throughout their lives and because of their educational experiences.

Houle (1961) conceptualized lifelong learners as being into three groups: the Goal-Oriented, the Activity-Oriented, and the Learning-Oriented. He stated that the Goal-Oriented were those who sought to solve problems or to pursue a particular interest. They are seekers after goals. The Activity-Oriented are those who engage in continuing education for some reason other than the knowledge it provides. These reasons are quite varied and include such things as social interaction, escape from other situations, etc. The Learning-Oriented are those who are preoccupied with learning and those who consider education fun. Each of these subgroups is driven to learn and this desire for learning may be so strong that it takes on an almost religious meaning for each.

There are many ways to categorize these learners; to group them so as to better understand who they are. Grow's (1991) model described four distinct stages of learners based on their own level of self-direction and their needs.

Stage 1 are learners of low self-direction who need an authority figure (a teacher) to tell them what to do.

Stage 2 are learners of moderate self-direction who are motivated and confident but largely ignorant of the subject matter to be learned.

Stage 3 are learners of intermediate self-direction who have both the skill and the basic knowledge and view themselves as being both ready and able to explore a specific subject area with a good guide.

Stage 4 are learners of high self-direction who are both willing and able to plan, execute, and evaluate their own learning with or without the help of an expert. (p. 3)

There have been numerous attempts over the years to identify the specific characteristics of a lifelong learner. Cross and Florio (1977) suggested that lifelong learners should be open to new experiences, feel that they never knew everything, always sought to know, believe that investing in self was the best investment, and much more. Warnat (1979) identified 10 specific characteristics of adult learners, including wisdom comes with age, the older we are the more information our brains possess, our vocabulary is greater, and we are more realistic.

In examining why older adults begin and finish various learning tasks, Hiemstra (1976) stated that those who persevered were more likely to perceive those who persist as more worthy than those who drop out; rate external and instrumental goals higher; have a definite goal as a reason for enrolling; be in a smaller class; and have had a high school rank higher than dropouts. Houle (1961) declared the most universally important factor is schooling. The higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely it is that he or she will take part in continuing education.

Along these same lines, Courtney (1992) argued that those who had not completed high school and that those who worked as manual, blue-collar occupations were far less likely to be represented among the ranks of the participating in educational opportunities. He affirmed that the most powerful predictor of participation was the amount of formal schooling attained by the learner. Houle (1961) added that, in general,

high income groups were more likely to take part in educational activities than low income groups.

Participation is also positively related to the size of the community, the length of residence in it, and the number of different kinds of educational activities available. People of certain nationalities or religious backgrounds were more active in adult learning than those with other backgrounds. Married people participated more than single people, and families with school-age children participated more than families without them. (Houle, 1961, p. 7)

Courtney (1992) reported the findings of London, Wenkert, and Hagstrom. They found the greater the frequency of television watching... the less likelihood of educational participation. Additionally, those with less education tended to pursue a more passive lifestyle, around the home, in the neighborhood, and with the extended family. The better educated by contrast, engaged in more “active pursuits;” reading, active sports, and memberships in voluntary associations.

Motivations for Lifelong Learning

Cross (1981) found that the more education people had, the more education they wanted, and the more they participated in further learning activities. Verduin et al.

(1986) provided the following 10 motivations for self-directed learning:

1. Desire to set my own learning pace
2. Desire to use my own style of learning
3. I wanted to keep the learning strategy flexible and easy to change
4. Desire to put my own structure on the learning project
5. I wanted to learn this right away and couldn't wait until a class might start
6. I didn't know of any class that taught what I wanted to know
7. I don't like a formal classroom situation with a teacher
8. Lack of time to engage in a group learning program
9. Transportation to a class is too hard or expensive
10. I don't have enough money for a course or class

While some of these may seem to be barriers for entering into formal learning experiences, each is an indicator of the desire of the learner to learn.

Alejandro (2001) said there were both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators for learning. Extrinsic motivators would include expected financial benefit and status such as bonuses, promotions, and rewards. Intrinsic motivation was more difficult to measure. For one learner it may have been just the pleasure of knowing and for another it may have been the sense of accomplishment.

As Galbraith (1991) indicated there are multiple reasons for participating in educational activities. He clustered them into six categories: cognitive interest, social stimulation, social contact, external expectations, community service, and professional advancement. People learn for cultural enjoyment, to become more useful in the community, because friends or family urge one to get involved, out of boredom and the desire for the company of like-minded people, because they like a particular subject matter or enjoy a particular hobby, and so forth. (Courtney, 1992, p. 3)

Barriers to Lifelong Learning

Needless to say, the older people are, the less likely they are to have opportunities to find intellectual refreshment. The barriers are numerous (Midwinter, 2004, p. 10) and not only prevent lifelong learners from obtaining specific goals they may set for themselves, but these barriers may exclude participation in any learning activity.

Some of the barriers are stereotypes imposed by society. Older people are burdened with myths about their not learning as quickly or about their not needing education, as education is so obviously work-related. (Midwinter, 2004, p. 10) Other obstacles relate to money. For some, learning is too expensive. For others, there is no

spare time and still for some, online access, which should be a plus, was found to become a negative because of cost. (Tomei, 1999, p. 72)

Education, in many forms and circumstances, is society's best hope for stimulating and bringing about the changes that improve the quality of human life. And yet, adults who attempt to continue their education and training generally find a frustrating absence of any coherent, coordinated learning system to meet their purposes. (Smith, 1983, p. 98) And, lack of information about programs, courses, and procedures can become a barrier to adult learning. (Verduin et al., 1986, p. 20)

Quinnan (1997) identified five basic sources of struggle for adult learners: economic barriers, internal family stressors, student-to-student tensions, student-teacher strains, and organizational obstacles. These are not all; there are others. Adult learners may also encounter opposition to the completion of academic goals from significant others who feel threatened by their successes. (Hensley & Kinser, 2001, p. 90)

There are many challenges that may affect the future of lifelong learners. Verduin et al. (1986) provide the following list:

1. The changing demographics
2. The increased concern for social problems
3. The increase in high school academic requirements
4. The questionable level of federal support for adult education
5. The changing woman's role and family patterns
6. The increased pace of social and economic change
7. The explosion of information and technology
8. The economic influence on lifelong learning
9. The role of private sector/industry based education
10. The influence of credentialism
11. The articulation of degrees and programs among academic institutions
12. The personal fulfillment needs
13. The right to education for all
14. The increase in learning needs.

Overcoming these challenges and more will take a concerted effort by the learner and by society. Opportunities must be made available to encourage lifelong learning.

Types of Learning Opportunities

According to Alejandro (2001) once individuals start to learn, they are more inclined to participate in future endeavors that promote continued learning. (p. 15) What are some of the opportunities available to lifelong learners? Does each seek the same type of occasion for learning? Stavredes, (2005) said the key to understanding learners and their needs is to recognize that not only are a variety of learning opportunities necessary but also the control to select what is appropriate for their situation.

Houle (1961) contended that the continuing education of the goal-oriented learner was in episodes, each of which began with the realization of a need or the identification of an interest. There was no even, steady, continuous flow to the learning of such people, though it is an ever-recurring characteristic of their lives. Nor did they restrict their activities to any one institution or method of learning. The need or interest appeared and they satisfied it by taking a course, or joining a group, or reading a book, or going on a trip. To be sure, the awareness of the need or interest was sometimes aroused because a learning resource becomes available. (Houle, p. 18)

Hiemstra (1976) discussed the study conducted by Roger DeCrow, *New Learning for Older Americans, 1974*. This national study was aimed at uncovering the extent of learning opportunities in a variety of agencies and organizations. Some 3,500 different programs were reported from all parts of the educational field and from a variety of non-school organizations. Among the findings were two key factors for becoming or remaining a lifelong learner: the first was the longer a person was an active learner (i.e.

participated in the learning process) and the second was the longer a person was a receptive client for adult and continuing education (i.e. willing to participate). This study found that the average person over 55 years of age spent nearly 325 hours each year in some form of learning activity. More than 50 % of those activities were informal, self-planned, and self-directed.

Self-directed learning has most often been used to describe a form of study in which people take the primary initiative, with or without the help of others, for planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning activities. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 208) Hiemstra (1976) defined self-planned learning as a learning activity that is self-directed, self-initiated, and frequently carried out alone. Adults, in a self-directed, self-planned manner and in the absence of a professional, learn about 70 to 80 % in this mode (outside formal and recognized place of education). (Verduin et al., p. 4) The consensus is that adult learners rarely plan their self-directed learning activities in advance. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 211)

Casey and Tucker (1994) offered this question “Ask yourself which has had more impact on your adult life – the learning strategies you acquired or the facts you learned. The answer may well be that both have had an equal impact.”

Formal learning opportunities must also be considered. As discussed by Wright (2000) nearly half of all community college students were age 25 or older. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, (1999), 15% of those enrolled in community colleges are age 40 or older. Even these opportunities are changing to meet the ever change needs brought about by the availability of technology. By 2002, approximately 84 % of all 4-year colleges and universities in the United States offered

Web-based distance learning programs. Hansen (2001) quoted Todd S. Nelson, president of Apollo Group Inc., which operates the University of Phoenix, “The online or distance education model is probably more conducive to adult students as opposed to what people think of as traditional-age students. Adults have a completely different set of needs and a completely different learning style.” (Hansen, 2001, p. 994)

Summary

The increasing involvement of adults in furthering their learning is an encouraging sign. (Hesburgh, et al., 1973, p. 5) As the many studies suggest, the gain for the individual also equates to a gain for society. Cross and Florio (1977) offer these 11 basic truths about learning and growth:

1. Adults who take command of their own learning often master more things and master them better, than those who rely on being taught: greater zest, retain more, make better use of it in their living
2. Adults learn in different ways than children. We have a different sense of ourselves, of our time, of what’s worth learning and why.
3. Your education is something you must tailor to yourself
4. No particular way of learning is in itself superior to another.
5. There is no prescribed curriculum that everybody must or should or can learn in order to be “well educated.”
6. The prime time to learn is when your own need, curiosity, taste, or hunger impels you in a particular direction.
7. Growing older may change what, why, and how you learn but it does not diminish your capacity to learn.
8. Immersing yourself in a new situation can be a prime way to learn.
9. In devising your own curriculum, you can tap an extraordinary array of resources at home, at work, and in the community.
10. The idea of self-development is the link between your life and your learning.
11. Being a lifelong learner is simply caring consciously about your own self-development.

Americans used to see education as something an individual engaged in for a certain number of years. Once an individual graduated, it was assumed that he or she did not ever need to return to the classroom. Today, learning is seen as a lifetime pursuit, not

something to be terminated upon completion of the associate's or bachelor's degree, or any degree, for that matter. (Wright, 2000, p. 333)

Thus learning is not a task or a problem – it is a way to be in the world. Learning is self-exploration and it is evident that self-exploration is not a process you will ever complete.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

There is so much to know and so little time in which to learn it that not even the longest lifetime is enough.

(Houle, 1961, p. 30)

How does one tell the story of a life? How is it best to record the wonderful, extensive journey of a lifelong learner? To provide an insight to the life of Hendrika Schuster, the qualitative method of research is the most logical choice. Qualitative inquiry makes an attempt to be faithful to human meaning making in life. Clarke (2005) stated that interpretive acts of meaning making were always situated in unique social contexts, times, and place. To understand a life is to understand the meaning that life has given to the one living it. Humans are instinctive storytellers and narrators. An autobiography can provide a valuable learning process since it is intimately linked to meaning-making. (Clark, 2001, p. 88)

The interview is the most commonly used methodological tool in qualitative research. Enosh and Buchbinder (2005) defined interviewing as a conversation with a purpose, a guided conversation that aims to understand the perspectives, interpretations, and meanings given by interviewees to specific issues. Qualitative researchers ask at least one central question and several sub questions. They pose broad, general questions to allow the participants to explain their ideas. They also focus initially on one central phenomenon of interest. (Creswell, 2003)

Qualitative research is descriptive. Data are gathered in words and photographs and compiled in narrative form. The researcher approaches the world in a detailed

manner, collecting the descriptive data. Using these words and pictures, a story can be told. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 5)

Larson and Brady (2000) described an biography as a window into how each person had grown to become the adult learner she or he was at that time. This description fits well within the confines of qualitative research. A biography provides a way to summarize and integrate various story lines of a life; seeks to understand these lines; and enables the acceptance of these stories. (Larson & Brady, p. 13)

A biography is an ancient genre that dates back at least as far as *St. Augustine's Confessions*. Numerous contemporary authors have praised the virtues of biography as a tool for learning and personal growth, specifically one which can introduce the process of "re-membering," achieve a second and deeper "reading" of one's own personal experiences, help people to create a sense of order, wholeness, and healing, and facilitate self-validation. (Larson & Brady, 2000, p. 13) To use this method of study enables the researcher to fully capture the life story.

Focus of the Study

This study focuses on the formal and informal experiences of Hendrika Schuster as a lifelong learner. Of vital importance to this study was the information revealed about the motivations and obstacles experienced by Mrs. Schuster in her pursuit of learning. This study provided an opportunity for Mrs. Schuster to share her story, to reveal her life history.

Participants

This study is a form of case study; a life history, with the researcher conducting extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative.

(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This study is limited to one participant, Hendrika Schuster, and follows her life from early childhood to the present. Mrs. Schuster was a resident of Chicago, Illinois and has made Abingdon, Virginia her home for the past 20 years.

Phases of the Study

With approval granted by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University, interviews were conducted with Hendrika Schuster at her home located at 490 North Court Street in Abingdon, Virginia. Each interview was audio taped with Mrs. Schuster's permission. These interviews varied in length and occurred over a span of 6 months.

The data collected was coded into various categories. Supporting documentation was obtained from newspaper articles, journals, letters, photographs, and Mrs. Schuster's autobiography. An external reviewer audited the information gathered in the text files, interview notes, coded materials, and supporting documentation. Mrs. Schuster was also given the opportunity to check for accuracy of factual information and did so.

