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Dropping a Line Into a Creek and Pulling Out a Whale: A Phenomenological Study of Six Teachers' Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

Mary Kathryn Kramp
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mary Kathryn Kramp entitled "Dropping a Line Into a Creek and Pulling Out a Whale: A Phenomenological Study of Six Teachers' Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Kathleen Bennett DeMarrais, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Carol Kasworm, Clinton Allison, Howard Pollio

Accepted for the Council:

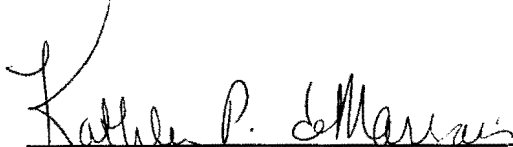
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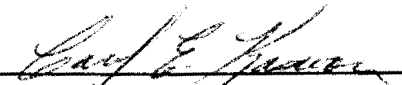
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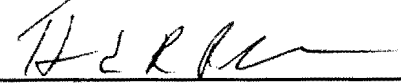


Kathleen Bennett DeMarrais, Major Professor


We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of The Graduate School

**DROPPING A LINE INTO A CREEK AND PULLING
OUT A WHALE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
OF SIX TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF THEIR
STUDENTS' STORIES OF LEARNING**

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mary Kathryn Kramp

August 1995

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DEDICATION

**For my sons, Kevin and Brian,
who profoundly shape my stories of
living, loving and learning.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The cooperation and assistance of others enabled me to realize this study. Among those who give it life and meaning are the outstanding teacher participants: Chuck, John, Margaret, Florence, Yulan, and Tim. There would be no study without their stories. Though not participants in this study, my other colleagues in the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) project are responsible for sparking my passion for this topic, and the research that would result in this study.

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My colleague, friend, partner, and husband, Dr. Lee Humphreys, has been a "friend to my mind." I emerge from this study wiser, stronger, and calmer, because of his presence and support.

ABSTRACT

This is a study of six college teachers' narratives of their experiences of their students' stories of learning. These six teachers took part in a two year project supported by Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), in which participants created opportunities in their courses for their students to tell their stories of learning, thereby allowing their students to self-assess their learning and senses of self as learners. Their students' stories became a context for these teachers to reflect upon their teaching and senses of self as teachers. Results of the FIPSE project showed they made significant changes in their practice. What was yet to be learned was the teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning. This study offers a phenomenological description and storied interpretation of the narratives of their experiences.

The phenomenological interview was selected as the appropriate context for these teachers to tell their experience. Their telling took the form of narrative. The texts of the interviews were studied to describe the essential themes of their experience of their students' stories of learning and to interpret them in ways that respected the particular narrative qualities of the stories each told.

In the analysis of the texts of their interviews each teacher is first introduced through a description of a basic metaphor that emerges in his/her telling, followed by the themes in his/her stories. Six general themes emerged from this analysis: Telling ~ Listening/Hearing, Not Knowing ~ Knowing, Complication,

Connection, Responsible Response, Change. Each theme is described as it is nuanced by each teacher. This leads to a matrix that relates the general themes and each teacher's experience -- one can trace a theme across the experience of the six teachers and also trace the six themes through the experience of each teacher.

The general themes are then configured as events, actions or happenings into a plot of a meta-narrative of the six teachers' stories of their experience of their students' stories of learning. In a storied analysis, the experience of each is re-storied in light of this plot, returning the narrative to each individual teacher.

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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE CONTEXT

". . . the story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers . . . and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense" (Elbaz, 1990, p. 31).

There have always been "teachers' tales" -- stories of the classroom, of students, of efforts rewarded and those gone unrewarded. Having more than entertainment value, the stories teachers tell particularize and contextualize their lives and experiences as teachers. Through such stories teachers can come to understand themselves and their practice. Through stories they often share with colleagues and anyone who will listen, how and what they experience, how and what they come to know. Such stories give life to the world of the classroom and meaning to the lives of teachers.

Historically, however, such stories were neither recognized nor valued as evidence of teachers' knowledge, of what they might come to know through practice. Traditional educational research tended to abstract and generalize teaching and learning, frequently losing sight of the particular teacher and each teacher's practice and practical reasoning derived from particular experience. Researchers overlooked

the potential of stories to enable teachers to articulate what they think and what they experience and to ground their thinking in their practice.

Current writing and research have come to value and recognize narrative and the particular ways narrative embodies our experience of the world (Kerby, 1991). Few would argue that through personal experience we can come to know. Many have come to understand narrative as one way of making meaning of lived experiences (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Brunner, 1994; Coles, 1989; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Eisner, 1991; Elbaz, 1990; Kerby, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995). Through narrative, life as told, we can come to know life as experienced (Bruner, 1986). Narrative is a way of telling about our experience and in the telling, of coming to know -- a way of connecting information with experience to construct knowledge.

My focus in this study is the experience of six particular college teachers in particular settings who, as the narrators of and primary characters in their own narratives, explore the meaning of their experience of their students' stories of learning. My purpose is to describe these teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning. This is an inductive study, phenomenological in its orientation to particular experiences of six specific college teachers. I adopt narrative as a way of knowing and a mode of inquiry. It serves first as a way of telling for the teacher participants. The teachers' narratives, the stories they tell, then become the sources of my data. Their stories are transcribed into texts which I then described, analyzed, and interpreted.

The college teachers in my study told stories about their experiences of "hearing" their students' stories of learning. Prior to telling me their stories, these teachers had incorporated into their courses occasions for their students to tell stories of learning. These six teachers knew how their students experienced learning because they "heard" what their students told them. Given this opportunity, their students made explicit and public through stories their experiences as learners in a particular course.

I wanted to know the experience of teachers who invited and "heard" the stories of learning told by their students over a significant period of time, in specific learning contexts. Therefore I asked these teachers to tell me about some times they were aware of their students' stories of learning, assuming their narratives would offer me clues about what it means to teach with an awareness of how students learn. This is a study of the experiences of six teachers described from a first person point of view. Since it is each teacher's experience of his/her students' stories of learning that I wished to describe, their experiences, rather than my observations of their overt actions and behaviors, are the focus of my study. **The phenomenon I studied is the teacher's experience of their students' stories of learning.**

Believing that narrative is uniquely suited for expressing lived experience as contextual and meaningful, I utilized it to arrive at a description of the experience of teachers who engaged their students' stories of learning. The narratives of each teacher, gathered in phenomenological interviews, tell of his/her experiences. In my experience of the interviews I came to understand narrative as both a process

(narrating/telling) and a product/text (a narrative/a story). As a process, it became a way for teachers to share their experiences/information -- they told me stories. As a product, their stories became texts to be interpreted. In my study I use story and narrative interchangeably. People -- students and teachers -- tell stories. The word "story" is more appropriate when speaking in a familiar, personal or conversational way. The word "narrative" calls to mind a particular genre with formal characteristics. A story is an example of a narrative -- a kind of narrative. A story is always a narrative, but narrative structure is not limited to story. By using the two interchangeably, or as fits the context, I can capture the experiential quality of "telling a story" while illustrating a particular way of thinking or knowing, and a framework or form for telling -- narrative. Usually experienced as more formal, the term "narrative" is a distant term even if more inclusive. When I use "story" I mean it to be understood as a narrative structure.

As a narrative structure, stories organize or "emplot" human events in time. Each story has a "plot." Each story, as a narrative, also reflects the perspective of a narrator or a "point of view."

Plot, as a construction, reflects a perspective or a point of view. The narrator constructs a plot by selecting and sequencing actions and events. The plot "grasps together" and integrates multiple and scattered actions and events into a temporal unity. Plot has time and sequence. Time is integral to the plot and to experience. Narrative organizes lived or human experience. Because the experience of lived time need not be linear, time within a story need not be linear. Time as humanly

experienced may be understood and expressed in various ways. For example, it is possible for cultural and religious practices to reflect cycle as well as sequence, even in a culture that uses calendars and clocks to mark time as linear. Narrated time is lived time. Ricoeur (1988) emphasizes this when he reminds us that "human time is nothing other than narrated time." (p. 102).

Point of view is someone's "standpoint" (Harding, 1987) or "angle of vision" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). The expression of experience and of "human" or lived time requires a form that is perspectival, that reflects a point of view. A narrator constructs a plot, that is orders, emplots or configure actions, events and experiences. This very ordering in a narrative is perspectival. The narrator "tells" a story from a particular point of view. As a literary genre, narrative has a temporal structure which relates or frames experiences in time. As we become increasingly more aware of the appropriateness of narrative as a way of telling one's experiences, we better understand the relationship of time, experience and narrative.

In this study six teachers describe their experiences of their students' stories of learning. They select and order their experiences, actions and events that constitute their narratives. As narrators, each presents a point of view. It is their own because that is what was requested. The teacher-participants in this study are both the narrators of the stories they tell and they are the primary characters in those stories. They tell stories about themselves in interviews which are then transcribed. These texts are interpreted to arrive at themes which are succinctly revealed in metaphors derived from each teacher's narrative. These metaphors dramatically capture in each

teacher's own words the essence of their experiences of their students' stories of learning.

My written presentation of this study reflects a dual perspective so as not to lose sight of the fact that the narratives gathered and interpreted are the narratives of individuals. The first perspective Donald Polkinghorne (1995) calls an *analysis of narratives* -- Chapter 4. The other I call a *storied analysis* -- Chapter 5. In each case the texts of the teachers' stories, transcribed from interviews, become data to be analyzed and interpreted. In my *analysis of narratives* I describe the emerging themes in each teacher's narrative and identify the shared themes that emerge. I relate these in a matrix which emphasizes the wholistic quality of each teacher's metaphor and narrative at the same time it nuances the particularities of each common theme as it plays out across the teachers' stories (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988).

Rather than concluding with a paradigmatic analysis and risk subsuming individual participants into a single structure, I make Chapter 5 a *set of storied analyses*. Here I am the narrator. Informed by my identification and discussion of the common themes, I construct a narrative for each teacher. In my *analysis of narratives*, it is the teachers' stories which are the ground and the themes that are figural. That is, the particular teachers' stories are the background (ground). They recede and the common themes and plot "stand out" (figure). In my *storied analyses*, I change the perspective, making the common themes and plot the ground, and the stories of each teacher figural (stand out). That is, the particular teachers' stories

"stand out" (figure) while the shared themes and plot recede to become the background (ground) (Thompson, Locander, Pollio, 1989). I prefer to come back to the teachers themselves so each remains particular and distinctive. Once again I rely on the text of each interview; but, rather than constructing a model or structure to represent common themes and plot, I configure or emplot particular aspects of each teacher's narrative into a story that tells his/her particular experience of their students' stories of learning. Informed by my understanding of what is common to the six narratives, I "re-story" what each teacher said in the interview. I make explicit nuances of the common themes and the plot of the meta-narrative they share.

By engaging in both *analysis of narrative* and *storied analysis* I am able to begin with the individual's narrative, move inductively to the particular and shared themes and plot, and refocus on the particular. The individual teacher is not subsumed into what is common to all. **The focus of this study remains of particular teachers' lived experiences of their students' stories of learning, contextualized in particular settings.**

BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF THIS STUDY

To present this study is to acknowledge its embeddedness in a broader story of collaborative research. My present study clearly has a history. It is a study of teachers' stories that tell their experiences of their students' stories of learning. The commitment of the six participants to gather and engage their students' stories did not begin with this present study. A flexible classroom process, initiated and researched

in two prior research projects that preceded this present study, enabled participants to position themselves within this present research and discussion of teaching and learning. These two prior projects served as entry points for my present inquiry. To know about the two prior projects is to understand the context for this present research for both the participants and for me.

The First Project (NCAL) - 1990-1992

Several years ago a colleague and I received a grant from the National Center on Adult Learning (NCAL) to create a process that would incorporate into our classes a time and a place for our students to tell their stories of learning. Our assumption was that through this process our students might develop a clearer understanding of themselves as learners. Compelling and provocative conversations about narrative within the disciplines supported our belief that to tell one's story as a learner might be a formative way for students to make their learning meaningful (Bruner, 1986, 1987; Coles, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995; Sarbin, 1986; Coles, 1990). Integrated into a course or some other learning situation, narrative might allow students to connect specific learning experiences with life experiences, ordering them in relation to particular beginnings and goals. The use of narrative, as in students' stories of learning, could promote connection or relationship between learning and life, life and the classroom, one course and another. Commenting on her reading of Joan Didion's (1961) essay, "On Keeping a Notebook," Grumet (1988) suggests that narrative fills the space between "what happened" and "what it means." Narrative could be one

way of ordering particular events and experiences -- the "what happened" -- so that meanings would emerge.

In this NCAL project (1990-1992), "Narrative, Self-Assessment, and the Adult Learner," my colleague and I demonstrated that when students tell their stories of learning in specific learning contexts they come to understand more fully their own learning processes. One student put it this way:

I didn't really notice it [learning] happening to me, until I kind of stepped back away from it, like the painting, you know, where you stand too close and you just see the dots, and once you back up, you go 'Wow!' And you see the whole thing (Kramp and Humphreys, 1995, p.11).

This new awareness of themselves as learners then set directions for their future learning.

To facilitate this project we developed a generic and flexible process and integrated it into our courses so our students could tell their stories of learning. Since this process is used by the teachers in my study and is integral to all of the research described, a description of its four components would be helpful:

Initial story: At the start of the semester the students tell a story of a prior learning experience in the content of the course or simply a story of a learning experience.

Vignettes: Throughout the semester students tell vignettes of what stands out for them as they are learning.

Story of Self as a Learner: At the end of the semester students

"review and reflect on" their initial story and later vignettes. Then they tell their own stories as learners in the course.

Interpretation of Own Story: Having told their own stories of

self as learner, students provide an interpretation of their stories of learning by "re-reading and reflecting" on their stories in the light of those of other learners. (Coles, 1989).

This *process* begins with what the learners bring to a particular course -- prior experiences with the subject matter or learning -- and sets a context for reflection on the students' learning in a course. The vignettes provide students regular occasions throughout the semester to tell about and to reflect upon particular learning experiences in the course. What distinguishes this *process* is that the initial story and the vignettes are revisited at the end of the semester and serve as data from which the students eventually construct their stories of self as learners (Kramp and Humphreys, 1993).

The above *process* -- having as its primary purpose the enrichment of student learning -- subsequently fostered powerful changes in our teaching and our senses of self as teacher. This unanticipated result of our students' stories -- that they informed and enriched our understanding of student learning and our possible responses to it --

offered a perspective that challenged us to rethink our teaching. This led to our second research project (Kramp and Humphreys, 1992).

The Second Project (FIPSE) - 1992-1994

Our second project, "Narrative, Self-Assessment and Reflective Teachers and Learners" was funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). In this second project we invited fourteen experienced college teachers from a variety of disciplines and institutions to explore with us ways in which the regular engagement of their students' stories of learning might inform their teaching practice as well as their understanding of themselves as teacher. These fourteen participants and co-researchers adapted and modified to their courses or learning contexts the *process* used in the first project and described above. The *process* -- having as its primary purpose the enrichment of student learning -- fostered powerful change in these teachers and in their teaching. Students' narratives provided a context for them to re-view their own teaching. An ironic and fascinating shift took place: *Student learning rather than improved teaching became focal. And this then led to remarkable changes in their teaching practice.*

The particular relevance of this FIPSE experience is that it was shared by the six teachers participating in my present study. As members of a team of fourteen faculty, the six teachers in this present study met and worked as colleagues over a period of two years. Knowledge of the FIPSE story provides background for this present study which explores the experience of six of these fourteen teachers.

