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Everyday Democracy: A Study of Two Teachers' Perspectives on Social Education

Elaine Metherall Brenneman

EVERYDAY DEMOCRACY:

A STUDY OF TWO TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL EDUCATION

by

Elaine Metherall Brenneman

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University
of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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This manuscript is dedicated to:

Mary and Ruth whose story this is.

Steve whose love and support made this possible;
and to Asa who makes it meaningful.

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ABSTRACT

As a nation, we are concerned about the values our children learn in school. Opinions regarding the appropriate educational content and strategies to sustain and improve our democratic country span the political spectrum. The social studies, a field dedicated to the development of *good* citizens, is especially concerned with values issues in education. Research on citizenship education has primarily focused its interest in the development and assessment of appropriate content and teaching strategies. An important, though often neglected, aspect of social education research is the investigation of teacher perspectives. This study suggests that who a teacher is, what she knows, and how she facilitates relationships with her students has a notable impact on what passes for social education in her classroom.

Through formal and informal interviews, classroom observations, and artifact analysis this study portrays the educational perspectives of two exemplary United States' history teachers. By placing the experience based narratives of the participants at the center, I have attempted to describe and explain their epistemological perspectives as grounded within their everyday thoughts and actions;

essentially their practical theories. My most significant findings are that teachers' do theorize, and that their theories matter. Their theories matter because they influence the types of educational materials and experiences students will be exposed to, the types of learning skills they will develop, and the kinds of messages they will receive about our collective lives. Teacher perspectives also impact the understandings students will develop about democratic citizenship and the ways in which they interact with others to address social issues. Therefore, the nature of a teacher's social education theory does have an bearing on life in a democratic society.

Implications for teacher education include encouraging pre-service teachers to reflect upon who they are and want to be as professionals, providing opportunities for them to interview teachers about perspectives, and using field experiences to further explore practical theory building. Suggestions for the classroom teacher include connecting students to social issues by exposing them to multiple perspectives, examining bias in historical interpretation, and telling stories about the common persons' role in history. Finally, this study provides additional support for the idea that building classroom environments, in which democratic interactions are modelled, allows students to discuss and practice participatory citizenship.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past few years I have been asked many times by well meaning (and somewhat interested) friends what my research study is about. I usually reply that I am concerned with the personal theories of teaching that social educators use to direct and inform their practice. The most common reply is "hmmm?" To this I add, by way of explanation, that I believe we are all actors within our own domain; that we develop reasons for our actions and build further actions upon our assumptions, our understandings, and our experiences. Within each of our lives, we think and move to solve the everyday problems of our particular existence. In my study, I say, I am attempting to speak with and observe teachers in the daily enactment of their professional roles. By being there, I hope to develop some understanding of the social action of teaching. More specifically, I add (if they still are listening), I am interested in how United States history teachers perceive and present issues of democracy. These issues include many things, but mostly have to do with the highly contested arena of values education in the preparation of our children for democratic citizenship.

This study is not primarily about how things are or how

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they ought to be. It is not an attempt to verify some ultimate truth, nor is it a philosophical inquiry. This is an investigation of the theories and practices of two United States history teachers as they struggle with the goals, issues, and questions of social education in their classrooms. In this work I will discuss these teachers' perspectives on democracy, citizenship education, history instruction, values education, teaching, and learning, as well as their views of the roles of students, teachers, schools, communities and society in social education. My voice and the voices of these teachers will weave together through the work. I will use this chapter to explain my perspective on the most important issues captured in the social education literature, the three findings chapters to describe and explain the perspectives of my teachers about themselves, their theories, and practices and the final chapter to discuss implications for social education. I hope that in the everyday details of the voices and the lives of these two teachers the reader will see what I have seen; that their perspectives have a crucial and definitional impact upon what social education is in their classrooms.

Theoretical lenses

I wear contact lenses and, unlike glasses which I look through aware of their edges and limits, my contact lenses become a part of my eye. Unless a speck of dust lodges underneath I am unaware of their presence. Theoretical lenses

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are like this, some we are aware of, but others are more imbedded in our assumptions, more a part of our unexamined selves. Many things that the two teachers said and did in this study were consistent with what I have read in the literature on social education. Some insights the teachers attributed to outside sources, others were from within, and still others were done without spoken awareness. It is not my goal to match my teachers' thoughts and practices with the ideas expressed in specific writings or schools of thought about social education. In fact, neither of my teachers ever referenced a theorist by name when discussing their goals, plans, or practices. While they are unlikely to dispute that their ideas were influenced by what they read, their perspectives were of a whole, an integration of many things not talked about in individual parts. Therefore, it would seem disingenuous of me to present it otherwise.

As a result, this literature review is an attempt to articulate my lenses, the ones I wore into this study which concern my knowledge and understanding of the issues of social education, and to place the questions of this research project into the academic discourse of this field. These are not my only lenses, they are just one set I used to interpret what I was seeing and hearing. It is important to note that this focus does not exclude the social education issues that were close to the hearts and minds of my teachers. In fact, many of their concerns resembled those of academic writers. These shared issues in social education, involving what should be

taught and how, serve as the nucleus of this literature review. In line with my expressed goal of investigating teachers' perspectives, I use this space to examine some of these broader issues of social education and their impact on the classroom teacher. More specifically, I will emphasize theories that concentrate on the role of the teacher as an active and reflective practitioner.

Social Education: Hopes, dreams, debates, conflicts

Most parents have some idea about what they hope their children will gain from public education. They want them to be prepared for employment, college, and the everyday tasks of life. Equally important to us, as a nation, is what we want all our children to learn in school. Opinions regarding the appropriate educational content and strategies to sustain and improve our democratic country span the political spectrum. Some citizens advocate indoctrination in values that benefit particular interests, while others value training students with the knowledge and skills necessary to solve present and future social problems. Many think little social improvement is required, while others wish to foster radical change in the social fabric of our society. The long standing political conflict over the appropriate socialization of school children has taken place in many venues, including the national press, legislative bodies, community politics, churches and the courts. On the front lines are school districts, individual schools, teachers and students.

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This broad and constantly shifting debate over social-ization spawned many educational reform efforts during the past two centuries. These reforms include the establishment of the social studies, a curriculum area dedicated to the development of _good_ citizens (Barth, 1984). Social studies educators have disputed the definition of good citizenship and the educational practice necessary to develop good citizens since before the field was recognized by the National Education Association in 1916 (Spring, 1990). This confusion surrounding the goals and purposes of social education has contributed to the inability of reform efforts to produce substantive changes in the classroom (Stanley, 1985).

Much of what is taught as social studies can be characterized as the transmission of fragmented pieces of history (facts) without controversy and context (Sirotnik, 1983, Davis & Woodman, 1992). Students learn little about the complex society they confront daily, and even less about their role in its maintenance and change. Socializing children into any type of political order can be seen as an ideo-logically loaded practice. The way we have done this in the past, despite efforts at reform, has primarily served to maintain traditional political interests. The transmission of the dominant view of democratic citizenship has been widely criticized as non-participatory and undemocratic by many social education theorists (Greene, 1988). If past reform efforts have made little change, what can public schools do to improve citizenship education?

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The first question to ask is can public education claim any definitional role in a debate over the meanings of democracy? Many critical theorists suggest that the terms of this debate have been so long controlled by dominant powers that opportunities for open and widespread public discussion have been significantly limited (Apple & Beane, 1995). In fact, the perpetuation of traditional views of democracy have determined many of the educational experiences students have in the classroom:

> Conventional notions of dialogue and democracy assume rationalized individual subjects capable of agreeing on universalizable and fundamental moral principles that become self-evident when subjects cease to be self-interested and particularistic about group rights (Ellsworth, 1989)

Some education theorists, including Ellsworth, have argued that individuals are not fully rational or disinterested, nor are moral principles universalizable. They argue that conventional ideas about democracy limit the types of discussion that students have about the meanings of participatory governance. The "self-evidence" that students are usually asked to seek is merely the uncovering of dominant views of citizenship and democracy. They are not invited to participate in defining democracy (Dewey, 1938), but required to recite the political rhetoric of the powerful. The recent backlash against multicultural education (as *political correctness*) can be seen as an example of the unwillingness of those with the greatest power to allow challenges to dominant views of democracy (Weiler, 1993).

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If we, as teachers and writers concerned with social education, are to engage ourselves and our students in a dialogue beyond hegemonic debate, we may need our curriculum to pose some difficult questions. Does it challenge dominant definitions of democracy and critically examine the surrounding debate? Does it include a wide variety of social issues, even those not at the center of current political interest? In a broadened dialogue, status quo definitions of democracy should not serve as the sole evaluators of our students' inquiries. A curriculum with an unbalanced focus on traditional values like individualism, success through determination, ambition and competition (Noddings, 1988) limits our students' critical analysis. Including the many non-political roles citizens have played in the development of our varied social values may extend their understanding of democracy and create more tools for evaluation. If "the most powerful meaning of democracy is found not in glossy political rhetoric, but in the details of everyday life" (Apple & Beane, 1995, p. 103) our discussions with our students may need more of these details. A curriculum which includes many points of view does not undermine democracy, but is at its essence (Greene, 1988). As James Banks (1985) says:

> We need citizens who are not only acutely aware
> of the characteristics of democracy and committed
> to its ideals, but who are also aware of the
> inconsistencies in our ideals and our behaviors.
> (p. 266)

Social education is not for the weak of heart. But as

social educators, we too are sometimes caught within the rhetoric of the national debate about values socialization. Many of us have passionate goals within the reasons we write and teach; coveted values we wish to communicate. Yet, as teachers and writers, the complexity of our task is staggering, the controversy is often disheartening, and the opportunity for an individual to facilitate transformative change almost non-existent. Social educators are also divided across many lines including class, ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, ideology, professional position, and power. These differences often make it difficult for us to form shared passions and to practice the type of democratic communities many of us wish to model for our students (Kozol, 1981). Political rhetoric and the conditions of the debate sometimes divide us from one another, as we struggle to find some connections for ourselves and our students.

What is it that we do not know? What is it that we do not do? Perhaps many things. But one matter of importance is the seeming lack of constructive dialogue among writers, teachers and others concerned with social education within our democratic society (Hartoonian, 1991). After all, social education does not want for ideal visions of the democratic classroom. They have been with us, at least, since John Dewey began writing about classroom environment in the early 1900's. Many of these ideas are exciting and substantive, and have been incorporated into major and minor reform movements. But like many educational reforms, they often travel

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hierarchically with little input from those most involved with their implementation. Frustration abounds. Teachers struggle to implement democratic education reforms that ignore many of the obstacles they face (McNeil, 1986), and theorists lament the mutations their recommendations become in the classroom (Zilversmit, 1993).

Perhaps one way to foster more productive dialogue is to closely examine the classroom from the perspectives of the participants. Fortunately, in the past twenty years, more researchers and practitioners have written about daily experiences with democratic education. These reports, though limited in number, draw attention to the considerable influence that teachers' viewpoints have on educational practices. They show that when participants' perspectives are heard, new understandings are found and a broader picture of the social education classroom emerges (Apple & Beane, 1995). We see that who teachers are, what they think, and how they interact with their students are important aspects of what happens daily in the name of social education. Constructive dialogue may require attention to this information. This study attempts to add to this dialogue by listening carefully to the perspectives of two teachers as they construct visions of social education through their work. These are visions that involve them as social actors, theorizers, and builders of classroom communities.

Teachers as Social Actors

A social actor, most simply put, is anyone acting through their role or relationships with others to influence social outcomes. Teaching social studies is, by this definition, a social action. Even those teachers who claim neutrality and objectivity in the world of values education are communicating certain values about society in general, and about the individual's social role. There is no privileged vantage point from which any one person can stand above the fray of society's normative negotiations (Whitson & Stanley, 1995). We all inhabit positions that, in many ways, block us from really discerning others' perspectives. Therefore, any teacher who is engaged in the endeavor of teaching is involved in social action of some kind without being able to claim neutrality. In other words, teachers' values find their way into the classroom in one form or another.

If social studies teachers are social actors in this sense, then who they are seems important to what they teach. The common practice of trying to "teacher proof" curriculum packages not only underestimates the impact of individual teachers on learning outcomes, but also fails to recognize the impossibility of erasing differences between teachers (Giroux, 1985). In the name of equal education, differences (in teachers and students) are often glossed over to create standard curricula. This approach seems to serve few students well, least of all those who are most unlike the norm. Again the dominant class receives most of the benefits, and our

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definition of equality remains limited to those things that are alike (Apple, 1985). No matter how fair standardized curriculum sounds to some, it remains impossible to implement as teachers, for the most part, do not see themselves as disseminators of the party line. Rather, many see themselves as social actors who interpret educational goals and objectives with and for their students. In a notable study, 70% of teachers surveyed characterized their most pressing daily dilemmas as ethical problems arising in themselves and with their students concerning what and how to teach (Lyons, 1990). A curriculum package, no matter how teacher proof, is interpreted by an individual with her own ideas, perspectives, and translations. Getting to know who teachers are seems a more productive path than trying to control for their variability.

So who are teachers? Most are women, 90% are white, 75% are middle class, 57% say they are politically moderate, 76% say they teach traditional values, and 72% believe the United States is an open society in which achievements are a direct result of effort (Leming, 1991). Across most of these demographic characteristics, teachers seem to represent the status quo. Numerous studies have confirmed that most social educators teach traditional values as well (Thornton, 1992). There may be a variety of reasons for this including the above demographics. Other reasons may be institutional structures and expectations which limit what teachers do in the classroom (McNeil, 1988, Schwab, 1985), social pressures students are

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under from peers to conform to certain ways of receiving an education (Cusick, 1991), and public political pressures to teach certain values (Nelson, 1992). However, all of this is still interpreted by the individual teacher as she plans and executes her professional actions. A glance beneath these surface definitions of who teachers are and the social contexts in which they work seems necessary to our comprehension.

Teachers' views of themselves and their reasons for being educators are important to understanding the social action of teaching. If it is true that a teacher's most significant daily dilemmas involve ethics and morals, then it is clear that how she views herself weighs heavily in the interactions of teaching. A number of studies confirm the close relationship between who the teacher says she is and how she talks about her job (Kelchtermans, 1993, Calderhead, 1993). For those doing the job of a teacher, Lyons (1990) found:

> There is a sense of living up to who you are, of yourself, your professionalism, your expertise, your values (p. 200)

Like many other professional roles, teaching can be seen as an ongoing process of development, a continuous social construction of the self. The ways in which a teacher thinks about her roles, and the portrayal of her teaching self to others can be seen as a kind of professional "life making" (Bruner, 1987). This is a life making process in which self-image, self-esteem, motivation, task perception, and potential

for growth play important roles in the ongoing evaluation of what it means to be a professional (Kelchtermans, 1993). In other words, the reasons she teaches, the values she holds, her evaluation of her effectiveness in reaching her goals, her satisfaction with her particular role, and her perceptions of what it means to be a good teacher are some of the concerns a teacher attends to in building a professional life. This life is constructed on a daily basis, within her interactions with students, colleagues, administrators and others in the educational community. And if she is a woman, as most teachers are, she may be especially concerned with understanding others' beliefs, opinions, and perspectives (Belenky et al, 1986). Perhaps she "steps into" teaching, bringing her human self into her relationships with her students and others. The professional becomes personal, and the personal becomes professional.

I like this view of the teacher as a social actor, struggling to create a professional sense of self. In this idea we can see the human face of teaching. It involves the daily decisions of how and what to teach, and how to react to surrounding opportunities and limitations. Within this view of teaching also live the seeds of change. In fact, some think that to be able to perceive institutions as changeable we must look at them in this way; we must speak in the "first person" (Kozol, 1981). Striving to leave the humanness of teachers out of the academic environment is not only impossible, but also is undesirable. Openly recognizing the

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role teachers have in interpreting and defining social education "as human beings showing their complexities, view points, hesitations, dreams, and passions" (Kozol, p. 12) enlarges our understanding of education and teaches our students about the human face of social action.

Teachers as Theorizers

Teachers fulfill their roles as social actors through the everyday decisions they make in their classrooms. These decisions are based upon the teachers' own knowledge and the assumptions they make about how and what should be taught in the name of social education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1988). Their assumptions may be influenced by many things including certain theories of teaching, personal views about social issues, prior educational experiences, district expectations, student needs, and available resources. In most cases, the individual teacher creates plans, implements strategies, and evaluates her success from within her understanding of her professional role. This is an everyday process of making decisions based on personal understanding and within the context of the school. According to Calderhead (1993) it is important:

> to recognize that the knowledge teachers use in
> planning is highly specific; relating to particular
> children, school contexts, or curriculum materials,
> and to recognize that planning also involves
> issues of values and beliefs (p. 15).

An individual teacher's everyday theory, in essence,

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helps her make sense of her everyday decisions. It provides a feeling of structure and consistency, a way to frame assumptions and actions. It is not usually a theory which can be pulled out of context and examined easily. As said before, it happens in an ongoing process. Even teachers themselves may have trouble articulating their theories in a comprehensive way apart from the everyday decisions through which they are evidenced (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1988). In this section we will consider some of the theory building done by teachers, and more specifically, the varied ways the social education literature attempts to influence this process.

Teachers hold various epistemological stances. In other words, they differ in their views of what knowledge is, what is valuable to know, and in their understandings of the ways people relate to knowledge. Borrowing heavily from Nora Lyons (1990), three questions can be asked to assist in the uncovering of teachers' theory building positions. Lyons calls these three constructions "the epistemological interactions of teaching" (p. 208):

> (1) What is the teacher's stance toward herself as a knower? What are the implicit and explicit assumptions she makes about knowledge and about her role in knowledge construction?
>
> (2) What is the teacher's stance toward her students as knowers and learners? Her assessment of her students as knowers determines how the teacher identifies goals, strategies and evaluations to enhance student development.
>
> (3) What is the teacher's stance toward knowledge of her subject matter or discipline in interactions of learning? Her view of the nature of content knowledge shapes the learning tasks she devises.

Her understanding of her subject matter interacts
with her assumptions about students as knowers and
influences the ways she collaborates with students
in knowledge construction, interpretation and
translation.

One of the most important goals of this research study is to examine and discuss these three epistemological interactions of teaching with our two educators. But for now, our task is to lay a foundation for understanding these interactions using some of the social education literature. More specifically, we will look at writers who recognize the importance of the epistemological positions of teachers and try to influence their view of themselves as knowers, their view of students as knowers, and their understandings of the knowledge of social studies education across the questions outlined above. We will examine literature that addresses teachers' perspectives about themselves and their students, their views on social studies knowledge, and the interactions of learning.

Teachers' views of themselves and their students as knowers

Historically, we, as a nation, have held high ex-pectations for our teachers (Johnson, 1989). We have required them to demonstrate a mastery of the content they teach, as well as expertise in the necessary pedagogical practices. For the most part, we have expected them to be models of the highest morality, and have vested them with the responsibilities of unquestionable authority. Therefore, it

may be difficult for them to admit they might be wrong, mistaken, biased, or subjective. We, as a nation, have consistently asked for more credentials and devised more educational requirements to guarantee teacher authority (Johnson). We have asked for teacher proof curriculum and standardized testing to minimize the effect of human frailty (Giroux, 1985). To guarantee the authority of the position, a view of knowledge that is product based is upheld. In this scenario, social studies has to be seen as information which can be transferred from the teacher to the student directly, like depositing money into a bank (Friere, 1970). Unfortunately, this traditional view of the teacher has been at the center of social education for at least eight decades. The transmission of social science information from teacher, as authority figure, to student, as passive recipient (Cuban, 1982) has been the primary mode of instruction.

In this transmission model, passing along information is the focus of social education. While the content of the curriculum has been argued vehemently over time, it most often resembles mainstream culture, knowledge, and values (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977). The prevailing role of teacher as authority may have many costs. First, it might narrow our view of acceptable knowledge by seeing it as that which can be taught objectively and within status quo boundaries (Stanley, 1992). Second, it may set up teachers to fail the litmus test of infallibility and cause the broader public to blame them for our many social problems (Hartoonian, 1991). Third, it

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might alienate our students from participation in their own education (Apple & Beane, 1995). And finally, it may allow us to overlook that what we *know* is an unfinished part of an ongoing process. If knowledge is seen more as a process in which we know some things, search for others, and realize there is much we may never know, then education can refocus on the processes of learning (Ellsworth, 1989). Do not misread me here, subject knowledge is crucial to this process. In fact, the more teachers know about their discipline area the more willing they are to participate in non-teacher controlled instruction (Muskin, 1991). But information is only a tool in the ongoing workings of knowing and understanding. Discipline knowledge is limited and constantly changing and is better seen as imperfect renderings of reality, not as indisputable facts (Mathison, 1994).

It seems that some social education teachers view knowledge as universal facts, others see knowledge within an ongoing process of better understanding. While traditional instruction dominates current practices in social education, there have been some cases in which teachers' views of knowledge as an ongoing process have influenced their educational practices and subsequent student outcomes. In two notable studies by Sylvester (1994) and Harwood and Hahn (1990), the researchers found that teachers who viewed their discipline area of history as incomplete, ideologically biased, and conflict filled devised strategies which allowed their students to participate in discussing, analyzing, and

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evaluating social education content. Harwood and Hahn reported that controversial discussions of social education information were positively correlated with increased political participation, positive political attitudes, greater interest in current events, stronger perceptions of civic competence and expanded student initiated social/political discussions. It seems that teachers who viewed knowledge as something constructed in interactions with and among their pupils were more likely to encourage a similar perspective in their students (Pagano, 1988, Lyons, 1990).

Sharing ownership of knowledge involves the teacher in assuming a different role in relation to her students. If she admits her partial knowledge then she places before her students her human, subjective self. She places the *I* back into teaching by accepting her imperfect knowledge, and brings students into the *we* of learning (Kozol, 1981). She shows herself as "an adult who learns in public" (Atwell, 1989, p. 10). Establishing spaces in which students and teachers feel safe to pursue the *pedagogy of the unknowable* requires high levels of trust and commitment (Ellsworth, 1989). It involves valuing students for their experience and knowledge, listening to them openly as they attempt to make sense of the world, and believing in their ability to be successful (Belenky, et al, 1986). Liking children is not enough reason to teach. Rather open discussions about relationships, social responsibility, and the "ethics of caring" become the primary concerns of the social education classroom (Noddings, 1988).

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Building these environments is not easy. It may be especially difficult to overcome the limits of the institutional structures of schooling (McNeil, 1986). In many ways the machine of education overwhelms the changes an individual teacher and her students can make in the classroom (Kohl, 1967). But in some respects, teaching students to see the bias in school knowledge, to question authority, and to develop their understandings may be an irreversible process. If students see themselves as interpreters of knowledge, essentially as knowers, then it becomes more difficult to tell them they are not. But can we pass the responsibility for institutional change onto our students? Perhaps we already pile too much obligation on their young shoulders. The writers I have cited in this section encourage us as teachers, academics, administrators, politicians, and citizens, to support new relationships among teachers and students. Ellsworth (1989) proposes a way to begin this dialogue:

> If you can talk to me in ways that show you
> understand that your knowledge of me, the world,
> and *the Right thing to do*, is partial,
> interested, and potentially oppressive, and if I
> can do the same then we can work together on
> shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing
> circumstances in which students of difference can
> thrive (p. 322).

Teachers' views of social studies knowledge

Are there constructed circumstances in which all of our students can thrive? Social education theorists have attempted to answer this question for a number of years. They

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have tinkered with the content of the curriculum, the strategies of teaching, and more recently, have challenged the epistemological frames of the social studies curriculum and related disciplines. While many theorists encourage social studies teachers to recognize that curriculum knowledge is partial and ideologically slanted, the persistence of traditional instruction can be disheartening. As mentioned above, teachers who view the content of social education as incomplete and often biased, endeavor to teach their students in the same ways. Those who see the curriculum as factual, or are unwilling to teach otherwise for institutional or personal reasons, teach their students not to question the authority of status quo interpretations. I believe this latter position has become uncomfortable for many teachers in recent years. People whose stories have not been included in the status quo versions of social education knowledge are wondering aloud where their stories are, and are pushing for a reinterpretation of our collective social past and present.

The question becomes in our pluralistic society, what content best represents our social complexity? Among others, many multicultural and feminist educators say it is *not* the narrow version of content which has always dominated public school curriculum (Banks, 1987, Nieto, 1992, Sleeter & Grant, 1988). White, European and male perspectives which have generally characterized this content have been challenged by educators who advocate the inclusion of previously unheard voices. Just adding new faces to the curriculum is not

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sufficient, however. Better representations of social reality require critical examinations of the criteria which determine what is seen as important to know (Noddings, 1992). The traditional standards used to assess the validity of school knowledge may prevent us from seeing different ways of defining social positions and values. Sources of information that have been considered inappropriate including fiction, narrative, biography, autobiography, letters, and oral histories have been suggested to fill the gaps in the curriculum (Greene, 1993). In addition, explicit study of the struggles of minority groups against ongoing discrimination, prejudice, and oppression (Sleeter & Grant, 1988) further challenge assumptions about our society.

Disagreements among historical educators also offer some important insight into the problems with bias in the social studies curriculum. Many believe that the goals of social education are best served by focusing on the common person's role in history, rather than just those in prominent political positions (Nash, 1989, Zinn, 1980). The conflicts and controversy that surround our society need to be included in the curriculum to make it more relevant and realistic (Davis & Woodman, 1992). Again, emphasis is placed on including students in the construction of knowledge by presenting many divergent stories about our collective past. Through these stories students can see that people and circumstances have been viewed in a variety of ways, and most importantly, that status quo versions of history which support dominant social

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values are suspect. And perhaps, to ultimately learn that if common men and women have been involved in social change, then they, as students, may have an important role in society (Kozol, 1981).