Instrumentation

The primary source for data collection was through interactive interviews. Questions were developed to initiate a conversation on specific topics gathering factual information. The format of the interview sessions were informal and allowed both the researcher and the participant to interact. The opening questions guided the interviews and subsequent questions were asked as the opportunity and topics arose. Overall, the questions focused on the various learning experiences of this lifelong learner. Additional data was obtained from secondary source documents such as newspaper articles, letters, diaries, and photographs.

Data Collection and Recording Modes

Data were collected primarily through a series of interviews with the participant, Hendrika Schuster. These interviews were audio recorded and the researcher took written notes. The recordings were transcribed into a text format using Microsoft Word 2003 and were hand coded. Categories were developed based upon emerging themes.

As indicated by Yoonkyeong (1999), studies of self-directed learning in adulthood should investigate learners' interdependence and independence and autonomy simultaneously. Thus, the opening interview questions were designed to gauge these areas. Additionally, the interview questions were constructed loosely to provide for interaction between the researcher and the participant. Over the years, the interview process has become increasingly recognized as interactive, so that both sides contribute to the outcome. This approach reflects the growing awareness that the interview is a relational and interactional act, one that motivates and shapes the dynamics and the processes of the interview. The interviewer and the interviewee are treated as conversational partners. (Enosh & Buuchbinder, 2005, p. 589)

Data were also collected from various newspaper articles and print materials. Mrs. Schuster has begun her own autobiography and did graciously allow access to this information.

Data Analysis Procedures

In examining a life story, the individual's biography is reconstructed and the various factors affecting her learning opportunities are identified. The collected data were transcribed from the audio recordings into a text format using Microsoft Word 2003

and were hand coded. This process continued throughout the interviews enabling the researcher to identify emerging themes and format questions to elicit additional information as the need arose. An external auditor checked the trustworthiness of the thematic categories using the transcribed notes.

Logistical Issues

The interviews were conducted at times that fit Mrs. Schuster's schedule and at her convenience. Each interview was held at her home in Abingdon, Virginia.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Rich data represent a hallmark of qualitative research (Brekhus, 2005) and are designed to elicit emotional identification and understanding (Humphreys, 2005).

Recognizing this, the researcher took great care to provide data from both primary and secondary sources.

The primary source of information for this study was the interviews conducted with Mrs. Schuster. Additionally, I used such secondary resources as print materials including newspaper articles, letters, and diaries; photographs, and other artifacts related to her life story to verify factual accuracy and credibility.

Additionally, I employed a peer debriefer to provide an external check of the research process. Dr. Judy Netherland served in this role. She checked for clarification of the facts. Additionally, her familiarity with the research process proved to be invaluable to the research process.

Summary

This biographical study was conducted using interactive interviews as the primary means of gathering data. The life story of Hendrika Schuster, a lifelong learner, was presented.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

I've had a very wonderful life.

Hendrika Schuster

The purpose of this biographic study was to explore the motivations and barriers to learning in the life of Hendrika Schuster. The study also examined the learning habits and methods that Hendrika Schuster has developed and what has been the effect of these learning skills on her life. An extensive biographical narrative was presented and subsequently analyzed.

Interviews were conducted over a period of 1 month at the home of Hendrika Schuster in Abingdon, Virginia. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style.

Introduction to Hendrika Schuster

The subject of this study, Hendrika Schuster, was a former resident of Cicero, Illinois. She was born on May 1, 1925, and was 81 years old at the time of the interviews. Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, she grew up in Cicero, Illinois and in 1943 graduated from J. Sterling Morton East High School. Mrs. Schuster received her bachelor's degree in 1970 and was a teacher in a private school for 11 years. In 2000, Mrs. Schuster was recognized as Virginia's Ageless Hero for her work in promoting history through the living portrayals she had created. Mrs. Schuster and her husband, Victor, live in Abingdon, Virginia. In her lifetime, Mrs. Schuster has been a mother, wife, educator, and, most importantly of all, a lifelong learner. Her story is presented in the following narrative in chronological order with emergent themes noted in a subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER 5

A CHILD GROWS UP

I am who I am because of my parents. They have both motivated me and tried to deter me. But throughout it all, they loved me.

Hendrika Schuster

In 1925 a young immigrant couple from Holland arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah to pursue the American Dream. Within a year, they would move with their 8-month-old daughter Hendrika to Cicero, Illinois. It is with her parents that Hendrika Schuster's story begins.

When asked what she would consider is a motivating factor in her life, Mrs. Schuster, or Henny to her friends, didn't hesitate. She responded that it is the beliefs instilled in her by her parents that have made her the woman she is. She also stated that it was a mixture of determination to prove to them that she could accomplish her goals and a strong desire to win their approval that always gave her the courage to try. To understand Henny is to first know her parents.

Henny's Father

Henny is a second-generation American. In 1923, her parents migrated to America from their native home of Holland. Historically the male members of the Van Beekum family were trade laborers including fishermen, crew on boats, and even shoemakers. None had any formal education or had worked in any formal profession or trade. Her father was the first of his family to be employed in industry.

Relatives have done extensive research on our family history. It's a bit disappointing to say that we aren't related to any aristocracies. Sadly, it was only the men that history recorded and in my family their accomplishments weren't great. My family was a simple one. The men were laborers; they worked as fishermen or crewed on boats. Of course Holland is a land of water and there was a lot of trade of that kind. A couple of them were apprenticed to shoemakers. My father was the first to show some promise.

His father, my grandfather, worked as a sweeper in a factory. He went to the owner of the factory and told him that he had a young son that appeared to be very bright. He asked if there would be a chance to apprentice him to a machinist. So at the age of twelve my father would finish his schooling, come home and eat a quick supper. Then at four o'clock each day he would go to the factory and for four hours he would work alongside this machinist. As a result of this he became a very skilled tool and die maker.

This determination and dedication would serve Mr. Van Beekum well in his life and it would be a trait his daughter would inherit. Mr. Van Beekum worked diligently at his newly found trade becoming proficient and confident in his skills and ability. These skills would save his life.

World War I was raging in Europe. Each government had its own means of filling its ranks. In Holland, the draft was imposed. When Mr. Van Beekum was drafted, he refused to fight. He hated the war and wanted no part of it. His determined refusal did not go unnoticed. When questioned by the authorities, he told them he couldn't march; "his feet hurt." Despite numerous tests, nothing could be found to either prove or disprove his claim.

When Mr. Van Beekum's employment record was checked, the government officials discovered that he was a skilled tool and die maker. Skilled labor was also desperately needed. The authorities decided to use Mr. Van Beekum's talents and placed him in Amsterdam working in a munitions plant. It was here that he would meet his future wife.

Henny's Mother

Determination and hard work were characteristics of both sides of her family. Henny's mother's family was very similar to her father's. In each family, public education was an important part of their lives. While Henny's father was working his way through school learning a trade, her mother was busy waiting to graduate.

My mother's family was also poor. Though they lived in the city of Amsterdam, they were much the same as my father's family; working as fishermen or other such trades. None were skilled or formally trained. My mother's family was large. My mother was the youngest of her family and she was also the brightest. In school, she skipped entire grades easily mastering the material presented. She was sixteen and ready to graduate, but because of Holland law requiring students to be seventeen and a half before they could graduate, she had to stay in school. She hated that. So during that year and a half, she studied a variety of special topics waiting for her graduation.

Henny's mother was the more highly educated of her parents. Her intelligence and her impatience were characteristics that Henny would emulate. Her talents were recognized and appreciated by her family. Additionally, she was encouraged by her family to pursue her education at a time when most women did not.

Because she was so intelligent, her parents and siblings collected enough money to pay her tuition to attend a Normal School. So she was the most educated in her family. She got a job teaching and was very enthusiastic about it. She loved the bright students but couldn't stand the slow students. She lacked the patience to deal with them. So after three months, she quit and got a job in a bank.

It was at this time, that fate would step in and Henny's parents would meet. Following a brief romance, her father would ask for her hand in marriage only to be refused. Because her family was so poor, Henny's mother did not want to enter a marriage as a destitute bride. She asked him to wait until she had enough money to buy what she considered to be the necessities for her hope chest.

After the war, all of Europe was struggling to recover from World War I. My father said very suddenly to my mother, "I'm going to America. That's the land of opportunity." She said, "If you're going, I'm going." So they got married and came to this country.

My father's family were Mormon converts. His mother objected very strenuously to this marriage. She had broken up one previous engagement. Unable to deter her oldest son this time, she made him promise to go to the "promised land" which of course was Salt Lake City. This is where I was born in 1925. My only brother would be born five years later in Cicero, Illinois.

Even though the goal had been to move to America and to live in Salt Lake City, a variety of factors would intervene. Lack of work in the area was the dominant force for

the move to Cicero, Illinois. Mr. Van Beekum would be able to find work in the more industrial area outside Chicago.

Mother absolutely refused to become a Mormon. She was the dominating person in the family. Please don't think my father was a milk toast. He was still the head of the family. She could ramble on about what she wanted and what she wanted to do and he would listen. Then very quietly he would say, "No, we're not going to do that." She was a pepper pot. She would explode and get angry. He would say, "no, we're not going to do it." I dearly loved my father. He was very quiet, very steady, and very predictable. My mother was the opposite. She was moody and very critical. She was a driven housewife. She could think of the most wicked punishments. It wasn't physical but rather she would tell me I had to give up something. Usually it was something I truly wanted or cherished. She could be wicked.

Henny's Early Childhood

Life in Cicero was vastly different from what it had been both in Holland and in Salt Lake City for the Van Beekums. For Henny, it was a wonderfully rich experience. In the 1920s, Cicero was a bustling suburb of Chicago. The Van Beekum family moved to the Polish community in the town. Determined to learn English and become an American, Mr. Van Beekum chose to not settle within the Dutch area.

My parents refused to speak Dutch in our home. I remember traveling with my mother to Holland when I was about four years old. We stayed there for four months. I loved the city and remember few details of my time there. What I do remember is that while I was there, I learned Dutch and forgot how to speak English. When I came home, I had to re-learn English.

My parents would use Dutch when relatives would visit. But even then, they would repeat everything in English. For many years I would retain some of the Dutch language and it came in handy. The only other time my parents spoke in Dutch was when they were talking about Christmas presents. I could understand them but my little brother could not. It was such fun to know secrets that he didn't. As I grew up, I slowly lost what little Dutch that I knew. My father didn't want us to learn the language because we were Americans. And that was ok.

There were other childhood memories that were not so amusing. Life wasn't always easy for young Henny and her family. During the Great Depression, Henny's

father would be unemployed and her mother would be forced to seek employment outside the home.

When my father came to this country, he declared he would always be able to work and support his family. Yet during the Depression, he was out of work for almost two years because all of the factories had closed all over the country. I didn't realize it at the time. My father would go down into the basement and putter around. I was about five at the time. I remember that my mother would send me down to the basement to check on my father. Years later, she told me that she worried that he would hang himself; he was such a proud person and being out of work was hard on him. He tried selling Hoover vacuum cleaners during that period. No one was able to buy them and he wasn't a great salesman. My mother hired herself out as a domestic and he stayed home with us. My mother worked for two years. We wanted her home so badly. He would burn the bacon. He would fix us lunches that we didn't like.

Later we moved into the basement and rented out our first floor. It wasn't that great but we had to do it. And we made it. Mom and dad never discussed their financial situation in front of us. I didn't realize anything was truly wrong. All of my friends were in the same situation that I was. No one had any money.

Most of Henny's memories of her early childhood are pleasant ones. She and her younger brother attended the local public schools. Though discouraged from bragging and calling attention to herself for any of her talents, Henny found it difficult to keep quiet. In those early days of schools, she would discover the hidden actress within herself. She became active in school functions including a talent show.

I talked one of my friends into doing a duet with me. She agreed. We decided to dress up in costume and perform this song. My parents came to watch. Later my mother told me that she was so embarrassed with the way my father behaved during the show. When I came on the stage, he turned to everyone around him and told them that I was his daughter. Mother said he was so proud of me. Yet, he never told me any of this.

I think very early in my life, my parents realized they didn't know what to do with me. I was always a bit of show-off. I don't think any of our family had ever been this way. But I loved drama!

Attending High School

High school was an exciting time for Henny. Here she would be able to grow as she gained her education. The nation was recovering from the Depression and Cicero

was growing. Her experiences in high school would help to shape the person she would become.

I grew up in Cicero, Illinois. It was the home of Al Capone. It was also the home of Western Electric Company, a telephone manufacturing company. The taxes were so high on that one business that our high school was one of the best in the country. The taxes paid for everything. Fifteen thousand students attended my high school. We went in shifts. The first shift began each morning at 6:45 a.m. and the second shift ended at 6:45 each night. Sometimes you had a great schedule and sometimes you didn't. It was an excellent education.

My high school was a four-story building that took up a whole block. The basement or ground level had an Olympic-sized swimming pool. We had a printing shop and an automotive shop. We had a curriculum that was designed for those who were not academically inclined. They could still learn a trade. We had an auditorium that was as elegant and huge as the silent movie theatre in Chicago. The music program was absolutely amazing. The library was enormous. We had classrooms and labs. Our gymnasium was outstanding. We had everything. Of course, I didn't appreciate it at the time. I thought everyone had this kind of experience. Only later did I realize this was not true.

Henny took advantage of the many opportunities her high school provided. She became active in extracurricular activities. Her parents did not dissuade her as long as her grades were good. Her mother, more than her father, would express concern.

I was never very competitive. I didn't want to compete in areas where I knew I would do poorly. For example, I was very weak in sports. I lacked the coordination to do well. I was not a good dancer. But I was encouraged from the time I was in the seventh grade to write. I did star in an opera in school and when I went to high school, I joined the drama club. I joined the French club. I joined the creative writing club; all of the extracurricular things.

My mother would say to me if any of my grades wavered or fell a little bit, "well, I guess you are going to have to give up some of these activities." But this is what I lived for. She knew this. She would try to do the same sort of punishment with my brother and he would say, "I don't care." But I did care; that was my vulnerability.