The FIPSE team of college teachers represented diverse disciplines, student populations, learning contexts, geographic areas and kinds of institutions. Fourteen teachers, who had come to know and express interest in our work, were invited to participate in the FIPSE project. They had attended prior presentations on narrative and students' stories of learning my colleague and I had made at national conferences such as the Lilly Conference on College Teaching, the annual American Association of Higher Education meetings, meetings of THE ALLIANCE: An Association for Alternative Degree Programs for Adults, and the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). From lists of interested faculty generated at these various meetings, we selected fourteen participants from different disciplines and different institutions of higher learning. Those invited represented a cross section of institutions and great variety of learning contexts. With two or three exceptions, we did not know the participants except by name and academic affiliation. The final composite was a group of faculty from institutions as distinctively different as Antioch College and Sinclair Community College; Miami-Dade Community College and Gallaudet University; Alverno College and the large state universities of Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Purdue. Diversity of institution and learning contexts were primary considerations in the selection of these FIPSE faculty. Because of this diversity, it is unlikely that this group of faculty would otherwise have met and spent time together, let alone enjoyed extended collaboration over a two year period.

Four times between 1992-1994, we came together for three days of meetings. Chicago was selected as a meeting site. During these days team members shared

their work in the project and reviewed, reflected, re-evaluated and redesigned their work. The changing and expanding emphases of these four meetings capture the participants' developing experience and the essence of the project. During the fall, 1992, and before participants came together for the first meeting, each received and read three books that served as a shared ground for our discourse and reflection during the collaboration. They were:

Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (1992).

Robert Coles, *The Call of Stories* (1989).

Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings, eds., *Lives Stories Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (1991).

In the two years of the project, participants also received Mary Belenky et. al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, (1986), and Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in the College Years* (1992). These readings informed our discussion and provided alternative ways to think about the work we were doing.

Brief descriptions of the four times the group came together reveal the intensity of the group's work together and the way in which the project developed.

Meeting One: The Process

When we first came together on January 15-17, 1993, my colleague and I presented the *process* described above. We reviewed and discussed it as each participant worked to adapt it to one of his or her courses or teaching situations. Discussions centered on the nature and power of narrative, on how to shape the prompt inviting students to tell an initial story of a learning

experience. Sample prompts included: for students in a cognitive psychology course, "tell about a time you learned something complex;" for students in an anthropology course, "tell about a time you experienced something different;" Beyond the initial story, the team considered ways they might appropriately incorporate vignettes into their various courses. Suggestions of narratives -- films or novels -- students might use at the end of the course to reinterpret their own stories of learning were shared. Participants left this meeting thinking about integrating this *process* into their courses so that students would have particular times and contexts in which to share their stories as learners.

Meeting Two: The Students' Stories

At our sessions on June 18-20, 1993, participants were talking about the stories their students had told. They shared examples of their students' stories of learning and the impact of these stories in fostering new perspectives and insights became clear as each participant repeated stories their students had told. As we discussed them, stories that might have first seemed ordinary came to appear extraordinary as the uniqueness of the particularities of students' learning experiences became apparent.

In response to the work of the first semester a participant said:

One of the things I learned from the response papers was how much students were struggling with the material, not in the sense of difficulty but in the radical way it was challenging their beliefs.

Another said:

I keep returning to what the students and I are learning rather than focusing on what I am teaching, and this shift in focus is having a rather unsettling effect on me.

And another:

I had assumed that the resistance some students have shown to the course principally was driven by a fear of and a distaste for scientific approaches to human experience. It seems to go deeper than that to a basic uncertainty about their ability to understand complicated issues.

Meeting Three: The Teachers' Stories

In what participants had said earlier about their students' stories there were already hints of implications for their teaching. By our meetings on January 7-9, 1994, this issue was focal. Through our discussions it became clear that as a result of their stories of learning, our students were more fully present to us in their particularity. This complicated the ways in which we engaged them. As one participant put it, "We became aware of the need to respond responsibly and responsively and that's not easy." Said another:

This past quarter with my students, I think I worked on helping them become more self aware as learners, but along the same lines, I was the one in the state of unease or transition or whatever. Now what is my role as a teacher?

A participant who taught deaf students and is herself deaf, and who made use of student drawings as a way to enable her students to express their stories, spoke of her progress toward this third meeting:

The first time we met it was very confusing. I didn't know what to do. I felt confused; things were not clear. The second time I started to pick up on things but I still didn't feel real comfortable. The third time, Yes! Yes! Yes, I understand! Yes, I got it! I wanted to try more.

Meeting Four: Teachers' Stories and Students' Stories

To prepare for our fourth and final meeting, May 19-21, 1994, participants reviewed their students' stories of learning, their notes from the group meetings, and their own teaching logs. Then they wrote narratives of their participation in the group project, which were circulated in advance of the May, 1994 meeting. All could come to the meeting with a knowledge of the narratives of the others. In this meeting we reviewed the narratives and our discussion centered on the issues, questions and concerns that emerged. In our discussion we "re-viewed" our teaching and particular examples that pointed to new insights and understandings we found in our students' stories of learning. This intense discussion highlighted what we had learned as a collaborative group of teachers. It was punctuated by the particulars provided by each participant that personalized and energized the work of the group.

A major result of this project was a change in perspective -- from focusing on teaching and improving teaching to focusing on student learning. Knowing that they were experienced and concerned teachers at the start of the project, and now attending to student learning as expressed by the students in their classes, group members observed that they were "different" teachers than they had been. They were intrigued with how the reconceptualization of their courses, pedagogy, tests and assessments, and the learning they hoped to facilitate had changed as a result of knowing the experience of the learners they taught. In making stories about learning a legitimate part of their courses, they changed the ways in which they taught and how they thought about teaching and themselves as teachers. The changes they effected together and individually, were not simply incremental improvements.

A SUMMARY OF PRIOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

These prior projects set the stage for my present study. What we learned from the FIPSE project is *what* these fourteen college teachers now do differently. The focus was on their behavior and *particular changes in their behavior*. For the FIPSE participants, listening to and engaging narratives of their students in their courses led to fundamental changes in their teaching practice (Kramp and Humphreys, 1994). Figure 1-1 on the following page summarizes this discussion of the two prior research projects.

TITLE OF PROJECT	DATES	FUNDED BY	FINDINGS
1. "Narrative, Self-Assessment, and the Adult Learner"	1990-1992	NCAL	Students develop a clearer understanding of themselves as learners by telling their stories of learning.
2. "Narrative, Self-Assessment and Reflective Teachers and Learners"	1992-1994	FIPSE	Students' learning rather than improved teaching became focal for teachers who engage their students stories of stories of learning. This led to changes in the ways they taught and talked about themselves as teachers.

Figure 1 - 1. A Summary of Prior Research

What these earlier projects inadvertently revealed is the power of interaction between teacher and student. The teachers discovered their students had something to say about their experiences of learning. Attending to what their students told them caused these teachers to pause and reflect on their own practice. There appears to be a link between the stories their students told them and the teachers' renewed reflections on themselves as teachers and on their practice. Such reflection appears to have resulted in a range of changes in the ways these teachers practiced teaching.

What was unknown and remained to be researched was the *particular experience* of the teacher who engaged his/her students' stories of learning -- the "what" that is experienced (noema) and the "how" or mode of experiencing (noesis). What experiences precipitated the changes we, as project directors observed, and they, as project participants, described? These are veteran teachers who over time and through practice developed habits of mind that shaped their senses of themselves and their understanding of teaching. What particular experiences led them to rethink

their past, present and future selves? The stories they told in the interviews help us understand what they experienced and bring us closer to confronting with them the complexities of teaching.

CHAPTER 2

ASPECTS OF THIS STUDY

In the process of writing about this study I became more and more aware of the particular ways narrative shaped my mode and style of presentation. It became apparent that I could not lay over this study a traditional template of research. It is important that my written presentation not be in tension with my topic and research, and that my written presentation communicate the enriched understanding of the particular experience of specific teachers. My research is about connection. I make no pretense to report my findings in a disconnected, detached, or distant manner. I tell the experiences of these teacher-participants as I have come to know them -- through their stories. "Narrative ways of knowing function collectively to affirm the values of multiplicity and connection" (Plath-Helle, 1991, p. 48). In doing this research it was my experience that narrative processes functioned as a connecting medium for knowing. They became the embodiment of an intimate relation between the knower and the known.

My purpose in this study is to describe six teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning. I explore their particular experiences -- the thoughts, feelings, ideas, the examples and situations they tell. These teachers "heard" their students' stories, in which their students made themselves present to their teachers, and invited them into their lives. In a similar way, these same teachers made

themselves present to me in their interviews, and in telling me their stories, they invited me into their lives. My connection to them is real and I am conscious of my role in this research process. When the situation and the research question warrant it, I believe as Oakley when she argues that:

. . . the mythology of "hygienic" research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than a dangerous bias -- it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (Oakley, 1981, quoted in Weiler, 1988, p. 58).

"Personal involvement" is the condition which made it possible for me to gather and interpret the narratives of the present participants. I did this not to chronicle the events that took place but to describe the particular experience of each teacher who "heard" his/her students' stories of learning. My research question -- **What does it mean to engage your students' stories of learning?** -- shaped the way I conceptualized this present study and the way in which I choose to write it, to present it.

Particular aspects of narrative that helped me conceptualize my presentation and discussion of this study are: characters, landscape of action, and landscape of consciousness. The latter two are Jerome Bruner's (1986, 1987) terms for what he sees as essential aspects of narrative, simultaneously constructing yet distinguishable from each other (1987, p. 20). My use of this term "landscape" is embedded in the work of Bruner in narrative (1986, 1987) and enriched by Maxine Greene's use of it in educational literature (1978). Though each uses it differently, for both it has the seemingly contradictory connotations of connection, vantage point and transcendence.

This possible contradiction may be clarified in the following way: landscape implies connection or contact, and because of that connection or contact, an ability to move away from in order to establish a vantage point to see differently. For each author the word has phenomenological overtones in that it puts us in touch with our lived world, returning us "to things themselves" (Greene, p. 2). In *Landscapes of Learning* (1978), Greene writes:

It is my view that persons are more likely to ask their own questions and seek their own transcendence when they feel themselves to be grounded in their personal histories, their lived lives. That is what I mean by "landscapes." . . . [and] to be in touch with our landscapes is to be conscious of our evolving experiences, to be aware of the ways in which we encounter our world (1978, p. 2).

Both Bruner and Greene inform and enrich my use of landscape and enhance its appropriateness. My landscape of action -- the events that unfold -- might be called "plot" in more formal study of narrative. It structures what I do in this study, how I organize what I do. My landscape of consciousness or how I think and what I think about what I do in this study, establishes my "angle of vision" or "standpoint," my theoretical framework. It makes clear what in formal narrative study would be called my "point of view." Given my orientation toward narrative and phenomenology, these constructs proved to be useful in the discussion of my research. Before presenting my landscape of action and my landscape of consciousness, I introduce the "characters" in this study and tell how they came to participate.

THE CHARACTERS: SIX TEACHERS AND HOW THEY CAME TO BE

PARTICIPANTS

The teachers who are the characters in my study are six of the teachers who participated in the FIPSE project described in Chapter 1. To be part of my study, participants must have had this experience and had to reflect upon the complexity of their experience in a sufficiently articulate way. These participants are all experienced faculty, seasoned classroom teachers who see teaching as a complex activity. The six are reasonably representative of the diverse learning contexts characteristic of the FIPSE study. I selected these six teachers out of the fourteen because I could interview them more conveniently due to their location or because I had ready access to them at a conference or meeting we attended. I could have selected any of the fourteen had they been equally accessible. The names and institutions of the six teacher-participants I interviewed were already public because they participated in the FIPSE project. In discussing this study with them they preferred that their names and those of their institutions be used rather than pseudonyms.

Chuck Matter, teacher of psychology,

University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, Green Bay Wisconsin.

John Graveel, teacher of soil sciences,

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Margaret Dotson, teacher of early childhood education,

Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio.

Florence Vold, teacher of mathematics,

Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.

Yulan Washburn, teacher of romance languages,

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Tim Riordan, teacher of philosophy and arts and humanities,

Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

These names take on flesh in Chapters 4 and 5, where they assume the unique and vital qualities their stories reveal and the particular selves they make present in their stories.

Implicit in the personal narratives of the teachers in this study are other narratives -- stories of institutions, stories of higher education, stories of disciplines, stories of American schooling, stories of cultures. My focus is on the personal narratives of these teachers, even though I recognize that inside the world of these personal narratives there is evidence of other worlds in which these narratives are set and with which they interact. Those worlds and stories of those worlds are not my focus in this work.

The willingness and curiosity group members communicated at the outset of our relationship in January, 1993, translated into an eagerness and commitment to rethink teaching and what it meant to be teachers. Central to our work was the mutual support and collaborative relationship that developed among the members of the FIPSE team. While they taught and worked with students on their home campuses and typically just saw each other when all met in Chicago, clearly the

shared story of the FIPSE project, recounted in **Chapter 1**, created a context that influenced the experiences of all participants. My interview prompt -- "Tell me about a time you were aware of your students' stories of learning" -- therefore had a particular meaning and intensity for the teachers in my study. I could ask this of the six participants because they were part of the FIPSE project described. Explicit references to this shared experience appear from time to time in the texts of my participants' narratives. Clearly it is a story implicit in theirs.

THE LANDSCAPE OF ACTION - THE PLOT

According to Bruner "the constituents [of the landscape of action] are the arguments of action: agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument . . ." (1986, p.14). What and how I did what I did in this study; why I did what I did; when and in what sequence/order I did it constitutes my "landscape of action" (1987). Conceptually and experientially Bruner's term appropriately informs and describes this study.

For this phenomenological study I invited six teachers who participated in the FIPSE project to tell their experiences of their students' stories of learning. I understand experience to be "an active interchange between an individual and the world around him or her. An experience must be had by someone and it must be of something" [my emphasis] (Pollio, 1982, p. 19). I wanted to determine what the experience of engaging their students' stories was for these teachers who had it and

told about it in their narratives. I gathered their narratives as told me in phenomenological interviews.

I initiated the interview and invited the teachers to tell their stories by saying: "Think about some times you experienced your students' stories of learning. Tell me about a time." This open-ended question made it possible for teachers to tell me what they wanted to say. While the question is mine, the answer belongs to the teacher. What is essential in this kind of interview is for me to hear what these teachers had to say about their experiences. Hence the choice of the phenomenological interview as a method. The teachers spoke readily and easily, telling me stories of their experiences; their stories were carefully constructed and detailed, resulting in transcripts/texts averaging thirty or more pages. Most took great effort to set contexts for the stories and several told more than one story.

The interviews were taped and then transcribed. Several transcripts/texts were interpreted in a research group affiliated with the Learning Research Center at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville. (See Appendix for an example of a transcript.) Group members -- faculty and graduate students -- read the texts aloud as a group and interpreted the texts suggesting possible themes. Building on this experience, I reread and reviewed each text until the particular themes in each teacher's narratives became clear. In this process, metaphors the teachers used to describe the experience of their students' stories of learning emerged. When I identified the prevailing metaphor and related themes in each teacher's narrative, I shared my interpretation with each teacher-participant. The themes revealed in each narrative made explicit the shared

themes in the narratives (Chapter 4). Informed by these shared themes, I constructed a plot to shape the metanarrative that was reflected in the six narratives. Then I re-storied the narrative of each teacher (Chapter 5), highlighting the particular configuration of themes in each story. These too were shared with participants.

Prior to interviewing the teachers, I participated in what is technically called "a bracketing interview" in which I responded to the same prompt I gave to the teachers (Thompson, Locander, Pollio, 1983). This interview is designed to make me aware of the presuppositions I brought to this research. "It is only in the presence of prejudices that we are open to our own experiences and allow those experiences to make a claim on us" (Smith, 1993, p. 195). A strong orientation to process became apparent, as did my bias that my pedagogy is and should be influenced by the knowledge of themselves as learners that my students shared with me. My willingness to move away from traditional models and metaphors of teaching and learning could also translate into a kind of missionary zeal -- a sense of urgency that might not always be shared. The importance of this bracketing interview for me was that I became aware of my presuppositions and the assumptions that influence me as teacher and researcher. I attempted to take these into account in my interviews, by staying away from "why" questions for instance, as well as in my interpretations of texts (Kvale, 1983). While I want to recognize the biases I bring to my research, I do not want to overlook the value of particular perspectives which can lead to insights derived from a particular way of seeing. According to Gadamer, my "prejudices are the biases of my openness to the world" (as quoted in Linge, 1976, p. xv). Aware of

them and sensitive to their potential, they need not be obstructive or intrusive. They can inform me as I move to a clearly stated description of the experience of these teachers who listened to and engaged their students' stories of learning.