There are many ways that writers have tried to influence teachers' views of social studies knowledge. Multiple and critical perspectives are added to textbooks, curriculum guides, pedagogical strategies, teacher magazines, in-service programs, and national guidelines. Some have been incorporated into the classroom as apolitical addenda, deflated in meaning and impact (Apple, 1985). Others have been used by teachers to change the way their students think about our society, past and present. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has been involved in the revisioning of social education on a broad scale. Their national standards, published in 1995, asked teachers to view the content and processes of the discipline in non-traditional ways. NCSS's stated outcomes for all social studies students reads:

> The informed social studies student applies
> personal and public experience to content
> perspectives plus habits of mind and behavior
> that respect the relationship of education
> (learning) to the responsibility to promote
> the common good. (p. x)

According to these standards every student should be taught to view the content from multiple perspectives including personal, academic, pluralistic, and global. In addition, the standards call for the teaching of "reflective thinking" which engages students in critically analyzing

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citizenship, public policies, democratic ideals, and the definition of the common good. NCSS units are to be organized thematically around ten areas including culture, individual identity, groups, institutions, power/authority, governance, and civic ideals and practices. While the guidelines have their critics from many points along the political continuum, in essence they ask teachers to expand their view of the curriculum, and to include their students in the inter-pretation and construction of social studies knowledge.

Teachers do hold various epistemological stances. They do see themselves, their students, and the content of their discipline in different ways. The way in which an individual teacher views knowledge is integral to the everyday decisions that she makes in her professional role. Her construction of knowledge, along Lyon's (1990) three dimensions, is central to her theories of teaching. In this section, I have presented many of the arguments which urge teachers to view their knowledge as partial, interested, and continually changing. This perspective seems to influence a teacher's conception of her role, her relationships with her students, and her social studies goals and practices.

Teachers' as builders of classroom communities

Active student involvement is not a product of learning theory that accidently wandered into social studies. Rather, it is at the center of what social studies has always wanted to do, namely prepare students as citizens in a participatory

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democracy. Dewey (1938) set the pattern by claiming the importance of having students practice democracy through a process of reflective inquiry, not unlike that discussed in the recent NCSS standards. His vision had many profound and lasting effects on education, not the least of which was the idea that classrooms could serve as models of democratic community. It was more than fifty years ago that Dewey demonstrated in his Chicago lab school how this might be accomplished. Many theorists and practitioners have elaborated and implemented his recommendations with greater and lesser degrees of precision and success (Zilversmit, 1993). Many of Dewey's views of classroom democracy remain compelling, especially his emphasis on allowing students to make decisions about what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. To cultivate the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in democracy, Dewey believed students needed to practice choosing relevant issues, discussing and analyzing diverse opinions, and acting upon their own decisions (Westbrook, 1991).

Maxine Greene, in The Dialectic of Freedom (1988), explains the necessity within a democracy for the creation of public spaces for the collective definition of social issues and for imagining possible alternatives. She sees traditional education as not providing these opportunities. In fact, she believes it isolates students from each other by highlighting individual achievement and personal gain. This supports the notion that freedom from interference (negative freedom) is

the primary definition of freedom in United States democracy. Greene reminds us that Jefferson viewed freedom as collective and active, as the responsibility and honor of participation in shared self-government (positive freedom). She affirms that Dewey shared this positive conception of freedom and viewed schooling as the opportunity to educate citizens about their own power in a democracy to make decisions within the context of relationship and responsibility for others. Educators are encouraged by Greene to create these public spaces in their classrooms by helping students look beyond status quo perspectives and to see that autonomy alone does not guarantee freedom:

> Rather than posing dilemmas to students or presenting models of expertise, the caring teacher tries to look through students' eyes, to struggle with them as subjects in search of their own projects, their own ways of making sense of the world. Reflectiveness, even logical thinking remain important; but the point of cognitive development is not to gain an increasingly complete grasp of abstract principles. It is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world (Greene, 1988, p. 120).

Are there teachers who have done this? While not many studies can be found in the literature, a few compelling stories illustrate that teachers are experimenting with community building ideas. I would like to conclude this literature review with an example of a teacher who challenged conventional views of content knowledge and pedagogical practice in social education. Barbara Brodhagen, a 7th grade social studies teacher, described her experiences with

reforming her classroom environment in *The Situation Made Us Special (1995)*.

Thirty-six students were randomly assigned to Brodhagen's classroom at the beginning of the school year. This resulted in a heterogeneously mixed group, including a few students who had been labelled learning disabled. Brodhagen described her approach as "constructivist"; one in which the students and teacher planned the curricular and instructional aspects of the class together. The class developed and ratified a constitution describing their rights and shared responsibilities. In groups, students took questions that they had about themselves and the world, and developed themes to comprise the structure of the curriculum. They identified activities which used differing learning styles to explore these areas of study. The class decided to use the lenses of democracy, dignity, and diversity from their constitution to investigate their curricular themes. They asked tough questions, sought answers both in and out of class, initiated a guest speaker series, and organized and participated in parent-teacher conferences. Finally, they used peer and self-evaluations to assess their work.

What about this situation made this class special? There may be many individual and group characteristics which made it unique, but this classroom community was successful because the teacher shared power and authority openly with her students (Apple & Beane, 1995). It was participatory because the teacher flattened the traditional classroom hierarchy.

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The essence of their community was the belief that all members could articulate and act upon their goals and purposes for learning (Belenky et. al, 1986, Atwell, 1989). Who the teacher was, her epistemological perspective, and her commitment to modelling democratic community made this situation special. By collectively and critically examining classroom roles and goals and through imagining more egalitarian social relationships, Brodhagen created the trust necessary to the practice of participatory democracy.

Many people have many things to say about the appropriate preparation of our children for their individual and collective lives in a participatory democracy. While the public debate about citizenship education has had some influence, how teachers interpret their daily work within the context of this debate, in the districts which they work, and through their own professional lenses also matters. This study poses that who teachers are, what they think, and what they do in the name of social education are integral to our understanding of the field, but also to our plans for change. By focusing on teacher narratives with the purpose of investigating underlying epistemological interactions as described by Lyons, this study will employ important aspects of a feminist epistemological orientation. In other words, I am assuming that teachers' views of themselves as knowers, their perspectives on their students as knowers, and the ways in which they view the knowledge of United States history impacts their students' experiences of social studies. I am proposing that by

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listening carefully to these perspectives which include teachers' goals, experiences, motivations, obstacles, hopes, and passions, we will see social education as it is and as it can be.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODS

My questions and why they are important to me

While you are in the middle of forming a life, one of the only true advantages seems to be hindsight. Choices often appear reasonable at a given time, but you wonder if they create a whole, if they work together somehow to make sense out of commitments made, energy expended, and battles chosen. When I left counseling to pursue a doctorate in curriculum studies, most who knew me were quite shocked. Why not pursue a PhD in psychology, open a private practice, and continue working in the areas of human development to which I had already devoted some ten years? It was a good question. But knowing I had other interests aside from those reflected in my heretofore chosen profession, I tried to activate my hindsight to see what I could possibly want to study in such depth as is required by doctoral work. While counseling certainly rated high, I saw questions that I wanted to answer, things that I wanted to know that seemed to revolve around broader areas of social justice and education.

All I am able to conclude from these interests is that I am truly a product of my experiences and my relationships. My earliest memories from my childhood are of walking through a

busing riot in Boston, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Watergate, and my mom building a remedial reading program in a rural school district from scratch. I remember every summer reading all sorts of donated books to see whether they would be useful in her classroom. I remember long family discussions about social responsibility, social change, and the importance of equality. While my parents always offered us the freedom to chose our path in life, there was an underlying value expectation that we should contribute to the social good in some way. Two of us went like my Mom toward education, and two followed my father into science fields as medical researchers. Through many activities, I devoted time to learning more about the ways that I might offer my contributions.

Education was not always my first choice. In fact, as an undergraduate, I majored in political science with the expressed wish of going to law school. I had plans to work for a congressperson, or a social service agency on issues of social welfare. After being disappointed by the hegemony of the law and politics, I chose to follow the interests I had developed in counseling and college student development through my roles as a Resident Assistant and Executive Officer of the Student Association. This is how I ended up pursuing a Master's degree in counseling and a career as a college counselor. I now see that pursuing a PhD in social education has allowed me to unite a variety of these long held pursuits. Counseling, the act of working individually or in a group to

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assist in the growth and development of clients, is an educational function. And social justice issues, including my most persistent concerns for equality, access, participation, responsibility and freedom, are equally at home within political science, education, and counseling domains. While I could claim that this epiphany arose from some sort of spiritual and intellectual meditation, it really happened as a result of looking through the many papers I had written over time, from high school to the present, and seeing a clear line of topics no matter what the course. In fact, I had argued to change many course requirements to fit into my ongoing preoccupations.

So what are these questions that have given so much meaning to my academic and professional life? As a budding academic I would like to say they are profoundly original or at least highly intellectual, but in fact, they are excessively practical. In a nutshell, I have always worried about social issues of equality; I have always been concerned about issues of community; I have always wondered about the lack of faith in education and teachers; and more recently, I have been interested in how education tries to influence the individual development of students in socially responsible ways. From these questions and concerns, I not only chose my graduate program, but my topic for my dissertation. I decided to narrow down these broad questions for this project and to focus on finding some responses to more specific versions of these questions within a distinctive context. I chose an

obvious classroom study, United States history, to ask these
more specific questions about social responsibility and
participatory democracy:

> (1) What goals and purposes do United States
> history teachers claim for their curriculum?
> (2) What is their perspective of United States
> history? What content do they think best
> represents our social complexity? What do they
> think about claims of bias, exclusion and
> ideological influences?
> (3) How do they define democracy and citizenship?
> What knowledge and skills do they see as necessary
> to develop participatory citizens?
> (4) What kinds of classroom experiences do they
> employ to further their goals? What resources and
> materials do they prize?
> (5) What types of classroom relationships do
> teachers value? How do these influence their
> classroom climate? Do students participate in
> classroom decision making? Are students valued as
> knowers as well as learners?
> (6) What types of conditions and obstacles
> influence the goals, content, instructional
> practices and social relationships in the two
> classrooms? Are they discussed with the students?
> (7) Do the teachers consider themselves theorizers?
> What are their perspectives on the processes of
> their practice? In what ways do they most commonly
> reflect upon and develop their own practice?
> (8) What are the broader social conditions that
> influence the teachers' abilities to theorize?
> What forums do they have to articulate their own
> theories of praxis?

My goals for this project, in summary, were twofold. I
wished to learn how the perspectives of individual teachers
concerning issues of social justice and participatory
democracy shaped their curriculum goals and practices. I also
wanted to learn what these perspectives attempted to teach
students about democracy and social responsibility.

Choosing a method to match my goals

To try to describe and analyze someone else's perspective seems to require a lot of details about the individual and her social milieux. Since the purpose of qualitative research is to specifically describe a phenomenon within a particular context, I found my starting point. I was anxious to wade into the environment and to pull out some "thick" (Geertz, 1973) descriptions of the voices of the two United States history teachers and the interactions of their classrooms. I wanted to focus on what my teachers had to say about their work, and what they said and did in the name of social education. In other words, I wished to understand particular perspectives by attending to the language and interactions of my participants (Calderhead, 1933). To accomplish this kind of phenomenological research I chose a protocol which included extensive interviews with each teacher, other opportunities for more informal discussions with the teachers, significant classroom observation, student interviews, and chance opportunities to speak with other members of the schools. With these ideas in mind I returned to the qualitative research literature to seek advice and anticipate problems.

Many qualitative researchers have criticized traditional qualitative research for claiming a privileged objective viewpoint from which they interpret the meanings of the actors in the study. They have extended qualitative methodology to include comments upon the social/political characteristics of the interviewer, the participants' feelings about being

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studied, the quality of the relationships between the researcher and participants, and attempts by the participants to use the researcher as an information source (Oakley, 1982). My study involved extensive repeated interviewing in which most of the above concerns were crucial. Oakley, a feminist researcher, found that the intimacy necessary to establish trusting relationships with female interviewees depends on reciprocity:

> It is clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer to interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest her own personal identity in the relationship. (p. 41)

In fostering a connection with the participants, I was explicit about my goals and methods, I provided access to all information from the study at all times to the participants, I assured them of confidentiality, I tried to answer their questions, I offered information, I carefully listened to their concerns and theories, I encouraged collaboration, and I tried to make resource referrals when asked. In addition, I recorded my ongoing comments about the development and characteristics of the research relationships.

While I found the relationship between the researcher and the participants was one aspect of the context of the study that was useful to explore in depth, other issues concerning the context required equal attention. My study attempted not only to record the discussion and actions of the classroom, but to actively question the commonsense assumptions

underlying them. Using the analytical methods of problematization and defamiliarization (Thomas, 1993), I looked broadly at how ideology influenced educational theory and practice within these two classrooms. Problematization is a process by which assumed definitions of situations and ideas are actively and critically examined, and defamiliarization looks at the same concerns from a variety of vantage points (i.e., gender, ethnicity, social class). The questions raised through this critical process were continually explored and used to inform the conceptual thematic frames generated by the study. This included constant critical examination of the ways in which I spoke and wrote about my findings.

Although I was informed by a variety of works, this research project, in theory and method, is consistent with important aspects of a feminist empistemological orientation. By placing the experience-based narratives of teachers at the center of this study, I have attempted to describe and explain two teachers' epistemological perspectives within their everyday thoughts and actions (Lyons, 1990), essentially their practical theories. The questions I asked, the methods I chose, and the focus of my findings, by and large, reflect this orientation. This is a social project for me as I believe that it is crucial that "those who have daily access, extensive experience and a clear stake in improving classroom practice" have more formal ways for their "knowledge of classroom teaching and learning to become part of the literature on teaching" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993, p. 5).

The implications of this social project for this study involved collaborative work with the participants in identifying research questions from the problems of practice, gearing findings toward practical applications for the classroom, and valuing teacher professional knowledge as a integral source of social educational theory. Closely examining the practical theories of professional educators not only supports teachers as *knowers*, but reminds us of the context in which education happens.

Choosing participants

In order to provide thick description of the teachers and their classrooms I limited this study to two teachers. I previously studied one of the teachers and wished to remain with her as I found her to be a thoughtful, articulate, and reflective practitioner. She graciously allowed me to continue interviewing her and sitting in her 10th grade United States history classroom. Mary, as I call her for this work, was in her mid-twenties, white, middle-class and from a more conservative area than her present school. She taught in a high school of 1,000 students who were mostly white middle to upper-middle class in a small, suburban district housing a liberal arts college.

The other teacher, Ruth, was recommended to me also as an exemplary practitioner by the Dean of her district. This recommendation was strongly echoed by other teachers and students. Ruth taught 8th grade United States history in the

school district in which she had attended. This middle school (6-8th grades) also had approximately 1,000 students. The district can be characterized as working class with a highly mixed ethnic composition (25% of Ruth's students were Asian American and African American). Ruth was white, middle-class, in her mid-thirties and had been teaching for six years at the time of the study. Prior to teaching she worked in banking for a number of years and completed her undergraduate and masters degrees, on a part time basis, before entering education. Both of these teachers were considered exemplary by me and by others. I chose to focus this work on out-standing teachers to offer a detailed description of theory and practice which is considered exceptional for the purpose of analysis and modelling. In a similar vein, Nel Noddings (1988) advises researchers to:

> purposefully seek out situations in which educators are trying to establish settings more conducive to moral growth, and study these attempts at length over a broad range of goals and with constructive appreciation. (p. 180)

Collecting Data

Of paramount importance to me initially was establishing strong working relationships with these two teachers. In our early meetings, I spent a great deal of time describing the goals of my research, as well as the mechanics, including how often I would like to visit and how the interviews would be conducted. In detailing my goals I constantly emphasized that my purpose was not evaluative, but constructive. I told them

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that I wanted to learn about what they did in the name of social education. I wanted to hear what they thought about their positions and how they characterized their role within the classroom, the school, the district, and the larger auspices of social education practice. My goal, I told them, was to present their stories of social education and to document what they did that made them popular and successful teachers. Mary had already read my pilot study, so she was confident in her understanding of my expectations of our relationship. She seemed to trust my methods and goals and welcomed the opportunity to discuss some of her own concerns and questions about her practice.

Initially, Ruth was not so sure despite my assurances about my intentions. It took a few interviews to make her more at ease with my presence in her life and her classroom. As someone recommended to her by her Dean, I anticipated her initial reaction might be one of hesitation. However, after a few weeks and a number of conversations, we connected across a similarity of concerns and ideas. While it is hard to characterize relationships that started in such a formal way as friendships, I believe now they have developed into both professional and personal connections. With Mary, I noticed this first when we met for lunch one weekend and hardly talked about work. With Ruth, I noticed this shift when talking with her on the phone. Her husband asked if it were for him, and she said "No, it's one of my girlfriends."

The formal interviews conducted for this study all took

place within the teachers' classrooms. I met with them each during their free periods and spent about forty-five minutes on average discussing their work. Each teacher was interviewed formally 11 times and informally, over the phone and over lunch, at least eight more times. While information gathered in the informal interviews was usually brought up by the teacher, I began all the formal interviews in the same way with the open ended question, "What has been going on in your class this week?" I chose to use open ended questions because they "better serve to conceptualize cultural knowledge than a deterministic grid" (Hamilton, 1993). I continued with open ended questions and verbal encouragements throughout the interviews to allow the teachers to arrange the agendas for their discussions. It is my belief that what is most important to someone usually rises to the surface in conversation, especially if the floor is open. Occasionally, I asked specific questions for clarification and sometimes would ask follow up queries from previous interview comments.

As the interviews went on, I found myself asking fewer questions to keep things going, and the teachers providing more and more direction to the interviews. I also found that most of the questions that I had about social education were addressed by the teachers in discussions of their own concerns. While I can attribute the thoughtful and meaningful data that I received from the participants to their own merits, I also feel that the open-ended nature of my questions and my expectations provided a connection that positively

facilitated the process and outcome of this study.

As mentioned, I was primarily interested in the teachers'
perceptions about their practice. I triangulated this
information with other sources of data including student
interviews, classroom observations, artifact analysis, and
short conversations with other involved parties, by will or
accident. I conducted open ended interviews with four students
from each school. I asked the teachers to choose the four
students, but to select a cross section based on their
interest in the course, class level, relationships with the
teacher, and grades received. Mary handed out twelve consent
forms to various students and the four who had them signed
first were interviewed by me. She allowed them time during
class to meet me in the hallway to discuss the course. I
assured each interviewee that this information would not be
shared with the teacher, and basically just asked for their
impressions of the course and the teacher. The only specific
question I used was "Do you think all ___ graders should take
United States history? Why or why not?" This question was
asked to all participants at the end of the interview. Ruth
chose four students from her class, who she also characterized
as a cross section. I met with these students during their
free periods in a guidance counselor's office provided by the
principal. All teacher and student interviews were audiotaped
and transcribed within a week to assist with further
questions.

I conducted classroom observations in both schools over

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the course of a year. I sat in on approximately 40 classes of Mary's and 40 of Ruth's. Half of the time, I attended classes once a week, alternating Mondays and Wednesdays. The other half, I attended classes in two to three day blocks allowing me to observe multiple day activities. For most of the time I observed the same classes, but occasionally, especially in Mary's school, switched classes to see a different group. During one semester in which Mary had a student teacher this was necessary in order to see Mary teach. During classroom observations I collected a variety of types of fieldnotes. Sometimes I would focus on what the teacher was saying, other times on student responses or reactions. Occasionally, I observed a small group at work on a project, focusing solely on their interactions. My fieldnotes were kept in a notebook, and although they were analyzed in their entirety for emerging theories, they were only transcribed in part for inclusion in this document.

Artifacts including handouts, tests, quizzes, project descriptions, curriculum guides, mission statements, syllabi, and reproduced articles were collected from the teachers. I also was allowed to view some student work, usually presented as examples by the teacher in interviews. While the artifacts were collected when I was in the classroom, I had enough to provide a pattern of typicality for both classrooms. Finally, conversations with administrators, other teachers, and students happened quite unexpectedly. I was asked to meet with both principals on the spot when I presented myself the

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first day. These meetings consisted of asking me to clarify my purpose, and of the principals providing unsolicited information about the goals and direction of their school. Other input included a guidance counselors' tour of the building, a couple of meetings with the Dean of social studies in Ruth's district, and comments from other teachers and students. Overall, it took one and one-half years to gather these voices together.

Analyzing Data

My first step was to transcribe all of the teacher interviews as I went along. This was important in forming follow-up questions, but also served a crucial role in preliminary data analysis. From the transcriptions, I organized my impressions of the data and began to categorize the emerging themes into codes. In developing these emergent codes I tried to listen to what the teachers stated as most important in their practice, while focusing somewhat on the questions that I had brought into the study. While in some cases my questions were altered, for the most part they were fairly parallel to the teachers' interests. I may have weighed the importance of a question differently, but I have tried in my findings to illustrate the tones and significance assigned to the issues by the teachers. This is not to say that I have excluded my voice, as this is both impossible and unnecessary. Rather, since I found the responses to my queries grounded within the teachers' descriptions of their

thoughts and actions, I have tried to be true to their source and expression. In Mary's and Ruth's descriptions I found consistent patterns of thoughts and actions which served as the framework for organizing and understanding the data.

To triangulate my initial findings, I used the developed codes to organize the other points of data including field-notes from classroom observations, artifacts, and student interview transcripts. In addition, I kept a journal of my impressions during both the data collection and analysis phase. This served to keep track of emerging ideas and themes as well as provide ongoing insight into my perceptions of the relationships I was forming with the participants. I used this journal to remind myself of questions I wished to clarify, either with my teachers or my dissertation advisors. As relationships were an important theme, my journal provided useful insights into the development of these connections with the teachers. I worked differently with the various types of data, clearly preferencing teacher interview data over the other forms as the main source of information about the teachers' perspectives. Building my findings chapters around this interview data obviously influenced the content, but also the tone, as much of it comes directly from the teachers. It was my desire, in representing their perspectives, to offer enough of their voices to authenticate my claims about their practices. While my views are heard within the selection, organization, and analysis of the data, I have attempted to render a faithful picture of the thoughts and practices of

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these two teachers.

The first findings chapter to emerge from the data was chapter 4, entitled "Teacher as theorizer". I believe this emerged first in the data for a few reasons. It coincides with my introductory goals for my project, which were to interview teachers about their curriculum perspectives and practices. Additionally, my early relationships with the participants formed around professional concerns, as befits initial purposeful interactions with people you barely know. The teachers willingly talked about themselves, but spoke mostly within the context of the types of questions I asked and the types of information that they thought I would want to hear. However, material for chapter four was enhanced and changed as I watched the patterns of what the teachers said and did over time. The findings concerning the relationships of teacher to students (chapter five) developed slowly throughout the process and relied both on what the teachers said to me about their classroom and on my observations of their interactions with their students. The autobiographical statements made by the teachers, found in chapter three, also were products of the positive development of our relationships. Like many relationships, you get to know someone better over time and through shared experiences.

Working toward a representation of teachers' perspectives

With this project, I have attempted to describe and explain the perspectives of two exemplary United States

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history teachers for the purpose of seeing how their views influenced their work. In trying to represent their voices I am sure that I have made errors, as a complex task like this would assume. I do feel, however, that I have captured the tone of both teachers' ideologies and practices. By using many interview excerpts within my findings, I believe that the reader will be able to hear the teachers' voices and decide for herself whether I have represented their visions of social education.

My position as *outsider* to these environments may have compromised my understanding and representation of the teacher, but I do think that it also had some benefits. One important contribution an outside view can offer is the opportunity for teachers to make sense out of their work to someone who does not share the same inside understandings. Both teachers commented on how much they enjoyed trying to explain what they thought and did in a broader and more holistic way. In addition, my position as an outsider may have allowed them more freedom to discuss opinions about the school that were politically problematic to share with insiders. While I am not making a case that the research method of this paper is the best way to look at teachers' perspectives, I am saying that it has some benefits that may not be realized in other ways.

With this work, I hope I have also offered another academic writing which values the inclusion of teachers in the ongoing discourse of social education. It is important to me

to support the work of classroom teachers by illustrating the ongoing contributions many teachers make everyday within the haze of competing political ideologies and dujour reforms. I see my responsibility as an academic in the field of social education, to continue with research of this kind, as well as to work to empower teachers to conduct reflective studies on their own. I am not sure that I can say that this particular work will assist with inclusion, encourage teachers to self-reflection, or give practitioners their professional due. Perhaps it only will serve as a starting point for me. But after having found little research concerning the perspectives of teachers, I experience this lack of practitioner voice as detrimental to the understanding of social education. If the people who shape education the most are so little heard, what can we really know about the actual goals and practices of social education? It is these questions that I think will be of enough ongoing interest to support my career as a researcher, and to inform my work as a teacher.

Chapter 3

DESCRIPTION OF TEACHERS AND INITIAL FINDINGS

A Stranger in a Strange Land

As a new person in both of these teachers' school con-
texts I saw my initial purpose as one of impression gathering.
Mostly I was quiet and concentrated on observing the visual
fields unfolding before me, both human and inanimate. It took
awhile to know both teachers and to feel comfortable within
their schools. Like any stranger I still remain uncertain in
my understanding of what I saw and heard. In this chapter I
describe my initial impressions of the teachers, their
schools, and their classroom interactions. Other chapters
will provide more detail about the theories and practices that
the teachers shared with me through their words and actions.