A Talent for Writing

Throughout her life Henny's extraordinary talents for writing and drama would be recognized though not always by her own family. While still in high school, she entered a writing contest and won first place in the nation.

My high school newspaper advisor encouraged me to participate in a national contest. It was for high school students and you were to write a theme on why the newspaper was important. I submitted a paper and won first prize.

When my mother and father found out, this may have been when they decided that all of the things I was interested in, the music, the art, the writing, were important. In my senior year, I made the honor society. Mom began to soft pedal a bit. She never gave me any extra chores to do around the house. Of course, she was also very persnickety about her house.

While Henny was still trying to find herself, her mother had very specific ideas regarding her daughter's education. She was determined that her only daughter would be able to support herself. She wanted Henny to become a secretary, never mind what Henny wanted.

My mother bought me a typewriter and insisted that I enroll in business programs in high school. I hated short hand; absolutely hated it. I also had to take computation; learning how to use the adding machine. I lacked the eye hand coordination to do this. I threatened to quit school if she didn't let me take the courses I wanted to take. She said "Fine, wash your face and go find a job. Start at the dime stores because that is the only place you will be able to find a job." She told me that I wouldn't be quitting school to just come home and sit. I would have to work.

In our area were several local businesses. So I decided to check with the dime stores. I went to three looking for work but they would not hire someone my age. So I decided to check at the grocery stores, but was unable to find work. Our neighbor had many of Polish descent and stores needed someone who could speak both languages. I could not. I came home defeated.

My mother told me to go back to learning; to go back to that course you hate and you will master it. She was right. I've used typing throughout my life. I've even used shorthand. A good deal that I learned in that coursework has been useful to me. Those skills were not wasted.

Luckily for Henny, a school counselor recognized her potential. She told Henny that her grades were great and that she thought she would be able to take a mix of courses; courses that would prepare her for college entrance. Her counselor told her, "you need to have an opportunity to go on." Her mother agreed only as long as Henny received her training to become a good secretary.

At graduation, the school superintendent approached her about pursuing a writing career. Her talent for writing had not gone unnoticed. She was both honored and surprised by what he had to say to her.

When I graduated from high school, the school superintendent asked me to consider a career in journalism. He gave me an application to fill out and told me to ask my father. The superintendent told me that he would give me the highest recommendation possible. My father refused. Part of the application asked about his salary and money in the bank. He didn't want to reveal his financial information. You've got to remember that he was of the generation who didn't believe in telling others what you had. This kind of information was kept private. As such, he would not complete the application and I wasn't able to pursue this as a career.

Higher Education

Though her father's lack of cooperation prevented her pursuit of a journalism degree, he did allow Henny to continue her studies at the junior college.

At some point, both mom and dad became proud of the things I was doing. When I finished high school, they agreed to let me go on to junior college which was held in the same building. There was no tuition or fees for the textbooks. You were only dunned if the books had been scribbled in or abused. The only fees were for lab courses.

For Henny, continuing her education was a dream and one she feared would not be achieved. The events of her own mother's past would overshadow any desires Henny may have. As she grew older and asked to pursue higher education, her father refused. He told her he only had money to educate one person and that would be her younger brother. He would say to her "look at your mother and what a waste her education was."

All of his life, my father grumbled about my mother's decision to quit teaching and turn her back on education. He questioned her often about quitting her job as a teacher. He couldn't understand why she did that to her family.

The interesting thing about all of this is that my brother was a very smart young man, yet he wasn't a scholar. He hated to study. As such he was only a C student. He attended the junior college that I did. Yet he dropped out after only six weeks. I was very bitter about this.

To see another squander what she longed for was disheartening. The motivation to attend college was there, but Henny herself confesses that it was not a strong motivation at that time.

If I had been greatly inclined to pursue a college degree, I would have. But you've got to remember I was raised in the old world tradition. It was expected that I would graduate from school and find a job. The thought of my leaving the home was not considered. I was to work and bring home my wages to pay room and board. I didn't consider the option of moving into a dorm somewhere and finding my own way into the world.

Yet, Henny would find her own way into the world. Her opportunity would occur at the junior college she attended. It would come in the form of a handsome young man who would literally sweep her off her feet and take her far away from the stable home she had known all of her life. In college is where she would meet her future husband, Victor Schuster.

CHAPTER 6

A YOUNG BRIDE

I had a very stable home life but it was routine. I wanted more. I suppose marrying Vic was an escape from my life.

Hendrika Schuster

When Henny entered junior college, her life was much the same as it had been in high school. The junior college was located in the same building and her routines didn't change much. She continued her coursework taking both business classes and every creative writing course possible. She was still following her mother's desire to obtain a position as a secretary but not willing to give up her idea to pursue a career in writing. It was in college that her life changed and both possible careers were pushed aside.

I never really got romantically attached to a boy my own age. They seemed immature and not very deep. Then I met Victor Schuster. Vic was six years older than me. He was smart and had a wonderful way of looking at things realistically. He was someone I could talk to and who would listen to me.

Victor Schuster

Victor Schuster was also a second-generation American. His parents were from Germany and were much older when they started a family. As such, Vic was an only child. Like Henny, he had grown up in Cicero. But whereas Henny was still living at home with her parents, Vic had recently returned to his parents' home. At the time they met, Vic was, in fact, a married man who was working through the process of divorcing his wife.

Vic had returned to Cicero to complete his basic college courses before pursuing a masters degree from Northwestern University. Vic and Henny spent a lot of time together in classes and soon out of class as well. For Henny, who had always avoided any impropriety and had never dated, this was a new experience.

In high school school, I was known as the “refrigerator.” I didn’t date. The boys all thought I was a stuck-up. I just didn’t have time for them. I had my studies. In junior college, I had classes with Vic. All of the girls liked him. He was so handsome.

Vic asked me to go to the museum in Chicago. I talked to my mother about it. Vic and I were just friends at this point. I wanted to go with him, but I didn’t want to harm my reputation. I told my mother that he was my friend, and she said to go.

While Henny may have considered their relationship to be simply friends, Vic was interested in more. Within a short time, Henny and Vic had completed their studies at the junior college. He asked her to marry him and Henny said yes.

I had a wonderful upbringing because it was stable. I thought my folks were so boring. I knew in my teens that I didn’t want to marry someone just to be content; to have the same routine day in and day out. I couldn’t stand it. I choose correctly.

A Troubled Engagement

While Henny may have been happy with her choice, her parents were not. Neither were Vic’s parents. Each felt the young couple was rushing into the marriage. Vic’s divorce was barely final and each set of parents felt that Henny was so naïve; too young for marriage. Persuading her parents to allow her to marry would be one of the most difficult things Henny had ever done.

My father didn’t want me to marry Vic. Vic was older and was divorced. Vic’s mother didn’t want him to marry me. Yet I was determined to marry Vic.

When we decided to marry, my father told me he would not attend the wedding. He said he would not leave the house to come see me get married. It was one of the worst times of my life. My father refused to speak to me. I was so upset. I lost weight. It was the thinnest I had ever been. We would sit at the table for meals, and he would look right past me. This was my father; the father I cherished.

Henny’s mother also disapproved of the marriage. She did not want her daughter to marry a man who had been married before. Yet, Vic would win her over.

My mother loved Vic. He knew how to handle her. He would tell me that she was the baby of her family and was used to people doing whatever she wanted. She helped us. Because my father would not leave the house to attend the wedding, we had the wedding in the house. He agreed to attend. It took us six months to reach this point.

Throughout those 6 months, Henny was determined to control her mother's criticism and to find a way to make her father proud. These two themes occur again and again throughout Henny's life.

It was many years later that I learned why my father was so opposed to my marriage. My mother said that he had a plan for me. My father thought I wrote well enough that I would someday be famous. He wanted me to write at least one book and the cover would say by Hendrika Van Beekum, not Hendrika Schuster. He never said anything like this to me. I wish he had.

A Lasting Partnership Begins

In 1945, at the age of 20, Hendrika Van Beekum became Mrs. Victor Schuster. This marriage would survive for over 60 years and would be a partnership on which both would rely. Throughout their marriage there would be problems and challenges; joys and opportunities. For Henny, Vic became her world. He would support her even when her own family did not. For Vic, Henny was everything he had every wanted and he was determined to make her happy.

My brother and my father never really accepted Vic. They were hourly workers. He was salaried. They would talk constantly in front of him about how their hard work supported the job he had. They said he didn't have to break a sweat and had no real responsibilities. I would get so upset going home to visit and listening to them. I was absolutely furious with my family whenever we would return from a visit with them. Vic would tell me to brush it off; that's what he did. He would tell me that he knew that what he did was being appreciated.

Vic enlisted in the Navy. This would provide him with both a living and the funds necessary to support a family and later his continued education. Henny refused to live with either set of parents and insisted that Vic locate housing for them before the marriage. Vic traveled to Washington, D.C. where he would be stationed and located a small apartment.

Vic enlisted in the Navy. His first assignment sent him to Washington, D.C. He was most fortunate when he signed up that he never had to serve overseas. Instead he was asked to join a special group that would be known as the Japanese Language School. He

would train with other men in learning the Japanese language. Their job was to break the various codes.

A New Learning Experience

Life as a new bride was not easy. Henny had never done much of the housework in her mother's home nor much of the cooking. All of these were things she had to quickly learn and learn in a strange new environment.

We lived in this tiny apartment in Washington, D.C. There wasn't even a real kitchen, not that I would know how to use it anyway. I would carry water from the bathroom down the hall that all of the apartments shared. This was for washing dishes and preparing food. It wasn't easy. Vic was so patient with me.

For Henny, marriage meant a new learning experience. She tackled this as she had her formal education. She sought the help of someone who had expertise.

I was determined to learn how to do the basics. An elderly lady who lived in the same building took pity on me. She began to teach me how to do simple things. She was so kind. I was so proud of the first time I prepared potatoes and they were actually edible.

I felt so clumsy and so awkward. I thought I would never get the hand of this. Fortunately Vic was in the Navy, so he would get a good meal at lunch time on the Navy base. I was so grateful that I didn't have to fix a big meal for him. I didn't have an oven, so I couldn't have fixed a roast if I wanted to. And of course, there was meat rationing so I didn't have access to a roast either. It was really a horrible time.

Once again in her life, Henny would be discouraged by her lack of education.

While she had studied and began her preparation for a career, she realized she had not prepared to care for herself or for a future husband and home.

In junior college, lots of my friends were taking classes in home ec and they would say, come see what we are doing. They would try to get me to join them. Of course, I didn't need any of that. I was going to be a career woman. And then it turned out that I was the first one to get married.

Learning how to cook and clean was only the first hurdle. Because he was in a special section of the Navy, Vic was expected to participate in various social functions.

Henny as his wife was expected to accompany him.

Vic had to attend these dinners and dances with the other servicemen. I didn't want to go. I felt so inept. I felt like I didn't have manners. I couldn't do small talk. I felt like I

didn't fit in. It was difficult for me. Yet, I did it. I knew it would help him and that we were in this together. We were partners.

After the war ended, Vic and Henny moved back to Cicero. There was a tremendous housing shortage across the country. They were unable to locate a place to live and had to leave their Washington, D. C. apartment. The language school was closed and Vic would be re-assigned to another post. For Henny this was an opportunity to continue her education in cooking.

After the war, we couldn't get a place of our own because housing was so tight. So we moved in with our folks for about a year and a half. I watched what my mother did. She wouldn't let me help her in the kitchen but I could observe. I tried to learn everything I could. So by the time we got into our own apartment I knew what to do.

Throughout the first 9 years of their marriage, moving would become a pattern in their lives. Vic's position in the Navy was continually changing and Henny as his wife found herself living in new locations without friends and family.

When the war in Japan was over, the school was closed. Vic was fortunate to get a commission and was able to enter the officer's training school. During this time, we moved back to Cicero. This time we had an apartment across the street from my parents.

When I was a teenager, I wanted my life to change. As a married woman, I could be with Vic all of the time. I remember a time when we came back to the Chicago area. We rented an apartment across the street from my parents. Vic had to go away for naval training. I had to stay home with our little girl. I was so blue. I really missed him. I cried for him. One night I had gone over to my parents so they could see Marcia.

My mother realized that I was depressed because Vic was gone. She warned me that I would be like an albatross around his neck if I couldn't exist without him in the home all of the time. She said get interests, get hobbies, and grow up. And she made me mad but she also made me realize that she was telling me the truth. I realized that Vic would be traveling and that I would need to find ways to fill my time. My mother said the right thing at the right time. I took her advice and did what she said.

In each new city or town, Henny would take the opportunity to explore and learn all she could about her new home. Just as when she was a young girl, Henny would visit the museums, the library, etc. She was curious and each city or town would offer her inquisitive mind something new to grasp and learn.

Throughout the first few years of their marriage, Vic continued to pursue his education. Henny would play a key role in this pursuit.

Vic worked nights during college. He worked at the power company operating the switchboard. He actually trained himself to wake up to the buzz of the switchboard so he could get some sleep. He held this job for four years. So when he came home, it was an upside down schedule for us. He needed to sleep, but it was daylight. But we were a team. I would type his term papers for him. I was as eager as he was to get his education behind him. It was what would make a difference in our life. Education makes a difference in everyone's life. By the time he graduated from the University, he had a job waiting for him. That was very reassuring.

Later, Vic was transferred to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center back in Illinois. The center had hired lots of civilians to work there during the war and now that it was over, they had to get back to regular size. So his job was to ease people out of their jobs. He was good at it and decided that he wanted to work in personnel. Little did we realize at the time that this would become his job in life.

With each of Vic's new positions and each move Henny found the strength inside herself to set-up a home for her husband and growing family. She overcame her shyness and began making friends. Throughout those early years and her life, she would write. She filled her journals with descriptions of their daily lives and wrote poetry capturing her feelings.

I re-read those journals from our early days together and I'm amazed at the determination we both had. It wasn't an easy time. We were moving a lot and money was never in great supply. Yet somehow we managed. As I read many of those passages I'm filled with wonder at the hope and happiness I find in them. I never doubted, I never second guessed. I knew that Vic and I were made for each other. We are a team.