THE LANDSCAPE OF CONSCIOUSNESS - THE POINT OF VIEW

Some narratologists understand and speak of "point of view" as "the perceptual and conceptual position in terms of which the narrated situations and events are presented" (Prince, 1987, p. 73). This understanding appears to be similar to Bruner's "landscape of consciousness," which he says is descriptive of "what those involved in the action know, think, feel, or do not know, think or feel" (Bruner, 1986, p. 14). Both terms help me to think about what I bring to this study, how I position myself or where I stand in relation to it, how I perceive and conceptualize it, and how best to present it. Bruner's construct picks up nicely on "point of view" and it too says much about the extent and significance of the particular "worldview" a researcher brings to a research study because it is conceptual and perspectival.

Landscape is a relational term which calls for the arranging and rearranging of its aspects. A landscape of consciousness, as a kind of "mindscape," is expansive and inclusive. It resembles a "vista," a "worldview," a way of seeing that enables us to understand the relationship of knowledge, the aim of inquiry, epistemological relationships in a given study. Researchers and theorists have different names for this landscape. Lincoln and Guba write about competing "paradigms" or "worldviews" that shape qualitative research (1994). Sandra Harding writes of "methodology" as

the conceptual framework that locates and identifies where one "stands." For her, "methodology" is the framework shaped by theory, personal biases, experiences of the researcher, as contrasted with "method" which identifies particular ways and strategies employed in doing the research (1987). In my study I use "landscape of consciousness" because it seems compatible with my focus on narrative and because it suggests there is a place for the subjectivity of the researcher.

To say my study is a **qualitative research study** does not reveal much about the conceptualization and implementation of this study. As is characteristic of qualitative research, I seek to describe human experience. Of more particular relevance and immediate interest is the clarification of my "landscape of consciousness" that shapes who I am as a qualitative researcher and this study as an example of qualitative inquiry.

My philosophical landscape is constructivism.

A constructivist believes that to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it. The inquirer [researcher] must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors. To prepare an interpretation is itself to construct a reading of these meanings; it is to offer the inquirer's construction of the constructions of the actors one studies (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118).

What Schwandt calls the "constructions of the actors" are the narratives of teachers in which they tell of their experiences of their students' stories of learning. Because my study is about the experience of the teachers -- particular actors, at particular times, fashioning meaning out of particular experiences -- my study is **phenomenological in orientation** (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ihde, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994). It is committed to descriptions of the teachers' experiences

of engaging their students' stories of learning rather than to explanations of them. In this way phenomenology differs from other qualitative or descriptive approaches because its focus is the subject's experienced meaning rather than the researcher's observations of the subjects' behavior or the researcher's descriptions of worldly objects (Polkinghorne, 1988). It is the teachers' descriptions of their experience that really invite us to share their experiences because

. . . descriptions retain, as close to possible, the original texture of things . . . their phenomenal qualities and material properties. Descriptions keep a phenomenon alive, illuminate its presence, accentuate its underlying meanings, enable the phenomenon to linger, retain its spirit, as near to its actual nature as possible (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59).

This sharing connects the researcher and the respondent as they mutually construct meaning within the context of the interview. Lincoln and Guba say a constructivist sees knowledge in a research project as created between the investigator and the respondents (Lincoln and Guba, 1994, p. 111). This is typically the experience of the researcher and respondent, interviewer and interviewee, in the context of a phenomenological interview who not only construct knowledge, but frequently come to know what was not previously known. In addition each may be changed by the experience and what each comes to know.

Consequently, my primary research approach or methods in this study are the phenomenological interview and narrative as a mode of inquiry. I understand a research approach to be a "method" or "a way or path toward understanding that is as sensitive to its phenomenon [the teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning] as to its orderly and self correcting aspects" (Pollio, 1993, class notes).

Since a phenomenological interview focuses on the experience of the interviewee, each teacher was able to tell a lived experience. This type of interview is more likely to elicit narratives than interviews where the particular line of questioning intrudes and discourages narratives (Mishler, 1986). In this way the teachers can make public what it is they want to say/tell and which I can only know if told me by them. My initial question, a "tell me about . . . question," is designed to elicit narratives because narrative is especially suited to inquiry that seeks to understand a particular human experience. "Experience has a narrative structure as surely as narrative has an experiential structure" (Keen, 1986, p. 176).

For the teacher as narrator, "recounting one's life is an interpretive feat" (Bruner, 1987, p. 13). For me as researcher, these transcribed interviews about experiences create narrative texts which then become objects to interpret and understand. Understanding is always an interpretation. Hermeneutic methods assist me as researcher to understand narratives. Hermeneutics seeks to understand; it struggles to dispel misunderstanding "but does not pretend to be an accurate snapshot of the phenomenon being considered" (Riordan, 1995. Personal communication.). The principle of hermeneutics is that we should try to understand everything that can be understood. Since a fuller description of teachers' experience is a goal of this study, I must come to terms with hermeneutics because as a theory of interpretation, it is an aspect of the landscape of consciousness within which I stand to do this study.

Hermeneutics is both a theory and a process. "The hermeneutic process allows us to hear what the text says to us" (Gadamer, 1976, p. xviii). As a theory it

shapes thematic analysis which attempts to arrive at the essence of experience. Texts of the interviews call for thematic analysis which is hermeneutic and interpretive. The phenomenological themes that emerge can be understood as "structures" of experience (Van Manen, 1990, p. 79). Themes describe aspects of the lived experiences of the teachers as narrated by them to me.

Hermeneutics is far from being represented and presented by a school of scholars of like mind. Each version has different implications for doing qualitative inquiry. "Philosophical" (Smith, 1993) or "moderate" (Gallagher, 1992) hermeneutics reflects my orientation as a researcher assisted by hermeneutics. Based on the works of Gadamer and Ricoeur among others, philosophical or moderate hermeneutics is not about the accurate depiction of meaning, the "getting it right," or the validation of a meaning that exists prior to and independent of inquiry (Smith, 1993). It is about coming to understand meaning in context. And it is about connection between reader and text, between researcher and text. "The reader [researcher] participates just as much as the author [narrator] in putting together meaning" (Gallagher, 1992, p.10). Moderate hermeneutics recognize that we cannot destroy ambiguity so we do not deny it, but find a way to live with it without "inflating" its effect.

Constructivism, hermeneutics (moderate or philosophical), existential-phenomenology, and narrative are all aspects of my landscapes of consciousness. They particularize my **qualitative research**. Within a constructivist frame, my study is an inductive study, phenomenological in its orientation to the particular experiences

of six teachers. It emphasizes **narrative** -- as first told in the interview and then as interpreted in the texts of the interviews.

Narrative is both a method of inquiry and the object of interpretation. It is both similar to and different from other forms of qualitative research. It is one of the "approaches" or "methods" in qualitative research and can be used for different purposes, especially description and explanation. As a research approach I see narrative as a particularly appropriate way to gather data about lived experience. It is a natural, universal human way of organizing experience in time. It translates experience into telling and in telling we come to know differently (Bruner, 1986). As a research approach it provides me with a way to undertake "the systematic study of personal experience and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects" (Reissman, 1993, p. 70).

Experience is lived time and lived time already has a quasi narrative character (Carr, 1986; Kerby, 1991). The expression of lived time or experience necessitates a form/structure/genre for which time is of the essence. Narrative as a form/structure/genre has both a temporal structure and is perspectival -- it has a narrator and a plot. "Lived time seems to be in strict accord with the present meaning of experience. In other words, our sense of time changes with the significance of our experience" (Kerby, 1991, p. 17).

Narrative is one way to order and give meaning to experience. This is what narrative does or might do. "To tell a story is to impose form on experience" (Grumet, 1988, p. 87). Through narrative, life as told, we come to know life as

experienced. Hence it is especially appropriate to use narrative as an approach in conjunction with the phenomenological interview. In inviting these teachers to tell their experiences which generate texts to be interpreted for their meaning, we can come to know the meaning of "life as experienced" by them. "Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Narrative is both the approach and the object of my study. In addition, what characterizes it as a way of knowing has everything to do with not only the way I did this study but the way I chose to present it.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONVERSATION REFLECTED IN RELATED RESEARCH

*"The sounds of storytelling
are everywhere today" (Greene, 1991).*

Maxine Greene speaks of the past even as she describes the present.

Humans have told and listened to stories for centuries. Through this ancient practice, storytellers and stories have shaped cultures, transmitted traditions and histories, sought answers to questions or explanations for puzzles of their times. Stories preserve memories of people. They provoke reflection and are a way of knowing. They sustain marginalized people who turn to their collective heritage of stories to experience community, connect with their past and envision a future. Stories are experienced personally, and used informally but meaningfully across cultures in private and public situations.

It is not necessary to teach people how to tell stories. "Narrative is a conventional form, transmitted culturally . . ." (Bruner, 1991, p. 4). Some scholars, especially psychologists and philosophers, argue that storytelling is a part of our cognitive repertoire, a way of knowing and ordering our experience they call narrative

(Ricouer, 1981, 1984-1988; Bruner, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1989, 1995; Carr, 1986; Kerby, 1991). Anthropologists (Turner and Bruner, 1986; Geertz, 1988; Van Maanen, 1988) rely on stories in their research. They value stories as "as culturally constructed expressions [which] are among the most universal means of organizing and articulating experience" (Turner and Bruner, 1986, p. 15).

In the academy, early work in narrative was grounded in specific disciplines, and generally came out of a sense of the relevance of narrative for the ways of thinking and inquiry appropriate to a particular discipline, i.e. history, literary study, religious studies. Narrative as an object of study was appropriate for literary scholars and narratologists who understand it to be an art form, with a recognizable structure and formal elements (Chatman, 1978, 1990; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Bal, 1985). Boundaries between the informal and formal study and use of narrative are breaking down as the conversation about narratives and stories expands to include new and varied voices. It is this recent, cross disciplinary conversation that informs this study. And, it is within this current conversation, especially as it is carried on in the study of teaching and learning in education, that my study must find its place and make its contribution.

Conversations about narrative during the last twenty or so years most directly inform my study of teachers' narratives. Formerly, when disciplines and disciplinary modes of knowing framed earlier research, study, and dialogue about narrative, it was seen as the province of literary specialists, folklorists, and narratologists. Research on/in narrative was highly specialized and technical. It

focused on what narrative is, that is, how a narrative itself is constructed, rather than what narrative does, that is, how it operates. This limited the conversations to the specialists and little if any exchange took place across the disciplines (Mitchell, 1981).

Respectful of narrative as historically practiced and experienced, and of narrative as a longtime object of study, scholars in the last decade opened the conversation on narrative to other scholars. The timeliness of the gesture was evident in the immediate response of the academic community and the sustained interest and conversation that was generated. Earlier, philosopher Richard Rorty (1979) anticipated the timeliness of this renewed interest in narrative when he reframed what he believed to have been the epistemological question that had preoccupied Anglo-American philosophy. He believed that the prior question, "How do we come to know the truth?" having been reconstructed through narrative inquiry, was now, "How do we come to endow experience with meaning?" (Quoted in Bruner, 1986, p. 12). His articulation of this re-formed question invited new perspectives and studies. Narrative is a way humans make meaning because narrative gets at the connections and relationships among human events and actions that constitute human experience.

The on-going conversation and subsequent research on narrative continues to inspire and directly inform my use of the teachers' narratives as both an object of study and an approach to inquiry. Consequently it is here I begin my review of relevant literature. Although I am a life long reader, I did not come to narrative through formal literary study. I experienced the concept of narrative first through the

study of history. Then, as a classroom teacher, through a more informal use of stories, I became aware of the appropriateness of engaging my students' stories of learning. These experiences and the increasing "sounds of storytelling everywhere" stimulated me to know more. This led to a formal study of narrative, especially in educational contexts. What anthropologists Turner and Bruner (1986) recognized, I experienced in the classroom, that through narrative -- life as told -- we come to know life as experienced. Through the stories my students told about learning, I came to know how they experienced learning and themselves as learners.

I was motivated to research the potential value of narrative in the world of the classroom and the particular ways it made meaning of learning and teaching for learners and teachers.

NARRATIVE ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES: NEW WAYS OF KNOWING

The specialized study of narrative within the disciplines began to change in the late seventies and early eighties as a result of a symposium held in October, 1979, under the auspices of the University of Chicago. The symposium, *Narrative: The Illusion of Sequence*, brought together "a collection [of presenters and participants] intended to carry thinking about the problem of narrative well beyond the province of 'the aesthetic' -- and to explore the role of narrative in social and psychological formations, particularly in structures of value and cognition" (Mitchell, 1981, p. vii). Among the participants were literary critic Jacques Derrida, philosophers Nelson Goodman and Paul Ricoeur, anthropologist Victor Turner, historian Hayden White,

psychologist Roy Schaefer, novelist Ursula LeGuin, narratologists Frank Kermode and Seymour Chatman. Howard Gardner, W. J. T. Mitchell, Barbara Myerhoff, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and David Tracy participated in the symposium but did not give presentations. Mitchell writes that as a result of this event, "The study of narrative has become a positive source of insight for all the branches of human and natural sciences" (p. ix, 1981).

Real shifts in thinking, such as a change in emphasis from what narrative is to include what narrative does, came as a result of the provocative and thoughtful exchanges among these scholars. Major contributions on narrative published in the next decade have come from participants at this conference, many of whom are still active conversants and researchers on the topic.

The Chicago Conference serves as a rather dramatic initiative resulting in an inclusive and lively scholarly interest in narrative. Following upon the conference was an expanded special issue of the journal *Critical Inquiry* (vol. 7, no. 1, Autumn, 1980) which made available to the public essays that grew out of the Chicago proceedings, as did Mitchell's edited work, *On Narrative* (1981). Bruner referred to the essays in Mitchell's edited text, as evidence of a "paradigm shift" -- "the coming alive to the possibility of narrative as a form not only of presenting but of constituting reality" (1991, p. 5).

Following upon Mitchell's 1981 publication, Bruner gave an invited address at the American Psychological Association meeting in 1981 in Toronto. Here he presented his current thinking on two modes of thought -- narrative and paradigmatic.

In his 1986 publication, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, he continued to explore the nature of narrative as a mode of thought and as an art form.

Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct (1986) edited by Sarbin suggests narrative as a root metaphor to conceptualize the human condition. He includes essays by scholars across disciplines and makes clear that story making, storytelling, and story comprehension are fundamental conceptions for a revived psychology (1986, p.vii). Among the invited essays are those of psychologists Kenneth and Mary Gergen on narrative, theologian Stephen Crites, existential phenomenologist Ernest Keen, historian Donald Spence and a sample of Mishler's early work on research interviews. Most of those who published in Sarbin's book in 1986 are still active contributors to the present conversations on narrative.

Building upon his earlier work, Bruner advanced a new and more radical thesis in "Life as a Narrative" (1987) -- the narrative we tell shapes our lives. Polkinghorne's significant contribution, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (1988), approaches narrative as a cognitive scheme, picking up on Bruner's basic thesis outlining two types of cognition: paradigmatic and narrative. Polkinghorne extends his study from narrative expression as a form through which humans make meaning, to its relevance in three disciplines -- history, literature and psychology -- where it has become a "research interest." Of particular significance for educators is his last chapter on "Practice and Narrative," where he discusses research, descriptive and explanatory, and relates the potential of narrative and the work of other researchers like Mishler's on interviews.

Bruner advances the conversation with *Acts of Meaning* (1990). Its major theme -- "meaning-making, and the central places it plays in human action" (1990, p. xii) -- is developed in the context of a narrative culture of stories, myths, folklore. His "The Narrative Construction of Reality" (1991), published in *Critical Inquiry*, presents a "ground plan of narrative realities"(p. 21). In Bruner's words, what remains now "is to show in detail how, in particular instances, narrative organizes the structure of human experience" (p. 21). Phenomenological research is a particularly appropriate way to do this. Dialogue between Bruner and Polkinghorne continues within the larger conversation on narrative and narrative inquiry with the publication of Polkinghorne's (1995) most recent thinking on narrative as a way of knowing and as a mode of inquiry. This essay is included in an especially useful collection of essays representing a variety of disciplines and issues, *Life History and Narrative*, edited by Hatch and Wisniewski (1995).