The first task, I believe, is to introduce you to Mary
and Ruth. To do this I will trace how I first met them and
share my beginning notions of their schools and their class-
rooms. I will comment upon the development of my rela-
tionship with each over the time I spent in their classrooms.
Then I will ask them to speak about why they chose to teach,
what their training was like, who they wanted to be as
teachers, and how they perceived their school environments.

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Finally, a summary of the characteristics that Ruth and Mary claimed as integral to their teaching success will be described. From all of these modes of introduction it is hoped that a pencil sketch will emerge of these two teachers that will serve as a guiding image in the further consideration of their theory and practice.

Mary

In the initial stages of project development, I discussed this research project with a faculty member at a nearby college. She immediately suggested that I speak to Mary as a possible participant. She characterized her as a young, but active, innovative, and reflective teacher. I telephoned Mary that evening to see if she would consider being involved in a pilot study. She asked a few questions, said yes, and invited me to her classroom to observe and interview her. We scheduled a date for the following week.

First impressions

I knew where the high school was because I had played tennis there a number of times over the past few summers. I arrived ten minutes early and only had to find the main office where I had arranged to meet Mary. I parked in what I thought was the front of the modern brick building, but there seemed to be no main entrance and signs for the "gym", "music center" and "art department" convinced me I was in the wrong place. I travelled back down the main road to a long winding side

entrance with a formal looking sign for the school. This looked promising. About a hundred cars were parked by the building where I also found a space. As I walked toward the building I searched for the appearance of a main entrance, but all the entries seemed like back doors. From this vantage point I could see that the school had many levels that did not stand atop each other in stories, but travelled up the incline of a graded hill. The building seemed squat because of the large brown square roofs that hung over most of the red brick. Long rectangular windows were encased upright along most of its visible faces.

I entered one of the back doors which made a peculiar sound which I associated with a broken lock. A chain hung on one of the outside handles and was held together with a padlock, maybe a replacement. Just beyond the door was a landing with steps going up to the right and a pair of glass doors to the left. I passed through the doors and headed generally toward the center of the building. I passed an empty cafeteria on the right then rounded a corner to see about eight long benches in rows fastened to the floor in front of another cafeteria entrance. A tall young man was sitting there alone and I asked him to direct me to the office. He politely, though confusedly, tried to answer my request. "It's really hard to get there from here" he said as he directed me through some more glass doors, some steps, more steps, more doors, rights, lefts.... Clearly overwhelmed by the task, he tried to explain it again. As he was on the

verge of taking out some paper to draw a map, I assured him that I would take his first few suggestions then ask someone else. He seemed relieved of the responsibility. After five minutes of twists, turns, doors, steps and three more guides I arrived at the front of the building where the main office was wedged in between the gym and the music center!

Unbelievably, I was still a few minutes early and the secretary invited me to sit on a soft couch in the main part of the office. This room was large with five secretarial desks arranged in two rows. There was no barrier separating the staff's area from the reception area. As I sat, three women were helping a female student select gifts from a school name catalog. They all were smiling and laughing and fully engaged in the task with the student. Other men and women (teachers and administrators) walked through the office continuously. Some stopped to inquire into the gift selection. When the buzzer sounded the end of second period the level of activity increased, but no one seemed particularly rushed. Students came into the office with questions and concerns, all of which were responded to pleasantly and respectfully. After a few minutes, the receptionist called down to my teacher's room, but got no answer. She asked a few adults near her if they had seen Mary. One responded, "She's in her room, I just left her a minute ago." The receptionist tried again, still no response. Now a number of people became interested in making sure I found Mary. A tall man with graying hair offered to walk me to her room, which I gratefully accepted.

As we walked, he asked if I found the school layout confusing and then explained its arrangement to my nodding head. Apparently the wings, which all have different floor numbers, were divided by subject area. Each wing also had several administrative assistants, and a few guidance counselor offices. Although not housed in the social studies wing, my tourguide was a guidance counselor of some tenure at the high school. As we walked, he told me more about the physical layout of the school and its demographics. Mary was just coming back to the room and greeted me with an apology for forgetting about our meeting. As we sat down, I briefly described the parameters of my project again to which she had no further questions. She seemed very comfortable with the format, focus, and potential outcomes of the research. She saw "no trouble" in granting me the interview time and invited me to observe whenever I was able. The rest of the period was taken up with a formal interview.

The first thing I noticed about Mary was her smile. It was warm and welcoming, with the kind of affect that makes you immediately comfortable in her presence. She seemed interested in listening to what I had to say, almost wanting to like me. It was the same greeting I have since seen her use everyday with her students. Mary was smaller in stature than most of her students, but she moved around the room with a quiet kind of gracefulness. She was soft spoken, both in individual conversations and in front of the class. She rarely raised her voice with her students, relying on a lifted

hand or a set of chimes to gain attention when needed. Though not loud, her voice was usually enthusiastic and animated. When talking to the class, she focused her attention on individual students, looking around from one face to the next. When students worked in groups, Mary circulated among them, grabbing a chair to join in rather than standing over them to address questions. I never saw her sitting at her desk, in fact her chair was always piled high with her coat and bags. She looked young, not much older than her students, but her presence clearly distinguished her from her pupils. Mary dressed nicely, but in a comfortable and casual way. Her room seemed to mirror this casual comfort as well.

The square classroom was of a pretty large size and had one floor to ceiling window on the far wall looking over a grass courtyard. The floor was of standard grayish linoleum and the walls seemed off-white, although being covered with pictures, photographs, and student collages of the 1920's made it difficult to tell. A long blackboard extended across the front wall and shorter one was on the side by the door. Most of the student desk/chair combinations were in uneven rows, as if they had been hastily moved back into position.

Mary's desk was in the front far corner covered with books, articles, handouts, newspapers, and student work. A laptop computer and small printer occupied center position on the desk, but was seen later on a nearby table for student use. Bookshelves ran above her desk and were crowded with history related books. More bookshelves were found in the

back of the room and included at least thirty different history textbooks and a hundred or more related fiction and nonfiction titles. The posters and photographs which covered the walls focused primarily on social history. Some examples included the great black migration, women in history, Chief Joseph, Ansel Adams photographs, and other historical prints by American artists. Admid student work on the front board were red, white and blue posters depicting the five themes of the American studies curriculum:

> The American Dilemma: Individualism vs. Conformity
> The Melting Pot: Old World vs. New World
> The American Success Story: Fact or fiction?
> The American Social Conscience: Theory and practice
> The American Frontier Spirit: Past and Present

Establishing a relationship

Mary's openness and willingness to participate in this study made it easy to build a strong working relationship. After the first few interviews, Mary became so familiar with the open-ended format that she initiated the subjects for discussion without any prompting from me. The interviews for the most part were dictated by her compelling interests concerning her teaching for the week. I only varied the subject if I needed further clarification. We always spent part of our time together catching up on personal information. We knew some of the same people, had some of the same interests, and talked about recent experiences outside of the scope of the study. I found these personal discussions crucial to the establishment of a trusting connection. While

I never used it as a strategy, in hindsight I see this naturally occurring connection as central to my understanding of the teacher, as well as to her comfort level with me.

In many ways the connection we established on both a personal and a professional level worked reciprocally (Oakley, 1982). We made our work together an ongoing conversation about ourselves as people, as well as educators. By sharing some of my own thoughts, ideas, and experiences with Mary, I believe it was less threatening to her to talk in depth about herself. Again, this was not a conscious strategy on my part, but just a description of the type of relationship that seemed to feel most comfortable to us both in the given circumstance. While Mary always seemed glad to see me whenever I visited, over time she enjoyed the opportunity to discuss her teaching in detail and to ask for reactions and feedback. My genuine enthusiasm for her practice forged a professional alliance that seemed to allow Mary to share her hopes for her social education classroom. We shared goals, strategies, and ideas across our similar roles as teachers and discussed our ideals for the practice of social studies. With Mary, I never felt she was telling me what I wanted to hear as an evaluator, but that she was trying to put into words who she was as a teacher and a person, and how she hoped to inspire her students.

Ruth

The first time that I travelled to Ruth's school I was invited to meet with the Dean of Social Studies, whom I had

contacted through a friend. I was there to hear about his goals for the district and to ask him to recommend a teacher to me who might fit the parameters of my study. I was interested in a school district that was different than Mary's. I chose Ruth's for a number of reasons including its more urban location, its working class demographics, and its greater diversity. I was hesitant about taking an insider's recommendation, but as I was looking for an exemplary teacher it seemed a reasonable risk.

First impressions

I received detailed directions from the Dean and arrived at the school more than twenty minutes early. The building was on a main road, an impressive gray stone with two tall stories. The only color was the royal blue of the front doors. The district office was a smaller, also gray, building attached by a corridor to the middle school. I went straight to the district office to check in and used my extra time perusing materials on display racks in the entrance way. I chose a few that might be useful and sat down to have a closer look. One was a social studies periodical put together by the Dean with historical information of interest to teachers in the district. On the front page was a story about some new findings concerning the exhumation of John Wilkes Booth in the late 1800's.

After I had waited for fifteen minutes, the Dean greeted me and asked me to follow him. We went through a crowded

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hallway and down a flight of stairs to a good size conference room. Before we entered, he pointed to his office across the hall which he shared with an assistant and one of the other Deans. The Dean began our conversation by saying that the high school United States history teacher he had in mind for my study was out on sick leave indefinitely. He was hesitant to recommend the other two U. S. history teachers as one had a student teacher and the other was brand new. He gave me two choices, either an eighth grade U.S. history teacher, or a high school European history teacher. I explained that as my study focused on U. S. history, the eighth grade teacher, if willing, would be my choice. We then spent about thirty minutes talking about the Dean's background and goals for the department.

Following this discussion, the Dean suggested that we go over to the middle school so he could introduce me to the eighth grade teacher he was recommending. I replied, "Maybe it would be better if I phoned her later," but he thought it best to mediate. As we walked along I was somewhat distressed by meeting the teacher this way. Although I did not know her relationship with the Dean, I was worried that she would feel compelled to participate if he asked her. I was not sure what this would mean for my relationship with her, but all I could do was wait. And wait I did, as the Dean asked me to remain in the hall for a few minutes until he ran the idea by her.

Ruth came with him into the hall somewhat surprised to meet me. Still she was very warm and cordial. I briefly

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explained my goals, and then arranged to speak with her over the phone later that week. She very nicely said, "Sure you can observe, no problem," but I sensed some apprehension. As I turned to walk back down the hall the principal approached me. He introduced himself and assured me, within earshot of both Ruth and the Dean, that Ruth would be happy to help me out. He also offered to assist me with any questions. Everyone was very friendly, but I felt uncomfortable with the way things had transpired and spent the drive home wondering what to say to Ruth when I telephoned.

When I called her the following evening I explained in detail how everything came to pass in such an awkward manner, and that I did not want her to feel compelled in any way to participate. She shared that she was a little surprised, but after asking a few questions about the project, expressed her desire to be involved. I told her that my impressions and findings would not be shared with the Dean, and that I only met with him for some background information on the district and for a recommendation of an exemplary teacher. She assured me that her relationship with him was comfortable and open, and that she did not feel compelled by him to participate. After such an uneasy beginning, I knew some work needed to be done to clarify our mutual expectations. I thought I could still hear some uncertainty in Ruth's voice. We arranged a time to meet during her free period two weeks later to further discuss the project, and to begin the interviews and classroom observations. In the meantime, I sent her some material which

explained my project in more detail. My initial impression of her from the phone was very positive. She was articulate and seemed very caring about her students.

The second time I was in the building I took more notice of the surrounding environment. The main office for the middle school was right inside the bright blue doors, and I reported there directly. No visitors were allowed to walk around without a pass. I asked the secretary for assistance, and after hearing why I was there she handed me a visitors' sign-in sheet and a pass to pin to my clothing. On some occasions the pass I was given said "visitor," other times it said "volunteer." Upon hearing my story the principal peeked out of his door and asked me to come in. He did not appear to recall me immediately, but as I explained the circumstances of our last meeting his face registered recognition. He asked a few questions about my project and the University, saying that his wife attended a graduate program there as well. He provided some general information about the school, and again offered assistance to me if I should need any.

Already knowing the way, I followed the yellow tiled hallway to Ruth's classroom. I remember feeling very small in this corridor as it was wide and the ceilings were unusually tall. I imagined some middle school students might feel the same way. I arrived outside Ruth's door early so I examined the student work hung on the walls outside her classroom. This is something I did frequently while I waited for the bell to ring. Every few weeks the postings changed, and during the

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course of the year I began to become very familiar with the work of Ruth's students.

When the bell rang I was buffeted about by a sea of students and just barely managed to hold my position against the wall so as not to be swept downstream. When the activity died down a bit, I waded across to Ruth's room and found her talking with a student by her desk. Her free period was not until third, so she welcomed me briefly and told me that as it was Monday class might not be that exciting. Then she escorted me to a table in the rear of the room to observe her first and second period classes. After seating me, Ruth turned her attention immediately toward her students, greeting most of them as they walked in the door.

I was sitting in a square yellow room, with the desks in rows. The appearance of the entire room was organized and neat. There were posters, pictures, and artifacts all over the walls, but they were hung aesthetically and made a pleasing mosaic. The bulletin board behind me told the story of the early explorers and the Native American societies they encountered through pictures and maps. All over the room there were signs saying "Assume nothing," "Attitude makes all the difference," and "Don't snooze read the news." Numerous globes were perched in various places, and maps were visible on three of the four walls. Windows with cabinets underneath lined the far wall, and the shelf above the cabinets was mostly empty with a set of textbooks on one end and a few racks of clearly labelled stand up folders on the other. A

blackboard on the other side wall had "goals" as a heading and listed three goals for the day and "homework" as a second heading with two assignments underneath. These two categories were always on this board, and as the semester progressed I noticed more and more students consulting it at the beginning of class. Ruth's desk sat just inside the door and was neatly covered with books, assignments, materials, a few balancing sculptures, and a mini lava lamp. A lectern occupied the center position in front of the class and Ruth's attendance book and materials for the day rested there. Over the lectern and attached to the board was a sheet of poster paper with some information about exploration. Nothing else but the day and date was written on the board.

It was only a few weeks into the year, but I immediately sensed a rapport between Ruth and her students. It was clear that most of them seemed to like her. They responded to her authentic smiles and open manner with rapt attention and smiles of their own. There was a sense of comfort permeating this class, but also one of business. Ruth seemed interested in her students personally, but was also focused on their learning. My first impression of her as a teacher was of caregiver, facilitator, but with a professional presence. As she said herself in a later interview, "We have a lot of fun in here, and sometimes we're kind of silly, but we get a lot done." This impression of Ruth was supported by her physical appearance. She dressed nicely, not in business suits per se, but in outfits that were well put together and professionally

casual. Her short blond hair always looked newly styled. Her manner with the students, while open and caring, was confident and articulate. Even when she was honestly admitting that she did not know the answer to a student question, she did this comfortably. She was able to laugh at herself in front of the students without a shred of sheepishness or loss of dignity. It was an impressive mixture of style, grace, confidence, and openness and the students seemed to respond to it quite positively.

Ruth exuded energy and excitement about the material. She spoke in an enthusiastic tone with the dramatic intent of a storyteller. She moved around the class frequently, travelling up and down the aisles facilitating discussion or checking student progress. When the students worked in groups, Ruth walked around assisting those who requested help and observing the rest. Encouraging phrases were offered to individuals, groups of students, and to the whole class. Even in our interviews she praised her students, often reaching for examples of their work to share with me. "Look at this one" she said as she showed me an interactive notebook, "Isn't this great? I had no idea she was such a good artist!" These types of comments she also shared directly with her students. She praised their work, but also talked with them about other things, from the previous night's basketball game to asking one student swimmer for shampoo advice for chlorine damaged hair. In all the time I observed, she did not seem to have any favorites, but directed her warm attention to most of the

students in turn. The four students I interviewed all said that they liked her because she was interested and concerned about them. They all claimed a personal relationship with her that was different from their other teachers.

Establishing a relationship

Having already discussed some of the difficulty of our introduction, it is not surprising to learn that it took a little longer to establish a strong working relationship with Ruth. After a week of observing and interviewing I wrote in my research journal:

> I feel that Ruth is still a little unsure about my expectations about the study. I am not certain if she yet feels comfortable with my presence in her classroom. Both of the two initial interviews were pretty short, and I sense she is not yet sure how I might be evaluating her. But Ruth always walks me back to the office and we have an opportunity to talk about more personal matters which seem to be starting to forge a stronger relationship between us.

As with Mary, getting to know Ruth involved much more than asking questions about her teaching, it required reciprocity (Oakley, 1982). By sharing personal information about myself, as well as my goals for the project, quite naturally (and maybe obviously) our relationship developed. The necessary trust grew out of conversations about who we were as people, not from the many claims I made about the goals of my project. Ruth, like Mary, connected with me through shared ideas and goals about social education, genuine interest in teaching, and mutual support of each other's work. The more classroom

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experiences we shared together, and the more discussions we had, the more understanding I gleaned about Ruth's goals and practices. While I had some idea of the type of relationships I wished to establish with my participants, both Mary and Ruth reminded me that I was a person first and that it is people who connect with each other across all types of interests and life experiences. Being asked to be myself in conversation by these two teachers was the best research advice I have ever received.

Why Teaching?

So far you have listened to my words and my impressions. Now it is time to hear what Mary and Ruth had to say about themselves as teachers. In this section we will ask them why they wanted to become teachers, who influenced their conceptions of the role of teacher, what their training was like, and lastly, about their career plans.

Background influences

When I asked Mary and Ruth why they wanted to become teachers there was no hesitancy, no searching, in either one's response. They both seemed to have reflected upon this decision a great deal and, while the reasons they gave were not uncomplicated, they were well considered and articulated. Mary and Ruth had strong convictions about teaching which caused them to make the kinds of commitments they had to the field. These convictions were the result of the many

experiences, both positive and negative, that Mary and Ruth had had with education, as well as the conceptions they had about who they wanted to be as adults. We will begin with Mary's reasons for choosing to become an educator.

Mary did well in math, science and history throughout her school career. Having been a good student, she was advised by others to pursue science because it was generally considered a difficult subject. She intended to be a physics major and to become an engineer or a teacher. In addition to always liking the school environment, having two siblings who taught attracted Mary to education. Her first introductory course in education at her small liberal arts college fixed this choice for her. Not only did she find the prospect of teaching appealing, but she found educational issues "fascinating." To Mary it was like "coming home." In the same semester, she took her first college history course (Latin American history) and was reminded how much she "loved history." The social issues encountered in the study of history, like the social issues found in the study of education, were of most interest to Mary. She decided to choose history as her major and to pursue secondary certification through the education department. When I asked Mary more specifically what attracted her to education, she replied:

> I think there were a lot of things. I think that my observation at (name of inner city school) were a really powerful part, because it was such a different experience than the educational experience I had growing up. I also think it made me look back on my years in school and think about what influenced me. I had several teachers growing

up who were really important to me and....were
wonderful people who made a big difference in my
life...I always knew I wanted to do something,
which is a big reason I gave up physics...because I
really wanted to work with people, I certainly
didn't want a lab existence, cut off from the
world. There needed to be more people who were in
teaching because they cared about kids and because
they really want to make a difference..... That's
very important to me, that my students feel that
they can be successful....and know that I care
about whether or not they are successful.

Mary's field experience in her introductory education
course seemed to solidify her commitment to become a teacher.
She said that she always wanted to work with people and to
make a difference in their lives. Mary's interactions with
teachers, siblings and otherwise, influenced her to consider
education, but her experiences observing in the classroom
pulled it all together into a viable career choice. Later she
said of this training, "It made me look critically at what I
had done in high school and to think about how I would do it
differently." Wanting to make a difference was Mary's most
compelling motivation for choosing teaching, and this interest
in social justice carried her back to history which she saw as
the secondary discipline area most concerned with social
issues. Mary's favorite course in college was "Women in
Education" which looked historically at women's roles in
education, as well as their present-day concerns. Mary said
of this course, "I was so totally into all of the
readings.....my reaction was 'Wow, this is so awful, I've got
to change this, I've got to help make it better.'"

Making a contribution to social understanding and change,

as we have seen, was the main motivation for Mary's decision
to become a secondary social studies educator. In later
chapters we will discuss Mary's position on teaching for
social change in detail, but for now it is important to reveal
that Mary's ideas about what to teach differed from some of
her primary influences. In this next excerpt, Mary
differentiates her political views from her mother's:

> I come from a very conservative family. I would
> characterize them as Reagan democrats, who have now
> totally turned over to the Republican side of
> things, and who are working class people. It is
> kind of interesting...I went to a high school that
> was more mixed than here, much more middle and
> working class than here, it was pretty traditional
> for the most part, but I found a couple of really
> wonderful teachers.
>
> I can clearly remember having very political ar-
> guments with my family about history when I was in
> high school. My mother is such a 50's person and I
> love her dearly, but she is totally stuck in the
> 50's. One time I came home and she said, I don't
> know how we got onto this, but she started talking
> about McCarthy and how he wasn't a bad guy, and he
> just wanted what was best for the country and all
> of this stuff....I was just like, "Oh, my God..how
> could you say that, he was horrible, it was like a
> witch hunt" and on and on and then she's like "Well
> what are you, some kind of communist?"...and "No,
> I'm not a communist, that's ridiculous and com-
> munism isn't really a political philosophy any-
> way, it's an economic theory." So here I am this
> junior in high school arguing with my mother.

All of the influences on Mary's perspectives can not be traced
through the data, however on many occasions she claimed
teachers as important to her ideas about social issues. Even
in the above challenge of her mother, Mary uses an academic
response about the categorization of communism as an economic
theory to finalize the debate. By resorting to school based

knowledge, we see a hint of its influence on Mary's worldview. Hints and conjectures aside, what is clearly visible is Mary's early critical view of her family's values. In all of her descriptions of her educational experiences in high school and beyond, her critical standpoint was evident. She claimed to look at most information, regardless of the source, with a critical eye. This was her wish for her students as well, to look at everything critically, including the information she presented and the views she professed.

Ruth was also strongly motivated by her concern for children and her love for working with people. Upon graduating from high school she worked in banking for several years, but found it "boring" early on. For seven years she went to night school so she could become a teacher. When I asked her why, she replied:

> I like teaching because I love the kids, they're fun. You have to enjoy this job...you know that... you do so much work at home, and if you don't enjoy it...there's just no happy medium. I was a banker for ten years....I thought it was boring, it was so awful....I always wanted to be a teacher so I thought why don't I pursue that. I got a lot of support from family and friends and I just pushed to finish it. It took seven years of night school, so I didn't start teaching until I was thirty....fortunately I got a job here, this is where I graduated from. I really do like teaching...I think 8th grade is a very interesting year because they really grow. It is a difficult year for them hormonally...it can be very confusing for them. I would never want to be in 8th grade again. A lot of kids come to school with problems that you really have to take into consideration. Language barriers also...we have a lot of children of Asian immigrants and I find that I have to be really considerate of the way they speak and write. I got into teaching because I love kids..that's the bottom line.

That Ruth wanted to become a teacher is quite obvious by her willingness to work so hard for so long to accomplish that goal. The primary reason she stated was her love for children and her interest in their problems. Ruth was strongly committed to the growth and development of young people. She recognized their difficulties, she empathized with their positions, and wanted to be an important part of the guidance they needed. To Ruth, having a career to which she could make this type of commitment was crucial and necessary. She did not want to choose something "boring" and "awful" again.

During the time I spent with Ruth, she made a few comments to me and to her classes that indicated she saw herself as a reluctant student in middle and high school. She told me that she found school somewhat boring and meaningless overall, with few teachers standing out as exceptions. Ruth's own educational experiences seemed to carry a negative impression and part of her motivation to teach was to offer something better than what she had had. I asked her why she chose to teach history:

> History classes were boring and I swore that there
> must be a way to convey this material that would
> make it interesting and worthwhile.....I think
> history is meaningless unless it is discussed and
> connected to the present. I think that is why so
> many people pounce on history as a useless and
> meaningless subject, because for so many years it
> was just memorization of facts, well that is just
> boring and stupid. I don't remember one boring,
> stupid fact or date from when I was taught history,
> but if someone had connected it for me it may have
> made sense. I just didn't understand what it was
> about, it never made sense to me.

Ruth wanted her students' educational experience to be better

than hers. She wanted history to "make sense" to them and was committed to teaching in ways that made the material worthwhile and meaningful. While she talked earlier about her general interest in children as a motivating factor in her teaching, she spoke of teaching her students to make sense of history with more passion.

Like Mary, Ruth did not possess an aimless concern for the development of her students, but wanted to teach them to connect the social issues of history to their own lives. She wanted to be more important to them than her own teachers were to her, but not in some unspecified way. Rather as a facilitator of socio-historical understanding. On numerous occasions, Ruth talked about her love for "social history." She believed a focus on the everyday lives of the "common people" not only served to make history interesting to her students, but fostered their appreciation of their place in the world. She summed up her position on teaching social history with "the common folk are like us."

Training

Like influences, training seemed to be characterized in many forms by these teachers. Mary and Ruth saw their training in a somewhat fluid way that included both formal and informal ex-periences in this category. College courses, field experiences, student teaching, in-service training, and professional development workshops were all mentioned, as was the importance of learning from personal experience, students,

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colleagues, administrators, parents and other community members. To Ruth and Mary, learning was an ongoing process involving a variety of sources.