CHAPTER 7

A MOTHER

Self-preservation is strong within me.

Hendrika Schuster

Henny's marriage to Vic would provide her with the escape she sought from her old world upbringing. As a young bride she would be travel to new places and have new learning experiences, yet the greatest experience was learning how to be a good wife and soon a mother.

Vic was in the service. Luckily he was never called to serve outside the U.S. but he still traveled a great deal. We lived in a variety of places. I was glad when we finally decided to settle down.

Almost 2 years after their marriage, Henny and Vic had a baby girl whom they named Marcia. In 1953, their second daughter Donna was born and their son Kent joined the family in 1958. For Henny, motherhood was difficult. Often she would be alone with the children while Vic was traveling either for the Navy or later his job.

The hardest thing I have ever done is to raise three children. When they were young, Vic spent a lot of time traveling. So I was home alone with three small children. They were very sickly. It was during that time that I felt like I was in a desert.

Settling Down in Richmond

After Vic completed his tour of duty, he took a job in Richmond, Virginia as a personnel manager for Reynolds Metals. Henny took the move in stride. She had lived in Chicago most of her life and had traveled with Vic as part of his naval responsibilities. Prior to moving to Richmond, she and Vic had lived again in Washington, D. C.

I use to say to myself growing up. There's got to a better place on God's green Earth. Richmond was a wonderful experience for us. We lived in Washington, D. C. twice during the two wars. After the Korean War, Vic had three job offers: Chicago, Bethlehem and Richmond. We chose Richmond because we wanted our children to live in a beautiful place. Chicago and Bethlehem were industrial cities. They were dirty and not truly a pretty place to live and raise children

As a mother, Henny felt inadequate. She was not prepared and felt so out of control. At this time, Vic was still traveling a great deal for his job.

I couldn't pursue the things I liked to do. I wasn't crazy about motherhood at that time. The children don't remember me that way. Fortunately, they were too young. I would take them on long walks in the woods near our home. We would look for new trails and animal tracks. I was not a naturalist. It was my way to keep from exploding.

An Unlikely Alliance

Learning to be a mother was an adventure for Henny. She needed someone to talk to; someone to listen. She didn't feel as if she could talk to her mother. In Richmond she made friends and sought their advice.

You need to have a support group of friends who can see your point of view. They may not have the same point of view and they may not agree with you completely but they allow you to have your own point of view. I found family relationships were awful. I had to muzzle myself all of the time. You only feel free and wonderfully accepted when you have other people who can accept you in spite of what you are.

In time, Henny would gain the confidence she needed. She developed a wonderful relationship with Vic's father. He would provide her with a sounding board and a friendship that would last a lifetime.

Vic's father was one of the dearest people in my life. He was a country boy who had not gone beyond the fourth grade. He would come to visit and would always tell me that he wasn't coming unless I had something for him to do. So we would do these projects together. Usually these were simple chores around the house; something that needed mending or fixing. He wanted to be useful. He would talk away as we worked. We established this wonderful relationship. When he developed Alzheimer's, I was more understanding of his limitations than either Vic or his mother because of our relationship.

He would encourage me. He told me not to worry; that I was doing a good job as a mother. I really needed to hear that. He was always so kind to me. He inspired me to try new things, to take chances. He listened to me without judging. He knew I was unsure and knew that I just needed someone to listen. He was a great listener; and he was a great storyteller.

The kids looked forward to his visits as much as I did. We all enjoyed his stories. I will always treasure the relationship we had. I miss him. He was a good man.

A Bit of a Rebel

Remembering her own childhood and Vic's childhood experiences provided Henny with the resolution to make her children's childhood special. She didn't want her children to grow up as sheltered as Vic had.

Vic was an only child. His parents were much older and they worried about him. They didn't want him to get hurt. They would tell him not to do this and not to do that. As a child, he didn't have a lot of fun. I wanted my children to have fun. I would tell them to go out and climb a tree. Take risks and have adventures.

I don't think I'm a rash and impetuous spirit but I had adventure in my blood. I was constantly trying to keep my parents from knowing some of the things that I did. These weren't illegal and these weren't bad; it was just things that I knew they would not approve of. In high school, I was one of the class officers. For Halloween, we decided to decorate the school with pumpkins and corn stalks. So, several of us went to a local field and gathered these for decorating. My shoes were covered with mud. I knew that if my mother saw them she would be furious. So I snuck into the basement through the back door and crept into the house in my socked feet. When she busy fixing supper, I went back to the basement and cleaned my shoes. I knew if she caught me, she would punish me. She always said I did the most ridiculous things.

Henny also wanted her children to explore all possibilities. As a child, Henny had been permitted to participate in the various school activities such as drama and chorus and some of the academic clubs. Most of these activities occurred within or immediately at the end of the school day. She was expected home before dark and to be working on her homework before dinner.

My parents didn't think much of sports. The only sports my father ever listened to were boxing matches. My brother and I were never encouraged to get involved with sports. In high school, our basketball team made it to the playoffs. I begged my mother to let me go. She said alright. The game was a night game. After the game, the boy who was driving the rest of us talked us into going for a treat. So it was eleven o'clock when I got home. My mother met me at the door. She said, you have been to your first and last sporting event. She meant it. There was no arguing with her. She was the law.

Henny also realized that she wasn't alone in the job of raising her children. Vic was a very important part of his children's lives. Though his job prevented him from

spending a great deal of time with them, he still found a way to make each moment special.

Vic was a very good father. When he would come home, he would do something simple yet special with each one. He would take time out to be with them. For example, he might take one to the drugstore with him. He would personalize the event and made it their time together.

As the children grew older, Vic would often take them with him on small overnight business trips. This was an opportunity for them to bond with their father and to have adventures. For Henny this provided some time to herself; time to write and time to think. Henny wanted to finish her education. It was her desire to get her college degree. She had waited patiently for Vic to finish his education. Now the children were older and going to school, she felt it was her turn.

CHAPTER 8

BACK TO SCHOOL

I wanted to live my life differently. I wanted things to happen and I didn't mind working hard to do it. Hendrika Schuster

When her youngest child was 7 and entering school, Henny broached the subject of returning to school. She had always wanted to finish her studies but now she was very nervous about going back. To start over at her age was terrifying. Vic convinced her to return to school to finish her education. For the past several years, Vic had been aware of her desire and at times had teased her about it.

Vic was taking a correspondence course to receive an increase in pay. He was traveling so much and he said to me, I want you to finish this for me. It shouldn't be hard. It's all multi-choice. You're always saying you want to go back to college. Let's see if you're worth the investment. Kent was 8 months old at that time. So I would get the kids in bed and start a pot of coffee. The title of the course *The Balance of Power Between the European Nations at the Start of World War I*. He jokingly told me that if I got anything lower than a 3.7 then college was out. The last question was a composition. I didn't know what to write. So Vic gave told me a few ideas and I wrote the essay. When he came home, he read it and said this is terrible. This won't get me anywhere in the Navy. So I told him to do it himself.

Luckily the college agreed to accept many of the courses from her junior college. With all of those credits, she was able to return to school as a junior. In 1965, at the age of 40, Henny re-entered the classroom as a student once again.

If I had gone with my preference, I would have studied journalism. But I needed my summers free to be with the children. So I studied education instead. I graduated with honors from the University of Richmond.

Student Teaching

As part of her education courses, Henny had the opportunity to visit other schools and observe classroom teachers. For her student teaching experience, she was sent to one of the inner city schools in Richmond. There she observed a young woman whose teaching style would influence her own.

While still in college we were sent to various schools to observe teachers. I will never forget this one teacher at one of the schools that was located on the border of the black and white communities. She was a young teacher who spoke so softly. She would teach quietly, talking to each child, touching them on the shoulder or head as she walked around the room. They were mesmerized. They loved her and would do anything for her. She had such a delightful manner about her. I was enthralled as well.

While Henny was impressed with her mentor teacher, she was not impressed with Henny. She recognized that Henny was not stern enough to handle the inter city students. Additionally, her age and lack of experiences beyond her own social class would hold her back.

I was very lucky to observe her as part of my student teaching. I learned a lot from her. She was anxious about me being in her classroom. She told me that I was the age of her mother and that it would be difficult for her to evaluate me. I told her that it would be better for me if she would tell me what I lacked now than for me to find out when I was in the classroom alone. At the end of my time with her, she commended me for some of my teaching qualities and she cautioned me. She said I had been in the middle class all of my life. My own children obeyed me, but I wasn't tough enough for her students. I didn't have the experience to be as firm as they would need me to be.

She did not recommend me for a position in that school. She spoke to the principal who in turn talked to me. He told me that they would not be hiring me. They said I was better suited to work in a school similar to one that my own children attended. It was the best thing they could have done for me. They were right, and I realized it at the time. They were looking out for me.

Family Crisis

Vic had been very supportive of her desire to finish her education but he now revealed that he did not want a working wife. He told Henny that he was happy that she had completed her studies but there was no need for her to work. "Vic was glad that I didn't get that first teaching job." But this would soon change.

Kent was having problems in school. He couldn't read. We couldn't figure out why. He was a bright child, very intelligent. I would have him read to me and he couldn't. He told me the words were all mixed up. He would try to guess and would guess wrong. We didn't know it at the time but he had dyslexia.

Kent's dyslexia was a family crisis. It was also a major point of contention for Henny and her husband. Vic did not understand how this bright boy could not function.

He was angry and accused the boy of being lazy. Henny also did not understand but as was her nature, she sought help.

I was finishing my degree and decided to talk to two of my instructors. I asked them to tell me what to do about Kent. I said this is my boy. What would you do? They both told me to take him to a specialist at the University of Richmond and see if he could determine what was wrong.

I called and made an appointment to see the specialist. In the car driving to the meeting, my seven year old son looked at me and said he was sorry. He was sorry that he didn't know what was wrong with him and sorry that his daddy didn't love him. He knew that I did and so too did his sister Marcia. He said he would be a good boy and try to do better. I couldn't see to drive. I had tears in my eyes. I tried to explain to him that he had done nothing wrong. It was one of the saddest moments of my life.

Kent was diagnosed with dyslexia. Henny didn't know much about the disorder and even less about how to help her son. She knew that something had to be done so she again sought the advice of the specialists.

The specialist recommended that we send Kent to a special school in Pennsylvania. The headmistress was a tough British woman. She charged an enormous tuition for children to attend her school. She was training young college students to work with dyslexic children, and the tuition we would pay would provide Kent with one on one instruction.

Both Vic and Henny were worried about their son. The thought of sending him away was almost too much to bear. Henny recognized the importance of the education and training that Kent would receive at the special school. She worked hard to persuade Vic to allow Kent to go and her perseverance paid off.

Vic agreed to pay the tuition and we sent Kent to live there for two years. When he came out of it and was still dyslexic, Vic didn't understand. He thought Kent would be cured. Kent had learned how to cope with the disorder. He was able to function better than he had before.

During this time period, little was know about dyslexia. It is easy to understand Vic's confusion and Henny made allowances for his behavior. To this day, she is a bit resentful of his lack of patience and willingness to learn about the disorder. She would

always carry a special place in her heart for her youngest child because he had revealed his feelings of abandonment to her.

A Job of Her Own

As a result of Kent's attendance at the school in Pennsylvania, the family would need extra money. Henny would need to find a job and would finally have the chance to work outside the home. For the first time, her dream of being a career woman would finally be realized.

When Vic found out about the cost of tuition, he said "I guess you will have to go to work." I was happy. I was ready to go to work. I wanted to get out of the house and do something. This was an interesting time in Richmond. It was during the time of integration and I worried about my own kids in school. There was a large church near our home that opened a private school. I was able to get a job there.

CHAPTER 9

A CLASSROOM OF HER OWN

I'm passionate about education. With education anyone can enrich their lives one way or another. Hendrika Schuster

Henny had always wanted to be a journalist; to be a writer. Teaching was her second choice and it was a logical choice. She would have the same schedule as her children. She would be bringing in much need extra money. It seemed like a perfect situation. Yet, Vic was not pleased with what was happening with his wife. Henny had become a very busy and very independent woman.

Vic was a little unhappy with me. The job kept me very busy. I was gone throughout the day and when I did come home, I would grade papers at night. Usually, I tried to do my grading while the children did their homework. I wanted my evenings free to spend with my family and Vic.

As a teacher, Henny would once again reveal her rebellious and independent nature. She wanted more for her students and often went beyond the traditional curriculum to include enrichment activities and events designed to challenge her students to think; to learn.

I was fortunate to get a job in a school close to our home. It was a religious school but instead of giving them the canned curriculum, I added to it. I was always working on lesson plans. I made up spelling tests based on our readings. My students referred to them as Mrs. Schuster's weekly guessing game. I gave them Bible quizzes. I was always looking for ways to make the curriculum exciting. I took my students to the library. We did plays.

I taught seventh grade. It was fun. I taught all of the subjects. Science was my weakest area. I found myself doing a lot of the activities that my practice teacher had done with her students. The principal of the school was a math teacher. He helped me teach math. I wanted to add music and creative writing and the school let me.

Henny wanted her students to experience the rich educational background that she had had in the city schools of Chicago. For Richmond of the 1970s this was progressive.

She was commended by her principal for going the extra mile and for finding ways to enliven the curriculum.

It was wonderful. I had the best of all worlds. We would have fun and yet, we were learning. The students wanted to call me something besides Mrs. Schuster. I was the age of their grandmother and they wanted to become more familiar with me but I wouldn't allow that.

I took my students on field trips. We visited the nearby museums. They loved that. Some of them had never been there even though they lived in the city. I even took them to the Capitol and we toured the building. Again, I was surprised at how few of them had been there. I wanted them to know and appreciate the history of their area and the arts that were so abundant.

An Encounter with Racial Tension

Richmond in the early 1970s was still recovering from the late 1950s and 1960s segregation. Nearby Prince Edward County had closed its schools during the 1950s to prevent integration. Many black families had moved to Richmond to provide their children with the opportunity to continue their education. The sudden influx had a negative impact on the city. Racial tension was high.