The first volume of philosopher Paul Ricouer's monumental work, *Time and Narrative* was published in 1984. Volume 2 followed in 1985 and Volume 3 in 1988. It remains the foundational work on the experience of human time and narrative, especially the narrative character of history and of fiction. Hayden White (1981) and Louis O. Mink (1981) are historians for whom the question of narrativity has figured prominently in their writings. Like his contemporary Ricouer, for philosopher David Carr, *Time, Narrative and History* (1986), "narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence" (p. 9).

Among the recent contributions to the literature on narrative are Anthony Paul Kerby's (1991), *Narrative and the Self*, and Richard Hopkins' (1994), *Narrative Schooling*. Kerby, like Carr, (See also Polkinghorne, 1995) posits the existence of a pre-reflective experience of narrative and Hopkins shifts the context to education and the controlling metaphor for schooling from a mechanistic to a narrative metaphor. Hopkins explicitly connects narrative and education, presenting a philosophical perspective informed by narrative, experience (especially as developed in Dewey's writings), existential phenomenology, and qualitative research. He integrates these perspectives in a provocative way. His work serves as a transition to another context where some of the most creative and current thinking -- discussion, debate about different and particular aspects, and applications -- is taking place.

NARRATIVE AND EDUCATION

On Teachers/Teaching

Unlike traditional research in education in which the teacher is the object of the research, and an observer's focus is on what the teacher does in the classroom, educational research using narratives incorporates the teacher's voice. Elbaz (1983) was among the first to make extensive use of teacher's stories in her project/book, *Teacher Thinking: A Study of Practical Knowledge*. As with many of the studies in the early 1980's, her intent was not to elicit narratives, but she was open to accepting teachers' stories if that is how they chose to communicate what they had learned through practice. Clandinin, in her research on the teacher in the classroom,

Classroom Practices: Teacher Images in Action (1985) used narrative as a heuristic for her inquiry. Her research linked narrative with a teacher's practical knowledge. Collaborating with Connelly in 1987, they published *Narrative, Experience and the Study of Curriculum*. They continued their collaboration and published "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry" in the *Educational Researcher* (1990), which remains one of the most frequently cited references and valued contributions to the conversation on narrative in education.

Grumet's thoughtful use of narrative and autobiography in her educational research on women and teaching -- *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (1988) -- elevates the discussion of narrative and educational research to a different level. Her feminist critical perspective leads her to ask different questions of her research, and herself as researcher. In "The Politics of Personal Knowledge," a paper presented in 1985, and reprinted in Noddings and Witherell (1991), she effectively and provocatively explores the relationships of power and politics in personal narratives. Over a decade ago, she anticipated the current debate about narrative and research in education. In many ways, her ideas may be more timely today than in 1985.

The professional life cycle of teachers was the focus of Huberman's study of 160 Swiss secondary teachers in the late 1980's. He posed a phenomenological question to his "informants" when he requested that they tell a narrative about a time along the trajectory of their professional lives or personal careers. He reviews his study and contextualizes it in recent research in his contribution to McEwan and Egan's *Narrative in Teaching, Learning and Research* (1995). He raises relevant

questions and significant concerns, this time as a participant in the current conversation on narrative and educational research.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle's contribution, "Research on Teaching and Teacher Research: The Issues that Divide" (1990), is a fine review of recent research on teaching and the phenomenon called "teacher research" or "action research." A major complaint of the authors is that "what is missing from the knowledge base of teaching . . . are the voices of the teachers themselves" (p. 2), Cochran-Smith and Lytle's study was not intended to fill that void, just make it glaringly apparent.

Coles, *The Call of Stories* (1989), resulted from research he did in his medical humanities course at Harvard Medical School. Coles explored the use of literary narratives among his medical students for whom he tried to create classroom experiences around narratives that connected his students with aspects of everyday life. Stories figured into his pedagogy, his teaching. He trusted the "immediacy that a story can possess, as it connects so persuasively with human experience." He was interested in the ways different students respond (1989, p. 204). He called his efforts "psychological inquiry" (p. 189).

Narrative as pedagogy was further explored in several of the essays included in Witherell and Noddings, *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (1991), for example, Makler in history, Narayan in folk narrative. Other contributors to this edited text develop narrative as used in research on teachers' stories, for example, Cooper on the use of journal writing to capture teachers' experience of teaching. Other contributors to the Witherell and Noddings text explicated narrative

research done in the interest of teacher education -- Florio-Ruane's ethnography investigating the relationship between literacy and teacher-student dialogue; Brody, et al, on narrative and personal story as modes of knowing for adult graduate students.

Goodsen (1992) in his study, *Studying Teachers' Lives*, raises questions from within the paradigm of narrative inquiry that seek to explore this emerging field of inquiry. In his paper presented at the American Educational Research Association's 1993 meeting in Atlanta, Georgia (reprinted in Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995), Goodsen characterizes stories and the study of stories as "genres that move researchers beyond (or to the side) of the main paradigms of inquiry -- with their numbers, their variables, psychometrics, psychologisms, and decontextualized theories. The new genres have the potential for advancing educational research in representing the lived experience of schooling" (1995, p. 89). It is significant that narrative and narrative inquiry have arrived at the point where those like Goodsen, working inside its paradigm, are in positions to critique it. Perhaps this signals a shift in posture, from one of apologia to a mature willingness to engage what is problematic about narrative. The intent would then be to improve our understanding and utilization of it, and the judgments we make about it.

Three 1995 publications provide clues to the direction of the current conversations in education. Jalonga and Isenberg (1995) make specific connections between teachers' stories and professional development in *Teachers' Stories: From Personal Narrative to Professional Insight*. The author's approach is instrumental, intended for practicing teachers and teacher educators. It exemplifies several of the

main concerns raised by essays in McEwan and Egan's (1995) text, *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research*, and Hatch and Wisniewski's (1995) text, *Life History and Narrative*. Both texts bring together multiple voices, representing varying perspectives, to debate issues and raise questions about the use of narrative in the classroom and in educational research. The editors of *Life History and Narrative* -- Hatch and Wisniewski -- also edit *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. They remark in their introduction that the text was inspired by both the quality and quantity of submissions in response to their call for papers for a special edition of QSE on narrative. Hatch and Wisniewski facilitate a conversation among the contributors to this text that advances the reader's understanding of narrative in a educational research.

On Students/Learning

The increasing prominence of teachers' voices in response to narrative inquiry makes the absence of students' voices that much more noticeable. Research on students, and student learning, using narratives as an object of study or as a mode of inquiry is limited. Pagano on reflexive reconstructions anticipates the use of students' stories when she recommends that "we teachers must encounter the otherness of our students in order that they may appropriate their own stories" (1991, p. 205). Pollio and Coffield (1994) studied the interconnections among themes revealed by teachers and students in the same classrooms in describing their classroom experiences. The use of autobiographies of students in teacher education is

explored by Brunner (1994) in *Inquiry and Reflection: Framing Narrative Practice in Education*. Perl (1994) turns "her teacher's eye upon her own teaching" (p. 427), making here students' learning the object of her inquiry. In her "Composing Texts, Composing Lives," she relates how she asks her adult writing students to make connections between the stories they read and the lives they live -- "composing our stories and composing ourselves." She has her students keep "lit-logs" and construct dialogues which they review at the end of the course.

Variations of student portfolios and journals are extensively used with students across campuses as ways of evaluating student work, promoting student reflection, or assessing prior work, for example, (Alverno College, Millsaps College, UW-LaCrosse, UT-Knoxville). Students' stories are gathered and then reconstructed as case studies by Gillespie (1994) for use with teachers.

Kramp and Humphreys (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995) report on their research in which they and other college faculty who created opportunities in their courses for their students to make public their experiences of learning through their stories of learning. These narratives told by the students enabled their teachers to know what they otherwise would not know. The research centered on student learning, but not learning as defined by developmental theories, theories of learning styles, or as measured by learning outcomes. Rather their focus was on learning as experienced and expressed by students in their courses. Such knowledge generated a sensitivity reflected in the changes they and other participating faculty made in their teaching practice. It became apparent to both the teachers and the students that ". . . teachers

and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and [each] other's stories" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 2).

The conversations and research described above are similar to but not the same as the research presented in this study. Prior work and research support this study. However this study attempts to relate the stories of learners and teachers. My emphasis is on the experience of the teacher, as told by the teacher who has experienced his/her students' stories of learning. Both the students' and the teachers' stories are figural at different times and both sets of voices are necessary. Narrative is consciously selected as a way of understanding students' and teachers' experiences of learning and teaching as meaningful.

The results of this study concern the relationship between student as learner and professor as teacher. In a unique and intimate way, the students' stories prompt the teacher -- the students' perceptions and experiences of self as learner provide a context for the teacher to reflect on his/her perception and experience of self as teacher. This context is critical because it is immediate, focused, particular, and interpersonal -- precisely the qualities of a good story, and all too frequently, the opposite of the classroom's teacher's experience of traditional research on teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

*" . . . our task now is to sample the texts, the narratives . . . to see not what they are about but how the narrators construct themselves" [emphasis his]
(Bruner, 1987, p. 24).*

In the stories they tell, the six teachers interviewed make it clear they are both "constructed" by their students' stories and they "construct" or "reconstruct" themselves in response to these students' stories. What might appear to be contradictory experiences — to construct, be the agent or actor, and to be constructed, to be the receiver or object of the impact — are described by the teachers as complementary. As Bruner (1987) says, the teachers "construct" themselves and the themes in their stories reveal this.

The themes in their stories present teachers who, as the actors, tell what they do, think, decide, listen, and respond. They author their stories and in doing so articulate something not previously known, even to themselves: "I am seeing some things talking to you that I had not really seen before." They experience the impact of narrative. Depending upon their readiness — their prior experience with narrative

and familiarity with its ability to reveal -- several of the teachers are surprised, others affirmed, and others changed in experiencing their students' stories of learning. Once beyond the initial surprise of their students' narratives, the teachers look to what they do in the classroom. They go on to tell how eventually they rethink or reconstruct who they are as teachers. As a result some changed their stories of self as teacher, and in changing these stories, repositioned themselves and their orientation relative to their future selves as teachers.

Several reflect on stories of a previous time or a prior self -- "the young college professor," "the typical college professor" -- and respond to a new awareness that "things are not as they seem." Some articulate a need to change in face of the awareness of themselves gained through their students' stories because -- "what I do is not what I say," or "that whole category of student has gotten shaken up." They take great pains in the face of their students' stories to respond responsibly to their students and to themselves.

In this chapter I analyze the stories I have gathered to discover and describe themes particular to each and common to all the stories. Since I have asked the participants to "Tell me about . . .," what I received were storied responses which were then transcribed into texts to be analyzed. This inductive process "functions to generate general knowledge from a set of particular instances" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). This results in a structure or pattern reflecting general knowledge about this collection of stories. In this analysis the particular stories told by the teachers record

into the background and become the ground in this way of knowing. The common themes are figural and stand out against the ground of the individual stories.

First I present each teacher and the particular themes his/her narrative reveals. Following this I identify and represent the common themes that emerged. In discussing the common themes I rely on the words of the teachers, because if I wish to become acquainted with their experiences, I must listen to the language spoken by them and be attuned to its meaning in their lifeworlds (Van Manen, 1990). To conclude this chapter on the analysis of narratives I present a paradigmatic structure: a relational matrix of all the common themes, nuanced in particular stories of each teacher.

TEACHERS AS CHARACTERS – THEIR METAPHORS, NARRATIVES, AND THEMES

It is significant that the participating teachers are not new to teaching but rather are veteran teachers having among them over 125 years in the classroom. Some have won formal awards for teaching excellence; all bring a particular excellence acquired over time.

Their narratives reflect a sensitivity to teaching and an awareness of its complexity. Each makes explicit self-as-teacher in the personal ways each tells his/her story and uses specific metaphors. These metaphors serve as organizing images which particularize the teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning. Their metaphors are dramatic, distinctive, and personal. They

contextualize and nuance individual themes that emerge. Each metaphor has a precision which makes it a "central vehicle for revealing qualitative aspects of life" and the teachers' experiences of their students' stories (Eisner, 1991, p. 227). If we subscribe to the view of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), that "our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor." And the centrality of metaphor in life and language comes as no surprise.

Metaphors used by the teachers in their narratives become the titles for my analyses of their narratives because they are wholistic images of the teachers' experiences. In my analysis of each narrative I first situate the teacher in his/her institutional context and then present and discuss key themes revealed in each story and implicit in his/her metaphor. "Teacher talk is usually straight talk; jargon free, experientially dense, expressive, compelling" (Huberman, p.129, 1995). The teachers in this study are no exception. Note the language of everyday experience they use when they state *the experience of their students' stories of learning is like . . .*

"Never in my wildest dreams . . ."

Chuck, a teacher in a Department of Psychology

"The whole thing changes . . ."

John, a teacher in a Department of Soil Sciences

"I was run over by a Mack truck . . ."

Margaret, a teacher of Early Childhood Education

"I was shocked . . . and very inspired . . ."

Florence, teacher of mathematics

"I had no idea what I was getting into . . ."

Yulan, teacher of foreign languages

"Listening for clues . . ."

Tim, teacher of philosophy and humanities

The themes revealed in each narrative are like "threads" that when woven together create a pattern with a plot-like structure. Wherever possible I use the teachers' words and voices to articulate the themes and make clear their experiences. Their stories, their words, leave us with vivid images of them and their senses of self. They acquaint us with multiple stories of teachers who care passionately about their teaching and feel deeply about their students' experiences of learning. Their multiple stories enrich our understanding of the experience of teaching by acknowledging its complexity and connectedness, positioning them and us within their experience of their teaching.

CHUCK

"Never in my wildest dreams . . ."

Chuck is a professor of Psychology and the chairperson of the Psychology Department at the University of Wisconsin - Green-Bay. He is an experienced

teacher whose students find his courses "fairly demanding." His years of teaching and the discipline he teaches have led him to expect certain patterns of behavior and particular learning habits from his students. By his own admission his emphasis is cognition -- both studying it and teaching it. He would like his students to demonstrate an understanding of complex topics.

His years at UW-Green Bay provide opportunities for him to participate in system-wide activities supporting teaching and learning. Recently he served as Chairperson of the UW System's Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Council. In that position he collaborated in organizing activities, conferences, and workshops for teachers in the university system that addressed various dimensions of teaching.

Chuck is an avid reader. He appreciates improvisation so it comes as no surprise that jazz and a good mystery are among his favorite pastimes. Each involves play with variations on themes.

Chuck's experience of his students' stories of learning is that in knowing, he did not know; in expecting "learning as usual" he is "struck by the unexpectedness of it." One particular story surprised him. In his experience of this student's story as "revealing" he finds she now has "a quality of mystery about her." It was true mystery he experienced because he didn't know he didn't know. Chuck's awareness does not simplify teaching for him. Teaching becomes more complicated as do teacher-student relationships.

The narratives of Chuck's students "intrigued" him, "stunned" him, "overwhelmed" him, "caught him up short," created a "quality of mystery." Their

stories made him aware of his students as whole persons, not simply as "cognitive entities" (quoted in Kramp and Humphreys, 1994). One became a character in Chuck's story. What she tells, says or does not say, does or does not do, has an impact on Chuck. It shapes the experience he tells about in his story. The way he tells his story reflects the respect he accords his students' stories. He had determined that "to ask for the narrative is to take a responsibility to give recognition to the fact that they have told you these things." His response was to "basically treat it [the student's story] with respect."