Formally, Mary received her Bachelor's degree from a prominent, small, liberal arts college. She majored in history and was in the certificate program in secondary education. As previously mentioned, Mary found her courses in the education department extremely influential. She credited them with developing in her a more reflective and critical view about education, both of her own experiences as well as others she observed. "I would give the biggest amount of credit to the education department at (name of College) because they taught me how to think critically and gave me opportunities to observe and try out teaching." Mary later stated that the hands-on experience of student teaching was a crucial part of her training. "You talk about theory so much you think I can change the world....then you get into the classroom and "aaaagghhh' there are all these people saying I don't want to call you Miss (last name) because you're only three years older than us."

What Mary learned through the experience of teaching was equally important to her understanding and practice. On one occasion she talked about her first professional job as a teacher working in another state. Her time was split between two schools and two grades, 6th and 8th. It was a less than satisfying experience:

I taught 6th grade social studies which was a world

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history course and I taught 8th grade....post Civil
War American history and that was torture, because
I had a class of 30 kids, 30 heterogeneously
grouped 8th graders...with a really incredibly wide
range of abilities. I taught with a team of
teachers, but since I was only there half of the
day, I got only half of the kids and it really cut
down on the effectiveness of a full team process.

Mary went on to say that not being a full team member made it

difficult for her to know, let alone impact, the inner city

students in her classroom. She felt so "in-between" the

schools that it seemed hard to be a part of either effort.

From this experience she learned the importance of being a

full time player in the school environment. Although she had

been only at her current school for three years, Mary was

deeply involved in curriculum decisions for her department and

in a number of other activities in the school community. She

showed appreciation for her school's attempts to foster

collegiality among the faculty, found valuable the op-

portunities to discuss varied concerns with her team, and

thought many of the in-service attempts at professional

development were worthwhile.

Mary sought professional development opportunities

outside her school environment as well. Most notably was her

attendance at a highly competitive summer history program

sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

With a small group of history teachers, of which she was the

youngest by far, Mary spent three weeks discussing the

influence of religions on United States history. In an

interview following her trip to the program she said:

NEH's whole purpose is to respect teachers as intellectuals and to give them the intellectual environment in which they can talk about interesting topics and to accomplish curriculum change through that......As a form of professional development, for me, this is probably the best way. I think you do need to talk about pedagogy, but as a history teacher you really need to be talking about high level history. This is one thing that I feel that I've really been missing.....To keep up with the field makes you feel more like a professional,an academic, an intellectual. I think that is what is missing from most schools. They don't make you feel like academics, they make you feel like glorified babysitters.

Clearly Mary identified herself as a professional, an academic, and an intellectual. She valued professional development opportunities which allowed her to reconnect with some of her love of history in order to assist her with curriculum and pedagogical changes. This was an important distinction, she said, as most teachers are not seen in this light. With the plethora of pre-packaged curricula out there it is hard to disagree with her assessment. But, Mary was not one to sit and lament. As I said before, she took an active responsibility in the concerns of her school including working to redefine the role of the teacher.

Equally valuable as a training tool were Mary's students. She felt she learned a lot about teaching, as well as about history, from her students. We will spend a chapter talking about these teachers' relationships with their students, but for now it is important to say that Mary consulted with her students daily about the curriculum and valued their feedback as a primary influence on her educational practice.

Ruth also placed her students center stage and claimed

them as a prominent influence in her ongoing training as a teaching professional. A number of times I heard her say something like the following:

> They take it to levels that I never dreamed of...they teach me a lot...they do, it is wonderful!

> It was a learning experience for me!

Ruth received her Bachelor's degree in history education (at night) from a well respected, small, local university. She characterized her collegiate history education as strong on information, but not always pedagogically interesting. Ruth went straight on for her Master's Degree before looking for a job in education. She found her current position in the school system she attended and, like Mary, is involved in professional development activities in the district. Ruth participated on the team that revised the 8th grade history curriculum before this study, and also served as an interdisciplinary leader for the school's student centered team approach. Each week, faculty with the same students met to discuss the concerns and needs of their classes. Ruth acted as the coordinator, but also an unofficial mentor for her team members. On a number of occasions I saw them consult with her about issues between classes. Sometimes it looked as if they were just looking for a friendly face or words of encouragement.

Ruth, like Mary, thought her school's efforts at in-service professional development were laudable. She stated

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that all the sessions she attended were useful. In particular, she felt that the Dean's efforts with the social studies staff were especially valuable. One such session led her to try out the interactive notebook she used during the year of this study to organize student notetaking. While much more will be related about this approach in subsequent chapters, it is informative to look at how she was first exposed to this idea:

> In the summer time I was involved in a workshop with (Dean). There was this senior high teacher from California, California always has these new innovative ideas...and she mentioned the interactive notebook she was using. I asked her for an explanation and for a couple of examples, which she later brought in. I thought...wow, this is so hard...but I wanted to try it because the kids in my classes were having a good time and they were learning, but I didn't like the way they were learning. So I said, let's give this a shot...and so far they're flying with it!

Adopting the interactive notebook required Ruth to change about 50% of the curriculum she had been teaching and to spend significantly more time grading. Although she had to teach the method, as well as United States history, she chose to do it "for her students." A few other teachers also tried it out but did not make the whole commitment to using it because of the hard work of implementation. Ruth stuck with it through-out the year because she wanted "to give it a fair chance." She constantly told me that it was too early to evaluate it, and that only after a full year could she tell whether it was worth it.

From this example, we see a teacher who does not try out

faddish curricula without a full commitment or a clear pur-
pose. Professional development opportunities seemed to provide
Ruth with choices, which she considered carefully and im-
plemented only with resolve. Again we see a teacher in an
active, ongoing relationship with her craft. A person willing
to engage in a process of professional training which con-
siders input from a variety of sources over time. I saw this
fluidity of approach in both Mary and Ruth, which made it
difficult to distinguish the marked importance of any one type
of influence on their teaching theories and practices.

Career Teachers

Classroom teaching is seen by many as a stepping stone
for long term careers in administration, curriculum planning,
academia, and other related occupations. This was not the
view held by either Mary or Ruth. They both identified
themselves as career teachers and planned to be in the
classroom throughout their professional lives. In fact,
neither spoke to me of any other designs. Each had been
singled out by her district for leadership roles, Ruth as an
interdisciplinary team leader and Mary as the departments'
main curriculum developer. These involvements may, in the
long term, offer them opportunities outside direct in-
struction. Mary in particular, had been recently given the
leading role in a significant reorganization for the American
studies curriculum based on her well received suggestions for
thematic restructuring. It did seem however, that Mary and

Ruth's strong commitment to teaching would keep them in or close by the classroom for a long time.

Theirs was not a blind love for classroom teaching; both worried about burn out. As Ruth said at one point:

> I love it all, I really really love doing this! It is a tremendous amount of work, far more work than I ever anticipated...teaching is a lot of work. But if you don't put in this amount of work, they're not going to learn. I took this job because I wanted these kids to learn and once I am not motivated to do these creative things with them, then I can't do this job anymore, I'm really emphatic about that. If I lose my enthusiasm then I am out of here...so hopefully it stays with me.....

Ruth correlated her hard work with the maintenance of enthusiasm for her job. She saw innovation and creativity as sources of this enthusiasm for her work, as well as the approaches necessary for fostering student motivation for learning. In effect, she seemed to have set up a circular formula to protect herself from burn out. Her motivation for doing creative things came from her love of seeing students learn, and seeing students learn, in turn, bolstered her motivation to work hard. Ruth's identity as a professional was so directly determined by her willingness to actively engage in practice that she would rather leave than do less. If she did lose her zeal for teaching, it is unlikely to have been from a redefinition of her professional identity or a lowering of self-expectations. Ruth constantly renewed her enthusiasm for teaching through her willingness to hold high expectations close to her definition of who she was and wanted to be as a teacher.

Ruth and Mary's love of teaching was always a work in progress. They both struggled daily to improve their practice, as you will see in the next two chapters. This ongoing work seemed to serve as an important motivation for both of them. As long as they were able to engage in ongoing reflection, trial, and improvement, they claimed satisfaction with their career choices as well as their current jobs.

According to both teachers, their districts' expectations allowed adequate room for them to define their roles in acceptable ways. Mary and Ruth expressed enough comfort with these current circumstances to want to stay indefinitely. While each actively challenged things they did not agree with, they perceived their respective environments as allowing them the academic freedom they required. I am not sure that others would agree with this assessment of their schools, especially in Ruth's district. Where Mary and Ruth saw freedom, others might see restraints. A closer look at the curriculum expectations of each school may provide some more insight.

The district's expectations of Mary as a high school history teacher had not been communicated in any direct or formal way. While she told me that a written curriculum for American studies probably did exist, she had never been given a copy. Having done her student teaching at the school, Mary stated, "It may have been assumed that I knew what the course was about when I started professionally." While it is true that nothing seemed to be shared in written form, the structure of the interdisciplinary program in American studies

had some significant consistencies. These consistencies included the five social education themes, a number of classroom activities, student requirements, and assessment strategies. The conformity, in this case, was accomplished by "team" meetings in which teachers assembled to interpret the established curriculum. They worked from a template designed a few years earlier, though not so closely that it required the use of the written document. The department members negotiated some of the aspects of the curriculum, but left many up to the individual teachers. Aside from the occasional related in-service topic and reminders about Pennsylvania standards, the administration seemed to endow much of the responsibility for curriculum decisions to each department.

Ruth's district, on the other hand, had a very specified curriculum manual for the social studies which was organized by grade. The manual listed historical themes and topics to be covered chronologically, outlined some teaching approaches to be used, and specified student outcomes. The district did involve the teachers in designing these requirements, but controlled the design by using a standard planning format across all the grades. While the Dean told me that the social studies curriculum was somewhat traditional, he felt that changes were being made slowly. Of importance to him were the increased use of progressive materials and teaching strategies. His job, as he saw it, was to provide resources, opportunities, and guidance for teachers to progress in their practice. Ruth saw his role and her interaction with the dis-

trict in a similar way. She felt supported by the Dean, free to try new things out, and involved in departmental and district decisions about the curriculum. The specificity of the curriculum manual did not bother Ruth, who seemed to see it as a useful set of suggestions, many of which were her ideas.

In neither case did the set curriculum expectations, no matter what or how they were communicated, seem to present much of an obstacle to the educational goals of the teachers. Mary and Ruth were involved in the establishment of the formal curriculum, but both saw the end result as a sort of template of recommendations, not a recipe for their teaching. Perhaps it was a broad interpretation of the purpose of the formal curricula that allowed our teachers significant freedom of thought and action in the classroom. I am not sure. Perhaps they had the freedom to interpret broadly because they were considered successful teachers and not in need of close supervision. I am not sure. I do know, however, that there was a seamlessness in the joining of their own goals and practices with the expectations of the setting. A seamlessness which supported their perceptions of themselves as professionals and allowed them the freedom to continue to develop their craft. A liberty more claimed, perhaps, than given.

Teaching as Work

So far we have looked at why Ruth and Mary decided to become teachers, some of their professional influences, and how they perceived their roles within the places they worked.

We learned of the people and experiences which not only influenced their desire to teach, but provided a framework for who they aspired to be as teachers. From their many life experiences they have chosen ways to think, act, and feel which, when combined together, give their picture of the role of the teacher. In the chapters to come we will examine in detail how this picture comes to life in their theories of teaching. For now, we turn again to Ruth and Mary to ask what they generally thought of as the keys to their teaching.

Part of each teacher's picture of their role involved the general claims they made about their practice. Although I have suggested that their theories of teaching were, for the most part, grounded within their everday decisions (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1988), the general claims they made about teaching were important aspects of this theorizing (Kelchtermans, 1993). Again, they made very few of these. Those they did voice were expressed as opinions about practices which they saw as essential to their work. These claims usually surfaced in discussions about particular units, but were defined by each teacher as practices they used consistently. In other words, they were the parts of each teacher's perspective that they themselves voiced as theory. To me they were sources of information on the teachers' perspectives, as well as guides for further investigation. Four themes characterized these general claims about teaching. I have labelled these themes hard work, smart work, advocacy work, and collective effort.

Hard work

Every teacher who has ever been envied for "having the summer off," knows teaching is time consuming. I believe many teachers work hard, staying well after 3pm and spending time each weekend with grading and preparation. Ruth and Mary were no exceptions. They both spent a lot of time in and out of school on classroom related work. As Ruth said about the interactive notebook:

> I'm really excited about it. I mean it's a lot of
> hard work (points to 12 shopping bags full of
> grading). I took them all home this weekend
> because tomorrow is progress reports, in the middle
> of the marking period, so I had to get some grades.
> Next time I collect them it will be one class each
> day....it took me about 12-13 hours.

Ruth chose this year to use an interactive notebook which was a student produced ongoing written record of her course. It contained homework responses, class notes, course activities, and journal type reactions. Students handed them in at the end of each unit with a self evaluation sheet. Ruth read through, commented extensively on each notebook, and handed them back the following day as they were in constant use. She also kept an interactive notebook herself, completing all assignments along with her classes. In addition to providing detailed comments on student work, Ruth spent a lot of time composing "notes" from a variety of historical sources to hand out to students instead of using the textbook. She also de-voted time to researching topics, planning activities, gathering (sometimes extensive) materials, and calling parents with "both good and bad" reports. She arrived before school

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and stayed late to allow students to drop by with questions.

As we have seen, Ruth was a team leader which required some organizational and leadership work. She was actively involved in the development of curriculum and was a faculty advisor to the student newspaper. In addition, she seemed to go out of her way to support other teachers in her department and on her team. On numerous occasions, other teachers stopped by Ruth's room between classes with questions or comments concerning daily activities. When I asked her about this, she replied that as a team leader other teachers came to her with concerns or agenda items. But it seemed clear to me that it was not just her role that made other teachers seek her, but the type of responses they received. In all of the interactions I observed, Ruth took the time to listen and to be supportive.

Much of Mary's time was spent researching and planning on an ongoing basis. Because she listened carefully to the interests of her students, her plans often changed on a daily basis. If a class discussion really took flight, Mary was not afraid to follow it. Such was a discussion on homelessness one afternoon:

> Basically we were talking about social Darwinism,
> about whether people who are rich today deserve to
> be rich and people who are poor deserve to be poor.
> This brought up the whole issue of homelessness,
> somebody said that homeless people did deserve to
> be poor because they don't work...and other people
> started to say no that's not true...and one of the
> students started crying and said that she knows
> several homeless teenagers that had a lot of other
> problems, probably some these kids can't even
> imagine...and even though life on the streets is

horrible it's better than it was at home.

For the whole period, the class explored their understanding of homelessness and poverty from a variety of points of view. They talked about reasons for homelessness, the government's role, and even calculated whether a family could pay rent on a McDonald's salary. The discussion did not end there, as Mary spent the next few days in an unscheduled foray into the topic. She found resources from a variety of perspectives in the library and facilitated a more in depth discussion which further challenged her students' understandings and perceptions of homelessness.

Mary was repeatedly "off to the library" to gather multiple sources and then come up with an activity to work through the social issues raised by the students. Like Ruth, Mary was a member of the curriculum development committee and an advisor to the school newspaper. She also opened her door to students before and after school and generally stayed in her classroom during her planning period to meet with students. She too gave extensive feedback to students about their work, including meeting with each individually during class about their ongoing research projects. When students asked her to conduct a study seminar for the Achievement Test, she voluntarily met with a group of interested students once a week. She provided practice tests, some lecturing on the material, and test taking tips.

Smart work

For both teachers, their energy had purpose. Ruth and Mary worked smart in a number of ways as they constantly tried to make activities and interactions serve their larger goals. However, their use of observation and reflection was the primary way they gathered the information needed to modify their practices. On a number of occasions, both teachers told me that all of their classes were different from each other. They both used extensive observation to figure out what was working and what was not for each class. Modifications were made to the approaches each teacher used with a given class based on their understanding of its "personality." I observed this many times when sitting in on different periods in the same day. Even when the lessons were primarily the same, the approaches might vary from slight changes to major differences. When I asked the teachers about the differences in their approaches from class to class, they were able to describe in detail why they took alternative routes.

In addition to their daily observations, both teachers talked about the need to get to know their students quickly so they knew which approaches to try. I even asked if any of their classes resembled classes they had in the past, and they responded "no, not really" and "they are seldom alike." "How do you get to know your classes personality?" I asked. Mary and Ruth answered alike again by saying they used any opportunities where they were not talking to observe the students. As Ruth commented:

> You just study them over the weeks...to really
> get to know them. When they are working in groups
> I watch them, I don't like to hover over them, but
> I come around to see if they are on the right
> track. I like to watch how they get along....

Critical self-reflection is the other main characteristic of what I am terming the teachers' smart work. Ruth and Mary constantly evaluated their own work and asked students for their reactions to activities, assignments, and materials. This type of evaluation structure encouraged modification of upcoming formats, but also supported the trying of new and innovative approaches, which both teachers did.

Trial and error was a way of life, especially for Mary who tended to take more risks in the classroom. These risks were not arbitrary attempts, but well considered approaches that she hoped would meet the needs of her students and further her social education goals. Like her struggle with the difficult textbook described later, Mary worked with her students to find "better ways" to make sense of the cur-riculum. At the end of my time in Mary's classroom, I asked her about the beginning of the new school year which included a major curriculum change for her district. In an unwieldy decision based on political compromise, the teachers had been asked to revise and teach a block style curriculum using their old 50 minute period format for a year before the district blocked the schedule. Mary included her students in the navigation of the hybrid year, saying on the first day:

> I told my kids I went whitewater rafting this
> summer and that this year was kind of like my

whitewater rafting trip because "I was really scared going into it, I didn't know what would happen, there were some very bumpy times....and you never quite know what's coming around the next corner, but it's fun in the end...but if you are in a particularly bumpy part of the boat you've got to tell me."

Advocacy work

Mary and Ruth saw their students as their primary audience and advocated for them in numerous ways. This advocacy entailed speaking up for student interests to the administration and in the community, but also extended to the treatment of students within their classes. They acted as facilitators of student learning as well as advocates of student success. On numerous occasions both Mary and Ruth told me they believed that all of their students were capable of doing well in their courses. As Ruth said:

As far as I am concerned all my kids are able
to do everything and anything...

While differences did exist in Mary and Ruth's relationships with their students, there were some very important attitudes toward students that they shared. These included, above all, a belief in each student's ability to succeed. This expectation of success was enmeshed in other attitudes that permeated the classroom environment. These perpectives included offering ample encouragement, acceptance, and respect. In addition, both Mary and Ruth solicited the students' prior knowledge and showed strong interest in the

students' ideas. Both teachers told me that they had a lot to learn from their students and that learning definitely needed to go both ways. They were open and honest and willing to talk to students about the controversial issues many teachers avoid. Though Mary carried this further than Ruth, the students in both classes characterized the teachers as "Someone you could talk to about almost anything."

Finally, along this same line, Mary and Ruth viewed problems of learning as problems of teaching. This position continued to spur on their work. When Mary's students were struggling with an ongoing task of synthesizing from difficult source material, they asked her for additional assistance. Her reaction was:

> I'm glad that they feel that they can talk to me and they can criticize and say to me "I really feel we should discuss this more in class" ....I tell them that gives me the feedback that I need so I know how to plan....

Overall, a collective effort

As we have seen in the previous three sections, Mary and Ruth did not do their work in isolation but sought others to support and assist them. The others were fellow teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and friends, as well as textual others like book authors. Most importantly, both did the work of their teaching within the context of their relationships with their students. Their work was col-lective in the most primary of ways; it encouraged student participation on many levels, not the least of which was in

curriculum evaluation and decision making. While Mary so-
licited student opinion a little more often than Ruth, the
students were the primary organizing principle around which
both teachers built their curricula, planned and implemented
activities, and evaluated their success.

That Ruth and Mary went beyond the curriculum
expectations of their districts is perhaps not a surprise.
Most teachers probably exceed the expectations of their
district manual, if only because many of these documents are
not specific enough to account for the human interactions of
teaching. But in both Mary and Ruth's cases, their enriching
was done in purposeful and consistent ways. They had reasons
for almost everything they did which related to the social
education themes they outlined as important. Mary and Ruth
saw themselves as professionals, not as technicians. They
grabbed onto the freedom they perceived in their districts'
guidelines and willingly took on the accompanying
responsibilities. By molding the expectations of the job
environment to fit their theories of social education
practice, they filled their positions like no one else would
or could. In this way they made their jobs their own; a
reflection of each of their understandings, knowledge,
beliefs, rationales, hopes, and values.

So far we have looked at how Ruth and Mary defined their
roles as teachers, and how this definition arose from a
variety of influential experiences, including family back-
ground, training, career choices, and their interpretation of

their job context. We have also looked at the types of at-titudes and actions that they claimed were important to success in the classroom. In characterizing the most important facilitators of their work, they have given us some insight into the types of classroom environments they tried to create and the kinds of social goals they had for their students of United States history. In the following chapters, we will examine in detail their hopes for their students and the practices that they used to facilitate their desired outcomes. This examination is grounded within the everyday happenings in their classrooms as well as each teacher's responses and reactions to their daily work.

Chapter 4

TEACHER AS THEORIZER

Grounded theories

When I first discussed this project with Mary and Ruth I was met with some skepticism. Both were willing to talk with me about their practice and opened their classrooms to me well beyond my stamina to observe. But each expressed doubt that I would find in their narratives a comprehensive, consistent theory of education. And on some level this is true. Neither teacher directly expressed a complete philosophy of teaching in any of the interviews. Each did, however, demonstrate a well considered position about her own practice through long discussions of her rationale, objectives, planning, and pedagogy for United States history instruction. When I looked closely at what my teachers said and did, and asked them what they thought and felt, an extensive and steady philosophy of social education emerged. Clues to each teacher's perspectives were grounded in discussions about their goals for particular units as shown in this excerpt from an early interview with Ruth:

> Interviewer: Maybe this question is too broad...but what do you hope your students will learn about colonialism from this unit?
> Ruth: That it was a risk..that they were risktakers...that money was a motivator, there was

> a lot of selfishness and greed...big themes.
> Colonization..the concept of that...how other
> countries tried to control, and how difficult it
> was to control when you're not there overseeing
> what is going on. Freedom...religious persecution
> ...broader themes...Roger Williams founding Rhode
> Island doesn't interest me, what interests me is
> why Rhode Island was founded. To escape religious
> persecution, but they came to the New World to
> escape that so how come they have to escape it
> here?....So we look at intolerance versus tolerance
> as well. The Puritan work ethic...opportunity and
> adventure...and risk taking, these people who came
> to the new World were risk takers and to learn that
> a lot of times in life in order to achieve
> something you have to take a risk and sometimes it
> is going to work out for you and sometimes it is
> not going to work out for you. That would be the
> big underlying theme.

Clearly, for Ruth there was more to the study of colonialism

than having students memorize names, dates, and places. Broad

social education themes were crucial aspects of the goals she

established for this unit. Specifically, it was important that

her students consider the motivations of settlers for coming

to the New World in the face of incredible risks. More

generally, Ruth wanted her pupils to examine the themes of

persecution, colonization of others, tolerance, and op-

portunity and its consequences. From her stated goals, we

could speculate about Ruth's philosophy of teaching United

States history. Perhaps we might say that she wanted her

students to think critically about sociological perspectives

in history, or that she wanted her students to connect past

actions and decisions with their present lives, but it is too

early. Ruth's philosophy of education will be discussed in

detail in this chapter, but it is important to note here that

it was found consistently grounded within her discussion of

her goals and practices.

Mary never made any broad claims about education to me. She also spoke through the context of her particular situation as a teacher. She talked of what worked for her at the time, with her students, in her school, in her district, in her state. Like Ruth, she extracted broader social education themes from the United States history curriculum as her focus. Mary meshed her understanding of the significance of historical study with her perceptions of the context in which she worked. Therefore, when she discussed her educational philosophy it was grounded in a discussion of the specific goals she had for her classroom:

> Interviewer: What are the types of things you would want your students to learn about the 1920's when you prepare your lesson?
> Mary: I guess I want them to have a general feel for...an understanding of how politics, social life and economics are all intertwined...how seemingly everything looked happy-go-lucky and they were having all these parties and people were having a wild time, but underneath there are these brewing social problems...one of which is prohibition...but that's only one. Then when we go onto the Depression one of the things I ask them to really focus on is who was not sharing in the prosperity of the '20's. They realize that there were these underlying problems with farmers and that the government was not even recognizing them or doing anything for them...basically ignoring the problems, at least the Republicans were.....and then the Depression came.

Again we see goals for history instruction which encouraged students to think about the underlying social reasons for decisions and events. Looking below the surface to uncover social issues which impact subsequent events was a common goal in Mary's classroom. We see, as we did with Ruth, an emphasis

on broad themes of history within the goals for Mary's unit on the twenties. Though just a short example of the way Mary talked about her curriculum, her perspectives began to emerge.

As we move through this chapter we will continue to look at both teachers' grounded descriptions of their practice, as well as classroom observations, student interviews, and classroom materials. Our goal is to describe and explain Mary's and Ruth's perspectives of United States history instruction within their particular settings. Many social education goals, like the ones stated above by our teachers, will surface to provide information about what Mary and Ruth thought was important to teach. The six general categories used to discuss these themes (The story of history, students as the common people, lessons of history, democracy as a collective process, student as citizen, and teacher as citizen) emerged from the data as the most influencial frames used by these teachers to establish goals. They represent the teachers' perspectives on instructional content, their ideas about their students' relationship to the content, the lessons they wanted to communicate through the content, the teachers' understandings of democracy, and their views of citizenship education. Within these categories we will see each teachers' view of herself and her students as knowers, as well as their understanding of the knowledge to be utilized in United States history instruction.