The private school in which Henny taught bordered a city playground. This playground was used by both students in Henny's school and in the nearby city public school. One day, Henny encountered what would be her first incident with racism.

I would often take my students to the park next to our school for recess. I had them play in organized games and we did lots of exercises. I always joined in with them. One day, a group of students from the nearby school tried to pick a fight with my students. Two of the black girls who were quite large took a jump rope away from my girls. Before I realized it several black students had gathered around my students and a fight was ready to erupt.

I called my students to me but didn't see a teacher with the other children. I tried to take my students back to school but the other students were determined that we were not leaving without a fight. They blocked our path and called my students names. Again, I looked for the other teacher who should have been with these children but no one was around. They refused to listen to me. They said some very hateful things. They called us names and told us that the park was theirs. I didn't know what I was going to do. Luckily a police officer happened by and saw what was happening. He stepped between the children and sent others on their way. They obeyed him. As they were leaving, one of my students called out a racial slur; he said "nigger." I was shocked and appalled.

Back in the school, Henny realized that the racial tensions she had sensed around the area were also in her classroom. Her students who came from affluent homes and had the best of education possible were unaware of the hurt and harm their words could bring; they did not realize they had a racist attitude. As a Mormon who loved all of God's children, Henny felt bound to take this opportunity to teach her students about the wrongs of racism.

I told my students that I didn't want to hear that word "Nigger." Sadly, they told me they used it all of the time. They didn't see anything wrong with it. I explained to them that it was not a nice word and that they would not use it in our classroom. One young man said I must have never had any dealings with black people. To this I replied that I had and that I had known black people all of my life. I told the students that this word was offensive. I then told the students that I wanted them to write an essay about a person who was not a Caucasian. This had to be someone that they knew either now or in the past. This person could be black, this person could be from Asia or from the Middle East. In the essay you must tell me what you admired about the person. You must write at least two paragraphs. I took the essays home and Vic and I laughed as we read some of them. One very studious boy wrote, "Why Mrs. Schuster does not want us to use the word nigger."

The next day, two of my students asked what we were going to do about the incident in the park. I told them that we were not going to do anything. It was over. They said that wasn't fair. They didn't start this fight. I explained to them that while we didn't start this disagreement, that we were in it none the less. The best solution would be to walk away. This wasn't just an argument over a jump rope. The children we encountered did not respect authority.

A Cultural Learning Experience

Henny said this wasn't the last time she would encounter racial tension in her school and community. "I think I thought I could slowly erase this way of thinking in my students." She would not allow the use of any racial slurs and fought hard to ensure her students understood why this was not allowed. Her principal, the second one she worked under at the school, noticed her efforts and commended her for trying. She encouraged others in the school to follow Henny's example. In the fall, her principal came to her with a special request. It would be a learning adventure that Henny could not refuse.

The principal asked me if I would be interested in tutoring two foreign children. These children were from Thailand. Their parents traveled a great deal and wanted their children to learn English. I said I didn't know anything about how to tutor students and helping them to learn English. She said "none of us do, just wing it." So I decided to try it. I would get paid for working with these children.

These two teenagers, a boy and a girl, would come to our home each day after school. They would bring their Thai dictionaries and spend the afternoon with us trying to learn English. They were so quiet and proper. I started by talking to them about their country. Our first lesson quickly fell apart. The young man interrupted me to tell me that I obviously had a misconception about his country. The discussion did not go well. He was polite but adamant that I was wrong. I thought "what have I gotten myself into?" The next time they came over, I was better prepared. I had gotten a book from the library. But again he disagreed with the information I had.

Finally I realized that this was not working. So I switched tactics. I opened the Richmond newspaper and asked them to look through it and ask me questions. The first thing he asked was "what is a massage parlor?" I tried explained that it was a place where people got a massage. He said, "I don't understand. I asked this question in class and everyone laughed." I then explained that many of the massage parlors today were no longer giving massages but were places where men could visit with prostitutes. He didn't know that term and asked me to spell it so he could look it up in his dictionary. When he found it, he said "Ah, ladies of the night."

It was a fascinating learning experience for both the children and Henny. They kept in touch throughout the years. The children would often visit Henny and her family spending time with them. As they grew into adulthood, this relationship developed into a lifelong friendship.

They were only in Richmond for about three weeks. It was a delightful experience. We kept in touch with the children throughout the years and even got to meet their younger siblings. Their parents would send them to America to prepare for college. They were Catholic and the Richmond schools would take them in. They would come to me to spend time learning more about America. Each went to college in America and was very successful. We got to know them well.

The Lasting Effects of a Teacher

As with most classroom teachers, Henny developed strong relationships with her students. She remembers these times with fondest and laughter. As a teacher she quickly realized that she was also learning; learning how to bring the subject to her students in a

manner that would capture their attention. She was also learning about human interactions.

One of the children that I taught was the daughter of our closest friends in Richmond. She was a devil of a tormentor. I made up my mind that I wasn't going to let her get away with anything. Needless to say she and I had several run-ins. She would torment one of the boys who was much larger than the others but was really a teddy bear at heart. She simply wanted his attention. He was too kind to fight back. So one day, I noticed during recess that she was picking on him. So after lunch, I had this English lesson. I was talking about active and passive verbs. Anyway I brought both of them to the front of the class and used the sentences to make a point that while he had been passive and she was active there may come a time when that would be reversed. She got the message.

Now this young lady is a teacher herself. She works with emotionally disturbed children and has made amazing progress with them. She told her mother that she thinks back to when she was in the seventh grade. She said she remembers all of the trouble she gave Mrs. Schuster and she's ashamed of her behavior then. This was the first time her mother had heard any of this. Of course, she told me what her daughter had said. She also wondered why I had never mentioned it. As a teacher, I was determined to handle the situation myself. I always believed that what happened in the classroom was my responsibility. So, I never told her mother. I knew I could handle it; it was my job as her teacher.

Though her career as a teacher may have been short, lasting only a few years, for Henny it was an experience of a lifetime. She had the opportunity to use her skills, her training and her knowledge to help others. For her teaching was a labor of love and it was a chance to prove to herself and to those around her that she could be more than a mother and housewife. At the time, Henny never realized the true impact of what she was doing. That would come later.

It's been over twenty years since I taught school in Richmond. Yet, I occasionally see some of my former students. Of course, I don't recognize them. They recognize me. They will come up to me and say do you remember me. They'll introduce themselves and talk about things we did in class. It's wonderful. You never truly realize the effect you have had on someone's life until many years later. That's the wonderful thing about teaching.

CHAPTER 10

THE PERFORMANCES

I could not do the same thing year after year and retain my sanity.

Hendrika Schuster

Henny confesses that if she had stayed in Richmond after Vic's retirement her accomplishments would not have been the same. In Richmond she would not have been able to work as closely with the local historical society or been given the freedom to pursue her own projects. In Abingdon she had both.

The Move to Abingdon

The decision to move to Abingdon was a family decision. It wasn't in Henny or Vic's original plans. It was a fortunate accident.

My middle daughter chose to come to Emory & Henry College for the craziest of reasons. She wanted to be close to skiing. She didn't realize that other schools would have been closer. Her true desire was to attend a small campus and be away from home. She thrived there and gained so much in self confidence. She changed her major after three years and came home to Richmond to attend VCU. She graduated with a double major. She and my son are overachievers. My eldest daughter is an underachiever.

My middle daughter met and married a wonderful man in the Abingdon area. After two years, they married and decided to live in the area. She would tell us that we should consider retiring in the area. She even went so far as to tell us that she had found this wonderful house for us. She begged us to come. We had other plans but we agreed to come and look. Vic and Donna had bonded when she was a child. This has never diminished. It's only grown stronger. He will tell you that she is his favorite. So we waited a year and the house was still on the market. Vic told me, "I'll go look at the place. She is so insistent. I'll find all kinds of things wrong with it and that will be the end of it." Just the opposite happened.

I encouraged Vic to bid on the house. He did. It was a stormy situation. I never went to look at the house. Finally after several months, Vic gave them a final offer and they accepted. This was not what we have planned to do. We actually bought land on the Northern Neck of Virginia and were planning to build a house in a little town called Warsaw. We even bought house plans. But instead we switched our plans completely and that's how we came to live in Abingdon.

The move was not made without hesitation. Henny and Vic were both a bit apprehensive. All of their lives they had lived in big cities. They were accustomed to the

perks of such living. They had no experience living in a small town. Moving to rural Southwest Virginia wasn't something they had ever considered. They had only visited the area and while they thought it was beautiful, they weren't sure if they would fit in.

We worried when we first came here. We are big city people. We have never lived in a small town. We were afraid that we would not be accepted. So we decided that if we were unhappy we would move within a year. Luckily for us, the people who sold us the house were intensely disliked by the neighbors. So when we moved in, they were so eager to meet us and make friends with us. That was the beginning of a wonderful twenty year relationship. Our stay in this town has been the most wonderful experience of our lives.

I don't know how many small towns would have accepted us the way that Abingdon has. I couldn't believe the reception that we got when we came here. We got into volunteer work in a hurry. That was the secret; we didn't expect to get any compensation. We wanted to be involved.

When we moved to Abingdon, we found ourselves in a community open to possibilities and in need of volunteers to make things happen. Most of our neighbors are also retired and before long some of them had talked us into helping with a committee that was trying to provide better services for the town.

Community Involvement

Vic would again take the lead in their lives. He persuaded Henny to help him with a local group who was working to help the county attain a certification. Vic would be appointed the leader of the group and Henny would be his helper.

Vic had retired before me and I had to stay and fill out the year. When we arrived in Abingdon, Vic felt guilty about taking a pension and not working. So he decided to take a job. He became the manager of the Chamber of Commerce of Abingdon. He did that for about three years. This helped us to get to know people. Then he had another heart attack. So, he decided to stop working. Yet, he still wanted to be involved.

Vic was very much involved in organizing the efforts to have Washington County recognized as a certified business community. This certification would enable the county to receive grant funding for a variety of projects. He and I attended a meeting where we decided to become involved. This was a committee which was working to obtain this certification for the county. Actually Vic decided that he would help out; I was there for support. They asked Vic to be the chair of the committee and he reluctantly agreed. It was interesting. Everyone was a volunteer.

When talking about their community involvement efforts, Henny is quick to point out that Vic was the driving force. She truly was his silent partner. He did most of the

organizing and supervision of all of the volunteers. His many years in personnel had honed his people skills. Though some towns may have seen them as outsiders, Henny and Vic were pleased to discover that Abingdon and Washington County were open to their help. Henny again found herself in the situation of learning new people through Vic's work.

The more we did, the more we learned about our new community. We had to work with the county and town leaders side by side. To meet all of the requirements to have the certification we need to have key components for our community. For example, Washington County needed to expand the recreation opportunities. Through our efforts, the Coombs Center was built. We helped to vitalize the parks in our county and to increase the number of parks. Additionally we were responsible for getting recycling started in our county. This took a lot of work, but we did it.

This was wonderful for both of us. I worked along side and we had such a terrific experience. It was interesting and a fascinating experience. We had so much fun doing this and really got involved in our community. Through my work on the committee I met some wonderful people who encouraged me to become active in the historical society. I agreed to go to a meeting.

The Beginning of the Historical Portrayals

It was at this meeting of the Washington County Historical Society that Henny would finally find a place to use her writing skills, her teaching skills, and her love of performing. Though she didn't know it at the time, Henny was about to meet the people who would not only give her the encouragement she needed but would also allow her the freedom to do anything she pleased. The Washington County Historical Society was also about to meet the woman who would put their good works into the most visible of places; the schools and the news.

I went into the Washington County Historical Society Library. At that time L.C. Angle was the only one who was really working there. I had gone in to ask some questions. Specifically some one had told me that Elliot Roosevelt had left in Abingdon; actually exiled here for two years. I wanted to find out if this was true. L. C. Angle is a Civil War buff and he really didn't know much about this. So, he tried to sell me a book. It was Summer's book; a history of Washington County. I wasn't really interested in buying the book but I was interested in learning more about this area. So, I bought it. When I came home and told Vic what I had done, he said "What?" He couldn't believe

that I had bought a book or paid that much just to get an answer to a question. Over the years, it has been a great resource to me.

While I was there, Mr. Angle invited me to attend the next Historical Society Board Meeting. I agreed to come. I was interested to know more and was impressed by the size of the historical society's library.

As a former teacher, Henny knew the resources provided by the historical society were not only a great way to introduce local history but it was also a great way to get primary source documents into the hands of the teachers. She also recognized that students need to be aware of their heritage. Her teaching experience both in the classroom and in working as a tutor had taught her that children need a sense of place and an understanding of their own culture.

There were three of us at that board meeting. One of the key points that we talked about at that meeting was the wonderful resources available at the library of the historical society. Because this was staffed by volunteers, the library had limited hours. Typically, it was only open in the afternoons and usually closed by 4:00 p.m. This didn't really give teachers an opportunity to come to the library.

I said, "If they can't come to us, why don't we go them? Why don't we take some of the most interesting things we have in this library? We could take the information on how this county developed; on how Abingdon became the county seat, and share it with them. We need to go into the classrooms. We could go in costume and re-enact the information." They said this is great. Who will do it? Then they looked at me. You suggested it, you do it. And that was how I was hooked.

Thus was born the idea of creating historical portrayals. The impact of these performances were not only felt in the small town of Abingdon but were to become headlines news in many nearby towns, cities, and even in Richmond. Henny would not only shine in these portrayals but would gain state-wide recognition for her efforts. From such a small start would come a lasting gift to the residents of Abingdon, Washington County, and the state of Virginia.

Henny approached Dr. George Stainback, the school superintendent, with the idea. He arranged for her to present a brief portrayal to the school principals. It would be

their decision to invite her to the schools or not. As Henny started her research to prepare for this presentation, she chose to focus on an indentured servant. This would fit with the SOL curriculum of the school and yet tie in with the materials provided by the historical society.