In learning things he did not know about his student(s) Chuck "never in his wildest dreams imagined" that students would use cognitive frameworks, course content and ideas in their own lives to help them understand their most personal selves and their most powerful experiences of their life. Of course, students over the years had discussed these complex concepts with him, and related them to their lives. Chuck knew that, but this was different. "It was the project that sensitized me to hear this." For Chuck, "to know" is initially understood in reference to academic knowledge, that "fairly demanding" content in his courses. His experience of his students' stories is that teaching becomes even more complicated when his students' stories help him realize they have lives outside the classroom which they bring to class and to which they relate what they learn in class. He tells us "he didn't know" his students did this. In fact he "never in his wildest dreams imagined" that the ideas, frameworks, course content would be integrated into his students' lives or that any student was making meaning in his/her life by using something learned in the course.

This experience of his students stories of learning is like "dropping a line into a creek and pulling out a whale."

Themes that emerged in Chuck's narrative are:

knowing ~ not knowing

expectation ~ surprise

revelation ~ mystery

acceptance of trust

JOHN

"The whole thing changes . . ."

John teaches Soil Science in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. Although he is a recent addition to Purdue's faculty, returning to Purdue University was like "going home" for John as he did his doctoral work there. John previously taught at another large land-grant university, so he returned to Purdue with rich teaching experience. Even as a veteran agronomist, John is among the youngest of his colleagues in the Soil Science Department at Purdue.

In addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate courses at Purdue, John is responsible for the hands-on Soil Science Study Center. Here his interaction with students is frequent and informal. It requires his attention to the point that he is as

exhausted by the intense interaction in the study center as when, as an avid runner, he runs long distances.

John's appreciation for the land is apparent in his easy excitement about soil samples, his pride in showing off Purdue's soil sample collection, and his respect for the environment which he models for his students. Known within his disciplinary and professional circles for the thoughtful attention he gives to teaching, John is the recipient of teaching awards given by these groups.

John's experience of his students' stories of learning is ". . . the whole thing changes. As soon as you call the student to relate their experiences, the whole thing changes because here is a student standing up, talking about his experience." John notes how the other students attend to the student's story. The classroom climate changes. He invites students to tell their stories of learning in class but he is always alert to how they "fit." For John, the class has its own gestalt. Even though it changes, everything still must "fit." He sees the latter as his need to exercise responsible control.

John's narrative reflects a clear experience of change from the "younger," more constrained, technically oriented, highly organized and unconnected, and responsible teacher he saw himself as having been, to the still responsible, flexible, spontaneous, more realistic, connected teacher, he sees himself in the process of becoming. The "younger faculty person" John remembered was "more interested in how you come across, than whether the students are really learning anything or not. What you want to do is come across as this incredibly knowledgeable person who

knows it all . . . and you sometimes lose sight of what it is all about." The "connected" John has "become very different I think I am becoming more realistic, I guess more human in terms of being a faculty person." For the John who sees himself as "different," "teaching is not just telling and learning is not just listening . . . it is doing and participating." He is explicitly more interested now in "what the student learns" than "what I should say or do." This means everything changes -- the way he arranges the room, where he sits, his classes, his exams. He connects himself physically and conceptually with his students.

Prominent themes that emerge in John's narrative are:

change from ~ change to

being ~ becoming

not knowing ~ knowing

not connected ~ connected

responsible control

MARGARET

"It's like I was run over by a Mack truck . . ."

Margaret is a teacher in the Early Childhood Education Program at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. A member of the faculty since 1975, Margaret played a major role in the development of this program which has attracted

nationwide attention. As a parent and teacher of teachers, education of the young represents for Margaret both a personal and a professional commitment.

Sinclair Community College is a large urban institution in downtown Dayton. It caters to a diverse student body with a variety of educational aims. The majority of the students select programs that lead to employment or licensure. The two year Early Childhood Program typically leads to teaching positions in day care centers or nursery schools. Margaret's students are mostly women, ranging from recent high school graduates to women in their forties or fifties returning to school to develop new skills or update ones they have.

Motivated and inspired by her own students and their stories of learning, Margaret recently made the decision to return to school to obtain a doctoral degree. This is indicative of her strong interest in and commitment to education and the personal experience of life long learning.

Margaret says at the start of her interview that she would need to "talk about more than one [student's story]." And she does! She tells stories of her experiences of the stories of five different students. And she tells two more about herself: one of her as a parent and the other of an experience with her daughter in elementary school. She communicates a clear appreciation of narrative and its power, in particular, the impact of narrative on her -- "It is like I was run over by a Mack truck . . ." She begins the interview by telling of her experience of several of her students' stories and the particular way she responded to each -- she changed what she did as a teacher. "So because of that one student's story I tried to look at classes that I teach

where I give tests and to come up with something I could do to try to not make it so threatening to students." By the end of the interview and her narratives she discovered she had moved beyond discrete changes toward an awareness of her need to "redefine my role [as teacher]."

Margaret's interview is a study of self in process. "I tried to do my typical college teacher thing . . . objective, open-minded, and logical . . .;" "I struggled because I felt so emotional about it [a student's story] and as a college professor you are not supposed to be emotional." She continues, "I go to where I am struggling . . . to be an intellectual person you had to be objective and logical;" ". . . the way the school system worked even then just did not fit what I feel." She came to the point of articulating what she called "the myth of the college teacher" and honed in on the ambivalence she was experiencing -- "I was saying do as I say, not do as I do." In the process of her telling her story, she became aware of what she called "two philosophical bents" and her experience was that they "didn't mesh." She felt the tension between the "two selves" -- the professor and the teacher, her "doing" self and her "saying" self, her objective self and her feelingful self. Her conclusion was that for her two selves to mesh, she would "have to redefine my role."

Prominent themes in the stories she tells are:

the impact of narrative on self/student
 typical college professor ~ teaching person I am
 what I say ~ what I do
 not mesh ~ mesh

What began for Margaret as something that would help her students remember -- "if I could get the students to tell stories that would help them remember . . ." -- became much more. She tells us "she wasn't prepared for the fact that their stories would make me reflect, examine, look at the differences between what I really truly believed about how children learned . . . and that learners are learners no matter what age they are . . . I was saying do as I say, not do as I do."

FLORENCE

"I was shocked . . . and very inspired . . ."

Florence teaches mathematics at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. She is deaf as are the students she teaches in the pre-college program. A caring and experienced teacher, Flo works at her teaching, putting forth great efforts to be effective in helping her students "understand" as opposed to "memorize" mathematics. She spends a great deal of her time outside of the classroom thinking about making mathematics relevant in the classroom.

The students she typically teaches in the pre-college program at Gallaudet are those whose prior experience with math was not marked by success. For many the experience was demoralizing and frustrating. Her students' lack of prior success in mathematics makes teaching difficult as their prior learning experiences shape their current perspectives and attitudes. One of her goals is to redirect those attitudes by

making math relevant and possible, creating learning experiences that increase her students' understanding of and success with math. Many of her classroom examples and projects are taken from newspapers and periodicals to make the point to her students, who see math as "other world," that it is possible to understand math and find practical uses for it.

Deaf persons tend to be strong visually and less comfortable with language. To play to that strength, Flo has her students draw their stories of self as learners. "[Deaf] students feel comfortable drawing, much better than writing and in that way they are able to express something better than writing it . . . Drawing in that way helps them to relax." At the beginning and the end of the semester she asks them to "tell the story of yourself as a math student." The pairs of drawings are quite revealing in that they make clear, changes in attitude toward math, and oneself as a student of math. Frequently, the initial drawings reveal students disconnected from math, intimidated by math, uncertain about their own abilities to do math. By the end of the semester, her students' are clearly able to depict changes in the way they see math and themselves in relation to the study of mathematics. The students use drawings to tell their stories, signing them for the entire class.

Flo says that the students' drawings and their stories "really hit me very hard." It was the change in the students' stories, evident in their drawings, that moved Flo. Speaking of her experience of one student's story/drawing she says, "I didn't expect the student to say that in comparison with the first picture. It seemed that there was no confidence at the beginning. But at the end there was confidence . . . that picture

is what made me realize that it was important to the students to see themselves as learners." She uses story-drawings to learn more about her students and to give them the opportunity to think about themselves as learners of mathematics. Though her initial response to their drawings is often "puzzlement," she "understands" their drawings. Since the tests she gives to the students "don't really help me know how much they really know, because they require students to memorize, often without really understanding," the students' drawings of themselves as learners help her know more about them.

Flo sees herself as a teacher who is "just trying to open up the world for myself and for them." It takes physical energy to teach as Flo does. She insists she does not know "where it comes from," but she knows she needs it and she needs to feel energy coming from her students. This energy is a kind of connection with them. "If I am feeling that energy from [her emphasis] them then I am definitely able to do more in the classroom than if I am radiating energy from me to them. Then it is all work on my part." For Flo the drawings help with that connection, ". . . the drawings help me to see where the students are coming from . . . the drawings help me to realize what I can do to break through the frustration. It is between the student and me."

Themes that emerged in Florence's narrative are:

connected ~ not connected

knowing ~ not-knowing

expecting ~ hoping

responsibility

YULAN

"I didn't know what I was getting into . . ."

Yulan is a professor of Romance Languages at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. He teaches Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies courses. As an outgrowth of his personal interest and expertise in foreign cultures, he directs the Language and World Business program at the University of Tennessee. In this role he teaches and supervises student interns in foreign and domestic settings.

Picking up on his own interests, Yulan gives metaphysical questions a central place in the courses he organizes and teaches. Questions of life and death find their way into a discussion of the Aztecs in a Latin American Studies class. His first narrative of his experience of a student's story was one in which the student had learned from death. Though he experienced her values as very different from his, "there was a part of me that learned through her . . . that somebody extremely different from me in a good many ways would be on the same line that I was on with this great issue of death, life and what you do with after death."

He appreciates that his students look "at themselves as people who face death just as the characters in novels and other books we read. And then out of them looking at themselves, they say things that go beyond anything I can give an A, B, or C." He experiences this as a constraint. He is interested in "what people really care

about in their own lives," and often finds that "loosed a bit," students respond to "a class that does strike cords that resonate deep inside [them]."

His is not the typical foreign language class where "foreign" frequently means "different" and "other." Yulan's personal living and learning have been enriched by diverse multicultural experiences and he brings these to the classroom with him. As is already evident, "same and different" emerges as a dominant theme in Yulan's narratives. "Part of my theory in the design of this course [Latin American Studies Course] is to try to design the course so that people by looking at Latin America are looking at themselves as Americans."

Yulan approaches his students respectfully and his teaching carefully, "with appreciation, with a little bit of perplexity, with profound respect." He moves forward, taking risks, "not necessarily knowing what you have learned exactly. Just knowing it was important somehow or another." His experience of his students' stories is one of being "freed" -- "I think it has freed me to actually organize a course around the things the students . . . at least a lot of them I know . . . really are interested in." Even though he is "freed," Yulan continues to experience the constraint of what he calls "hierarchical conventions." Grading is an example. "On the latest paper I told the students I am going to have to grade them in a conventional way. Yet a couple of the students, once I loosed them it is hard to hold them back." This further complicates teaching for him.

The students' narratives stimulate awarenesses that make them "become very precious" to him. Again, he is aware "teaching is complicated," and further, "the

whole category of student has gotten shaken up." The "hierarchy is shaken up" and "this makes it more difficult to function as a traditional teacher because you are really on the same level with your students in some ways. At least in some moments, for the moments I read those papers and react." Conventional grading is further complicated as Yulan finds much of what his students are learning cannot be represented by a single letter grade.

Themes that emerged in Yulan's narrative are:

same ~ different

constraint (hierarchical conventions) ~ freedom

contact

risk/complications/responsibility

TIM

"Listening for clues . . ."

Tim is a professor of philosophy at Alverno College, a women's liberal arts college in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A veteran teacher and faculty member, Tim teaches in the Arts and Humanities Division and coordinates the on-going formal conversation of the Alverno faculty on teaching. Alverno makes explicit its commitment to excellence in teaching and its focus on student learning. At the beginning and end of each semester, time is set aside for discourse, planning

curriculum, faculty sharing and presentations -- whatever is timely and relevant and will foster excellence in teaching and learning. Tim brings to his role of teacher and coordinator years of teaching experience, as well as a fascination for questions that stimulate the thinking of his students and colleagues. For Tim, teaching is a way of thinking.

Tim's particular focus on the student as learner reflects his own values and the ethos of the college which is a learner centered institution. A knowledge of developmental frameworks shape Alverno's curriculum and its practice of assessment as learning. Implicit in Tim's narratives are those of the institution's culture and the cultural contexts that are home to Alverno's women students.

In addition to his work at Alverno College, Tim is an adjunct faculty member of Marquette University's College of Education where he teaches Philosophy of Education and serves on doctoral dissertation committees. As a philosopher he is grounded in the works of John Dewey and Richard Rorty. Rorty has led Tim, the philosopher-teacher, to change the question from "How do I teach Richard Rorty?" to "How does what Richard Rorty says influence the way I teach philosophy?"

Tim's experience of his students' stories of learning is like "listening for clues . . . which tell us what students are ready for and what would help them to learn." He says that "listening" is one of the most important things about teaching. It appears from Tim's narratives that he is listening for something. And he listens with a developmental understanding of learning which informs his listening. ". . . I hear something in what people say in class or I see it in their written work which tells me

something about where they are with a particular question or what has been helpful in their learning." As a teacher he facilitates his students telling and his listening and has found ways to ". . . not only hear what students are learning but to ask more explicitly things which will reveal that to me." Tim's responsible response is responsive teaching -- deciding and choosing how best to "assist students to achieve goals given what I am learning about how they are learning."

Tim told five stories in his interview. His initial narratives are about particular students in one-on-one situations. His third story tells of a single student in a classroom of students and his last two narratives are about the students in a particular class. He must make complex decisions in the first narrative but his choices are even more complicated in his last story where he is interacting with a classroom of students. His question to himself is "How can I address this particular student and take in the rest of the class? . . . it is not panic but it is the feeling that there are a lot of possibilities here."

Themes that emerge in Tim's narratives are:

inferring ~ confirming

telling ~ hearing/listening

responding ~ thinking/doing

responsibility ~ deciding/choosing

THEMES COMMON TO THE TEACHERS' NARRATIVES

The narratives of the six teachers clearly reveal multiple themes. Reading the texts of the interviews over and over it is apparent how the dominant themes in particular narratives coalesce, creating shared themes or categories of shared themes. These abstractions suggest a general description of the teachers' experiences of their students' stories. There is evidence of these common themes in each story. The experiences of the six teachers are similar enough to define common themes. In each of their stories, however, these similar themes are nuanced differently. Contextualized and personalized, they describe the particularities of each teacher's experiences of his/her students' stories.

Each of the thematic categories or common themes was defined inductively, moving from particular examples and evidence to the identification of a common theme. They are all found in each teacher's narrative. If we think of each theme as expressing a continuum of experiences, what is revealing is the range of particular experiences within every theme.

Formulation of the common themes does not truly do justice to the richness of the experiences of the teachers or the fullness of the narratives they tell. Because "theme formulation is at best a simplification" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 87), it comes as no surprise that the six common themes that emerge from the teachers' narratives appear disembodied, lacking affect, particularity, and temporality. Careful attention to the nuances of each theme as experienced by the teachers, enriches and particularizes my description of the themes, and therefore, my understanding of them.

The teachers' experiences are embodied. Because they tell their lived experiences, their experiences are also temporal. The common themes are nuanced in the teachers' particular experiences -- embodied and in time -- which they "tell" in their narratives.

In presenting common themes, I discuss and exemplify each, noting the relationships among them and the nuances that individualize them in each teacher's narrative. I describe the common themes in the order listed below. I show how each theme is nuanced in the narratives of each teacher, taking the teachers in the order established above, except where a different juxtaposition makes clear the dimensions of the theme. The common themes are:

listening/hearing ~ telling

knowing ~ not knowing

complication

connection

responsible response

change

Theme 1 -- Listening/Hearing ~ Telling

It makes sense that the theme of *listening/hearing ~ telling* is central to teachers' experiences of their students' narratives. Narrative implies a teller -- a narrator -- and a listener (reader). The experience of *listening/hearing ~ telling* is revealed explicitly and with different emphases in the teachers' narratives. The experiences range from Chuck's keen awareness of the student's telling (talking in

experiences range from Chuck's keen awareness of the student's telling (talking in writing) -- "when she started talking . . ." "she turned around and talked . . .," to Tim's focus on listening-for -- "what the students are ready for and what will help them learn." For Tim, listening-for "tells me something about . . ." whereas Chuck's experience of the students' telling leads to real surprise -- "It is almost like . . . dropping a line into a creek and pulling out a whale." Tim's listening-for leads to pedagogical decisions. "So I am much more conscious of trying to find out, actively find out where the students are and what is happening with the class in order to plan what I am going to do."