The Story of History

When Mary and Ruth discussed specific instructional goals, they focused on broad social themes of history. This reflected a certain view of United States history and history instruction that for the most part they shared. This particular view of history was used as an important lens through which these teachers reinterpreted the given curriculum. The goals and practices which emerged from their reinterpretation represented, for the most part, what they thought should be taught to their 8th and 10th grade United States history students. At the core for both teachers was a considerable emphasis on social history, as seen in the following excerpts:

> Ruth: I love history, I just like the stories. I like social history the best, because I like to know what people were doing behind the scenes, the everyday people. How they were living, what they were wearing, what they were eating, why they did things, their relationships with one another....I think this is really fascinating. A lot of time you are just taught the fundamentals and you never learn about the common folk, and I think that's where it is interesting because the common folk are like us.

And;

> Mary: I set up history as a story, a collection of stories and it depends on who's telling it as to what stories get told.

And later;

> Mary: When I'm giving a lecture (which I do sometimes, not that often but sometimes) I try to bring in stories. The first lecture I do is one on George Washington and the Constitutional Convention and I tell them that George Washington was very tall, well over 6 feet and a very impressive person...and I say "I think it was a little bit of a size-ist thing that he got to be the leader of the convention"...

The *stories* of history used by Mary and Ruth allowed students a broader view of the circumstances surrounding historical events and times. A better understanding of the social contexts in which historical events took place was an outcome both teachers wanted for their students. For Ruth, connecting her students to the multiple perspectives of the "common folk" was important. Mary took it a step further by suggesting, humorously in this case, underlying social issues which influenced perceptions of people and events. Hinted at by both was that much of what students had been taught about history was inaccurate, or at the least incomplete.

Both Mary and Ruth used many stories in their respective practices which were similar in content and form. There were personal stories about famous people, stories about what the common people thought and felt during certain periods of time, stories by those who were oppressed, and stories about underlying social reasons for political change. They told stories about themselves, their families, and their friends. They encouraged students to do the same. Both labelled the extensive use of narrative in their instruction as a specific educational approach, which they called "social history." Defined more broadly than traditional approaches which focus primarily on political interpretations, social history posits that better understandings are fostered through consideration of multiple perspectives (Nash, 1989). This was important to Mary and Ruth, who both believed that many perspectives were

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more accurate than one.

Some of the reasons these teachers used a lens of social history were similar, some were quite different. Ruth claimed two reasons for telling stories to her 8th grade history classes. The first was pragmatic; she told stories because they made class more interesting and she felt the students would learn more if engaged. Second, Ruth believed students could better understand history if it was taught in a way that connected with their previous knowledge and experiences:

> History is common sense and if you just approach it as a common sense science, it makes sense rather than trying to make it so difficult with boring dates and people....there is more to history than Washington and Lincoln and those important guys you always study.
> Interviewer: That seems a different approach than...
> Ruth: Yeh, and the kids....I can see lightbulbs..."gosh that's so easy, that makes sense." And they can see it, they can connect...I am big on connections and linkages.

And in a later interview:

> We always go back to units and I'll say that's why this happened so they can unite this whole year...so it's like one big story, not just a bunch of little facts.

"Connections," a word used very often in her class, was an organizing principle of Ruth's planning and practice. While we will talk about this in more detail in the next section, Ruth's view of connections involved students critically interacting with various perspectives in history as well as voicing their own views about the past, present, and future. Ruth used a number of structured activities to facilitate this, including primary source discussions, letter writing,

dramatic presentations, collage building, drawing, story-writing, and one of her favorites, sentence stems. For this activity she gave a sentence for students to complete in short essay form, for example:

> Early explorers are like rock musicians because....
> The Revolutionary War is like a divorce because....

Ruth did a similar activity in which her students wrote responses to this statement:

> History of course is written by the winners and winners choose to ignore their own violence and emphasize the violence of the losers.

Mary also wanted her students to connect with United States history, but had somewhat deeper critical and analytical goals for her 10th grade classes. It was not enough for her students to understand that there were different views of history, but it was important to critically examine contradictory points of view and underlying ideologies in detail. She began the year by having each student write about a pep rally. As a class they discussed the differing perspectives on the event. Some students said it was worth-while, many said it was "stupid" and some were indifferent. Mary had the group contrast the "facts" and the "feelings" of the reports and speculate on why there were differing views. Next they read five varying positions on the Constitution and analyzed them in a similar way. Mary had this to say about the Constitution comparison activity:

> I think as far as them being critical readers they need to have an understanding that on a personal

> level we all see things differently, but when you actually put it in front of them it is a lot harder for them to make clear distinctions. You can give a kid a primary source which is very important, but another thing that is very important, which has not been done much in high school, is to give them interpretations of that source and say this is how it was viewed. That is where these guys are having such a hard time...it is such an important but hard concept. They're struggling, but in the long run they will start to see it an ask "Well what perspective is this person writing from?"

The stories of history showed Mary's class that not all people agree, even about information which has been taught as established and supported through consensus. She wanted to show her students that *who* writes history was just as important, if not more important than *what* was written. Mary constantly reminded her students to challenge interpretations of history, including what she herself said in the classroom:

> At the beginning of the year we talk about bias in history...I tell them that everyone who writes history books and everyone who teachers history, no matter what, everybody has an agenda they want to get across. Part of my agenda comes from the district and part of my agenda comes from myself and who I am. I tell them I have an agenda and that social history is where my interests lie and that's what I focus on, what I like to teach the most....

I was there to see Mary introduce bias in historical interpretation to three of her classes. Although she did not say the above verbatim, it was quite close. While observing, I noticed that most of the students listened attentively as a teacher told them that her view of her subject area was biased and invited them to challenge her perspectives. When interviewed, all four students characterized historical record as ideologically biased and in need of critical reading.

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Mary and Ruth, to a different extent, presented a view of history to their students that was complex. Their interpretations were full of the conflict, struggle, compromise, continuity and change of history. Social education themes wove their way throughout both curricula, resurfacing numerous times. Yet, their views asked students to make connections, and often to assume some kind of responsibility. As one of Mary's students said:

> The big comparison past to present is racism...that seems to be one thing all throughout time, anywhere you go you can find it. We talk about it in class... a lot of times...it comes up a lot...I think it is good to talk about it...because this is what life is like and we all have to deal with it...many people may not like having to deal with it, but that's life.

Students as the common people

Telling stories in history class was an important strategy employed by both teachers to connect their students' lives to the content of United States history. Ruth described it as a way to talk with students about their role within a participatory democracy:

> A lot of history is written by the big wigs, by the people who made it. Well the common people are what make a democracy work...If history was written by the leaders...what were the people doing..things were being destroyed and land was being taken away from people...that's what was going on. Look now, Congress is arguing over the budget and getting ready for a presidential election, but what are the people doing...what are we doing? Are we just sitting there watching it on TV or are we taking part? How will it affect us taxwise...how many government workers have lost their jobs because of cutbacks? How pathetic is it to go to a casino and see people gambling their last paycheck for longer

term security? We need to look at what was or is
going on...we need to see because that is what
matters. We are the majority.

Ruth was facile at raising critical issues with her students,
especially those that challenged status quo interpretations of
social concerns. She focused on encouraging her students to
understand an issue from a variety of perspectives. By
allowing students to see themselves in the stories of others,
Ruth hoped they would learn something about their role in
society. It is not as clear, however, how Ruth wanted her
students to use this information. Later, I asked this
question of Ruth and she explained that she did not want to
tell her students how to live their lives, but wanted them to
see the consequences of people's individual and collective
decisions over time. The four students I interviewed from
Ruth's class all mentioned the importance of the past in
understanding the present, though none remarked specifically
how that might influence their own lives:

Student: You want to know what happened in the past
so the good things you can repeat and the bad
things you don't want to repeat, like wars and
stuff.
Interviewer: You said you like the way Mrs. R
connects things that happened in the past to the
present...why?
Student: I think that is good because she tells you
where she's coming from and she lets us tell what
we think goes along with it..and we can share, and
she lets you have time to talk about it...

Mary had some of the same reasons as Ruth for presenting
history as socially complex. She wanted her students to
understand multiple interpretations of history for reasons of

accuracy and understanding, as well as academic and personal skill development. Mary thought that looking at history through the lens of multiple social perspectives would allow her students to understand people better. This emphasis was so pervasive in her practice that I began to refer to it in my notes as *historical empathy*. Mary's description of this concept is easily gleaned from the following excerpt:

> I think that a big part of any social studies curriculum should be teaching people to be accepting of others and teaching people to respect all kinds of people. I think social history talks about what happens to the common person and what happens to all kinds of people in society....I try to ask them to put themselves in a lot of people's positions...they put themselves in the position of a farmer in the Dustbowl, the position of a Sioux at Wounded Knee, one of the pioneers....we look at things from a lot of different perspectives and try to carry that into today...like a couple of weeks ago we had a discussion about racism, the whole Rutgers thing and I tried to have them look at the different sides...then try to make a decision about it.

Mary's students discussed many points of view, but they also talked about decision making, problem solving, and sometimes, what they could do personally about social issues. I was in class one day when a student announced that after a previous discussion about the Oklahoma City bombing she had suggested the student council collect relief funds. I was also there when a general discussion of discrimination turned toward school practices questioned by the students. Student connections of past to present seemed an everyday occurrence in Mary's class. And for some students, their understanding and empathy for others seemed almost a tangible thing. As one

student said when asked what she learned of importance:

> Many times I've been struck by the feeling in class
> that this would have actually been me, not just
> look at those people over there...that it actually
> would have been me.

Lessons of History

Ruth: History is human. Learning it has to be
human. This is all human stuff.

Ruth and Mary loved United States history. They saw the
discipline as full of significant and relevant information for
themselves and their students. While both taught their half
of United States history chronologically, they planned their
units (era) around broad social education themes. For both
teachers, these themes seemed to be grounded in past and
contemporary social issues. As previously mentioned, Mary's
curriculum revolved around five themes devised by the
department. Each had its own decorated poster which hung over
the front chalkboard in Mary's classroom:

> The Melting Pot: Old world vs. New world
> The American Frontier Spirit: Past and present
> The American Success Story: Fact or fiction?
> The American Social Conscience: Theory and practice
> The American Dilemma: Individualism vs. conformity

Mary used these themes to plan her curriculum in
consistent ways. Variations on the above issues were
discussed in class and showed up on quizzes. She also used
them to structure her ongoing current events assignments. In
these, each student was required to choose a variation on one
of the themes and write two to three short essays discussing

related newspaper reports. Her consistent focus on these and other social concerns created an atmosphere within her class that was questioning and critical. Mary supported this type of learning community with many interesting and varied activities. A favorite for both teacher and students was a simulation which recreated a company town from the early industrial age. The teacher owned the factory, all the housing, and the store. The students were her workers. They labored for less than a living wage and tried to survive within the very limited parameters of the teacher owned town. According to Mary, most of her classes formed unions and attempted to bargain collectively with the teacher:

> The goal of the whole thing is that they eventually start to unionize...like my second period class, absolutely...they all walked out by the end...it was this huge scheme....We do it for three days and then we process it for a day and I don't think any of them ever forget being workers in that company town, they refer back to it often.

Mary allowed her students to discover collective action on their own with this simulation. She recreated the frustration of the situation, but did not let unions be the unproblematic answer. Throughout the simulation, she broke students' attempts to form unions, employed child labor, and raised living costs in response to unionization. In the processing of this activity, the students discussed their thoughts and feelings, as well as the industrial era's connection to the prosperity of the '20's and the Great Depression. Mary said at one point, "In the 20's workers were

being paid better, and on the whole there was this general prosperity.....but who is left out?" A discussion of the exclusionary nature of unionism as well as capitalism followed.

Simulations were not the only way in which Mary encouraged her students to empathize with historical others. Discussions, dramatizations, research projects, positional debates, journal/letter writing, and recreations were also employed. Mary used a variety of additional resources including literature, film, periodicals, editorials, music, and art to describe people's lives. I observed a discussion of an essay written by a Native American boy about his decision to leave the Carlisle Indian School and return to the reservation ("Blue Winds Dancing"). The students had read it the night before and, for half the class period, discussed the major points which involved questions of cultural assimilation. Mary then referred to three questions she had written on the board for students to work on individually:

> (1) What shapes your identity?
> (2) What is the problem of identity faced by White Cloud? What creates this problem? How is it resolved?
> (3) If you were a Native American what things would make you want to stay on the reservation? Why would you want to go to a white school? Which do you think you would do and why?

Mary asked her students to consider first a broad concept like identity, then encouraged them to empathize with the main character's struggle between two cultural worlds. Finally, she asked them to decide what this meant to them personally.

"What would you do and why?" With these questions she connected the experience of another person of another place, culture, and time to her students' experience. What did Mary's students learn from this? According to one:

> I think it teaches you what life was like ...that's a big part of it. A lot of people struggled to make our country what it is today, and a lot of people are still struggling. I think it is important to see how those people were. It teaches us how to learn from other people...learn from mistakes and to take the good things out of it.

And another student;

> Understanding the plight of the common person is probably going to stick in my mind when it comes to making decisions about life, politics and stuff like that....

Ruth also provided experiences that encouraged her students to empathize with historical others. While she had a variety of approaches, she primarily used structured discussions (teacher questions/student answers) and written responses to accomplish her goals. This was an excerpt from a structured discussion reviewing a lesson from the previous day, a practice Ruth often used to begin class:

> Ruth: What did the Declaration of Independence do?
> (A number of hands are raised and Ruth calls on one student)
> Student 1: Declared war
> Ruth: Each man that signed the Declaration of Independence...what were they doing?
> Student 2: Signing their death warrant
> Ruth: Yes, if you were caught as a traitor what would happen to you?
> Student 3: Death by hanging.

In this review Ruth asked her students to see the Declaration of Independence as a radical and dangerous document. She then

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had the students run a voting simulation for and against the Declaration. After each group made their case, Ruth commented to the students that "it is easy for us to be lighthearted about our voting and think of this as a fun activity, but at the time it was very significant and tense." When I asked her about this comment later she said:

> Yeh, I do that a lot, make comments on the side like "You don't have to worry about it because you are free, this is just something we are doing in a classroom." I want them to think....if you were a person standing outside Carpenter Hall and your whole future depended on what was going on inside....you weren't free. And they didn't know, if they supported these guys inside if they would get killed because they were traitors.. What if they didn't win the war? People's lives were at stake here.

Through these structured discussions, Ruth asked her students to consider the perspectives of the many people involved. She was concerned that they focus on not just the influencial men inside, but the many that awaited the outcome and had to make their own decisions about joining or staying loyal to the king. It was common for Ruth to ask *who* was included and *who* was not. Later in this same discussion she asked, "Who is created equal? Does this mean women and African Americans?"

Ruth did not back away from difficult social issues. However, she often used individual written reactions rather than discussions as a tool for students to process feelings and thoughts:

> I came in Friday and I shut off all the lights and I had them get out their notebooks and write

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"slavery" at the top of the page and "whatever comes to your mind, write it down". We did that for 3-4 minutes with the lights off, it was very quiet and I just walked around the room.....I didn't make any comments after they said what they wrote as I called on various people. It was very emotional for some people...in my first class I have one Black girl who is an absolute doll and one of her words was "nigger", nobody said anything, I didn't say anything, but you could see people welling up with tears and they got the point...there is a lot of racism and they are sensitive to it. It was good that emotional response....then I read them some primary source readings from "To Be A Slave"....some of the kids were in tears, they had a hard time with it. Then because slavery has different meanings to different people and because there way of coming to terms with it differs I had them do a collage....you can see mine here (shows me her collage).

This activity seemed to create a powerful experience for these 8th graders. Using both the words of historical others and the students' own thoughts, Ruth enabled her classes to reflect on slavery. Ruth stated that with an emotionally charged issue it was better to allow students to hear other's ideas, but to process them on their own. She provided a creative outlet for the emotional energy produced by this activity. When asked more specifically about her goals for this activity she responded:

Some of them already understand, but for some it's so very difficult for them to imagine how people treated another class of people so poorly because of their race, because of their color...and to understand that is why we have prejudice today...to see the roots go all the way back to slavery..and even before.

While both Ruth and Mary actively entertained difficult social issues in their classrooms, their strategies differed. I believe that Mary, if she had done this activity, would have

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pursued more of an open discussion about the issue. While Ruth did not shy away from discussing a variety of issues, on a few highly controversial topics she structured her lessons away from general discussion and toward more private reflection:

> I don't expect much in the discussions because it is all going to come out on their collage...it is such a sensitive topic that we just touch on it...we started to talk about it and there were some stories that I didn't want the kids to share with each other....I didn't want it to get out of hand.

As Ruth was saying this, I was struck by her sympathy for the children, by her fear that they might feel compromised or uncomfortable with their peers if they divulged too much personal information. A number of other times I have heard Ruth inquire about students' personal experiences, including differences in cultural and national backgrounds. However, with the issue of slavery the benefits of collectively delving into this complex social issue were outweighed by Ruth's desire to ensure safety for her students.

For Ruth and Mary, the lessons of history available to teach were many and varied, but the common thread seemed to be the goal of connecting their students to the lives of historical others for the promotion of greater understanding of the multiple voices of history, and to encourage personal reflection. Their perspectives for the use of the content of United States history to further their social education goals had an impact on what was included and emphasized in their classrooms as well as on how the information was taught.

Democracy as a collective process

At the center of the study of United States history in both Mary's and Ruth's classes was democracy. Both viewed democracy as a process of collective work and United States history as the social record of that *living* process. The broader social education themes they promoted and the social issues they raised reflected their interests in the ongoing questions of participatory governance. Although Mary's curriculum covered from Reconstruction to the present, she spent the first few weeks of school revisiting the Constitutional Convention, discussing different forms of government, and talking in detail about American social values. In her comparative government activity, she grouped students into governance types (dictatorship, consensus, democratic) and had them decide on rules for the school. Each group then presented their ideas. As they moved from dictatorship through to consensus, less rules were agreed upon by the groups. Mary talked about what she hoped they learned from this:

> I think part of it connects to the whole issue of
> perspective, like with the Constitutional con-
> vention a lot of what affected your perspective was
> issues of class, regionalism...it goes back to
> these ideas of democracy again and how hard it is
> to actually have democracy. I think it was coming
> out especially in 2nd period, in the consensus
> group someone said "I think the school should be
> democratic" and then others said "no way we'd never
> be able to get anything done, all they would ever
> be able to decide is that we should wear clothing."
> This is a really good point and I hope it is
> reinforced by the convention because I think it
> says something important about the democratic
> process and negotiation and compromise.

When asked about her overall goals for the first few weeks she responded:

> I hope that they take away from this that democracy is a really challenging process...its not so easily done...like when we are trying to get consensus on the due date of a paper....we see very quickly how hard it is to do that. When we do the Constitutional Convention in here we have representatives from each state ....we spend two days arguing with each other about the issues of slavery, taxation, tariffs, and representation and they end up realizing how difficult it is to come to consensus...yet how important it is for all people involved to have some say in it.....I think that they would definitely say that democracy is a hard thing...and that there are times when it is not easy to be democratic.

Spending time discussing democratic challenges at the beginning of the semester was Mary's way of "setting up the issues" for the year. As discussed before, she used social history to challenge historical perceptions of democratic values including freedom, equality, individual rights, social responsibility, and progress. At the beginning of the year, Mary brought these broader issues into the discussion, but after a few months the students, more often than not, raised similar types of concerns. A student of Mary's summarized her understanding of United States history when asked what she learned from the class that was most important. Of special interest was the connection she made between the personal and the political:

> Well...I think the whole growing up process that our country has been through is very important, because individually we have to grow up and as a country we have to grow up. We still are a very young country...and we've gone through a lot... we've made some very good decisions, but have been

through some hard times as well.

Ruth did not start her year with the establishment of United States democracy. However, when she arrived at it chronologically, she spent three weeks on the Constitution alone. She mentioned, on a few occasions, that she spent more time than the other teacher on this unit because she found it central to her goals for her course. When asked what she wanted her students to learn from her Constitution unit, she responded:

> The practical aspects of the Constitution...that it is not just a piece of history..that it is something that will affect them..so...we learn about compromises, how the Constitution came about...then we take the document and dissect it. We rewrite certain parts of it...we rewrite the preamble...and how they would rewrite the Bill of Rights for today' society...what changes they would make. We take cases..
> Interviewer: Supreme Court cases?
> Ruth: Actually current cases...some hypothetical situations...we compare them, how would it fit...and they role play some of them. We look at a number of things for evaluation..we look at it from a moral standpoint, ethical standpoint, especially rights. Always with this unit, and I do this with the rest of my units, but this unit on the Constitution has to relate to now...it is meaningless if the kids don't relate to it now.....the Civil War is important, the Revolutionary War is important, but without knowledge of the Constitution nothing else really makes any sense. They need to know what is going on...kids need to know about their rights.

Again, we see the importance Ruth placed on the connection between the Constitution and the lives of her students, especially from the standpoint of morals and ethics. She wanted them to understand their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution, but in a critical way. She did not present it

as a finished product, but encouraged her students to examine its strengths and limitations through roleplays and reinterpretations. To this end, Ruth spent much of this unit having her students rewrite the Bill of Rights. To facilitate their understanding, she used school rule analogies to describe Constitutional rights. Like Mary, she discussed broad themes of equality, justice, individual rights, social responsibility, and freedom in relationship to the Constitution and its role in United States history. Although Ruth's discussions were more structured than Mary's, both focused on these broader themes of democracy.

From the perspectives of both teachers, the story of United States history was the story of democracy. The relationship was so intertwined that most of the critical questions asked by the teachers in the classroom had to do with democratic values. These questions were so enmeshed within the teachers' philosophies and practices that they were almost too integral to extract. An example which occured frequently, and has already been mentioned in this work, was how both Mary and Ruth talked about exclusion and equality. *Who* questions were asked almost daily. "Who is equal?" "Who writes history?" "Who was included in making that decision?" "Who got to vote?" "Who was counted a person in establishing representation?" and so on.

Student as Citizen

Interviewer: Citizenship education has long been a theoretical focus of social studies education...I was wondering what you thought about it and whether it relates to what you are doing here?

Mary: It does....but I don't know that it's the classic definition of citizenship. Ok....well I do have a flag in this room (jokingly), but I didn't last year, it was here when I got here this year. But, I think that a lot of times citizenship has been narrowly defined....it certainly is a big part of the social studies curriculum everywhere...but for me...what I think of as creating citizenship skills is to a) be critical of what's around you and to be critical of the media, and to be critical of society, and b) to hopefully make students feel empowered enough that they see they have some role in the change that needs to take place, if they believe that a change needs to take place. Ummmm.....so I hope to teach them to have really good decision making skills and to be able to be people who will consider all sides of an issue before they make a decision. So that's how we really deal with citizenship in the classroom, by considering lots of perspectives.

And later in the same interview:

I tell them from the start of the year "Don't just listen to what I say and sit back and say that's it, because I am telling you what I think is important and may not be what you think is important....be critical of what I say, be critical of the course." I tell them to be critical of everything. "If you sit back and are passive, then you have no right to complain when something bad happens."

From these excerpts we see that Mary carefully considered her role in facilitating citizenship education in her 10th grade United States history courses. She labelled her definition of citizenship as nontraditional, which meant that she did not advocate the uncritical transmission of democratic values. Rather, she looked at democratic citizenship as a process of critical thinking and decision making. Again, the importance

of using multiple perspectives to examine social issues was emphasized in her goals for citizenship education. She told her students to be critical of everything including herself, her course, the school, and the broader society. Mary hoped that her two-pronged approach would not only develop thoughtful students, but that it would empower them to be socially responsible. She did warn them about apathy, but maintained their right to choose their own social battles.

In almost all of the classes I observed, I saw Mary push her students to broaden their views and argue for her own ideas. Yet, she still left her students room to decide for themselves. Mary demonstrated this by following up on the social issues of interest to her students. The following excerpt returns us to an earlier scenario of a class discussion on homelessness:

> So basically we were talking about social Darwinism...about whether people who are rich today deserve to be rich and people who are poor deserve to be poor. This brought up the whole issue of homelessness... and somebody said that "yes, homeless people did deserve to be poor because they didn't work"....other students disagreed. And then one student started crying and said that she knew several homeless teenagers and that they had a lot of other problems, probably some that these kids can't even imagine... and "that even though life on the street is horrible it's better that it was at home." Then another girl said that they should stay at home, but that the government should do something about it...and then the first girl said they do try, but they can't possibly help everyone. So this sparked this long discussion...then we got into this thing about employment..."These people should just go out and get jobs." So I said "where will they get a job?"..... the response was "McDonalds." "First, it is hard for a homeless person to get a job if they have no address...no place to be called back, but let's look at how easy

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it would be to live on a McDonald's salary." We did all the calculations for a forty hour week at five dollars an hour...with how much you might need to spend on different things. I think it brought home that the Company town problems could happen today....we were in debt too on our McDonald's salary, even as an individual person..."so imagine as a parent...you would be way in debt..maybe not living in a house."

Mary was not afraid of tangents, especially if they served her goals of broadening students' perspectives on social issues. In the above excerpt, she encouraged her students' inquiry by allowing ample time for discussion, and by guiding them in practical ways to challenge their own solutions. Some were able to see that "getting a job" was not the panacea they might have expected. Mary was not content to just revel in her excitement about this spontaneous discussion, but over the weekend went to the library to research the issue. By rearranging her curriculum for the week, she made room for more work on the questions of homelessness:

I hope to build on that tomorrow by taking readings from opposing viewpoints...like homelessness threatens working families versus homelessness doesn't threaten working families; the government should provide more housing versus the government shouldn't provide a better housing policy; then various causes....mental illness is a cause versus it isn't; alcoholism is a cause versus it isn't...