The first performance was brief and held for only the principals of Washington County Schools. They were kind and receptive. They shared the information with their teachers and soon Henny's phone would ring. The schools liked her portrayal of the indentured servant and wanted more. Henny was happy to give them what they wanted. In a span of 12 years, she would develop over 40 different portrayals.

The first several performances that I did I would get terrible belly aches. I would ask myself "why are you doing this to yourself?" Then something magical happened. I decided that the audience wasn't my enemy. They were my friends. Even if I was fooling myself, I still held onto that thought.

This was so different from anything that I had ever done before. I had always loved to write but now I was writing a script for myself. The research was fun. I was learning more about the area and the time period in which the town was first settled. I decided to make my own costume. I had always enjoyed sewing and now those skills came in handy.

The Performances Expand

Henny's first performance was in a local elementary school. The students greeted her enthusiasm and the performance was a success. As the teacher thanked her for coming, Henny realized she had enjoyed what she had done and wanted to do it again.

I know what performers mean when they say the acting bug has bitten them. It was such a terrific feeling being this character and sharing "my life story" with the students. I was hooked.

After I did my first presentation, I started looking for materials for the subject of my second portrayal. Someone mentioned that Elliot Roosevelt had lived in Abingdon. I was intrigued. I wanted to know more. As I researched this I learned so much. I was so excited. I wanted to share what I had learned but quickly discovered that not everyone shared my excitement. I realized that I could get excited about it but I shouldn't be deterred that other people were not. Not everybody likes history and that's ok.

What began as a lark would become a passion. For Henny this was the creative outlet she had needed most of her life. She finally had the venue to showcase all of her talents. She didn't want to stop.

I decided to do a portrayal of Virginia's famous women. This state is rich in its history and as I've said before, too often it is the men that history remembers. I decided to start with Edith Bolling Wilson because someone told me she was born in Wytheville. That is so close to Abingdon. Mrs. Wilson was an interesting woman. She was called the "The Iron Lady." As I did my research I also discovered that she was called the "Presidentress in Petticoats."

While Vic's involvement with his community project slowed, Henny's picked up. She became more involved with the historical society and with her performances. Many times when traveling to the schools, Vic would accompany her. He would drive and wait in the back of the room while Henny did her performances. He was proud of her and impressed by her ability to transform into a character holding the young audience captive.

Vic is so supportive. He likes going with me to the schools. He says the children are interesting. He enjoys hearing them ask questions. He told me he was impressed with what I was doing. He encouraged me to continue. He says it's good for the children. I think he also knows that it is good for me too.

It's exhilarating to work with students. I have such a responsive high when I work with a receptive group. It usually takes me about two hours to get over it. It is the most amazing thing in the world. I have arthritis in my hands and knees. Yet, when I get up to do these programs, I don't feel any pain. And it usually lasts about four hours. I asked my doctor about this and he said it is endorphins. All I know is that it is a feeling of euphoria. It is wonderful!

For Henny the focus has always been on the doing. She never stopped to consider that this was something for which she could be paid. It was not a job; it was fun. As she says, "one of the great things about being old is that you can do what you want, when you want."

I do over forty characters and this has been the result of people asking me. If I'm asked and someone really wants to know about a certain person, then I don't mind do the research. It keeps me hopping. I really love to sew and enjoy creating the costumes. I look in books to see what people wore at that particular age. I get my fabric from the local stores and don't really worry about matching the materials exactly.

People would stop me in town and say, my son or my daughter told me what you did in the classroom. Sometimes people would ask me if I would be willing to research a person, usually a relative for a family gathering or reunion.

At one family reunion I was asked to portray Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart. Now, you never know if people are open to this type of thing. A family reunion is a mixed bag of people. The person in charge of entertainment may think this is a great thing but in reality some may really hate historical portrayals and be really bored. J.E.B. Stuart still has lots of living relatives. These people had come from all over. And it was really amazing, except for one crying baby, no one moved a muscle. They were enthralled.

As time passed, Henny's portrayals took on a life of their own. She was invited to participate in the Virginia Highlands Festival, one of the top 100 festivals in the nation, held in Abingdon every August. She was invited to create characters for special events including the nearby city of Bristol's celebration of its founding.

For the Bristol Sesquicentennial Celebration, I researched Melinda King Anderson. She and her husband were the first pioneers to settle in Bristol. He opened the first store there. In its day, Bristol was a rip snorting town. She was involved with every aspect of community life. She is a fascinating gal and I was glad for the opportunity to do her.

I've had the opportunity to perform at historical events, such as re-enactments. Often I wouldn't be the only performer. At many of these re-enactments, there would be people who want to go into this big time, who would want to be paid three to four hundred dollars. I'm not into that. I started out in the schools. I did this for free. I did it for me.

When asked why she has continued, Henny's answer is simple, "I want to do it." Her curiosity combined with her innate desire to share her knowledge has guided her. As a former teacher, Henny is eager to teach others. As a performer, she is ready to take the stage and show-off just a bit. The most important part of all was the learning. It is as a learner that Henny has excelled. Each of these portrayals was developed only after hours of research and detailed study. For Henny, the rewards were intrinsic.

I think the big thing that I wanted out of all this work is to generate pride in people. It is work, the research, the bibliographies, and the costumes all take time. I like to see the pride in the eyes of the people.

This is why I enjoy learning about these characters because they've accomplished part of what their whole era was like. They were part of it. They become the kind of people they have because they were in the place where they were and the world events, the

national events shaped their lives. I learn so much about the past when I do this. It's like traveling back in time.

Sadly all good things do come to an end. Henny knew a time would come when she would physically be unable to continue the portrayals. She did not want all the knowledge to be forgotten. There had to be a way to preserve portrayals for future generations.

In the past few years, I realized that I would not be able to continue to do these portrayals. Yet, I wanted them to continue. So, the historical society and I came up with an idea. We would videotape me doing these presentations and make the recordings available for purchase. I know several schools in our area have purchased these. It's funny for me to watch myself on film.

It's also good to know that these will be available for the students and the community long after I've left; long after I'm gone. As much as these performances have been a part of me, the characters are who I wanted everyone to remember.

Washington County Historical Society

Though Henny does not take credit for what happened with the Washington County Historical Society, its growth can be traced to her portrayals. The local (and state) newspapers wrote about what she was doing. Each mentioned her connection with the historical society. Community members became interested and involved. The organization grew.

I didn't volunteer to do a lot of things with the historical society. For example, I didn't volunteer to stay in the library or to help people do genealogical research. That's actually the biggest part of the library's reason for existence. Even though L. C. Angle was interested in history, he didn't want to work in the library. His area of expertise was oral history. He knew a lot about his own family but had no desire to pursue others.

A lot has changed with the historical society. In the past twenty years, I have seen this group grow to meet the needs of the community. We started with only three members on the board. Now, there are at least thirty people on the board. We each do our own things. The only communal effort is the library. We all contribute in our own way to the library. We've got people who do tours, who do lectures and even volunteer teachers at the College for Older Adults. It not particularly a team effort; rather it's all part of a whole.

For Henny, watching the growth of the historical society was heart-warming. She had developed a special relationship with each and every person on the board. She also felt a strong sense of ownership. She was proud of the accomplishments of the group though never really taking credit for herself.

The camaraderie is wonderful! It's warm. I like this. The other thing that drew me to this group was that we were rapidly out growing our space at the Washington County Courthouse. We were growing; our collection was expanding. The hunt was on for someplace larger; a place that would meet our needs. We were offered the old train station depot. The Abingdon Town Police Department was building a new building and moving their offices. The depot would be perfect for us. It had parking where as the old courthouse location did not. The depot is more centrally located and easier to get to.

Our group has grown and everyone who has come in has brought their own focus, their own expertise, and their own challenges. Each of us has something special we can offer; something we can do for others. It is really great to work with a group like this.

Recognition

In 2000, Henny received Virginia's "Ageless Hero" Award presented by U. S. Senator John Warner. Nominated for her work with the Washington County Historical Society, Henny traveled to Richmond to receive her award. This is but one of many recognitions that Henny has received in her life. Yet, this one was special.

I felt that I truly didn't deserve this award. One of my friends had nominated me for this award. She had submitted a packet of information about all of the work I had done with the Historical Society and the various presentations I do for the community and the schools. I only felt as if I were doing what I could to help out. I'm not an "ageless hero."

My mother never approved of bragging or calling attention to yourself. She would say, "self praise leaves a very bad odor." She never said "it stinks" but the message was there. Neither my brother nor I were allowed to brag on the special recognition we may have received. My mother would say, "there is always someone who is smarter than you or who can do something better than you." And I think this is a very realistic approach.

At the awards banquet, Henny was joined by her family and many of her friends. As Senator Warner read about Henny and her accomplishments, Henny's eyes filled with tears. As she said, she was unaware the broad impact she had made on her adopted community. As she thanked everyone for their support, she received a standing ovation.

This was such an honor for me. I couldn't believe that I was there. To me the portrayals had been my own way to have fun while sharing what I had learned with others. Listening to what my friend had written about the increased interest by students and community members in our local history and the growth of the historical society because of the little things I had done was humbling. I was overwhelmed. I hadn't done anything special. It was something I wanted to do, so I just did it.

CHAPTER 11

A LIFE WELL LIVED

We all want folks in our lives who give us permission to be ourselves.

Hendrika Schuster

As Henny reflects on her life, there are many events she can recall. Incidents that have shaped her life, yet it is the people in her life who have had the greatest influence.

I have always loved people. There have been so many fascinating people in my life. I think about that advisor I had in high school. She encouraged me to talk to my parents and pursue other courses.

I think the hardest relationship in my life had to be with my family, because I'm nothing like the rest of them. I'm sure my family thought I must have been hatched under a cabbage leaf. My mother thought I was a show-off. She was constantly trying to rein in my enthusiasm.

My mother and father were very stable parents. I've had a wonderful sense of security all my life long. I've had this with Vic too. It's a wonderful feeling. I've had a very wonderful life. We've had tough times, but these give you a chance to grow up.

From Child to Care Provider

In the early 1970s Henny's father died. Although Henny asked her mother to come and live with her, she chose instead to live with Henny's brother. The relationship between mother and daughter had never been and never would be close.

My mother very much favored my brother in lots of ways. He was good to her. My mother lived to be 93. She was a widow for 33 years. Her last few years here on Earth she was very, very angry. Her body was failing her. She said she never loved anyone after her husband died.

I feel like my mother wasted all of her talents that she had because she would never use them. She was very sparse with her compliments. She told me once, "When I left normal school, I was finished with education. You have never stopped." I savored that because I had thought that often times but had never dared say it

Henny's relationship with her father-in-law was a key component of her life.

Prior to their deaths, both her in-laws would move in with Henny and her family.

Though Vic did all he could to help with his parents, the requirements for his job often forced him to travel. Henny assumed the role of care-giver. For Henny, this was a

reversal of roles. As a young mother she had sought the advice of her father-in-law much as a child seeks wisdom from a parent. Now, she would provide the care as parent does for a child.

Vic's parents came to live with us in Richmond. They were getting to the point where they could not live alone. The neighbors were afraid for them and had contacted us. It seems they had had some difficulties with small fires. Needless to say, it was time for them to move in with us. It was a hard thing for them to do. Each was at an advanced age and didn't really make friends easily. Living in Richmond with us was a difficult thing for them and for us. That was a sad time. But you grow during these sad and hard times.

Vic was traveling so much for his job during that time. He would often be out of town. I was left with children and parents to take care of. Additionally I was teaching. It wasn't an easy time.

Vic was out of town when his mother died. Still today he will ask me to tell him about her final hours. He'll ask "what did she say?" How did it all take place? How did you manage through it? What did you do? He was so proud of me for being so calm through out all of it.

It wasn't easy, but you know I'm stronger for it. I'm glad I had those experiences. I'm also glad that it made me very aware of what it was like to grow older. You then say to yourself, "hey this is going to happen to me someday." It makes you think. It also makes you a bit afraid. Who will take care of you when you are old?

Henny's Children

Henny's children bring her great pride. Each is a college graduate and inspired by their mother's accomplishment, each is involved in various civic organizations.

Additionally several of her grandchildren are also college graduates.

I am fiercely patriotic. And I'm passionate about education. With education anyone can enrich their lives one way or another. I know that college will not make life different for everyone but as individual you either have to have a burning desire or a vast outlook on this world. Otherwise you are going to be unhappy with yourself.

I've encouraged each of my children to get a college degree. To be honest, it wasn't an option. Marcia is a teacher in South Carolina. Donna has her nursing degree and lives in Richmond. Kent has a business degree and a good job in a big company in Harrisonburg.

Henny's children are her greatest accomplishment. They are her pride and joy. No awards, prizes, recognition can ever compete with the affection she has for each of them

My children are very different. Our oldest child lives in Charleston, SC. We don't travel there that much. She has always been the one to march to a different drum beat. Marcia is an underachiever. She has been married twice and has four children. Like me, Marcia is a writer. She strives to save the world and tries to change those she loves. Sadly she doesn't always make good choices in the men she brings into her life.

Donna is married to a wonderful man that she met in the Abingdon area. She had a rough engagement just like me. Her husband Pat had been married before and as a Catholic he refused to get a divorce. Instead he sought and finally got an annulment. It was very hard on their relationship, but Donna stood by him. It took almost two years for everything to work out. Pat has two daughters and Donna loves them as her own. They are very happy.

Kent is my pride and joy. As the baby of the family he has always enjoyed the privileges that come with being the youngest. I am most proud of his accomplishments. His dyslexia will always be a hurdle for him. He has never given up.

For Henny's daughters, college was not a difficult task. For Kent it was difficult. He enrolled at Hampton-Sydney, a college with a reputation for strong academics. Henny was there encouraging him every step of the way.

When Kent went to college, he was told in orientation to shake hands with four people sitting near him. The professor then told them that at least four of these five would drop out. When he took his writing entrance exam, he was with four of his friends. One was strong in science but quit after the first year; two were football players who were placed on academic probation and another loved skipping classes to play bridge. Kent was the only one who studied hard and graduated. He had it rough but he and I were determined that he would make it.