Within the range of ways this theme manifests itself is John's experience of sitting and watching one student tell her story to another: "I sat and watched them as she told the story about her experiences with soil . . . here were these students telling stories to one another about their learning. So I think seeing the students teaching each other using terms that are not so technical, and expressing the same sorts of information that you would express in probably a totally different way . . . that is what really struck me." This experience is so figural for him that it convinces him of the efficacy of students' telling their experiences ". . . let them [the students] tell their stories. Because everyone listens to them. I mean, you have a class of 120 students and they are all sitting there . . . you are lecturing. Some of them are paying attention and some of them are not, but as soon as you call on the students to relate their experiences . . . the whole thing changes." His focus is both on his seeing the student telling and the student's telling, rather than on his own hearing or

listening. John "steps back" and lets the students tell their stories to each other. He hears by observing.

The experience of feelingful reading is Margaret's particular experience of this theme. Over and over in her narratives she tells of "all of those feelings [that] came up when I was reading the stories." "When I started reading some of them . . . the feeling part of me came out." She "hears" through her feelings. Even when the students' read their stories out loud, "I sat there and I had tears in my eyes." Listening is more figural for her in reading and she experiences her students' voices in their stories. The stories Margaret tells make it clear she is touched by her students' stories and what that means for her. "I wasn't prepared for the fact that their stories would make me reflect, examine, look at the difference between what I truly believed about how children learn . . . and that learners are learners no matter what age."

Florence, who is hearing impaired, listens with her eyes. For her, to see is to hear what indeed -- "This picture blatantly tells me about what the student is trying to do." ". . . we are visual people, deaf people are, so I understood his drawing." Her students draw their stories and she hears -- "we will see what he says." In her narrative "notice" means to hear, and "analyze what she sees" means to listen. She describes what she does as "reading between the lines, but in this case between the drawing!"

For Yulan, listening is "being with." "[The] student talked . . ." and he reads or listens. "Being with" can lead to conversation. This theme is nuanced reciprocally

for Yulan. He responds to what the students tell him by writing on their papers, letting students know "they said some things that provoked and stirred my feelings as I read the paper." We have the start of a conversation here -- the students tell, Yulan reads/listens; Yulan tells (responds), the students read (listen).

Figure 4 - 1 on the following page nuances Theme 1 as it emerges in each teacher's narrative. This matrix is the first in a series of developing matrices that appear as each theme is described. The matrix will follow as the appropriate figure at the end of each description. Read horizontally, the matrix nuances the common themes as they appear in each teacher's narrative. Read vertically, the

NARRATIVE CONSTRUCT	TEACHERS					
	CHUCK	JOHN	MARGARET	FLORENCE	YULAN	TIM
METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/ LISTENING/ HEARING	Telling/ Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .

Figure 4 - 1. Nuances of Theme 1 as it Emerges from the Teachers'

Stories of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

matrix presents the wholistic metaphors with their nuanced themes, used by the teachers to describe their experiences of their students' stories of learning. The completed matrix, presenting all six themes as nuanced in each teacher's narrative, follows the description of Theme 6.

Theme 2 – Not Knowing ~ Knowing

The second shared theme of these teachers' experiences of their students' stories is *not knowing ~ knowing*. Of all of the shared themes this one is the most complex. *Not-knowing* manifests itself both as prior to *knowing* and subsequent to it. None of the teachers really knows what their students will tell them. For this reason I put *not knowing* first. When they hear, see, read these students' stories of learning the teachers know what they did not previously know. Some, informed by this new knowledge or awareness, tell stories that reveal their subsequent experiences of *not knowing*. *Knowing* what they now know, their experience is they do not know what to do or what to say. For most of the teachers the experience of *knowing* is more figural than *not knowing*: however, aspects of *not knowing*, both prior and/or subsequent, surface in all six narratives. The teachers express *not knowing ~ knowing* in ways that range from a passive knowing (the revelation of something not only not previously known but not even anticipated, imagined, or expected) -- to affirmation (an actively anticipated, informed knowing).

Chuck who experiences *knowing* as revelation repeatedly says he "would not have known [that I did not know] had I not had the narratives to rely on." And, "I would not have been aware of that without the narratives." It is *not knowing*, both prior and subsequent to *knowing*, that is figural for Chuck. Prior, "I really didn't know anything about her." "I had no sense of how she was integrating that into her life." Subsequent, "I didn't quite know how to deal with the responsibility of that." "She knew more about it than I did." "I don't know . . . there is an inherent

ambiguity in the message." He found his normal teaching situation "unrevealing" and by contrast, his students' stories "revealing." ". . . how unrevealing the teaching situation usually is, that the student plays a role and the faculty member plays a role and there is a shield on both sides that kind of protects you. In many situations faculty members are like actresses and actors. They adopt a role which hides their personality . . . they feel naked if they have to play themselves." It is through his students' telling that he knows. However in *knowing*, he is most aware of what he does not know -- "I didn't know her." "I didn't know how to respond." "I don't know." "I wouldn't know what to do." He is surprised that he has pulled a whale out of a creek.

John experiences *knowing* as empowering -- "It made me realize . . ." "I mean I know I can do it now." For him *knowing* is having the information and being able to use it appropriately or "make it fit." ". . . if you know that a student has a good story to tell or you know that they have some background . . ." he believes he is able to decide best how to incorporate the student's story into a learning situation. John's experience of *knowing* is awareness that a student has a story and of his own ability to use it appropriately -- "I mean, there is just no doubt about it. When you have those opportunities and you know about them . . . you don't know about them unless you talk to the students and they tell stories about living on the farm. [If] you don't know, you can't take advantage of it, I guess." "If I had known, that would have been a great story for the student to stand up and talk about." There is an instrumental quality to John's *knowing*. By contrast, his *not-knowing* the student's

story makes him unable to use it. For John, his students' stories are primarily pedagogical tools to facilitate learning -- his and his students.

Knowing, for Margaret, is reflecting. "What my reflecting about myself as a teacher has done is to make it very apparent to me that as a college teacher I was sitting on my students." Her students' stories put her in touch with her feelings and herself. Hers is a connected *knowing*. She describes first in her narrative how she comes to be aware of her need for "some kind of integration of feeling and thinking." Then she tells how she tries to achieve self-integration. "When I started reading some of them [her students' stories] I tried to do my teacher thing . . . objective, open minded, logical . . . the feeling part of me came out, like the two things kind of merged . . ." Reading her students' stories she, "knew what I was feeling and why I was feeling it." Reading her students' stories she knows, believes and responds, "oh, wow!" She knows, believes and acts -- ". . . because of that one student's story I tried to look at classes I teach . . . to come up with something that I could do to try to not make it so threatening to students." In reflecting Margaret finds that while reason is necessary for her to be "this teaching person I am," she experiences its insufficiency as a single perspective.

For Florence, whose students drew their stories, *to know* is to "realize" -- "That picture is what made me [my emphasis] realize that it was important to students to see themselves as students." She apprehends -- takes to herself -- and comprehends -- grasps mentally or understands. "I realized today when I saw him in class what it [his drawing] really meant." "But at the same time here we are visual people, deaf

people are, so I understood his drawing." The point of the students' drawings for her is ". . . to know the students better This drawing helped me realize"

When she knows or realizes, she "expects" -- "For my geometry class I expect it." And when "not so sure," she "hopes" for it -- "for this particular group [an algebra class] I hoped for it."

"I will find out some things I really both want to know and don't want to know." For Yulan the possibility of *knowing* makes him uneasy. As his story develops he changes his language substituting "learn" for "know." For him learn means to know things not previously known. Learn includes both *not knowing* and *knowing*. To learn one must be aware of what one does not know. ". . . I had learned in the Amazon things I did not know before." Yulan learns from his students' stories -- ". . . that was part of what I learned from her." "Instead of putting the usual kind of professor reaction, 'good essay' . . . what I tried to do was let each student know I have learned from reading their papers." He would write "just a few lines at the top of the paper to let each student know what a professor learned [his emphasis] from reading their papers." *Knowing* for him is "learning" and "being affected" by what one comes to know. He experiences learning as more inclusive than *knowing*. Yulan learns about his students from what they tell -- "That was something new to me that somebody would have that approach." He learns about himself because what the students have to say affects him. "Once I took this approach I really did learn lots of things that I thought of." At the end of his narrative his experience of *not knowing* is expressed in dilemmas or when he feels

tension, such as having to make decisions about grading. "How are you going to put an A, B, or C? I don't know. I really don't know."

At the other end of the continuum from the experience of *knowing* as revelation is the experience of *knowing* as affirmation. "So the particulars of the experience I am going to describe here sort of confirmed what I had been thinking all along from what I was hearing from students in their papers." Attentive "listening-for" provides Tim with clues -- ". . . I chose this novel because of what I learned from the students" -- that inform pedagogical decisions. Tim listens-for what students say, write, think and relates that to various frameworks. "I know I wasn't just guessing there. She was literally saying it." He moves from evidence to inferences, relating them to each other and finding meaning for them within various pedagogical and disciplinary frameworks. *Knowing* for him is the experience of affirmation or confirmation which then enables him to determine what "would be helpful in their learning." "And I must admit that the experience confirmed my instincts about that." ". . . I hear something in what people say in class or I see it in their written work which tells me something about where they are with a particular question or what has been helpful in their reading." His experience of *not-knowing* is much like that of Yulan's -- the experience of tensions or dilemmas where he is not sure what to do. "I didn't know what to say." Figure 4 - 2 illustrates nuances of Themes 1 and 2.

NARRATIVE CONSTRUCT	TEACHERS					
	CHUCK	JOHN	MARGARET	FLORENCE	YULAN	TIM
METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/ LISTENING/ HEARING	Telling/ Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .
THEME 2: KNOWING/ NOT KNOWING	Revelation/ Mystery	Enabling/ Unable	Connected Knowing	Realizing	Learning	Confirming/ Affirming

Figure 4 - 2. Nuances of Themes 1 and 2 as They Emerge from the Teachers' Stories of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

Theme 3 – Complication

Knowing something not previously known frequently serves to complicate life, particularly choices and practice. New knowing typically results in different ways of seeing. Figure and ground shift, not changing task or context but generating new sensitivities and awarenesses of the worlds in which we live. The experience of *complication* emerged as a shared theme and once again was nuanced for each teacher in particular ways. The ways it is experienced range from the disruption of what was normal, expected, and typical in a teaching situation to a heightened awareness of possibilities. For some it raised questions of a pedagogical nature. For others it raised questions of a more personal nature. And for others, the experience of complexity had to do with self as a classroom teacher. There is no question that each teacher spoke of experiencing complexity as a result of engaging their students'

stories of learning. This complexity was experienced as difficult or hard by some, and/or as enriching or creating possibilities by others. What is revealing are the particular qualities of *complication* and the words each teacher selects to tell about it.

At one end of the continuum is the experience of Chuck for whom *complication* was experienced in the world of the classroom where he has control and knows what to do. As a result of what his students tell him in their stories, he becomes unsure, uncertain. He "doesn't know what to do . . . I wondered what I was getting into here. Where is all this going to go?" He chooses a dramatic metaphor to describe his surprise and his predicament. "I was struck, as I mentioned several times, with the unexpectedness of it. It is almost like . . . well like . . . I don't like the violent metaphor here . . . dropping a line into a creek and pulling out a whale." He is surprised and unprepared for the unexpected. "I didn't quite know how to take that." What he didn't know complicated his decision making process. "I didn't know whether to raise the questions with her and say, '. . . I don't know quite how to handle that'. . . I did have this sense of responsibility to her and I didn't quite know how to get at this."

Believing now in the efficacy of students' stories, John experiences *complication* as constraints, which he calls "difficult." "It is very difficult [making time for students' stories in class] . . . I could see myself doing a lot more of that kind of thing especially in the introductory courses. But because the way the course is set up it doesn't lend itself to that. I think that there are a lot of students out there that have interesting experiences to offer. But when you only have 50 minutes a

week . . . you have to be kind of picky in how you work things out." The *complication* becomes how to incorporate this into his teaching given the usual constraints of structure, tradition. "That's a difficult challenge because you are stuck with the same old format that you have been in and the questions are sort of technical based questions." John's experience with students' stories encouraged him to think differently about his pedagogy. "The same old stuff" he typically did in the classroom is experienced as ineffective. His new pedagogical preferences are difficult to fit into a traditional classroom. John now finds himself in a position where "there are so many things to think about . . . like using humor and telling stories. You have to think about all of that and how it fits together and how you can take advantage of that. That is where it becomes very complicated. Much more complicated than giving a traditional lecture where you just go through a set of notes."

Complication first occurs for Margaret when she is struck by the awareness that she "was saying do as I say, not as I do." Her students' narratives hit her like "a Mack truck." She comes face to face with two selves -- "my typical college professor self" -- defined by the profession and her peers -- and "the college teaching person I am" -- defined by who she experienced herself to be and shaped by learning and experience. This awareness challenges her to rethink self as teacher, and to try to "make them [her two selves] mesh." "I can be objective but I also have this subjective part of me that is there. I can allow this teaching professor . . . sounds like I'm schizophrenic (laughs), and this college teaching person to be part of who I am and what I am. A total picture and not separate."

"They don't understand how I can even teach." For Florence *complication* is experienced in her interaction with other teachers who fail to understand what is happening. ". . . it is hard for other teachers to see. They think that in my class there is no structure." "They don't understand how I can even teach." For Florence who experiences herself as a "team player" the lack of supportive peers complicates her classroom decisions and her use of students' drawings. Her peers seek explanations she is uncomfortable providing. "It is between the student and me. I don't know that I can explain it to other people. How drawings can help them in their classrooms with their students. I find myself a little awkward in explaining it. It is simply that I [emphasis hers] need it." She is committed to teaching math for understanding. What she "realizes" from the students' stories is the extent of their frustration and lack of interest. "They think math is the hardest subject. I think it is definitely the hardest subject to teach."

It is through his students' stories that Yulan "gets into awarenesses of the students that become very precious to me. They complicate teaching." Conventional hierarchies are shaken up. ". . . professor and student and that whole category of student has gotten shaken up. I am not sure that those words . . . they just don't have the same hierarchical value they once had to me." Students' stories open up learning experiences for them, and for Yulan, they create dilemmas. This complicates teaching. When questioned further, however, while he admits to the dilemmas, Yulan does not describe them as undesirable. Rather the presence of dilemmas "enriches and complicates." Grading is one of those dilemmas. He

experiences its inappropriateness in some situations. "How do I tell the difference between the "A" and the "B+" on that?" And ". . . I have got to come up with a grade of "A" through "F" or whatever by the end of the semester." A tension with other conventions he experiences clearly increased as his students' stories continued to affect him. He gives no hint that he would wish away *complication*, just the reverse. In loosing his students -- "once I have loosed them it is hard to hold them back" -- he himself has been loosed if only to be "enriched" by *complication*.

Tim notes: "O.K., now there is this certain tension -- I think it is a creative tension -- but I think it is an acute awareness of the complexity of the situation. And I just think it gets worse instead of better the more I do this. There are many more things to be dealt with and I am being pulled in all those different directions. I feel like I am being pulled in all those directions." The experience of *complication* is one of creative tension providing possibilities for Tim -- "the pulling in all those directions." The pulling signals the presence of possibilities. This is different from panic and confusion. "It is the feeling that there are a lot of possibilities here. And the more I teach the more I am aware of the possibilities which means its . . . I mean I think I can feel that" -- a heightened sense of being in the classroom. He does not walk into a classroom and say "O.K., I am going to say this and I hope they get it." That might be a less complicated way to teach -- you wouldn't "have all those things pulling in different directions." However, the implicit message in the experience of *complication* revealed in this narrative is that without it there would be no possibilities, and without possibilities teaching would be boring. Figure 4 -3 illustrates the nuances of Themes 1 thru 3.