In this case, Mary encouraged her students as critical thinkers by allowing them to raise questions, pose concerns, analyze viewpoints and discuss possible solutions prior to reading about homelessness. The readings were added to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues from a variety of perspectives. She then had them compare what they knew

with what they read to further discuss this complex social issue, with the expressed goal of connecting students to social issues. She harnessed their interest and asked them what could be done, on societal and personal levels. When planning curriculum, it can be difficult to only wait for spontaneous moments to define what you will cover, but Mary seemed to seek a balance between planned and unplanned learning. This worked for the four students I interviewed who all found her class interesting, relevant, and thought-- provoking.

Ruth also used social issues to develop citizenship skills in her students. Like Mary, she wanted her students to understand many perspectives, but reserved their perogitive to make their own decisions about how to think and act:

> Interviewer: A broad goal of the social studies is to educate children for citizenship...is this important?...is it part of your message?
> Ruth: Yes, but it is a covert message...responsible citizens is such a broad statement...regardless of how these kids turn out...regardless of the paths they will take...from this unit on government...if they act properly they will know their rights, if they act improperly they will know their rights. Not everyone is going to be perfect, and I'm not asking them...I'm not telling them to be perfect, but I can tell them consequences...how you should act. I can't live their lives for them...only act as a role model. This is a democracy and you do have rights, but you have to act within reason. People walk around..."well it's my right"..well what about other people's rights? You have to respect others' rights as well. Those are the types of messages I am covertly teaching...I don't want to be a lecturer..and I don't portray myself like that...I'm not perfect either...but we talk about ways we should be....you know...you teach, you talk, you teach, you talk.

Ruth used a lot of rights language to discuss her goals for

citizenship education. She told her students that they had the right to make their own decisions, but wanted them to understand the consequences of their actions. Her role, as she described it, was to act as a role model and to provide enough information for students to make considered decisions.

In the above excerpt, Ruth indicated that there were ways in which people ought to behave and that was part of the knowledge that she wanted to teach in her classroom. Unlike Mary, I found Ruth more focused on individual development than collective action. Still, her approach was much more mixed than this quote signifies. In addition to discussing the consequences of breaking laws, she also encouraged her students to critically analyze the social fabric of society including the creation and interpretations of legislation. As mentioned before, who was included, who wrote it, and who it favored or oppressed were often concerns in her class.

Ruth employed a variety of activities, including critical film analysis, to encourage her students to question societal assumptions. Below are some excerpts from a worksheet used in conjunction with the viewing of the feature film The Last of the Mohicans:

> Your challenge here is to analyze the film and to think critically about its messages. Does it capture the essence of the time period? Is it historically accurate? No one is arguing that a movie has to be. However, visual images are powerful, and many Americans believe what they see on screen. In an age in which visual images rush at us from every direction, we must be able to differentiate between accurate ones and ones that are only meant to entertain or persuade us.

The purpose of our viewing is to examine how film can shape the way people think about historical events. (The worksheet goes on to list daily questions for the students to write about, a couple go directly to the above point):

What do you think the film maker wanted you to feel and to think?
Are there times in this movie when you thought the film maker used a certain image to make a particular point? How?

This activity encouraged students to look for historical inaccuracies and, more importantly, specific social messages from the film maker. Both were discussed after the viewing of the movie, as Ruth says, "To see how Hollywood has tended to blur the lines between historical fact and entertaining fiction." While Ruth's goal was to enable her students to watch film critically, she did not explore the underlying reasons why society finds some visual images so compelling. In this case, critical thinking for the goal of historical accuracy seemed most important to Ruth. Perhaps this was a reasonable goal, given the age and experience of her students. For many, this was the first time the history books had been actively questioned. When Ruth showed Disney's Pocohontas, her students were appalled at the historical inaccuracy of the story, as well as the social messages that were being sent to their younger siblings. Their critical viewing skills were activated, and for Ruth that was an important first step in citizenship education.

As mentioned, Ruth showed a mixture of critical depth in her goals and activities of her United States history class. She used social history and social issues to question narrow

historical interpretations, but did not always problematize new interpretations or speak with her students about possibilities of social change to address the problems they identified. Two activities I observed illustrate this. The first was a chip game in which students were given trading rules for greater economic gain. They played a few rounds and then Ruth summarized the point of the game as the exercising of freedom to "get rich". While she did a good job discussing the *taken-for-grantedness* of some U. S. freedoms, she did not problematize issues of opportunity, exclusive access to wealth, unequal distribution, or related social class issues.

On another occasion, Ruth grouped her students into pairs to see how many words they could make out of the word "American." The goal for this activity was to come up with the phrase "I can." This seems a traditional, and unquestioned interpretation of the American dream. Yet, with many other activities, she delved deeply into the underlying issues. To start her unit on the Revolutionary War she asked "Why do students fight with each other?" and "Why might they disagree with the school, or teacher?" The class then analyzed reasons and devised solutions to address conflict. Within this mixture of activities, many of her students seemed to be getting her message. When asked what he was learning, traces of empowerment were apparent in one student's reply:

> If you don't like something that happened in the
> past we could change it. In class right now we are
> learning about our rights and the laws. History
> also teaches us what we can do...like through
> protest and all...and how we can help change the

laws even if we are not of voting age.

For Ruth and Mary, citizenship education was an important, if hard to define, outcome for United States history instruction. While both valued critical analysis of multiple perspectives, Mary on the whole did this more consistently than Ruth. For example, Mary's activity on being an American cut deeply into the influences that comprise social views of United States culture. Her students discussed their own definitions of Americanism, then analyzed opposing views on the topic (Arthur Slessinger versus Ronald Takaki), and finally used all the information to examine their understandings of culture. Perhaps we can attribute this to differing assumptions about the developmental readiness of 8th and 10th grade students, but it also seemed like a difference in philosophy. Mary encouraged more reflective self-examination in relationship to social issues than did Ruth, though both valued it as a goal of citizenship education.

Teacher as Citizen

Mary and Ruth modelled citizenship in their classrooms in a variety of ways. These included sharing personal stories, admitting when they did not know something, negotiating topics and assignments with students, sharing their own reactions to content, and openly discussing school-wide issues. In addition, Ruth communicated her expectations of her students in very open and tangible ways. Goals for the day and homework

assignments were described in detail on the side board, and rubrics were given out with each major project. Ruth's room was crowded with materials that conveyed her critical approach, including a poster that said "Assume Nothing", a map of the world from the Australian perspective, a shelf full of historical resources, and pictures of George Washington and Abe Lincoln in beachwear. Ruth did all assignments along with her students, a practice that was much appreciated by the four students that were interviewed. On the whole, her students seemed to view her as honest about her perspectives and expectations. As she said herself, "I never make false promises, I come prepared to class and I work hard to make it interesting for my students."

One of the biggest issues that arose in Ruth's class demonstrated her idea of citizenship modelling. Luckily, I was on hand to watch it unfold. Her students had the option of presenting a play or video about some aspect of colonialism. One group made a film depicting the Salem witch scare from a contemporary perspective. Included in the video were references to current Satanic rituals, mostly garnered from rock videos, as well as some negative references to symbols of Christianity. The video was extremely sophisticated from a production standpoint, and to my mind, it managed to convey the hysteria of the Salem witch trials. That was Ruth's thinking as well, as she said to me after class:

I am so glad you were here to see that!....Isn't
that amazing...all that devil stuff, I'm sure the
school board would not like that very much at
all...but what am I going to do? That is the way
they portrayed the Salem witchcraft trials..and I
think they made a lot more sense out of it than
just reading from a book, they made a connection to
the cults and witches in the current age. They
could see that connection...and I thought it was
beautifully done!

Ruth did show it to the assistant principal before showing it

to her other classes. He was supportive, but advised her not

to show it anymore in case it became a problem for parents.

Ruth decided to call the authors' parents to make them aware

of the controversy and of the content of the film:

I told them (parents) that they got a hundred, that
it was brilliant and that I loved it, but that it
was banned because there were some Satanic re-
ferences in it...and it might be disturbing to some
people. I mean both of these boys who made it were
on the honor roll. I said to the parents "If you
notice a slip in grades or attitude..then you can
worry, but at this point.."

This is basically the same speech Ruth used with all of her

classes in relationship to the banning when they asked to see

the film. She also talked about how, when she was growing up,

her parents were afraid that she would become addicted to

drugs if she went to a Kiss concert or listened to Alice

Cooper:

Interviewer: Were the students upset about it being
banned?
Ruth: Yes, but they were very happy that I levelled
with them. I told them it was banned and that we
couldn't watch it...I told them that I loved it...I
had no problem with it, but I think some people
might so we can't watch it anymore. They want me to
be a rebel...and I said "I am a rebel, but I do
like my job."

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Ruth was excited about the work of these students and remained so despite banning the video. She was honest with the authors, their parents, her other students, and the administration about her position. She took responsibility for banning the film from her classroom, but talked the reasons over with her students. While she did not let the students decide for themselves, she did tell them why it was important to her not to ruffle feathers over this issue. We could argue that she should have picked this battle to fight, but it seems more important to focus on what she did model for her students. She demonstrated the human activity of making a complex decision in the face of competing moral values.

Mary also thought aloud as a way of modelling the decision-making process. She negotiated activities and as-signments with her students on almost a daily basis. She openly discussed school issues and when in disagreement with school policy, owned this to her classes. Mary encouraged her students to participate in decision-making at the school on many levels. When the administration asked her to find a student from each class to serve on a committee to discuss a change to block scheduling, Mary turned it into a democratic election:

> Mary: A volunteer is needed for a school committee on intensive scheduling. (As Mary describes the duties 10 hands go up to volunteer).
> Student 1: How will we decide. Should we pick from a hat?
> Mary: No, let's use a democratic process.
> Student 2: Then we need some speeches.
> Mary: Ok? (most students nod or say yes)..let's go down the line.

The ten students each spoke a short time about their position on block scheduling. Three students said they were not in favor of it, but wanted to learn more. Four liked the idea for various reasons, but also stated that they needed more information. The remaining three were unsure, but were interested in the question. Four students marketed their candidacy with phrases like "I'm a good speaker," "I'll go to all the meetings and I am not afraid to speak up and have the classes' opinions voiced," "I will speak my mind," and "My parents are involved so I'll have more information." After the speeches, Mary asked her students to write their vote on a piece of paper. As they started to do this she said, "Wow, this is a hard decision."

While seemingly unremarkable, this process was interesting for a few reasons. Mary had taken the expectation for a teacher nomination and turned it into a matter of representation on an issue of importance to her students. On numerous occasions, I heard students express concern about this scheduling change. This was also evidenced by the large number of volunteers for the committee. The suggestion for speeches, and the speeches themselves indicated an understanding of the democratic process. While it is hard to say whether the vote ended up going to the most popular student in class, a piece of overheard conversation recorded in my field notes, indicated a more considered decision:

> As students vote, some are discussing the options.
> A group of four women who are sitting near me are
> clearly trying to form a voting block. They are

discussing the candidates by who they think is the
most qualified, who they agree with and who might
most benefit by having the role. One student names
a candidate and says, "She is new here maybe it
would be a nice way for her to get involved."

Mary modelled this type of considered decision making in most of her interactions with her students. When planning activities, making assignments, grading, and discussing school issues, Mary sought significant student input. As said previously, she did not shy away from controversial issues. A great deal of her time was spent developing ways to talk to her students about contentious matters. These were concerns that she struggled with as a person and a teacher. After attending the National Endowment for the Humanities summer program "Religion and the National Culture," Mary described one of her dilemmas:

Interviewer: Since you want to integrate this into
your curriculum, how will you do it?
Mary: I think it is a touchy subject. I feel a lot
of people say that if you talk about one religion
you have to talk about all and I think that is a
fight many teachers would like to avoid. I need to
create subversive ways of doing it, but at the same
time I'd like to be up front about it with my
students.
Interviewer: What do you think they would say?
Mary: Even last year when I didn't talk about re-
ligion that much...immediately as soon as you say
anything about it they say, "We can't talk about
religion."
Interviewer: The students say that?
Mary: Yes, and my roommate had a whole blow up with
the school board about it. It is just a hot button
issue, but at the same time it is important to do
some of it. So we will. It is hard to talk about
American history without talking about religion. I
don't know how you can talk about the American
Revolution, the Constitution, the Declaration of
Independence, these documents contain a lot of
religious thought, the concept of a civil religion..

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In this interview we see that Mary wanted to include the influence of religious belief on the social and political events in United States history in her curriculum. She wished her students to critically analyze its impact, but was not yet able to penetrate the general resistance to the classroom study of religion in any form. This was a question she continued to struggle with in her teaching, as she did with many taboo subjects like racism, discrimination, gender issues, classism, and exclusion. Tinkering with her goals, trying out new activities, and talking them over with her students showed Mary's teaching as a work in progress.

At the beginning of this project both teachers expressed doubt that I would uncover a comprehensive and consistent theory of education from talking with them about their assumptions, plans, and practices. As we have seen, both Mary and Ruth's teaching was grounded in their perceptions of United States history, democracy, citizenship education. It was influenced by their beliefs about students, their role as teacher, and the larger social context influencing their classrooms. So far we have seen that who these teachers were and how they viewed themselves, their students, and their knowledge of social education had an important impact on their expressed goals. Next, we turn to what the teachers claimed as the most important means through which they worked to accomplish their goals. Namely, the relationships they tried to build in their classrooms.

Chapter 5

TEACHER AS BUILDER OF CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

The age old challenge is in the translation. Theories, philosophies, rationales, and thematic goals do not always translate easily into practice. Both Mary and Ruth wanted their students to personally connect with the lessons of history, to see history from a social perspective, and to view democracy as a collective process in which they, as common people, had an important role. They wished to offer opportunities for students to practice the role of citizen, including developing skills in critical analysis, empathic understanding, problem solving, decision making, participation, and action. But how did these teachers attempt to reach toward these learning goals within their classrooms? I have already provided some clues as to how this was undertaken. In this chapter, we will focus more specifically on how Mary and Ruth's perspectives on social education were translated into their daily plans, activities, and interactions with students.

Studying the establishment of relationships in their classrooms was crucial to discerning how Mary and Ruth translated their teaching theories into practice. For both teachers the work of the course happened within the context of

the relationships they forged with their classes. These in-
cluded the relationships each teacher facilitated with and
among her students, and the relationships they shaped between
students and the content and goals of their courses. While
there may be many ways to view the pedagogy of these two
teachers, I found nothing as strongly emergent and con-
sistently compelling as the emphasis they both placed on
relationships as the medium through which most else was
accomplished. Even though Mary and Ruth had different
assumptions about relationships and played different roles in
the nurturance of these in their classrooms, according to
both, relationships served as the primary determinent of
successful practice. How they developed, supported and
utilized these is the topic for this chapter. Despite
differences in their approaches, I believe there is much to
learn about relationship building from both of these models.

RUTH

Building relationships with and among students

Ruth's relationships with her students could be charac-
terized as a balance between a personal commitment to each
student and a professional responsibility to her educational
goals. She took an active interest in the concerns of her
students and treated them with care and respect. For the most
part, she listened to what they had to say, was careful not to
interrupt, provided many opportunities for them to meet with

her individually, and offered constant encouragement of their efforts. Her support was not lost on her students, as all four interviewed said that she cared about their success. In every class I observed, Ruth's words of encouragement were plentiful and included phrases such as; "great," "perfect," "much better," "this is a new unit so let's start off well," "I was superpleased by your quizzes," "good answers," and "see how we used our heads to figure this out?" When offering encouragers, Ruth's voice was authentic and enthusiastic. Even in interviews when we discussed students, or when she showed me their work, she was genuinely animated.

As mentioned before, Ruth was also direct with her students about her role in the classroom:

> I don't think of the teacher as the all knowing, autonomous giver of knowledge....I am just here to facilitate....

Ruth willingly admitted many of her mistakes to her students, thought about her curriculum aloud with them, and offered them some opportunities to participate in curriculum decisions. By modelling her thinking, she hoped to encourage her students to "use their heads to figure out" some of the content. This she called "discovery learning," a defining characteristic of her teaching approach. In each class I observed, there were components of this approach in which Ruth asked her students to use what they knew to discuss what might have happened next historically. Ruth saw her students as capable of figuring things out and her role as finding ways to support them in their learning. She described each class as having a

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"different personality" and said that it was important to change her teaching approach to fit the class. I observed two middle level classes over the year and found that while much of the material was the same, Ruth's approach did vary with each class. One group she gave less direction and more freedom for discussion, while the other she maintained more authority. When I inquired if she perceived a difference between the two classes, she stated that the second class seemed to require more explanation and monitoring to keep them on task. When asked to compare the three tracking levels, Ruth responded:

> As far as I'm concerned all my kids are able to do everything and anything, it is just a matter of how they process it. That's the only difference between the levels for me.

One way Ruth learned about processing differences was through class discussions of *how* students did their work. By doing each assignment along with the students, Ruth seemed to open the door for more of this *how-to* talk. Many of the students appreciated her effort. As one said:

> She gives you time to do it (work), and she does it herself too....so you see what she is doing...and she's not just saying "Here's your homework, I'll check on it later"....we do it together

Ruth took pains to establish supportive and respectful relationships with her students. While she seemed to have fairly rigorous goals for her classes' learning, her students perceived her as someone who helped them in significant ways to reach these goals. Her curriculum expectations were out in

the open for her students to see and understand. Not only did she talk about them, but her goals and homework expectations, as previously mentioned, were written on the board each day. A student's course grade was comprised of a variety of assessments which included some traditional tests and quizzes, but also a significant number of creative projects. Ruth presented, verbally and in writing, the detailed rubrics which she used to grade assignments. She offered bonus point quizzes, review notes, and after school-time for test preparation. Creative projects consisted of plays, presentations, mock letter writings, and point of view essays. Students graded themselves on their major project in the course, an ongoing interactive notebook. While this will be described in detail in the next section, it is important to note that Ruth gave her pupils the opportunity to assess their own work. When asked how she felt about this process, she replied that, for the most part, the students gave themselves the same grade she would have and, if not, were generally harder on themselves.

Balancing care and support with academic rigor was a symmetry that Ruth worked on constantly. To be both personal and professional was important to Ruth, and characterized how she described her role in the classroom:

> I don't want to be their best friend, but as you can see I am very personal with them...asking them how they are...If I see someone who is upset, I'll pull them out into the hallway. If people are saying ignorant things about other people I'll address that. I basically confront the kids on everything they do, positive and negative. I try

to show them that I care about them by asking "How did you do in your game?" or "What did you do to your foot?" or "Your hair looks nice."

I always try to say something nice, something positive to the kids because 8th grade is a very tough age for them and their self-esteem and mood swings...and they really need to know that you're there for them, because we are a parent figure, we're an adult, we're a role model and they need to know that we care about them. It is a real needy age..but you still need to be structured and you have to let them know that this is wrong, that "You can't do that"...but you don't have to be a screamer and a yeller. You can just go up to them and say "This is inappropriate, it is just not right." Every once in awhile I'll have a fit...but that's okay...because they see different sides of you....

Ruth's academic and behavioral expectations occupied a center role in her classes, but they were accomplished through the supportive working relationships she established with her students. The students perceived this care and most of them seemed involved and invested. While the students interviewed did not see the coursework as "easy", they all felt that Ruth made it easier through her encouragement and accessibility. They claimed to know where they stood with her and found her consistency and structure reassuring. As Ruth said:

I never make false promises...if I say I'm going to do something its as good as done. If you miss three homeworks I call home...in my roll book you can see I've already made over thirty phone calls (end of October)...I call. I call for good and bad things. The kids know I'm stable, that I follow through, that I'm not just blowing smoke, and I think I get a lot of respect for that.

It was also important to Ruth that her students "learn to work together." She believed this was a consequential life

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skill, one they would need for the rest of their education as well as their working lives. Students worked in groups almost every day that I observed, and in all cases Ruth appointed them to groups. The assignments were varied with students travelling across the room to join with others. While she did have seat assignments, she changed them often and did not use them to determine the composition of collaborative groups. Ruth said she occasionally allowed the students to compose their own groups, especially for assignments that involved out of class time. Ruth talked to her class as a whole group much of the time. Her phrases of encouragement were group-oriented and included comments about the classes' progress ("You did great on your quizzes!" and "You'll be so excited by your grades on your interactive notebooks.")

While Ruth emphasized the importance of figuring out meanings together, much of the energy of the classroom was directed toward her. During whole class discussions, students generally responded to questions Ruth asked or statements she made. In most cases, she seemed at the center of the classes' attention. Even the follow up discussions after group work were directed and evaluated by Ruth. While she did encourage multiple views of history and student input, Ruth usually took the role of interpreter and stated or summarized the significant meanings to be found. This role was consistent with Ruth's assumptions about her students' developmental capabilities. While she fully believed them able to critically analyze information, she thought they needed structured

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direction to do this successfully. Ruth stated that, for most of her students, this was the first time that the history books had been questioned, and that they required a lot of assistance to understand multiple interpretations. Consequently, Ruth played two interesting and contradictory roles in relationship to authority. While she did allow her students much creative room for questioning, through both her teaching activities and the presentation of herself as fallible, she still acted as the primary interpreter of meaning.

As the primary interpreter of meaning, Ruth said she had some significant curriculum decisions to make involving time, coverage, and inclusion. While strongly committed to multiple perspectives, she often ran out of time to entertain many views. In about half of the classes I observed, she gave a single interpretation of an event or construct. While this view usually differed from a traditional viewpoint, it often skirted over other important issues. Revisting an earlier example, she had the class participate in a game of economic opportunity which was designed to simulate problems of access based on social class status. Ruth just used the simulation to illustrate how Americans took their freedom to compete in capitialism for granted. While it is arguable that this is the first step in understanding how some peoples' freedoms are more accessible than others, Ruth's interpretation of the purpose of the simulation was limited. On the other hand, when discussing the Constitution, Ruth carefully illustrated

the concept of limited access to freedom and opportunity based on social group membership. Overall, I got the sense that although the students were being somewhat carried through critical social analysis, they did pick up on it. As one student said in his interview: "She makes us think."

This mix of a teacher directed and student-centered classroom had elements of openess and structure. The students interviewed perceived themselves as having important roles in the class, felt personally connected to Ruth, and felt welcomed to express their ideas and points of view verbally or on paper. Their respect for Ruth and their committment to her seemed quite strong. In all the times I observed, Ruth never had to raise her voice to get the students' attention. The students voluntarily quieted at the beginning of class, and if some went off task other students *shusshed* them. And while the classes often became loud in groups, they remained for the most part on task. There were few classroom management problems that I observed, despite the presence of a number of students other teachers had labelled "trouble makers." On the few occasions that Ruth had to quiet an individual student, she most often said just his name. Sometimes, as she walked around the room, which she did constantly, she stopped and whispered something to help a student catch up. On a few occasions, I did observe her confronting the class or aparticular student for not keeping up with homework: "See me after school or you'll get a zero."

Ruth expected her students to demonstrate respect for

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each other. This, she told them, meant listening quietly when someone was talking, paying attention to other people's presentations, leaving other students' property alone, and not talking about people behind their backs. While Ruth primarily used modelling to communicate her expectations to her students, she sometimes confronted offending behavior more directly. When a number of students were talking about a classmate who got into some kind of trouble with the principal, Ruth said:

> Let's not talk about it.....(a little louder) let's
> not talk about it. I don't think it is fair to
> talk about someone that is not here.

On another occasion, Ruth asked the class where a certain student was. A few people responded that he was out because he got hit by an automobile and he was home recuperating. Some laughter accompanied comments about how "stupid" one must be to get hit by a car, to which Ruth responded:

> Really, it could have happened to any of us...you
> know that it could.

In summary, Ruth attempted to facilitate relationships with and among her students that were supportive, respectful and productive. She desired that they worked together well and not abridge anyone else's learning and comfort in her classroom. Ruth still remained at the center of the classroom in many ways, but she did seem to offer a role to students that many found satisfactory. They were able to participate and voice their views, but still had the safety of clear

expectations. She employed a balance between challenge and support.

Facilitating students' relationships
with course content and goals

Ruth's concern for structured experiences to meet her students' needs was most evident in the teaching strategies she adopted. One of her goals, as discussed before, was to encourage student connections with the social fabric of United States' history. To Ruth, critically understanding the meaning of history was the most important instructional aim. She used strategies that allowed her students to connect their present lives to the social issues of the past. "Figuring out" activities were at the center of her attempts to develop their skills of historical understanding. Writing advertisements to encourage colonists to come to the New World despite the hardships, posing a theory about the disappearance of Roanoke based on known information, and devising a simile and rationale for an event in the Revolutionary War were some of the ways Ruth encouraged her students to interact with meanings.

One of the students' favorite activities was trying to figure out who shot first at Lexington Green, the British or the Colonists. For this activity, Ruth handed out a map of the Green with some background information and ten different opinions about what happened. The students evaluated the opinions for accuracy, but also considered who expressed the

opinion and in what source (diary, letter, sworn testimony).
They then made an explanatory case for their view of the
events. These cases were discussed with the whole group
asking questions and evaluating the merits of each proposal.
Since we do not know what actually happened, there was no
right answer to be *discovered*. Ruth's goal for this activity
was for the students to learn about the issues at the time and
more importantly, to see how an individual's perspective can
be influenced by who they are and what they believe in. In
both of the classes I observed, Ruth reminded students of this
point directly.