Today as an adult, Kent still struggles with dyslexia. He is like me. He is a morning person. When the children were smaller, he would always get up early and pack their lunches for school. I was visiting them one time when he daughter Katie came home from school. I watched as she emptied her lunch box tossing all of the trash. She showed me a note that he father had written for her. This was something he did every time he packed their lunches; he would write them a note. This note said, "Dear Katie, Have a great day and know that your daddy is ticking about you." He had then crossed out ticking and replaced it with thanking. He then crossed out thanking and wrote thinking. I asked Katie if I could keep the note.

Later Katie was given a writing assignment by her teacher. She was to define the word success and to talk about a person who was successful. Katie wrote about her daddy.

She talked about her daddy's struggles to overcome dyslexia and that he was a success because of it.

Kent has two children and though Henny is a bit shy about it she will admit that Katie is her favorite of all her grandchildren. Like Henny, Katie is a strong writer and an independent young woman. She is enrolled at James Madison University and writes often to her grandmother. Katie plans to graduate with a journalism degree.

Vic's Health

Now, it is Vic who needs Henny's help the most. He has suffered several heart attacks and this has affected his health. Recognizing their limitations, they have decided to move back to Richmond to live with their youngest daughter.

It's difficult to leave Abingdon, but we must. We can't backtrack. We are still physically able to move and we know that won't be true much longer. Our daughter is excited to have her father with her again and our son is happy to know that we will be nearby. All of our family is pleased that we have chosen to move in with Donna and know this will be best for us.

I worry about Vic. He has had two episodes when he didn't know who he was and where he was. One morning I awoke and couldn't find him. I searched the house and had just started out the door when the phone rang. It was one of our neighbors. Vic was with them. He had gotten up before me and for some reason had gone outside. He became confused and finding their door unlocked had gone in. When they got up, he was sitting at their kitchen table reading the paper. He didn't know that it wasn't his house.

Another morning he woke me to tell me that the house was on fire. He led me down the hallway where he had put wet towels on the floor. He had literally soaked these in the tub and they lined the floor from our bedroom to the front door. There wasn't a fire. Yet in Vic's mind, the house was burning and he had to create a safe path for me. I had a very hard time convincing him that the house was fine.

The doctors tell me that all of this related to his heart attacks. He will not get better. That's why we are going to live with Donna. She is a cardiac nurse. She will know how to care for her father.

Another Chapter Begins

As Henny looks back at her life, she is able to do so with the wisdom that comes with both age and experience. As she says, "hindsight is twenty-twenty and at my age, it's the best vision I have."

The older you get the wiser you get. You look back at the people in your life and you think there's an interesting story. It's fun to just sit there and do the stories.

And the recording of these stories will continue; only now Henny is writing her own story. She wants her family to know and appreciate their heritage.

I have written about Vic's German background and my Dutch background so that my children will know about their rich heritage. These emigrants came to this country because it was the land of opportunity. And they made it. Their stories are filled with such pathos.

Henny has no plans to publish these stories. These are the private stories of her ancestors, of Vic's and her parents, and of her life. To her the act of writing has become second nature and at her age, she jokes "it has also become a necessity."

At our age, we now write ourselves notes. I'm discovering that I don't have the recall that I once had. I think I've lived too long. I can't cope with this computer age and this electronic age.

Learning is and will continue to be a vital part of Henny's life. As she says, "I love, love learning." Throughout her life she has been involved in both formal and informal learning experiences.

When Vic and I came to Abingdon, we started participating in the Elderhostel programs. While this is only for the elderly it is still a great way to continue learning. We have taken a lot of wonderful trips. There's even an Elderhostel program here in Abingdon. It's very well done.

Now in her eighties, Henny shows few signs of stopping. Her health is still good. She walks daily and refuses to slow down. Her energies are now focused on her family, but don't expect Hendrika Schuster to stop being herself.

The performances will end now that we are moving back to Richmond. I'm ready to quit. That's ok. Vic's health is my primary concern now. But when we get to Richmond, you better believe that I will get involved in something else. There are so many things that I can still do.

I've enjoyed doing things that are wonderfully different. If something becomes old hat then I don't want to do it any more. I want to be challenged. I like things to be different. It is how I stay interested. Sometimes, I've had to do things out of financial constraints. Reaching into different directions keep me stimulated. There's a lot to be said about

trying a number of things that may not be pointing to one thing or focused on one thing. The side roads you take can lead to wonderful adventures.

When I was involved with a local women's group, I entered a writing contest and won second prize in the nation. There's something about putting something down on paper that other people can read and relate to that is such a wonderful feeling. I'm never satisfied with what I've accomplished. People say you've done this and you've done that and I say so what. I'm not satisfied. I'm not quitting.

CHAPTER 12

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

I'm not unique in anyway. I'm just ordinary

Hendrika Schuster

The motivations and obstacles that influenced the lifelong learning process of Hendrika Schuster were examined through a biographical study. Using a conversational style, various interviews were conducted at her home. Additional information was also obtained from newspaper articles, journals, letters, photographs, and Mrs. Schuster's autobiography. Tapes of the recorded interviews were transcribed and coded into categories as developed by the researcher. Emergent themes were identified. These themes were used to organize and present the data in a chronological format in Chapters 5 through 11.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine one person's experiences as a lifelong learner. An additional goal was to not only tell this person's life story but to also relate her experiences to various theories of motivation of lifelong learning. The chronological narrative of Hendrika Schuster's life story is the foundation of this study.

Extensive information regarding the motivations of lifelong learners is available. Studies and research have been conducted regarding the various modes in which learners pursue lifelong experiences. Yet, relatively few studies have been conducted that examined the individual's life experiences. Statistics and theories can provide generalities in regard to lifelong learning. With the ever-increasing population of elderly people in our nation, there is also a growing need to better understand the opportunities for these lifelong learners. This study provides a look at one such learner as a means of providing possibilities and suggestions for encouraging others to pursue and continue to pursue learning opportunities.

The findings of this study are organized around three fundamental themes: motivations to participate in the learning process, obstacles to participation in the learning process, and modes of learning. Each of these and their related findings or sub-themes were presented and discussed in the context of the narrative.

Motivations for Participation in the Learning Process

Examining the narrative of Hendrika Schuster, key motivating factors emerged in relation to her pursuit of learning opportunities throughout her life. These learning experiences were both formal and informal. Additionally both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in seeking these learning opportunities were evident.

Family

Her family, both immediate and ancestral, played an important role in Henny's attitude toward learning. As a child, she heard the stories of her father's determination to learn and his apprenticeship at an early age. She knew her father had been able to immigrate to America because of his skills. She recognized the importance of his education in regards to both his job and their financial survival. Without his training, he would not have been able to locate work or support his family.

She also knew the history of her mother's educational efforts. This would prove to be both a motivator and an obstacle for her own education endeavors. Her mother's family had not only recognized the importance of formal education but had sacrificed much to provide this for Henny's mother. In their eyes and in Henny's father's opinion, this sacrifice was wasted. Her mother had turned her back on her education and opportunities when she quit her job as a teacher after only 3 months.

Both families instilled in their children the belief that education would enable them to succeed. With knowledge, skills, and training, anything could be possible. Without education, they would continue in the career paths established and maintained by their family for generations. Henny's parents carried this message forward to their children. Henny would listen; her brother would not.

When Henny began her narrative, she credited her parents for instilling in her the beliefs that would guide her throughout her life. As her story unfolded, she also revealed the determination she had developed in their home. This determination to prove herself was in response to both her father's conditional love and her mother's desire to control her. This intrinsic motivation can be seen throughout her life.

This finding supports suggestions regarding intrinsic motivations for learning made by several researchers (Adler 1956; Alejandro, 2001; Cross & Florio, 1977; Gross, 1977; Houle 1961; Tomei 1956). The role of family has also been identified as a motivating factor in pursuing education by many researchers (Courtney, 1992; Galbraith, 1991; Quinnan, 1997)

Formal Education

As a child, Henny was fortunate to attend one of the best school systems in the United States. The public school in Cicero, Illinois was large enough to provide both quality education and many extracurricular opportunities. Henny recognized her good fortune to have participated in this educational system. As an adult she was surprised to learn that others did not have the advantages that she and her brother had enjoyed.

In her high school, Henny was able to take the core classes. She also had the opportunity to learn French, take advance writing courses, and participate in drama

classes. She was a member of her school's newspaper staff and this provided her with the opportunity to hone her writing skills and even gain recognition for her work. Her involvement with the drama club also gave her the experience of performing for others; an experience she would never forget.

Henny was able to continue her formal training upon graduation from high school. The junior college was a part of the Cicero school system and she was able to attend due to its proximity and relatively low cost. Additionally, her mother wanted Henny to have the necessary secretarial skills to find employment. Henny admitted that though she hated taking these courses, she has used the skills gained from them throughout her life.

Though her desire was to continue her formal education immediately, it wasn't until years later that she would have the opportunity to do so. Henny did obtain her bachelor's degree in education and like her mother she was employed as a teacher. Unlike her mother, she did stay in this position for several years. A requirement for her employment was to take the occasional courses to renew her teaching license.

Additionally, Henny and her husband participated in various semi-formal educational opportunities upon their retirement. Although briefly mentioned, they became involved with the Elderhostel program traveling and learning about the many areas they would visit. Henny also took courses through the College for Older Adults program offered at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. These classes were primarily designed to provide elder members of the community with information on a limited number of topics in a short period of time.

The role of formal education has often been identified as a motivation for lifelong learning by various researchers (Alejandro, 2001; Courtney, 1992; Cross, 1981; Smith, 1983; Wright, 2000). As demonstrated by Henny's life, all education and learning does not occur within formal educational opportunities but this often served as the starting point for other learning to occur. Henny's formal education gave her the foundation on which to continue her learning. She had the necessary skills for conducting effective research and for writing effectively. These skills would serve her well in her development of the historical performances.

Encouragement from Others

As a student Henny had the opportunity to explore her talent for writing. Her high school newspaper sponsor would not only encourage her, but, at his behest, Henny entered a national writing contest and won. Her guidance counselor encouraged Henny to pursue her education and her superintendent spoke to her father on her behalf. Each recognized her ability and knew that further education would be beneficial for Henny.

As a new wife, the kindness of friends and neighbors would assist her in her role of homemaker. As a new mother, her father-in-law would prove to be her greatest ally. He provided more encouragement and advice than her own mother.

As a teacher, she would find encouragement from veteran teachers even when the words may not have been what she wanted to hear. Her principals supported her efforts to provide more than the canned curriculum and praised her for her efforts.

The members of the Washington County Historical Society would provide the greatest encouragement and support. They would give Henny the permission she needed

to truly be herself. From them she would not only gain resources for her projects but also the freedom to do whatever she wanted to do.

Researchers recognize the importance of the influence of others on the success of lifelong learners (Galbraith, 1991; Houle, 1961). Through the kindness of others Henny found the inspiration needed to persevere and succeed.

Self-Directed Learning

Henny was most fortunate to grow up in Cicero just outside of Chicago. As a child and teenager, she had the opportunity to visit the museums, the theatre, and the library. This established a pattern she would follow in each new town or city in which she would live. Her curiosity and innate desire to know led Henny to these resources and others like them.

Throughout her life and when faced with any problem, Henny would seek to find a solution. As a young mother and relatively new bride, she wanted to learn more about keeping a house. When she and her family moved in with her parents, Henny made the best of the situation by learning all she could from her mother. Though her mother did not offer to show her how to cook, to clean, etc., Henny made a point to observe and through her observations developed skills that would help her in maintaining her own household.

When her son displayed reading problems, Henny knew there had to be a reason. She sought the advice of her classmates and of area experts. She was not willing to accept the situation without learning more about it. Her search for answers led her to both understanding and an alternative educational opportunity for her son.

As a teacher, she could have easily taught the curriculum of the school. Yet Henny was not content with that. Just as she wanted to know more about the world, she wanted to pass this love of learning on to her students. She admitted that adding to the curriculum was also a way to keep her from being bored but her students benefited from their teacher's unconventional methods.

In developing the various historical portrayals, Henny was practical in her learning. She sought the information and was not content until she knew the complete story. She was curious about the stories she heard and wanted to know more the lives these people had lived. She also wanted to share this knowledge with others.

Researchers had found that the desire for self learning or self study is often a strong motivation among lifelong learners (Hiemstra, 1976; Houle, 1961; Longworth, 1999; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Verduin et al., 1986). Henny is a perfect example of this motivation. As Longworth (1999) suggested, she was on a personal voyage to learn, to explore her world. She was proactive and decisive. She wanted to know and was not content until she did.

Involvement in Community

As a new bride, Henny found herself in a variety of physical communities. She would move frequently with her husband. The one constant that remained was the social community or climate in which she often found herself. As a Navy wife, she was part of a group that often got together in a social setting. While this was a new experience for her, she adapted quickly and became quiet adept at blending in.

In her role as teacher, she was not only invested in the educational community but also in the neighborhood. When confronted with the issue of racial tension, she used this

opportunity as a means of educating her students. While it would have been easy to let this incident remain on the playground, Henny chose instead to use this to challenge the students to think beyond their comfort zone and to see others in a different light. This would also become her challenge when working with the students from Thailand. Like her students she had preconceived ideas that she also had to overcome. She became both teacher and learner when working with these children.

It was in Washington County that Henny would become most involved in her community. She began with her volunteer work on the committee her husband would chair. This would lead to her involvement with other such groups including the board of the local hospital, friends of the library, and the local women's auxiliary group. Her greatest role would be the one she would take with the historical society. It was here that she would finally come into to own; that she would provide her greatest legacy. Not only did she develop a unique component for their offerings with the addition of her performances, but she also created a renewed interest in the organization. Her energy was contagious. She was a role model for her peers who upon seeing her accomplishments decided to also become involved. She was instrumental in the growth of this organization and saw the board membership increase from 3 to 20 during her time with them. This number does not reflect the many volunteers who also worked with the group in various ways.