NARRATIVE CONSTRUCT	TEACHERS					
	CHUCK	JOHN	MARGARET	FLORENCE	YULAN	TIM
METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/ LISTENING/ HEARING	Telling/ Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .
THEME 2: KNOWING/ NOT KNOWING	Revelation/ Mystery	Enabling/ Unable	Connected Knowing	Realizing	Learning	Confirming/ Affirming
THEME 3: COMPLICATION	Response To Students	Fitting It Together	Mesh/ Not Mesh	Professional Peers	Enriches Experience	Creative Tension/ Possibilities

Figure 4 - 3. Nuances of Themes 1 thru 3 as They Emerge from the Teachers'

Narratives of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

Theme 4 -- Connection

Narrative connects: characters with actions and events; one character with another; actions with events; motives with actions and events; storyteller and listener; text and reader. It is not unexpected then, that *connection* emerges as a common theme in the teachers' narratives. If its presence comes as no surprise, the particularity it takes on in each narrative certainly does. Teachers' experience *connection* or the absence of it in their students and the content of their courses: between student and student, teacher and student, students' stories and course curriculum, course content and the "real" world; in the meshing of dual perspectives; in drawings that connect; in seeking and achieving "contact" with students; in

selecting course content and activities that meet their students' learning needs. Such variations reveal a theme that is rich and complex.

At either end of the theme, *connection* is experienced in the relationship between students and course content. What distinguishes these two experiences is the response/role of the teacher. Initially Chuck is surprised by the way a student relates course content to her own life -- "never in my wildest dreams . . ." "I was again nearly overwhelmed by the kind of *connection* she was making . . . between rather abstract, bright, scientific kind of modeling in her life." ". . . what it taught me [was] that while I had initially believed that these concepts were not being connected with the students' lives there are some cases where they get connected very heavily to students' lives and I wouldn't be aware of that without the narratives."

The common theme of *connection* is focal for John. In his experience, *connection* takes on perspectives that are conceptual, interpersonal, and spatial. John provides multiple examples of his experience of *connection* throughout his narrative. He first reveals this theme when telling how he watched a student tell her story to another student. "So what this person was doing is basically telling a story about her experience with the soils from the past to this student who obviously connected with that story . . ." This really "struck" him and made him think of how he would have used technical terms to explain the same phenomenon and probably not connected with his student. Later, when giving a lecture on organic soils -- ". . . I was just kind of breezing along" -- he becomes aware that "this isn't connecting." Here it is the absence of *connection* between himself and his students that he experiences. "I

just felt like I wasn't connecting with the students." He called upon two students whom he knew from their stories had farmed organic soils, to tell what their experience taught them. And he ". . . just sat down, but on the other side of his desk." He was sitting with his students. " Aware of the potential efficacy of students' stories of experience and learning, he tells how he decides to incorporate students' stories into his classes. His criterion for use is that a story ". . . has to fit. It just can't be something off the wall." Here he experiences the need for appropriate *connection* between the story and his gestalt or "the big story" for his course. "There has to be a goal in mind. I don't know . . . that is not the right word . . . there has got to be some end point that their stories are going to contribute to the big story."

Subsequent changes in John's pedagogy, such as -- ". . . cutting down on the material I present." -- make figural *connection* between the course content and the real world. "I guess I will try to make it [his course] more real -- connected to the real world in some sort of fashion. I am trying a lot more to do that sort of connecting to the real world." He has moved from his initial experience of observed *connection*, to the experience of his own lack of *connection* when lecturing, to his awareness of connecting students' stories and course content, to his desire for *connection* between his course content and the real world. Overall, for John, connection has to do with response. "I circulate [in the study center]," "I am interested in the whole aspect, not just the student as student . . . Students connect to that."

Margaret made very clear her experience of the absence of *connection*: "I have started trying to . . . now what can I do differently to make the two mesh...in terms of being the objective logical college professor teacher as defined by our peers versus what I know or what I think I know or what I feel about how children learn or how all learners learn." At first reading Margaret's experience of *connection* appears to be the lack of it. Anticipating such a response she cautions the reader, "I don't think I am disconnected. I think I am really connected in terms of what I think about children and how children learn." It is important to note where *connection* is experienced. It is not between the two selves but rather between "what I think about children and how children learn." Left unexplained is the feeling of "not meshing" between the "college teaching professor" and "the teaching person I am." For Margaret, what stands out is the absence or lack of *connection* rather than an experience of disconnection. Her "mesh"/"not mesh" gets at it nicely. Her experience of her students' narratives give her insights into herself. In reflecting she becomes aware she was saying to her students ". . . do as I say, not as I do." She teaches her students that children construct their own knowledge yet she teaches her students as if they themselves did not. She is sensitive to this discrepancy and wishes to change herself so that the "who I am and what I am [is] a total picture and not separate."

In contrast to Margaret, Florence seeks *connection* both between her students and herself and among the students in the classroom. Her students' stories serve as a medium to do both -- "stories connect." "What I am trying to do is connect the

drawings with what really happened in the past. In that way I am able to learn more about the students." "With these drawings and our in-class relationships I am able to make that connection." *Connection* between Florence and her students includes a linking together that is informative. "I get to know the students better." As she experiences *connection* among her students in the classroom, it appears to her as camaraderie, a kind of community and willingness to converse. "I think that is very important for a class, it is very important for a class to develop that warmth, to develop the camaraderie to be able to do things [together]. You know at the start everyone is sitting there in their own space and you feel that everyone was really afraid." Florence has students tell their stories and/or share their drawings. This breaks down some of the initial barriers and she experiences the class members as more free and more connected to each other. To remove physical barriers between her and her students she rearranged the room. "I decided to move the desk so that students wouldn't feel any barrier in the classroom." *Connection* is also embodied in what she calls "energy from the students." "If I am feeling that energy from them [her emphasis] then I am definitely able to do more in the classroom than if I am radiating energy from me to them. Then it is all work on my part. I am not able to get that reinforced." This experience of *connection* appears to have an enabling dimension. The students interact more comfortably when they are connected and she derives energy from the students when connected with them.

"I think my greatest strength as a teacher and my greatest weakness is that contact with the students is utterly essential to me . . . I do it I think, but I am not

sure how I achieve that sense of contact with the student in a foreign language. But these papers [the students stories of learning] give me that sense of contact." Yulan's is a very personalized and clearly articulated experience of *connection*. For him *connection* is the contact with the students that he needs and works to achieve. It is achieved with mind and body -- "through eye contact, through interchange, asking questions, reflecting, sharing memories with them." It is an attending to and a "being with" -- "making sure that you're in touch with this side of the room, that side of the room, and the center of the room and you are not neglecting the people in the back and that sort of thing." It can happen in the classroom but it is more likely elsewhere. It typically happens in Yulan's one-on-one encounters with students. "The best learning goes on where you have got me and maybe one other person or two other persons. You can see that light in a student's eyes when they are thinking something they have never thought before. And never expected to think or feel when they came into the office." Contact is a multifaceted experience of *connection*. The recognition of its importance for him is prior to his experience with his students' narratives. However it is his students' narratives that provide him with an experience of and a clear "sense of contact."

At the other end of the theme of *connection* is the experience between the student and the course content, only here Tim intervenes to structure and create learning to meet what he experiences as the learning needs of his students. There is the expectation the students will make use of course content in their personal lives and in the classroom. "So I am much more conscious of trying to find out, actively find

out where the students are and what is happening with the class in order to plan what I am going to do . . . based on what I am hearing the students say . . ." ". . . I have tried to find ways to not only hear what students are learning but to ask more explicitly things which will reveal that to me." Expectation, rather than Chuck's surprise, characterizes Tim's approach. He anticipated and planned for *connection* between his students and the course content. He expected it to happen. Figure 4 - 4 illustrates the nuances of themes 1 thru 4.

Theme 5 – Responsible Response

The discussion of prior common themes, even the very emergence of these particular themes, lays the groundwork for analyzing the theme of *responsible response*. Other themes reveal participating teachers to be caring and thoughtful people facing multiple challenges, in complex and sensitive situations. Themes discussed above make prominent these teachers' responsiveness to their students' stories of learning. Though the themes are isolated for the purposes of analysis, they are interrelated and do overlap. They reflect teachers who puzzle over their often ambiguous responsibilities when confronted by the need for decisions in the light of new concerns. This interrelationship of themes increasingly stands out as I read and reread these texts. For example, I find it particularly difficult to describe the theme *responsible response* except within the context created by the other themes and without circling back to the others. The six common themes play across all of the

NARRATIVE CONSTRUCT	TEACHERS					
	CHUCK	JOHN	MARGARET	FLORENCE	YULAN	TIM
METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/ LISTENING/ HEARING	Telling/ Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .
THEME 2: KNOWING/ NOT KNOWING	Revelation/ Mystery	Enabling/ Unable	Connected Knowing	Realizing	Learning	Confirming/ Affirming
THEME 3: COMPLICATION	Response To Students	Fitting It Together	Mesh/ Not Mesh	Professional Peers	Enriches Experience	Creative Tension/ Possibilities
THEME 4: CONNECTION	Course Content and Students' Lives	Getting a Response	Dual Perspectives	Drawings Connect	Contact	Course Content/ Student Needs

Figure 4 - 4. Nuances of Themes 1 thru 4 as They Emerge from the Teachers' Narratives of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

narratives, even as they particularize each narrative, creating harmony and dissonance but testifying to the authenticity of each teacher's story.

The theme *responsible response* enriches the description of these teachers' experiences of their students' stories of learning. The range of experiences of this theme is from Chuck's experience of *responsible response* as the acceptance of a trust required of him as he responds to and honors his students' telling of their stories, to Tim's experience of *responsible response* as responsive teaching.

Chuck didn't ask his student to tell him what she did. In her narratives she told him things he would not have asked her. "That didn't relieve me of responsibility." *Responsible response* is experienced early on as an awareness of the

responsibility that comes from requesting students' stories of learning. "To ask for the narrative is to take a responsibility to give recognition to the fact that they have told you these things." The request is for the narrative of learning, not for information typically considered private. When the student reveals private as opposed to personal information, what is the teacher to do? *Responsible response* for Chuck is to recognize the story is told to him. While he didn't "quite know how to deal with the responsibility of that" he arrived at a way that addressed her choice to tell and his choice of response. "What I did basically was to treat it [her story] with respect." He limited his comments on the student's papers, just letting her know he heard what she chose to tell him. *Responsible response* for him was admitting he heard her story. "The fact that she shared that with me gave me some responsibility because I now have information about her that she may well not want to have shared with other people. So she made the choice to tell me, that doesn't relieve me of the responsibility." For Chuck, incumbent on the request for a narrative is the responsibility to acknowledge he has heard.

Responsible response reveals itself in John's narrative as "responsible control." The experience here is "doing it the right way." There are clear ways -- right and wrong -- to exercise the control that classroom teachers have. What is not responsible use of control is a haphazard, random use of stories in class, stories that don't fit the course and simply fill up class time. John's sense of his control is that it is responsible -- the right kind of control -- characteristic of one who is "still highly motivated, responsible" even though he has changed his ways of teaching. He uses his students' stories at "strategic times." He wants to interest his students in soil and

he wants them to understand soil as well. "This is very difficult." For John, the teacher who exercises responsible control prepares for contingencies which complicate teaching. "There are so many things to think about."

Personal reflection on her students' stories followed by action on her part, is Margaret's experience of *responsible response*. She does a number of things in her classroom "because of a story." For example, she changes the "rules of the game" so that her students bring notes when they take tests. This reduces their anxiety and provides her with a better sense of them as learners when she reviews their notes with their tests. An immediate response on her part translates into a pedagogical decision. *Responsible response* eventually involves reflection on herself as whole person. "That particular story affected me in a personal sense in terms of I had to look...it made me look at my life and things that I do." Initially *responsible response* involves a change in her behavior as teacher. By the end of the interview Margaret has determined she must redefine her role as teacher. "I wasn't prepared for the fact that their story would make me reflect, examine, look at the difference between what I truly believed about how children learn [and how I was teaching]."

The students' narratives and their regular feedback support the Florence's efforts as she "teaches for understanding." While not explicit in her narratives, the theme of *responsible response* is implicit in her commitment to her students understanding mathematics as opposed to just memorizing. Throughout her narrative she tells us -- "I want them to understand." "It is hard to know what they are really learning. Tests don't really help me know how much they really learn. Tests require students to memorize without really understanding. I like to get more information

about their learning. I want them to understand [her emphasis] it." Students' stories of learning help her know more about her students' experiences of learning. As one who is "just trying to open up the world for myself and them," Florence feels strongly about this approach. "I have got to stick by this kind of approach in teaching because it is what I strongly believe." Her response is to involve students in their own learning and promote student understanding and involvement in mathematics. She insists "I am not going to do it [math] myself."

Conventional teaching practices, or what Yulan calls "hierarchies" are called into question by his experience of his students' stories of learning. He is concerned that his students be fairly treated. "And I feel a real responsibility about that." The theme of *responsible response* manifests itself when he confronts inherent inequities in conventional hierarchies and practices. Grading is a prime example. "I read several [of the students' narratives] . . . six or seven of the set and I read them . . . when I read the first one I wanted to put a grade on it. I just couldn't think of a grade so I read the next one. I went through six or seven more papers before I decided I did not know what to do with these." Yulan becomes increasingly aware of the inappropriateness of putting grades on his students' stories. "They face death [in the materials they read and study] and then out of that looking at themselves they say some things to me that go beyond anything to which I can give an A, B, or C." In addition, he has become aware of his patterns of grading and felt "it is not fair to grade the students that way [with grades] because they are different from me." Complicating his desire to be fair and his experience that grades could be inappropriate is his understanding that some students really do need grades "They

will learn better, thinking that they are going to be scrutinized very carefully . . . be given a grade of some sort." Yulan's experience of *responsible response* is characterized by uncertainty and ambivalence as he tries to do what is fair.

At the other end of the theme *responsible response* is the experience of Tim who says, "I was in a quandary because I felt I had a responsibility to help her move [developmentally] or at least think about her own assumptions." What he did was "choose." What he didn't do was "push her on why she didn't want to read it [the assigned book] because he didn't want to invade her privacy." "I didn't want to go where I shouldn't and I didn't want to hurt her." There is an awareness of personal boundaries here. Initially for Tim, *responsible response* is deciding and choosing what could facilitate his student's development as a learner. "One of the reasons I chose this book is because many of the students in my class are dealing with that question." "I chose this novel because of what I learned from students about what their experiences were and what I felt would be helpful in their learning." His response to the student, whether personal or pedagogic, comes after he listens for clues. What his students tell him informs his decisions and actions. "It told me where she was in re-thinking her own view. So what that told me then was that what I need to do is to provide experiences or feedback or direction which will assist her to think of this as a way which isn't dichotomous." He has become "more concerned about and pays more attention to how I assist students to achieve those goals given what I am learning about how they are learning."

Responsible response for Tim is responsive teaching. Responsive teaching raises different questions about teaching in general and his teaching in particular.

These questions are contextualized in particular situations. The questions are varied and multi-focused. The resulting experience is a "creative tension" -- "I am being pulled in all these directions." He feels neither panic nor confusion. Rather he feels the potential of possibilities "I think I can feel that." Figure 4 - 5 illustrates the nuances of Themes 1 thru 5.