Ruth's desire for structure within her curriculum caused
her to employ a new strategy for organizing her students' work
called an interactive notebook. While Ruth thought her classes
had been going well, she still felt some kind of organizing
structure was missing. In adopting the interactive notebook,
she hoped to pull the year together into the students' "own
history book." In other words, she hoped her students would
use this method to connect more personally to the content of
the course. Although the year of this study coincided with the
first year she used this method, she was very pleased by the
results, even in this initial implementation. In the following
interview excerpt, she described her rationale for using the
interactive notebook:

> I really am against passive notetaking, I think it
> is boring, I've always hated it. I don't like the
> textbook much either, I feel it is just one per-
> son's perspective on history. That's why you will
> always hear me telling stories, referring to the

newspaper, making connections, linkages. We never use the textbook as a sole source, just as one source. The interactive notebook is a way to use the textbook and other sources to take notes and to process them...people have different ways of processing things. Some process by pictures, by writing, doodling, graphs and the interactive notebook lets children make choices about this. Right side pages are typically for things that we will be tested on, the left side is for processing.

The interactive notebook, for Ruth, was a way for students to organize historical information from a variety of perspectives, including their own. They made a title page for each unit using drawings, computer graphics, paintings and other mediums. As they progressed through a unit, Ruth gave them typed notes, activity sheets, question sheets, and class discussion handouts to tape into the right side pages of their notebooks. On the corresponding left sides the students "processed" the right side information. This was sometimes done in class, sometimes for homework, and usually involved their response to an open-ended question, a sentence stem ("Early explorers are like rock musicians because....."), a political cartoon, a picture, or a historical quote. On a number of occasions, Ruth showed me the students' interactive notebooks. The left sides were filled with drawings, poetry, essays, computer graphics, collages, and other creative responses. I also observed that many students were proud of their work, sharing it with classmates, Ruth, and even me. Early in the year, Ruth expressed her excitement about this teaching strategy:

Can you imagine it with ten units! These will be
so thick and big! Real ownership and they'll save
these...and when they get to the senior high
they'll already know about them and it will be
easier for them to adjust. It's a big adjustment
with the right--left, "Do you mean this goes on the
left or a new right or left?" They have a hard
time with the directions, I have to repeat myself
like 90,000 times...but I'll tell you what, I think
its improving the way that they're learning...this
is my sixth year teaching and I think I am as
excited as I was the first because of this. They
are learning and it's really sticking with them....
Interviewer: So how do you know it is sticking?
Ruth: By their class participation....but you know
what is really neat? Not all kids are comfortable
participating in class, but they are participating
in here. I have a student who I really have to pry
information from...she's so shy...but when I marked
her interactive notebook she got a 100! She really
flew with it! I'm really excited about it...I mean
it is a lot of hard work (points to 12 shopping
bags full of grading she did over the weekend) it
really gives me a lot of insight into the students
and their writing.

Ruth was clearly pleased with her use of the interactive

notebook. Not only did it serve as a way for students to

organize their class materials, it also gave them a written

record of the historical content presented and discussed

within the course. The students' reactions to the material

she presented were given significance by their inclusion in

the interactive notebook. While it was not necessarily

"testable" information, the many ways the students "processed"

the content of the course was supported by Ruth. As one

student noted in his interview: "It is like your own

interactive notebook, she lets you do anything you want with

it." Again this fit Ruth's goals for her course, which were

to make the curriculum accessible and meaningful to her

students.   By structuring their relationships with the material through the interactive notebook, she offered a way for her students to process a variety of sources, multiple views of events, historical interpretation and individual meaning making.   As Ruth said about her approach:

> I hope I make sense, I try to make sense. I try to bring it to a level where it is sensible. Sometimes it is difficult to read, but it makes sense if you discuss it on a real down to earth level..."This is what you are reading, this is what it is saying" and combine discussion with story.

In addition to making sense, Ruth wanted her curriculum to connect with broader social issues. An important goal of social education, according to Ruth, was to provide interactions with meaningful social information to enable students to make better decisions as members of the larger society.   As mentioned in the last chapter, Ruth took this goal very seriously.   In fact, it seemed the center of her curriculum objectives for United States history instruction. She consistently talked about the importance of connections in our interviews, and more significantly, with her students in the classroom.

Ongoing assignments were dedicated to teaching students how to make these connections on their own. The strongest examples were the "time out" papers assigned every two weeks. These required students to search the newspaper for current events which related to historical materials within the unit under study. The students then wrote their interpretation of these connections.   Another example was a map activity in

which Ruth had the class draw the lines of colonial demarcation on a current map, then find present day place names which showed the influence of the controlling country. Ruth constantly used examples from school life to make points about historical events. When studying the Revolutionary War she started the unit by discussing the following questions; "Why do students fight?" "What school rules do you find oppressive?" and "How might we protest these?" In this next excerpt, we revisit briefly Ruth's goals for her unit on the Constitution:

> The practical aspects of the Constitution...that it is not just a piece of history..that it is something that will effect them... it has to relate to now....it is meaningless if the kids don't relate it to now.

Again, we see Ruth as unwilling to teach something without connecting it directly to the lives of her students. The Constitution was viewed as a living document, which had changed over time and was open to new interpretation. Students were asked to figure out what it meant and to suggest changes in areas which they felt lacked social relevance. Ruth's goal for this was stated above. She thought it was important for her students to understand their role as citizens, to know about their freedoms, their rights, and their responsibilities:

> People walk around "Well it is my right"... well what about other people's rights? You have to respect other's rights as well. Those are the types of messages I am covertly teaching...I don't want to be a lecturer...and I don't portray myself like that...I'm not perfect either...but we talk about ways that we should be. The way that they behave in

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my classroom...that's also representative of the Constitution. They have rights and responsibilities. If they are distracting..I only have to look at them because they know. I tell them that I come prepared to class everyday and "You must be prepared also." And in our discussions....we talk... I talk to these kids...you know, you teach, you talk, you teach, you talk.

On some level, Ruth saw her classroom environment as mirroring the social expectations of the Constitution. Her students had some rights and some responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities seemed to center on the assumptions and expectations Ruth had of herself and her students as outlined previously in this chapter. Through being a productive class member, Ruth thought her students would learn some important lessons about their roles within the larger society. Through a constant and unrelenting focus on the connections between the lessons of history and the students' contemporary lives, Ruth hoped to teach them some valuable skills for navigating the larger social world. In many ways, Ruth modelled these skills which included critical social analysis, assessment of relevancy, openness to multiple interpretations, and considered decision making. While their learning might be somewhat limited by her central role as interpreter, many of the students seemed to understand her message. As one said when asked about the most important thing he was learning through the study of history: "You might predict something to come."

Building relationships with and among students

> I love 10th grade...it's funny I was just having a
> discussion after school yesterday with this other
> teacher who says that 10th grade is the worst year,
> he would never want to teach it again (laughs).
> He'd much rather teach freshman or juniors...he'd
> never want to teach 10th grade again. I love the
> 10th grade...I think the students are more settled
> than when they are freshmen, but they are still
> young enough to be willing to try new projects...to
> be creative. For example, this week we are going
> to start the Depression and as part of this unit
> they are going to present Depression era talk
> shows. They really get into it, get really excited
> and make up funny things. It is interesting to
> watch!

Mary, like Ruth, was fond of her students. When she talked
about them she seemed genuinely excited by their energy, and
clearly motivated by the challenge of teaching them. While
she noted that 10th grade was her favorite, she previously
taught eighth graders and enjoyed them too. I got the
impression that she would find most grades appealing to work
with, even if for different reasons.

Mary's teaching approach was very student-centered. She
defined her role as a facilitator, not an all knowing author-
ity. As discussed in the last chapter, Mary encouraged her
students to be critical of everything that happened in her
classroom, including her own teaching practices. She was very
open to student input in planning her curriculum and solicited
their opinions almost daily. Students seemed willing to offer
ideas and expressed concerns about projects, papers and read-
ings. For Mary, this was an important part of teaching, as

she saw her role as one of discovering better ways to teach. Her students were her colleagues in this venture, and she relied on them for fresh ideas and critical feedback. To Mary, her students' involvement in their education was an important part of her relationship with them. Her belief in their ability to make reasoned decisions about their schooling created the type of participatory classroom Mary valued:

> It is very important to me that they (students) feel that they can be successful in here...that they know that I care about whether they are successful or not.

From opening day, Mary set an expectation of personal involvement for her students. The first thing she did was have them write their names, addresses, and phone numbers on paper, and then answer the following questions:

> (1) What are you interested in in American History?
> (2) What's the most interesting thing you've done in Social studies?
> (3) What are your interests in general?
> (4) What extracurricular activities do you do?
> (5) What interesting thing did you do this summer? What do you wish you could have done?
> (6) What is your favorite book? Your favorite movie?

Mary used the responses to these questions to get to know her students, but also to assist her with planning decisions. To Mary, each class had a "different personality", and the more she knew about her students, the better she felt able to provide activities which enhanced her practice. After the students handed in their answers, Mary shared her own responses to the questions aloud. She added some biographical information about herself, as well as a rationale for why she

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became a teacher. In the two classes I observed, most of the students listened attentively (and many with surprise) as a teacher shared personal information.

Also, on the first day of class, Mary had her students write about a pep rally they attended. The goal of this activity was to show how eyewitnesses could interpret the same event differently and to set up historical perspective as an important critical concept for the year. Most importantly, these opening day activities provided the students with a fundamental first impression of Mary's classroom. They learned that personal involvement was not only encouraged, but necessary to the learning to take place over the year. On a number of occasions, Mary talked about the importance of developing this type of classroom community to her overall teaching goals.

In Mary's case, the first impression was a lasting one. Throughout the year, Mary's classes remained student-centered in many significant ways. Student input into decisions was valued, a wide variety of related (and some unrelated) concerns were entertained in class, productive tangents were encouraged and sometimes followed for days, and open discussions were a common practice. Mary often levelled the playing field by participating as an equal member within roleplays. Instead of orchestrating certain results from the sidelines, Mary was more apt to take a position within the roleplay to bolster discussion. For example, in a Constitutional convention simulation, Mary let the discussion go for

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about 15 minutes without any input. When it started to falter, she nudged it along to a different issue by assuming the role of the representative from Georgia; "It is our God given right to own slaves...it says so in the Bible.....after all who would take care of them if we didn't?" This single statement refreshed the simulation. By giving the students permission to argue with her within the safety of a roleplay, Mary proposed a different relationship between student and teacher. After a few months in the school, I began to notice more open questioning of Mary's knowledge and authority by the students, as well as less direction provided by Mary. I was amazed when she began one class period with the simple question, "Does everyone know what they are doing?" and 45 minutes of productive work followed.

Mary's commitment to her students seemed strong, and her encouragement of them tireless. She viewed problems in learning as problems of teaching and spent time reflecting upon and changing her plans and practices. What worked with one class did not necessarily work with another, and Mary sometimes tried six different approaches within the same day. The four students I interviewed felt that Mary's class was interesting and relevant. While two complained of too much work, all four said Mary tried hard to help them succeed. While Mary welcomed me into her classroom and generously gave her time in interviews, her time with her students was of primary importance to her. This next segment, taken from fieldnotes, typifies her focus:

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As soon as the buzzer sounded the teacher quickly
finished her sentence, immediately got up from the
seat she had occupied while I interviewed her and
moved to the door to greet her students. Many of
them commented on her new haircut, which I didn't
notice. She was smiling, calling each student by
name and asking them how they were. She seemed
glad to see them as they were her. There was
general talk among students about a variety of
topics with a few students asking questions about
class assignments of Mary.

In each class session I observed, the teacher's attention

shifted promptly to her students whenever they entered the

room. In one case, in the middle of an interview, a student

came in to ask Mary a question. She stopped mid-sentence,

responded directly to the student's concern, talked with her

for a few more minutes, and returned to the interview only

after the student was finished. The students sensed Mary's

interest in them and seemed comfortable whether asking her

about her haircut, entreating her to organize an after school

study group, seeking her advice as an academic advisor, or

negotiating the class curriculum. Perhaps the best testimony

to Mary's regard as a student-centered teacher came from the

interaction described below.

A male student came into Mary's classroom as the
buzzer sounded to wait for a friend in Mary's
class. He asked Mary "Why can't I be in your
class?"...she hesitated for a moment and responded
"because you are in Mrs. (Name)'s class." This was
not good enough for the student who kept asking
"Why not?" in a variety of creative forms. After a
minute, his friend was ready to go and the student
still not willing to give up said "Can we talk
about this later?" I got the distinct impression
that this had happened before.

Mary was also concerned about the types of relationships

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her students had with each other. She nurtured these relationships in two primary ways. First, as previously mentioned, she facilitated group interaction and problem solving by stepping away from an authoritarian approach. By participating as a class member in simulations and group work, and by sharing some of the curriculum decisions with her students, Mary created an environment in which students had a crucial voice. She recognized that this voice may be expressed in different ways, and she used multiple means to evaluate participation from observing group work to assessing essays.

Mary also nurtured classroom relationships by providing opportunities for students to work together to analyze and understand United States history. From class discussions to small group presentations, Mary constantly encouraged active and cooperative participation. It was important that her students learned to work with each other, and she spent quite a bit of time reflecting on her cooperative learning approaches. Early in the semester she had this to say about organizing groups:

> I sometimes choose partners, but with this assignment they have to meet outside of class, so I try to let them have more flexibility. It is really hard for me, it's this big debate....but it is also hard to pair people too...sometimes I just do it randomly, but when I try to think about personalities then it's this long affair of okay, this person and this person, I've never seen them talking so maybe they should work together, but both are really quiet, so maybe this will help one be more outgoing, but then this person is really talkative and this person is really quiet, so maybe she'll be overshadowed by the other one...so it is

hard. This is one of the hardest parts of group work for me.

Mary used three approaches to organize groups, which included letting students choose their own partners, randomly selecting groups, or choosing partners for them. All of these approaches had their pitfalls, according to Mary, which was why she used all three fairly equally. The time Mary spent thinking about her groupings for cooperative learning activities was indicative of how important she felt these experiences were to the overall objectives of her classroom.

As mentioned earlier, at the heart of group activities in Mary's classes was an effort to place students into the role of the historical or social other. As she said, for anything that required meeting outside of class Mary had her students choose their own groups. From my observations, Mary used random selection and prepared selections equally for quick in-class groupings. For longer term in-class activities including simulations, presentations and readings analysis, Mary tended to use prepared group selections. Mary's cooperative learning approach encouraged her students to actively participate in the development of critical social understanding.

For Mary, balancing the needs of the individual to the group was a challenging reality within her school organization. While she saw problems with the tracking system that was used, she also saw some advantages. As she described below, she was undecided:

I feel really torn about this because theoretically
I see a lot of problems with it..and I think that
if you look at the distributions there are a lot of
class and race issues, and gender issues...the
lower levels are like 90%..I'm exaggerating...but
they are mostly male. I think that they are used
as a dumping ground for behavior problems and I
don't like that either. But I also think that
these people are put into smaller classes and for
most of them it is a positive thing, because for
whatever reason they want additional attention and
with thirteen or fourteen of them I can give them
additional attention. I think it is really
hard....even thinking about where to put people
next year is a hard decision...do I put them in a
smaller class where the work is too easy for them,
but they are getting the attention that they so
much want...or, ummmm...do I put them into a CP
(College Prep) class where they might act out for
attention...or because the work might be harder.
So I think it works in some ways, but not in
others.

Mary had experience with a heterogenous grouping system

in a previous teaching position. While she saw advantages

with more equitable social groupings, she was disappointed by

the large class size which severely limited her ability to

provide needed individual attention. Neither system suited

Mary, but she tried to take advantage of the strengths of

homogeneity while addressing the problems in a variety of

ways, including open discussion with her students. All these

issues of the school context, of student resistance, and of

tracking became grist for the social studies mill in Mary's

classroom.

Mary had a way of drawing students in which made many of

them feel important to the classroom community. In one case,

I observed a low track student, Sara, who adamantly opposed

reading her essay to another student. Sara said she was not

a good writer and did not want anyone to read her work. Mary did not push her and simply said, "Ok, you do not have to, but some time I would like to read something that you have written." A week later when I went into observe, Sara had brought in an unassigned five page essay on a class related issue for Mary to read. When I asked Mary about it, she replied, "I know, I am as surprised as you are! I'm not sure what happened, but she has let me read a few things...and you know...she really is a good writer." Mary shared this feedback with Sara, telling her that she had some important things to contribute. After that, Sara became the most active voice in Mary's class.

Like many teachers, there were aspects of the school context with which Mary contended daily. These included the difficulty of modelling democracy within a "school environment which is not particularly democratic." Openly acknowledging injustice within the school was one way in which Mary addressed the impact of the context on her students' education. She also encouraged her classes to develop and act upon ways to improve their situations. By entertaining their concerns and working them into her presentation of United States history, Mary not only validated student issues, but posited connections to her curriculum. In the study of these connections, students often saw ways of collective change. This sometimes led them to action, and sometimes did not. But always, Mary emphasized the importance of group participation to social change. Most of her students finished the year

having had some collective experiences with social action.

Facilitating students' relationships with course content and goals

Mary's student-centeredness was part of her desire for a socially meaningful and relevant, yet rigorous, curriculum. She used her alliance with students to encourage and foster their relationships with the content of United States history instruction. In some cases, this was a balancing act with Mary working hard to create approaches which respected the needs of the students, while meeting her standards of learning. Her strategies, as we have seen, were varied. She used simulations, discussions, dramatizations, games, cooperative learning activities, film critique, research projects and other more traditional approaches like lecturing, formal testing, and worksheet assignments. She also employed a variety of sources including biography, fiction, poetry, music, political cartoons, letters, art, costumes, and artifacts to expose students to multiple perspectives. Working with these many sources and many strategies was challenging and made Mary wonder aloud if she was meeting the goals she had established for her course.

Maintaining a balance between "fun and rigor" was the struggle that Mary labelled the primary focus of her planning and practice. Nothing illustrated this better than an ongoing conflict over the textbook used in her honors classes. Although many of her students found it difficult to read, Mary

liked the book. She felt <u>The Enduring Vision: A History of</u>
<u>the American People</u> (Boyer, 1990) contained a significant
amount of social history and offered multiple views of
historic events. This intention was confirmed by the
author's introduction:

> Throughout we have sought to describe the
> experiences and perspectives of ordinary people as
> well as to account for the motivations of history's
> great figures. Our view of history is neither
> rigidly top down or bottom up; rather, we see a
> constant interplay between communities, regions,
> and nation. As frequently as possible we introduce
> students to real people from the past and allow
> these participants to speak for themselves (p. v).

These goals were seemingly upheld by the content of the
chapters as witnessed by typical section titles including:

> 'Saving' the Indians
> Young women and work in Industrialized America
> Cultures in conflict
> Public education as an arena of class conflict
> Progressivism and social control: the movement's
>   coercive dimension
> Controversy in Black America
> Wartime intolerance and hysteria
> Racism and the Red Scare
> Exploiting the West
> The Gospel of success
> The cult of domesticity
> The middle class assault on the
>   working class culture
> Routinized work; mass produced pleasure

Most of Mary's students found this book difficult which she
saw as one of her greatest challenges:

> Interviewer: As you said, I noticed a lot of
> critical views of history are presented by the
> textbook.
> Mary: Yes, they are pretty critical although I
> think that my kids sometimes miss that, I don't
> know (laughs). All they know is that they hate
> reading it, but....to me.....its hard for me
> because I feel they should be reading it, but there

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is so much resistance across the board, and I have
wonderful students, I love them dearly, but
they're.....they're so resistant to reading the
textbook, ahh... I think that part of it is that
it is difficult to read, but it has so much
interesting stuff in it...I can't understand that
they tell me its boring. I can understand it being
hard, I can understand it being long, I can
understand it being..umm... in some parts very in-
depth, but I can't understand it being boring!
Except for the fact that I think all those three
things to them make it boring, because they
can't....they can't read enough....I think they
must just lose their concentration and then miss
all the parts that are so great. They give all
these little details that are just, when I tell
them they all are like "Wow, that's so cool!" and
then...yet they miss it half the time in the
reading. Although now they are starting to get a
little bit better about picking it up.

In the above excerpt, Mary described confusion about her
students' resistance to the textbook despite the fact that
they seem interested in the material when relayed verbally.
According to Mary, students struggled so much with the written
presentation that they lost the interesting stories and the
important meanings. Mary was not ready to give up on the book
for two reasons. First, as just said, she valued the critical
viewpoints presented, and secondly, she deemed it an
appropriate academic and developmental challenge for 10th
grade honors students:

The teacher next door (names her), she is wondering
whether or not we should continue using the book
because she really doesn't think that the kids do
a lot of reading in it. And to me...like, well...I
think we have to make ways for them to do the
reading that they will be successful and of
course...I think...I really do feel that in an
honors course we shouldn't lower our standards
because......I do see a big change in people
getting more and more resistant to reading as
technology or whatever, advances and people are

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more into this...give me information, give it to me quickly and give it to me in a very interesting way...and ummm......"I....I don't want to have to focus on any one thing for very long." And I feel that it is a great book and that they should be able to read it, it's the only time that they really have a textbook...in any history course beyond this they really use.....we supplement a lot with primary sources, but they really base their whole course on primary sources, and I think before you can read Nietzche you have to be able to read this book (laughs)...and next year they read Neitzche...so...

Mary seemed to be saying that learning was not always going to be "fast and fun", and that reading textual material was an important skill for high school students, especially college bound ones. By this reckoning, Mary's problem was to find ways to make the material more accessible to her students. Again Mary tried a variety of techniques, some she developed on her own and some which were suggested by students. These techniques included writing study guides, conducting student note presentations, and coordinating dramatizations. The following excerpt contains her evaluation of one of her attempts:

Interviewer: You mentioned last time that you divided the chapter readings for small group presentations...how did that work?
Mary: I think that worked pretty well.... umm...they're....there still is some.....it's like any group presentation you get some that are really powerful and like, that people have done a lot of work on. They'll try to make an attempt to do something creative because they know that is what I'm looking for, but you know they threw it together at the last minute...that they really didn't put a lot of time and effort into it. So... hopefully...I think....I think that they, as far as getting the information...umm...across to them I think that that definitely have more knowledge of it than they did, but again I worry about the whole thing that....like for a lot of them I know that

they are dependent on that and they are not going
to read the nine pages, they read their two pages
and that's where it stopped. Umm.........I'm not
sure how to make...how to create some kind of happy
medium where they can be getting it from both
places and I know that they are..maybe that's
impossible. So we'll see we'll probably do some
sort of adaptation of that....umm....definitely
when they have a lot of reading to do. I give
that one maybe a B+ (laughs) as a way to do it.
But I still haven't found that A+ way.

Mary's concern for academic rigor carried over into her

evaluation of her pedagogical method. While she recognized

the importance of exciting activities, she was conscious of

carefully choosing experiences that promoted substantive

reflection. In her own words, "I feel very committed to

preparing them for the future. It's a hard thing to balance

making it interesting and fun, and making it challenging. And

making it work for the future." Her struggle to develop ways

to better present difficult material was a process to which

Mary devoted significant time and energy. But perhaps this is

a contradiction. If this textbook was inaccessible, then

there was a significant anomaly between its use and a student

centered classroom.   It seems a fine line between

inaccessibility and appropriate challenges in the classroom,

and as an outsider it was hard to judge where this case fell.

A glimmer of understanding was offered by the only student

interviewed who spoke of the textbook:

>Well I know that it really isn't a high school
>textbook which makes it hard, but the main thing
>about it is just finding the time to sit down and
>do the reading, but once you do that.....they tend
>to go off on little specific things that you may
>not need to know too much about, but for getting

the main ideas it is pretty useful.

It was crucial to Mary that her students were enabled to use the materials, discussions, and activities of her course to make personal and group connections to larger social issues. Her emphasis on cooperative learning respected individual opinion, but also served to develop the skills of collective response to the social issues under consideration. A search for understanding of multiple positions and suggestions for social change were some of the most common outcomes I observed in her classroom. To Mary these discussions and activities were the most crucial aspects of her curriculum. For her students to focus on the connections between past and present and to carefully and critically analyze social issues with an eye for change were her primary goals. In the following activity, in which Mary links the study of the Jim Crow laws with current racial attitudes, we can see clearly what she valued in her students' interactions relative to issues of the broader social context:

> I taped an Oprah Winfrey Afterschool Special on racism last year...I used it in class and it really sparked a lot of excellent discussion. It's a tape that talks about the discrimination that immigrants face, but also about the discrimination that Native Americans face, the discrimination that African Americans face and...it represents all ideas in the whole spectrum...there are people like the Aryan Nation, people who feel that its all been turned around and affirmative action is no longer necessary...it's not only black and white...there are Asian Americans who talk about the discrimination they feel...and there's stuff on the LA riots. It really includes a lot of perspectives and they (students) have a lot to say because they really don't discuss discrimination and racism in school,

because I think a lot of people feel that if we discuss it we're going to open up a can of worms or something.