While the historical portrayals provided Henny with the creative outlet for all of her talents, these gave the community of Washington County a new tourism feature. Local, regional and state newspapers picked up the story of the woman who did character portrayals. Soon, she was a regular feature at the Virginia Highlands Festival, one of the

top 100 festivals in the nation held each year in Abingdon. The county tourism office had Henny's contact information on file and would frequently contact her to perform for area events.

As researchers have found community involvement plays an important role in the lives of lifelong learners especially those who are retired and seeking meaningful activities to fill their time (Alejandro, 2001; Courtney, 1992; Galbraith, 1999; Hesburgh et al., 1973). Community involvement provides an opportunity to stay active and as Galbraith (1999) indicated to be more useful.

Barriers to Participation in the Learning Process

There were many obstacles in Henny's life that prevented her from obtaining her goals. Some were deliberate and easy to recognize but many were more subtle and too often more effective.

Family

Each of her parents recognized the value and importance of a good education. Neither truly understood Henny's desire to become a career woman, a journalist, a writer. Her mother ignored Henny's goals and pushed her to obtain the training necessary to obtain a clerical position. Her father refused to support her dream of obtaining a college degree. He judged her based on his experience with her mother. He didn't want to waste his money on a girl but chose instead to send her brother to college.

Her husband, Vic, would also prove to be an obstacle. He didn't want to spend the money for Henny to obtain her bachelor's degree fearing it would be a waste. He wasn't sure if Henny truly had the desire and skills to obtain a degree. His comments to her regarding his own correspondence course revealed his hesitations. Additionally his

lack of understanding and patience with Kent's dyslexia also indicated his limitations in his own education. He didn't know what dyslexia truly was and was unwilling to learn. He wanted the problem fixed and didn't understand when a solution wasn't immediate.

Though Henny loved her children dearly, she was not prepared to be a mother. As the primary care provider, she would be unable to pursue her own activities and goals. Her family would come first. Her education and possible career would be on hold until the children were in school. In the selection of her career, she passed by her true calling and chose instead to become a teacher to have the same schedule as her children. Even then tension would be evident in the home if she put her work before the needs of the family.

Researchers have noted that one of the common sources for struggle for adult learners is the internal family stressors (Hensley & Kinser, 2001; Quinnan, 1997). Some learners feel as though their spouses are threatened by their successes. For Henny this was never verbalized but the tension was there. Even into adulthood her mother could not understand her daughter's continued quest for education.

Gender

Henny will also admit that her gender has been a hindrance. As a girl growing up in the 1930s, she knew that education was not at the top of the list for females. Rather it was expected that a woman would marry and raise a family or if she worked outside the home her opportunities were limited.

As Vic traveled for the Navy and later his job, it was expected that Henny would remain at home. That is what the wife did. She had to stand firm to avoid living with her parents during the early years of marriage. Vic would have easily agreed for that to

happen but Henny was adamant that she was going with him. It was rare that Henny would argue with her husband. As woman she had been raised to be subservient to her husband. This was also her old world upbringing.

There are many factors that researchers have identified as a barrier to educational opportunities and gender is one of these (Birren, 1964; Hiemstra, 1976; Warnat, 1979). This is not as prevalent in studies of younger men and women. The implications are that this barrier may also be associated with the age of the learner.

Culture

Henny grew up in a time when women were not expected to have a career. Rather, they were supposed to get married and have families. Any work outside the home would be in a subservient position such as a clerical, housekeeper, and possibly teacher. All of these roles were seen as nurturing and providing service to others.

Her father's old world beliefs would prevent Henny from obtaining a scholarship. His refusal to complete the necessary financial documents because it was no one's business how much he made prevented Henny from obtaining a scholarship or financial assistance to attend a 4-year college after high school.

Henny wanted to be a journalist but chose instead to give up that dream settling for training to be a teacher. She needed her schedule to fit with her duties as a mother and wife. She understood that her needs would come second to these obligations.

Vic Schuster also held with old world customs. He didn't want his wife working. He felt her place was in the home. It was only after Kent was diagnosed and the cost for the special school revealed that Vic reluctantly agreed to allow Henny to find

employment. Even then he would show his displeasure if Henny would grade papers or prepare lesson plans when she should, in his opinion, be focused on the family.

And culture would also prevent Henny from getting her first job as a teacher. The young black woman who had served as her mentor realized that Henny did not have the cultural background to be successful in her school. As a white woman from the middle class, Henny could not connect with poor black children. Culture would also factor as a positive for Henny. This is discussed later as an area where further study is indicated.

Studies have indicated that culture plays a part in the experiences of lifelong learners (Midwinter, 2004; Miller, 1967). Many adult learners tend to seek opportunities in which they are comfortable or accepted. Others hesitate to step outside their cultural norms.

Educational Opportunities

Access to educational opportunities was a small barrier for Henny. She wanted to attend college but this was denied temporarily. As an adult, she actually had educational advantages. Living in the large city of Richmond enabled her choices for her pursuit of higher learning. It was only when she sought solutions to problems that she discovered obstacles.

Understanding Kent's dyslexia would have been simpler if Henny had already completed her educational training. But it should also be noted that it was through her contacts in her coursework that she was able to locate someone who would diagnose the disorder and point her in the direction of the school in Pennsylvania.

When Vic and Henny retired they did take advantage of the Elderhostel programs. Yet, living in Southwest Virginia these opportunities were limited. Henny did take one

class through the College for Older Adults program but did so very late in their stay in Abingdon. She discovered this program by accident and too late to really benefit from its offerings. Henny has even said that she has lived too long and can't cope with the technology age. The course at the College for Older Adults would have provided her with an opportunity to acquire technology skills.

Perhaps the important thing to note about educational barriers for Henny would be the lack of accessibility and information regarding what was available. As an older adult, Henny had to find her own resources and rely on skills she learned in her formative years. If she had known about the opportunities available to her as an older adult, Henny would have participated.

Studies conducted in the past 10 years have noted this fact. Researchers recognize that many older adults do not participate because they are unaware of educational opportunities (Cross, 1981; Quinnan, 1997; Tomei, 1999). Livingstone (1999) suggested that older adults would participate in these opportunities in order to keep up with the world around them.

Conclusions

After examining the formal and informal educational progress of Hendrika Schuster through the biographical study, it appears that much of what she has experienced can be associated with the findings of various research studies. Yet, in Henny's story, we see the individual. We see her accomplishments, her disappointments; we see Henny. Sheehy's statement "We seldom make time to process even the most meaningful experiences of our lives; we just speed through them" is a warning to us all.

Reviewing statistics is important but taking the time to pause and know the person is vital. Henny's story is her own, but it is reflective of so many others.

The motivations and barriers in Henny's life are secondary to her spirit; to her innate desire to always learn, to always challenge herself. Wherever she was, whatever she did, Henny always tried to find a way to make it a positive experience and if not positive than definitely an experience from which she would learn and grow as a person.

As Henny looks back at her life sharing her experiences she stated "I've had a wonderful life." Much of her experiences can fit into the predefined perimeters of the various research studies, but these are her experiences, her life story. Just as Henny has her unique story filled with triumphs and occasional failures, so too do all people. Each of us has a story to tell, a lesson to share, and an experience unlike any other. Applying these generalities from research to one person's life results in learning more about that person and about life in general and with this education we gain wisdom from which all can benefit.

Recommendations to Improve Practice and for Further Research

There is a need for providing adults with the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences. This self examination not only provides them with the opportunity to gain meaning from their experiences but also provides insight for others who may be facing similar circumstances. As the baby boomers begin to retire and life expectancies increase, the number of older adults also increases. Each person has a rich heritage of life experiences that should be treasured and preserved. Society can benefit from an analysis of this wealth of knowledge.

Additional modes of learning should also be explored. Though some communities do have libraries, museums, theatres, etc. with outreach programs designed to educate and inspire, others do not. Some colleges and universities may offer courses for older adults as a means for extended learning opportunities. More can still be made available. There is a need for supplementary learning opportunities for our adult learners. These opportunities can be either formal or informal but need to be available and information distributed to all who may wish to participate.

Additional studies should also be conducted to determine if the factors of gender and culture as barriers will exist as our world becomes more global. With the mixture of race and cultures, will these obstacles cease to exist? With continued efforts for equality, will gender be ignored? Will time alone delete these barriers or will studies reveal the need to not only recognize these but to also address them?

Most importantly, studies such as this need to continue. While Henny's story reflects one woman's experience, it is not a story told in isolation. The impact of her life is far reaching and the implications for what she has accomplished will be felt long after she is no longer with us. Those who read her story will be inspired. Every person has a unique story to tell. As individuals we can gain much from these stories and as a society we will reap many benefits from the sharing of knowledge.

The lessons learned by these individuals are universal in their scope. The wisdom achieved should be shared for all. From one individual's story can come hope, and this hope can be incorporated into the lives of others and each life made all the richer for it.

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APPENDIX

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Rebecca Lee Austin

TITLE OF PROJECT: Motivations for Lifelong Learning in the Life of Mrs. Hendrika Schuster

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE

The purpose(s) of this research study is/are as follows:

The problem that this study will address is to determine what motivates a person to pursue continued education throughout his or her life. To understand why an individual chooses to continually seek wisdom can be accomplished by examining a life story. The simplest way to find out why adults participate in education is to ask them. Hundreds of local, state, and national studies have done just that. In such studies respondents were presented with lists of reasons why people might participate and asked to indicate which ones applied to them. This study seeks to reveal more than just a list of reasons. Rather, the focus of this study will be the individual; the lifelong learner and her experiences. This study will focus on the formal and informal experiences of Hendrika Schuster.

DURATION

During the course of several months the subject, Mrs. Schuster, will participate in a series of interviews during which she will discuss her motivations and experiences in regards to lifelong learning. She is the only participant in this study.

PROCEDURES

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board Approval, a series of interviews with the subject, Mrs. Schuster will be conducted in her home at Leitchfield Court, Abingdon, VA. These sessions will last approximately two to three hours each and will be audio taped with Mrs. Schuster's permission. Data collected from the interviews will be coded and classified identifying various themes. Source documents including photographs, personal papers, etc. will also be examined. An external peer debriefer will audit information from the text files, coded materials and source documents.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts of your involvement include: You may experience anxiety as you recall and describe experiences from your past.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefits of your participation are having an opportunity to share your life story with others; to record and preserve your educational experiences which have contributed to your lifelong learning.

FINANCIAL COSTS

There are no possible financial costs to you as a participant in this research study.

COMPENSATION IN THE FORM OF PAYMENTS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There will be no compensation or payment to the participant of this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling Rebecca Austin, whose phone number is 276-676-3317. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

In addition, if significant new findings during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation are likely, the consent process must disclose that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the participant.

In addition, if there might be adverse consequences (physical, social, economic, legal, or psychological) of a participant's decision to withdraw from the research, the consent process must disclose those consequences and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the participant.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Rebecca L. Austin at 276-676-3317 or Dr. Terrance Tollefson at 423- 439-7617. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the

research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in the home office of Rebecca Austin at 324 Jones Lane, Abingdon, VA for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU/VA IRB (for medical research) (or ETSU IRB for non-medical research), the FDA (if applicable), and personnel particular to this research (individual or department) have access to the study records. Your (medical) records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)

DATE

VITA

REBECCA LEE AUSTIN

- Personal Data: Date of Birth: August 7, 1963
 Place of Birth: Richlands, Virginia
 Marital Status: Single
- Education: Buchanan County Public Schools, Council, Virginia
 Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts, Virginia Highlands
 Community College, Abingdon, Virginia 1983
 Associate of Science in Education, Virginia Highlands
 Community College, Abingdon, Virginia 1983
 Associate of Science in General Studies, Virginia
 Highlands Community College, Abingdon, Virginia
 1983
 Bachelor of Arts in English, with a minor in Education,
 King College, Bristol, Tennessee 1985
 Minor Library Science, UVA@Wise, Wise, Virginia 1986
 Master of Science in Library and Information Studies,
 University of North Carolina at Greensboro,
 Greensboro, North Carolina 1995
 Master of Science in Educational Leadership, Radford
 University, Radford, Virginia 2002
 Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, East
 Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
 Tennessee 2008
- Professional Experience: Teacher, Powell Valley High School; Big Stone Gap,
 Virginia, 1989-1990
 Teacher, Holston High School; Damascus, Virginia, 1990-
 1991
 Library Media Specialist; Glade Spring Middle School,
 Glade Spring, Virginia, 1991-2004
 Reference Librarian; Virginia Highlands Community
 College, Abingdon, Virginia, 1995-2008
 Adjunct Professor, University of Virginia's College at
 Wise, Wise, Virginia, 2000-2008
 Adjunct Professor, Virginia Intermont College, Bristol,
 Virginia, 2003-2008
 Instructional Technology Resource Teacher, Washington
 County Schools, Abingdon, Virginia, 2004-2008

Presentations:

- Austin, R. (2008). *Introduction to Online Photo Editing*. Technology Blizzard Conference, Washington County Schools, Abingdon, Virginia
- Austin, R. (2007). *Smart Boards in the Classroom*. Washington County Education Association Technical Tuesday Workshop, Washington County Schools, Abingdon, Virginia
- Austin, R. (2007). *Great Web Sites*. Washington County Education Association Technical Tuesday Workshop, Washington County Schools, Abingdon, Virginia
- Austin, R. (2007). *Washington County Resources*. Washington County Education Association Technical Tuesday Workshop, Washington County Schools, Abingdon, Virginia
- Austin, R. (2007). *What is Web 2.0? An introduction to the ever changing internet*. Southwest Virginia Technology Splash Conference, Emory, Virginia

Honors and Awards:

- Washington County Middle School Teacher of the Year, 1995
- Washington County Education Association President, 1998-2001
- Virginia Educational Media Association Regional Director, 1998-1999
- Virginia Education Association District 2 President 2001-2003; 2007-2009
- Cool School Award from Education World for GSMS Webpage, 2001