Mary used this activity to spark discussion about past and present views of racism and discrimination. While she believed that many teachers do not openly talk about such volatile issues in school, she did not shy away from the opportunity for students to interact meaningfully with a most difficult topic. Opening cans of worms apparently did not bother Mary. Each class took this discussion in different directions and many of the student comments, while they might be uncomfortable to others, were not squelched by Mary. Below she characterized her classes' reactions to the tape:

> The class make up really affects the discussion. In my second period class there are four African American students, and I think that is a different dynamic than my all white classes. Two of them have very strong views and they're very vocal, and I think that changes the nature of the discussion. In my fifth period class, which is all white, the discussion seemed to automatically have a different emphasis...although the issues were kind of the same, there is a different level of personal involvement. They talked about interracial dating, racism within the school and how we can break down racism in society starting here. How people need to talk to each other and how that is going to happen here...and maybe someone will ask "Why don't you sit at a different lunch table?"...
>
> Interviewer: So they talk about ways they can make a difference?
> Mary: Most of the classes want to talk about an interesting contrast in the video between the Aryan Nation people and this African American man who starts by discussing cases of discrimination like Hawkins, Eleanor Bumpers, and Michael Griffith ...and then.... he goes on to make a statement about how all white people should be destroyed. This contrast is always one of the first things that comes up for them. In my second period class, one of my ABC students said "You don't understand,

sure maybe he's wrong, but I can totally understand
that anger....when you have been the object of
discrimination for so long that anger is going to
be there."   And we also discuss "How is that
different from the Aryan Nation guy?"

Mary talked about these class discussions as varying depending

on their demographics.   While she believed most of her

students were interested in considering these issues, she

found a different level of personal involvement expressed in

some of her classes.   While it made for uncomfortable moments

for some students, Mary's goal of illustrating multiple per-

spectives was substantiated by differing opinions on the

issues, both from the tape and from the students.   Also inter-

woven into the discussion was an emphasis on what students

could do in their own lives to make social changes.   There

seemed a constant refocusing of the lens from society, to

community, to classroom, to individual and back out again.

Mary saw these relationships of perspective as integral to her

students' understanding of social issues.   It was part of

seeing the many sides of a story:

> I think it is something that we really need to
> discuss..when people never hear another side to the
> story they just seem to become resentful of other
> people...and ask "Why should they feel that way?"
> Even my kids are...they say "Well Black people hang
> out together at school and they exclude other
> people from their groups...and if they do that then
> white people should be allowed to exclude other
> people from their groups." Then students will
> challenge that and discuss it...and I think it is
> really important for them to talk this over.

Mary was happy with her student discussions of this tape, but,

as always, encouraged them to challenge themselves and their

own perspectives on racism and discrimination.   Mary said

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that, for the most part, her students did listen to other views and benefited by seeing social issues as complex. Reflecting on what it meant in their own lives was also a crucial component of Mary's objectives. "What can we do about it?" was a question often asked in Mary's classes, though not always by her! In the above activity example, Mary used a current tape as a resource, but continued to connect it to related events in the past:

> We definitely talk about what is happening currently and how it is similar to what happened in the past...like the Chinese Exclusionary Act in 1882, the quota laws of the '20's, and Proposition 187. When we did WWII last year we talked about anti-semitism in the 1940's and then whether they thought that there are religious groups which are discriminated against today...we ask if religious freedom has evolved or whether it has not. This kind of thing in this district brings up the hot topic of religious neutrality...which they all want to talk about. We also do Muckrakers' speeches... they can pick a school, a local, a state, or national issue to expose...we have a lot of fun with that too. They'll never forget what a Muckraker is because they had to listen to all these speeches about how horrible the cafeteria food is, how dirty the school is...

Weaving past and present social issues into the study of United States history was the defining characteristic observed in Mary's classroom. Students struggled with their understanding of and relationships to difficult social concerns. Activities, resources, discussion and opportunities for significant personal reflection focused primarily on the development of skills of critical analysis, decision making, and active participation in societal change. In this way, in Mary's classes, United States history became a living social

record, open to critique, growth, and change.

Building classroom relationships which facilitated their goals for social education was seen, by both Mary and Ruth, as the most important aspect of teaching. Mary tended to emphasize the importance of group processing and decision making, Ruth focused more on individual growth and development. In both cases, however, the relationships they established with and among their students and the relationships they built between their students and the course content were subjects of much thoughtful self-reflection, evaluation, and change. Both searched, quite consistently, for better ways to connect their students with the meanings of the course, while tirelessly and caringly supporting their students' success.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

There are many pieces in the equation of teaching. Numerous parts that, even when understood individually, do not perfectly clarify the whole. In this study, I have attempted to look at one aspect of teaching; the perspective of the teacher and its impact on the goals, theories, and practices of social education. I suggest that who a teacher is, what she knows, and how she facilitates relationships with her students has a profound impact on what passes for social education in her classroom. More specifically, we examined how perspectives of teachers concerning social education shaped their practice, and what these views attempted to teach students about democracy. Teacher perspectives, however, are largely ignored and unstudied phenomena (Calderhead, 1993). It is an ignorance which may have a number of costs, including a lack of faith in the ability of teachers (Johnson, 1989), a history of unsuccessful educational reform (Stanley, 1992), and the persistence of patterns of social education which continue to fail to substantively address the complexities of our social world (Hartoonian, 1991). The findings in this phenomenological study of two teachers will not solve these

problems, but they do offer an additional voice to the minimally studied arena of teacher perspectives. That the perspectives of these two teachers informed the goals and methods of their classrooms may not be surprising, but the extent to which their views influenced their students' experiences of the meanings of social education seems significant.

I can not emphasize enough that their theories of teaching were found embedded within the everyday decisions that the teachers made about their practice. During the study, the participants and I specifically discussed issues of the day, week, or unit that they were facing in the classroom. Both Mary and Ruth were hesitant to speak in general terms about their teaching. While Mary and Ruth discussed the types of work attitudes they found useful, they had few platitudes on education that they wished to share with me. They did, however, have specific goals for each lesson and unit, as well as overall goals for the year that played out within the daily enactment of their roles.

Drawing upon some aspects of a feminist epistemological orientation, I used formal and informal interviews, classroom observations, student interviews, and artifact analysis to see how these goals formed consistent thematic patterns of social education theory and practice. Within the stories of these two teachers, I found philosophies of teaching woven out of their assumptions, values, knowledge, experience, and commitments (Kelchtermans, 1993). Through ongoing discussions, a clear

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picture of the processes of thought and action emerged as each teacher attempted, on a daily basis, to fulfill the expectations she had of her professional role.

Ruth and Mary showed us that who they were and what they thought was integral to an understanding of what they did in the name of social education. In summary, the most significant findings of this study are that teachers do theorize and that their theories matter. Their theories matter because they influence the types of educational materials and experiences students will be exposed to, the types of learning skills they will develop, the kinds of messages they will receive about our collective lives, the ways in which they will interact with others to address social issues, and the understandings they will develop about democratic citizenship.

Therefore, the nature of a teacher's social education theory does have an impact on life in a democratic society. Ruth's and Mary's influence can be found in the detailed explanation of their views of themselves as social actors, the ways in which they constructed theories of instruction, and the commitments they made to relationship building in their classrooms. Understanding the ways in which teachers' perspectives can influence social education theory and practice along these three lines is essential to the implications to be drawn from this study.

Teachers as social actors

One of the most consistent findings was that teachers, such as Ruth and Mary, perceived themselves as social actors. This means that they identified personally with their professional roles. "Living up to who you are" (Lyons, 1990, p. 200) as a teacher involves this joining of the personal with the professional. The social values that a teacher holds influences her perceptions of her role, her professional goals, her understandings of the discipline area, and her relationships with others. Even if she tried to sever her home and work identities, she still would be communicating a values orientation to her students. It seems better to willingly take on the role of a human social actor with students; to openly recognize responsibilities, but also misgivings and mistakes.

In this study, both Mary and Ruth stood before their classes as people. They saw themselves as role models, but ones that represented the human processes of thinking (Atwell, 1989), caring (Noddings, 1992), and valuing (Greene, 1988). Their stories are, for the most part, representations of teaching in the first person (Kozol, 1981). For Mary this representation involved sharing her focus on critical thinking and collective social action, and for Ruth, it involved emphasizing individual choice and responsibility. But, no matter the difference in motivations, the personal presence marking each practice was indelible.

To support a human face of teaching we must live

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comfortably with teacher difference. In the hotly contested arena of values education, this may be a difficult pill to swallow (Weiler, 1993). As a nation we are sensitive about the values our students learn in schools. Through political manoeuvering at all levels we attempt to control not only what and how teachers teach, but who they present themselves as in the classroom (Giroux, 1985). This constant flutter of competing activity surrounding social issues in education has produced a surprising inertia (Cuban, 1982). Teachers willing to take on the responsibilities of social education are faced with many institutional and societal obstacles to practices other than those that present status quo definitions of our past and present society (Sirotnik, 1983, McNeil, 1986).

Both teachers in this study recognized the existence of some barriers to their educational goals, but in very real ways they claimed freedom over who they were as teachers, what they taught, and how they interacted with their students. Though they had similarities and differences in their definitions of social education, both Mary and Ruth engaged themselves in the difficult responsibilities of citizenship development. In their own ways, they provided opportunities for students to think critically about social issues and propose change.

In the present political environment, the claiming of difference in thought and practice may seem risky to many teachers. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons, including the clear lack of substantive change in social

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education practices and the missed opportunity to teach students that the processes of thinking and valuing are human, fallible, subjective, active, and most of all, involve social responsibility. Despite the possible risks, both Ruth and Mary perceived their role as one of social action that united their personal and professional lives. Their emphasis on a pedagogy of caring (Noddings, 1992) made it possible for them to collaborate with students to create a more responsive and socially responsible curriculum.

Teachers as theorizers

To claim freedom over a professional life, a teacher needs to have some epistemological stance. She must have some assumptions about the role of the teacher as knower, the student as knower, and the knowledge of her discipline (Lyons, 1990). These assumptions give her a framework for everyday thoughts and actions, a sense of consistency of self and practice. This was the case for both Ruth and Mary who saw knowledge as a shared process, not a commodity. Neither viewed herself as an authoritative knower. Rather, they saw themselves more as facilitators of the construction of knowledge through interactions with their students (Pagano, 1988). In turn, their students were seen as valuable knowers, bringing their own understandings into the larger classroom arena of meaning making (Belenky, 1986).

Student perspectives were treated with respect by both teachers and used as integral components of their teaching

practice. They cared what their pupils thought and felt. And, to a differing extent, they involved them in decisions about the curriculum and pedagogy of the classroom (Brodhagen, 1995). This is not to say that Mary and Ruth placed minimal value on the content knowledge of their discipline. On the contrary, they both stressed the importance of learning about history from many perspectives to inform analysis, discussion, decision making, and action (Mathison, 1994).

The framing of knowledge by a teacher has an important impact on the practices within her classroom. Recognizing, for example, that traditional views of United States history are limited in scope and ideologically biased (Davis & Woodman, 1992) can cause a teacher to openly challenge the set curriculum and search for additional materials which better reflect the complexities of our history. Understanding that certain groups have been misrepresented or unheard within the status quo curriculum may encourage a teacher to utilize activities which allow her students to critically question historical interpretations and to seek out other perspectives (Banks, 1987, Nieto, 1992). In addition, related social issues including discrimination, equal opportunity, and allocation of resources should be central to classroom discussion (Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

Both teachers in this project saw the study of United States history as an opportunity to delve into these important social issues within the frame of participatory democracy. Each saw the potential in the study of U. S. history to inform

students about the social processes of democratic negotiation. If their teaching approaches were a novel, the characters would be the many people who influenced social issues over time, especially the common people (Nash, 1989), the plot would be the ongoing search for the democratic society amid conflicting social values (Davis & Woodman, 1992), and the narrative would be the interactions of the many perspectives of the characters. The student as reader has an important role as well. It is up to them to make sense of the novel and to relate it to the issues they face within their own lives and times. The students are interpreters, but are asked to invest their interpretations with an understanding of the perspectives of historical others. Mary and Ruth encouraged their students to extend their critical thinking skills, but at the same time asked them to develop what I call historical empathy. They wanted their students to see through the eyes of another, even if just for a moment, with the hope that they could apply this understanding to more current social concerns.

During the course of my time in their classrooms, it became clear to me that the epistemological frameworks of these teachers had a significant impact on their students' experiences of social education. I found that the teachers' views of their roles as knowers, their students' roles as knowers, and the roles of discipline knowledge defined social education in their classrooms.

Teachers as builders of classroom community

Building the classroom relationships which reflected the epistemological frames important to Mary and Ruth was not an easy task. However, the relationships they developed with their students were the most important mediums through which they accomplished their goals for social education. In our teachers' cases, presenting a non-authoritarian view of teacher knowledge, encouraging students to flex their muscles as knowers, and introducing a broadened and critical understanding of U. S. history required significant building of trust. Part of this was accomplished by the ways in which Mary and Ruth communicated their roles to their classes. They encouraged the development of *safe spaces* through the respect they showed to students and their opinions, the interest they displayed in the academic and personal lives of their pupils, the constant encouragement they offered, the attention they paid to students' concerns and interests, their willingness to be vulnerable, the desire they demonstrated for all their students to be successful, and the faith they had in them to discuss curriculum and pedagogical decisions.

Developing safe spaces for students to discuss the varied social issues of democratic governance seems a worthy goal for United States history instruction (Greene, 1988). If our students are to learn from history, they need to make some meaningful connections to the people and the issues of the past. Teachers who are aware of the influence of classroom relationships on educational outcomes can work with students

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to build the kinds of environments which foster broad, critical, and reflective approaches to the study of society. As we have seen, encouraging students to make sense of the world by interpreting lived experience from as many viewpoints as possible seems an effective strategy to connect students with the social issues of the past and present (Greene).

The kinds of classroom relationships that foster these outcomes demand a commitment to an ongoing process of trust negotiation for teachers. Mary and Ruth both told us that this process takes time, work, and commitment, but most importantly, we found out that it involves an ethic of care (Noddings, 1988). In other words, it requires a profound belief in the capabilities of the individual and the group to construct better understandings, to develop valuable connections, and to labor for the common good. Therefore, the types of relationships built by teachers with their students can be essential to the success of the goals, methods, and outcomes of a teacher's theory of social education.

Implications

There are many things to be learned from working with and writing about teachers. But a few implications concerning the importance of teacher perspectives emerged as valuable within the broader discussion about social education. These suggestions fall into two categories of concern to the field. First are implications for the education of pre-service teachers, and second, implications for the classroom teacher.

Implications for pre-service teacher education

Stories about teacher perspectives may be important resources from which many pre-service teachers could benefit by reading and analyzing. Reading about teacher theories and their classroom observations would allow pre-service teachers to get a feel for the everyday interaction of a teacher's philosophy and practice. They would be able to see both the complexity and the necessity of making teaching decisions with broader goals in mind. Most importantly, students could try to locate their own budding theories of education within the web of information and advice they receive about teaching. In Becoming a student of teaching, Robert Bullough and Andrew Gitlin (1995) provide the following rationale for using educational autobiographies as a strategy for developing reflective practices in teacher education programs:

> We are born into a particular family, holding particular values, within a particular social, economic, and political context that brings with it specific problems and issues and ways of making meaning. Educationally, it makes a difference, then, if one is born in an urban setting to a single, unskilled, and unemployed mother or to a large rural farm family, and these differences are expressed in how the world is made sensible and in how and what one learns. Made explicit, and then competently articulated, the past as a story of self forms the basis for powerfully entering negotiation with new situations, like a first teaching job. From this grounding educational judgements can be made and justified (p. 25-26).

Literature on reflective practice has shown that it is important for pre-service teachers to examine their own experiences with education to identify assumptions that may contribute to their professional identity (Houser, 1996).

They are sometimes taught to use this reflective analysis to critique educational theories and their own practices, but they lack models of what this might look like on a daily basis within the social context of schooling. Reading about the process of teacher theorizing and its impact on practice and classroom relationships may provide a constructive experience.

Teacher education programs need not limit themselves to having students just read about teacher theorizing. The majority of programs have field experience components in which their students observe teaching practice and participate in teaching. Many, however, do not require (or perhaps even encourage) pre-service students to interview teachers about their curriculum development and pedagogical decision-making. Teacher educators may be worried that cooperating teachers do not hold the same types of theoretical positions as their programs. Perhaps they are concerned that teachers' views might negatively influence pre-service teachers' attitudes about teaching. Iannacone (1963) showed that teacher education programs can not protect their pre-service teachers from this bruising of their ideals, even if their time with their cooperating teacher is limited. And in fact, the unexamined gap between the ideals of teacher education programs and the realities of the classroom cause many pre-service teachers to limit their conceptions of what is actually possible within a school setting. A closer analysis of this gap is needed.

One approach might be for pre-service teachers to

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interview their cooperating teacher four or five times during a semester and compare their observations with each other and with written studies. In this way they could see how theory, assumptions, and context interact to empower or limit teaching practice. And most importantly, they could consider what it might entail to bring social education ideals and realities closer together in their own practice.

Using field experiences to study the social contexts of education is not a new instructional goal for teacher training programs. Most pre-service teachers spend some time learning about the demographic, structural, cultural, and political influences on schools and classrooms. Some may even study the many ways students and teachers collude with or resist some of these structural limits. They learn about social problems facing the students they will work with and maybe even ways schools and teachers can participate in social change. These issues challenge some pre-service teachers to rethink their ideas about curriculum and pedagogy, these issues overwhelm others, and to others they run a distant second to the importance of *teaching* mathematics, science, literature, and history. As shown in this study, the social context of the classroom was defined broadly and given primary consideration by Mary and Ruth. They saw the social context of the classroom and the relationships developed within as the most crucial aspects of instruction.

While the importance of social context may not be lost on pre-service teachers, the complexity of its meaning when faced

with a classroom is daunting to many. It is easier to think of children as individuals than to think in terms of social (let alone political or economic) relationships. Facilitating relationships within the classroom, where students can see themselves mirrored in the study of American history and connected to each other in their search for understanding and social impact, is something that requires exploration and practice.

Again, in field experiences, pre-service teachers could conduct small observation studies through which they could characterize the classroom community and the roles of students and teachers. They could interview students about their connections to the teacher, to other students, to teaching practices and the curriculum content. Pre-service teachers could also ask teachers about the classroom relationships. They could question them about how they perceive the character of each class limits or supports the goals of the curriculum. Supervisors and pre-service teachers can discuss how they might foster the development of both individuals and the classroom community. All of this information pre-service teachers could contrast with other studies of classroom community.

The work involved in identifying goals and implementing practices consistent with their perspectives is a difficult and ongoing process for most professionals. As mentioned above, for teachers it means examining the assumptions that lie at the heart of social education and observing the

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classroom community, including their own role within it. It involves designing and revising curriculum and teaching methods which effectively support their goals, researching and presenting new perspectives on social events/issues, and being willing to take risks and push for changes. This takes a lot of time, honesty, commitment, and courage. One may ask here whether honesty, commitment, and courage can be taught in a teacher training program, or if telling pre-service students that teaching is hard work really offers any new insight at all. For most, it is not a lack of willingness, but a lack of knowledge of how to revise curriculum, research for new perspectives, find appropriate resources, and articulate their theories to colleagues and students (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995).

Models are needed, but also opportunities within teacher education courses to search for teaching resources, discuss multiple perspectives on social issues, and experience a variety of teaching strategies. Most importantly, teacher educators need to openly discuss their goals for courses and solicit and use student feedback, including involving students in curriculum, pedagogical, and assessment decisions. Teacher educators should offer themselves, and their classroom practices, for critical study by student participants. Assignments which assist pre-service teachers in identifying a broad variety of resources and materials, enable them to revise existing curriculum to reflect many perspectives, and design teaching strategies to connect with students in meaningful ways would be useful. Focusing on applications to

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the classroom allows pre-service teachers to graduate having had experiences of reflective practice with which they can approach that first fearful year of teaching.

In _Pride and Prejudice_ Jane Austen says that "few have the courage to be in love alone," perhaps this is the way of teaching. The articulation of a teacher's philosophy to colleagues, to family, to friends, and to students is an important aspect of identifying oneself as a committed professional. While most schools do not value this articulation in any structured way, both teachers in this study have identified colleagues with which they can discuss their ongoing decision-making processes. They have found others with whom they can carry on professional dialogues despite the lack of formal forums and time to do so. Teacher educators may rightly lament this lack of time to collectively reflect on practice within the schools, but there are ways to change this for their students. By encouraging opportunities for group discussion of educational experiences with the goal of further articulating individual theories of social education, teacher educators can provide opportunities for students to seek professional affiliation (Ellsworth, 1989). Showing students how to work cooperatively on the big issues of education may well result in the need and desire to continue. We all value opportunities which connect us in our struggles and praise us in our successes. It seems easier to be engaged, committed, and courageous together.

Implications for Classroom Practices

If we were to generalize from Ruth and Mary's approaches, then we would encourage all teachers to step back and ask "What are my goals for history instruction?" and "What do I want my students to learn?" If the answer is like our teachers, to learn to be thoughtful analyzers of history and to be able to apply critical understanding to citizenship decisions, then broadening students' perceptions of history is essential. Most of us are the common people; however, we grow up on a steady school diet of heroes. We learn that historical change has been primarily accomplished by those with political and economic power. While an argument can be made that social movements have produced many strong leaders, social change has mainly been a popular occurrence no matter who is credited (Nash, 1989). Looking at history textbooks, many groups have wondered where they are, perhaps just as some of our students wonder how they could possibly impact society as a common person. If we want our children to participate actively in building communal life, we need to show them how responsibility for social change and growth has always rested with the common people.

Critical thinkers never take historical accounts at face value. They ask important questions like "Who wrote this?" "Why did they write it?" and "What audience are they trying to influence?" If we want our students to think critically about history, we must help them to ask these crucial questions. Using multiple perspectives to illustrate

historical events is a useful way to invite comparisons which can easily lead to the above questions. Done repeatedly, as by the teachers in this study, this approach can lead students to always look at new material with these questions in mind. Once a student learns about ideological bias, it is hard to accept any account at face value. The price of this approach is more discussion, more initiative for inquiry, more genuine research opportunities, and more interest in history. Connecting history to the lives of students may seem a daunting task, but it is made easier if started with the social concerns of students, for are they not the stories of the common people?

Like Mary and Ruth, if we look at U. S. history as a social story, then the struggle for democracy is the major plot line. Practicing democracy in the classroom is a good way to enable children to become caring and competent decision makers within a social community. On the surface it sounds like a reasonable proposal, but it is as radical as the Boston Tea Party. Facilitating the development of a democratic classroom requires teachers to examine their assumptions about education, including their ideas about the appropriate role of the teacher and her students. The classroom playing field can be levelled by actively soliciting student input on the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, and classroom relationships. Students are not empty vessels, but have knowledge, goals, and concerns which can connect them strongly to the issues identified in U. S. history and social

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education. In addition, talking openly about the realities of schooling including standardized tests, state mandated goals, the limits of the school and classroom structures, and the negotiation of relationships within the context of schooling directly addresses issues of significant concern to many students. Rather than forcing status quo expectations unquestioningly, practice in participatory democracy involves discussing school issues and allowing students to decide what to accept and what to try to change.

Many teachers feel alone and isolated in their classrooms. In most schools there is little time where they can discuss their work with their peers. Unlike Mary and Ruth, it is not common that teachers will look to their students for support, encouragement, ideas, and assistance. By sharing responsibility for what happens in the classroom, teachers no longer are isolated, for who cares about what occurs in class more than their students? Thinking aloud about their goals and objectives, soliciting feedback on topics to be covered, and listening to students' views on how they best learn are ways in which teachers can include pupils in educational decisions. Students can be excellent sources of ideas and insights about effective teaching practice. They know what works for them and, if asked, often come up with exciting and innovative approaches. As teachers, we know how students try to negotiate expectations, attempting to gain some control over requirements. Perhaps by including them in curriculum decision making, students will energize their involvement

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instead of trying to dummy down the requirements. By listening to student input the responsibility for learning is shared, as is the responsibility for teaching. And we find that the community is built by many voices with shared goals, activities, and commitments.

In conclusion, this study focused on the perspectives of teachers as theorizers and the impact of their thoughts and decisions on the quality of social education in their classrooms. It looked at how Ruth and Mary described themselves as social actors, the ways in which they constructed theories of teaching, and the commitments they made to build relationships in their classrooms. For the most part, aspects of a feminist epistemological orientation were used to uncover the teachers' practical theories which were grounded within everyday practice. As noted, there were some differences between Ruth's and Mary's perspectives and some strong similarities. Of these similarities, most important was that their practical theories influenced the types of educational materials and experiences to which they exposed their students. Their perspectives impacted the types of learning skills emphasized, the kinds of messages students received about society, the ways they interacted with each other to address social issues, and the understandings they developed about democratic citizenship.

The fact that teachers theorize and that their theories matter has important implications for pre-service educators, as well as for classroom practices. These implications

include encouraging pre-service teachers to reflect upon who they are and want to be as professionals, providing opportunities for them to interview practicing teachers about their theory building, further using field experiences to explore the impact of teachers' perspectives on the practice of social education, and making time for pre-service teachers to critically discuss the influences of teacher perspectives. Implications for the classroom teacher include connecting students to social issues by exposing them to multiple perspectives, examining bias in historical interpretation, and telling stories about the common person's role in history. Finally, this study provides additional support for the idea that building classroom environments in which democratic interactions are modelled allows students to discuss and practice participatory citizenship.

When I entered the lives of these two teachers, I was interested in developing some understanding of the social action of teaching. I never counted on being transformed by their thoughtfulness, their energy, and their commitment to reflective practice. I believe many of their students grew under this same light. If we, as a nation, are serious about educating our children about democratic citizenship, then we must support the theoretical voices of our teachers. Perhaps it is as Maxine Greene (1988) suggests:

> A teacher in search of her own freedom may be the
> only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons
> to go in search of their own (p. 14).

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