NARRATIVE CONSTRUCT	TEACHERS					
	CHUCK	JOHN	MARGARET	FLORENCE	YULAN	TIM
METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/ LISTENING/ HEARING	Telling/ Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .
THEME 2: KNOWING/ NOT KNOWING	Revelation/ Mystery	Enabling/ Unable	Connected Knowing	Realizing	Learning	Confirming/ Affirming
THEME 3: COMPLICATION	Response To Students	Fitting It Together	Mesh/ Not Mesh	Professional Peers	Enriches Experience	Creative Tension/ Possibilities
THEME 4: CONNECTION	Course Content and Students' Lives	Getting a Response	Dual Perspectives	Drawings Connect	Contact	Course Content/ Student Needs
THEME 5: RESPONSIBLE RESPONSE	Accepts Trust	Responsible Control	Questions Pedagogy/ Self	Teaches for Understanding	Being Fair	Responsive Teaching

Figure 4 - 5. Nuances of Themes 1 thru 5 as They Emerge from the Teachers'

Narratives of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

Theme 6 -- Change

The final common theme, *change*, reaffirms the interconnections among the various themes. *Change* is present in the narratives as subjectively experienced

and/or as objectively achieved; as anticipated by the narrator or predicted by the listener. *Change* is an aspect of many of the other experiences described above. Often it is one's perspective or attitude regarding another theme that reflects the theme *change*. The experience of difference is implicit in *change*. Difference is central to the various ways in which *change* reveals itself as a common theme. At one end of the theme of *change* is Chuck's realization that students are not as he expected; they are different. At the other end is Tim's experience of *change* as creating explicit opportunities for students to say what they are learning. He sees this as something different from his previously listening-for what his students told him in random ways. Now he makes deliberate pedagogical decisions that create opportunities for his students to tell him about their learning. Several teachers describe *change* as an experience of being and becoming, change from, change to. For others *change* is an ongoing process. In describing their experiences of *change* the teachers give hints of future selves and of different futures.

Any experience of *change* is subsequent to Chuck's narrative. His experience is that of unexpected difference -- students behaving differently than he expected -- rather than changes in what he does or who he is as a teacher. His realization could be read by a reader as a harbinger of change. The stories Chuck tells are prior to any evidence of change. They set up the possibility and/or the likelihood of it. And because *change* is frequently experienced retrospectively, it is not unlikely that it will follow upon his experience of unexpected difference. "I never in my wildest dreams . . . the HIP model that I presented is one I created for instructional purposes. It is kind of an integration of several different concepts. It's mine. I built it. I never in

my wildest dreams imagined some people would use it in a way to conceptualize their lives." A student does use the framework from the course to make sense of her life for herself and tell her story to Chuck. "It made me think about the issue [teaching] . . ." It is no longer beyond " his wildest dreams" to think that his students don't/won't connect course concepts with their personal lives. On another occasion Chuck does reveal his experience of change as anticipated in his narrative: "I have come to realize that I had taken the same narrow perspective on my students as the cognitive approach is accused of taking with the human experience. I was trying to deal with their "cognitive selves" divorced from the rest of who they are. Their narratives have taught me that it is the person who is reacting to the course (and me) not a detached thinking entity."

Awareness of the "young faculty person" he was and the "older faculty person" he is becoming captures the experience of *change* for John. He has a clear sense of how he is different: ". . . as far as impacting me in the changes I have had and what it means for me is that I have tried to become a lot more mellow in class instead of being this highly organized . . . still highly motivated and responsible teacher. I am much more reflective in the sense that what I do in the classroom is . . . I will ask them [the students] to tell a story about their experience." John recalls his experience of change. In doing so he uses the second person, "you," but the context of his words indicates he is telling about himself: "I think that when you are a young faculty person that you are not thinking about all of that sort of stuff. What you are thinking about is this information you want to get across. So, you don't have the spontaneity it requires to incorporate stories into your lecture. In the sense that

maybe you don't have the rapport that you would normally have with students and as time goes on [my emphasis] you establish a better rapport with students, I think. I mean as you are older [my emphasis], for some reason when you are a young faculty person you are stiff For some reason, maybe I have changed in the way I view teaching, that has become a much easier thing to do." Narrative invites temporality which figures prominently in John's experience of *change*. His use of "time" words -- "start," "beginning," "starting out," "younger," "older" -- punctuate his narrative and convey his sense of being ~ becoming, of "change from" ~ "change to." He "has become different" but he doesn't "know whether that is good or bad." He does know that he has changed and is not who he once was as a teacher.

Margaret changes in response to her students' narratives. Knowing what she did not previously know, she sees a different picture and goes out of her way to make an appropriate change. Her initial experience of *change* is that she sees and acts differently. This becomes a familiar and acceptable response to her students' stories" because of one student's story I tried to look at classes that I teach and I tried to come up with something I could do" Margaret's perspective and actions change. Pedagogical adjustments appeared appropriate responses to her as a conscientious teacher. As she continued to work with her students' narrative over four semesters something happened -- "It was like I was run over by a Mack truck" Admittedly she "wasn't prepared for the fact that their stories would make her reflect, examine, look at differences between what I really truly believed about how the children learned and that learners are learners no matter what age they are." Margaret confronted herself when she realized "I was saying do as I say,

not as I do." Change began for her when she personalized it, trying to "make the two mesh." She became the object of her efforts to change. The experience of *change* she goes on to describe is one of self-integration and, "it is not easy." She is engaged in the process of "trying to practice what she preaches." She vividly captures her experience in this metaphor: "I feel like a cicada. I have been masquerading in one form (ideas about college teaching and how best to educate college students) while all along my true form (ideas about how learners learn) had yet to emerge into a form true to what I believe and feel" (Kramp and Humphreys, p. 11, 1994).

Getting to know her math students better, connecting their drawings and their in class interactions have led Florence to focus on her students as learners rather than herself as teacher of mathematics. Her students' drawings (narratives) make her aware of her students as particular, personal, human. Her experience of *change* is her experience of self as "empathic." She tells about her students' feelings as well as their abilities -- "I did have her first semester and it wasn't that she hated math. She said that she was very frustrated with it. She couldn't learn. I think that is different. She knows that it is important but it's a negative experience because she is having a hard time learning . . . so this drawing helped me realize that it is not that she hates math." Flo experiences herself as "having changed a lot." This does not surprise her because she "is trying to." And she acknowledges, "it is just so hard."

Conventions and models of the past are shaken up for Yulan when he experiences his students' stories of learning. "Because of my culture I have been taught to think in terms for example, of teacher and student, professor and student [his emphasis] and that whole category of students has gotten shaken up. I am not

sure that those words . . . they just don't have the same value that they once had for me." "It makes it difficult to function as a traditional teacher because you are really on the same level with your students in some ways. At least at some moments, for the moments I read those papers and react." His response to his discomfort and ambivalence is to "start something new." His response to his students is to tell them what he learned from their papers. To "let the student know how good of a teacher they are." He upends the hierarchy and he becomes the student. He changes as he becomes aware of his students as learners and of the inappropriateness of conventions he has used for years, such as grades. Yulan tells of "loosing" his students. He implicitly is loosed. But he explicitly speaks of himself as being "freed." "In my case I think it [the experience of students' stories] has freed me a lot . . . I don't think I was quite free to try to organize a course to evoke that sort of . . . you know, where in part you want complexity of reaction in a class." Yulan's experience of *change* is as a process. He engages his students' stories and learns from them -- "with appreciation, with a little bit of perplexity, and not necessarily knowing what you have learned exactly."

At the ~~start~~ start of this experience Tim was listening for clues from his students to tell him what they are ready for and what will help them learn. For him the experience of change is in "trying to find ways to not only hear what the students are learning but to ask more explicitly things which will reveal that to me." In the first of the five stories he tells, he makes it very clear "I didn't ask her. It just sort of happened." Given a conscious effort on his part to view everything that happens with a student developmentally, Tim says, "I am much more conscious of trying to find out

where the students are and what is happening with the class in order to plan what I am going to do." What he hears and reads tells him about his students. What he experiences as different now is the ways he has extended the opportunities to hear his students -- to do what he can do to "get the stories out." "What I have been emphasizing is, as you say, paying attention, but there is another part of this listening. I also think it means constructing the course, approaching class sessions, assigning experiences, so you hear things that you wouldn't hear otherwise." Tim crafts questions to get students to talk about their experiences of learning. He remains a listener, and also provokes students' reflection on their learning.

A RELATIONAL STRUCTURE OF METAPHORS AND THEMES

Figure 4 - 6 on the following page completes the matrix bringing together the metaphors each of the teachers used and the six themes common to their narratives. A matrix is relational and is especially effective in this instance. It permits the descriptors of the common themes to be arranged and read horizontally without losing the particularity of each story as a context that can be read vertically. Read horizontally, the particular ways each theme is exemplified and nuanced in each story is kept distinct and made relative. Read vertically, each teacher's narrative maintains its integrity, remaining whole, while the common themes are nuanced in the context of each teachers' narrative.

Importantly, all aspects of the matrix stand in relation to each other. No part stands alone, or has meaning in and of itself. In addition, there is a dynamism within

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METAPHORS	"Never in my wildest dreams. . ."	"the whole thing changes. . ."	"I was run over by a Mack truck. . ."	"I was shocked . . . and very inspired. . ."	"I didn't know what I was getting into. . ."	"Listening for clues . . ."
THEME 1: TELLING/LISTENING/HEARING	Telling/Listening To	Observing Students Telling	Feelingful Reading	Visual Listening	Reciprocal Listening	Listening for . . .
THEME 2: KNOWING/NOT KNOWING	Revelation/Mystery	Enabling/Unable	Connected Knowing	Realizing	Learning	Confirming/Affirming
THEME 3: COMPLICATION	Response To Students	Fitting It Together	Mesh/Not Mesh	Professional Peers	Enriches Experience	Creative Tension/Possibilities
THEME 4: CONNECTION	Course Content and Students' Lives	Getting a Response	Dual Perspectives	Drawings Connect	Contact	Course Content/Student Needs
THEME 5: RESPONSIBLE RESPONSE	Accepts Trust	Responsible Control	Questions Pedagogy/Self	Teaches for Understanding	Being Fair	Responsive Teaching
THEME 6: CHANGE	View of Students	Change From/Change To	Self-Integration	Aware of Students' Feelings	Being Freed	Creating Possibilities for Students To Tell

Figure 4 - 6. Nuances of Themes 1 thru 6 as They Emerge from the Teachers'

Narratives of Their Experiences of Their Students' Stories of Learning

a matrix that invites the reader to participate in it, reading it for what it presents as well as what is possible. The matrix presented in Figure 4-6, gives visible form to variations on the six common themes. The particular variations are meaningful because they make explicit and particular the lived experience of each teacher. Themes describe aspects of their lived experience of their students' stories of learning. These themes should not be read or understood as categories, abstractions only. A theme is not a thing (Van Manen, 1990). The particular descriptors (read

across) which capture the individual variations of the themes are dramatic reminders that it is the teachers' experiences of their students' stories that is the object of this study. Read down, the particular integrity of each teacher's narrative forcefully impresses the listener with its coherence and authenticity. The themes common to all the narratives give shape to what might be experienced by the reader as shapeless. They do this by pointing out aspects or constructs of that teachers' experiences of their students; stories of learning, the phenomenon researched in this study (Van Manen, 1990, p. 88).

CHAPTER 5

AN INTERPRETATION: SIX STORIED ANALYSES

*"So if telling a story requires giving oneself away,
 then we are obligated to devise a method
 of receiving stories that mediates the space between
 the self that tells,
 the self that told, and
 the self that listens;
 a method that returns a story to the teller that
 is both hers and not hers;
 that contains herself in good company" (Grumet, 1991, p. 70).*

Having heard the stories the teachers told, I devised the technique of "storied analysis" as a way to return their stories to them. In these storied analyses I am the narrator. Having analyzed their narratives, identifying and describing the shared themes or constructs of the teachers' experiences, I return the stories to the tellers. I re-story each teacher's narrative, configuring particular aspects and events in the narrative I construct. While the common themes inform each storied analysis, a storied analysis relates rather than separates these themes, emplotting or configuring

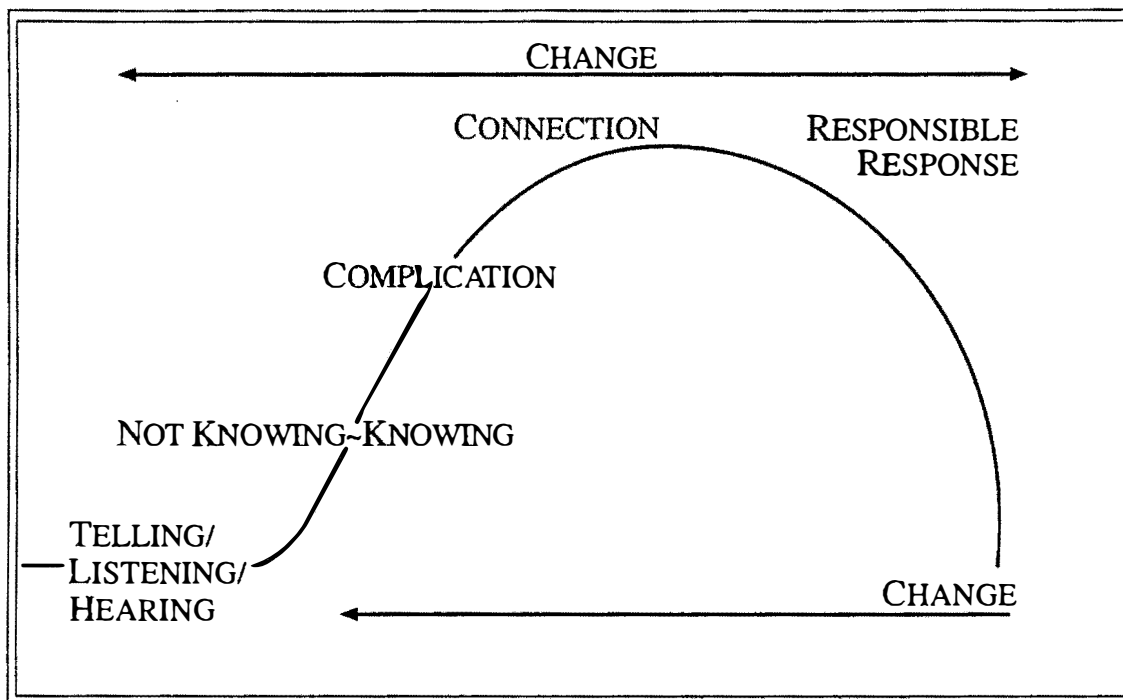
them in a meaningful way into a unique separate narrative for each person. The outcome of this approach -- storied analysis -- is a story. A storied analysis is retrospective, linking past events, actions, happenings, and experiences together in a way that makes them meaningful. According to Polkinghorne (1995), the researcher, in constructing a storied analysis, particularly attends to the temporal and unfolding dimension of human experience by organizing the events along a before -- after continuum.

My storied analyses cannot take just any shape. Story and data are related but it is the story with its plot that determines what counts as evidence. The storied analyses I construct incorporate events, happenings, actions, and experiences told by each teacher. The common themes -- *telling ~ listening/hearing; not-knowing ~ knowing; complication; connection; responsible response; change* -- described in **Chapter 4**, are essential aspects of the stories I construct. These themes are threads which, when woven together, create the fabric of a meta-narrative that is shared by the teachers.

The meta-narrative of these teachers is not identical to any one teacher's story but each teacher's story is immanent in it. Its plot is inclusive of all but mimics none in particular. It serves as a general narrative of the experience of the teachers who engage their students' stories of learning. It begins either with a teacher's experience of a student's *telling*, or the experience of *listening/hearing*. Having heard, the teacher is aware of *knowing* something not previously known. As a result of new knowledge, the teacher may now *not-know* how to respond, what to do, how to be as

a teacher. This *complicates* teaching, frequently resulting in a turning point, perhaps even a crisis, in the teacher's relationships: with self as teacher, with colleagues, with students, with teaching, and with what is taught. *Connection*, or the lack of it, becomes apparent and the teacher makes conscious efforts to *connect* -- with self, with colleagues, with students, and with course content, with "real world," etc. *Complication* and *connection* prompt a *responsible response*, which typically takes the form of *change* in self and in teaching practice. *Change* is essential to this meta-narrative and is experienced broadly throughout it. Changes may be personal, professional, or both. Whatever the focus, *change* has an impact on self and practice. Ultimately it presents the teacher with different and newly informed choices, resulting in a change in one's metaphor of self as teacher and in the existing story within which the teacher had positioned himself/herself to explain and understand past and present selves and to anticipate a future self. Figure 5-1: *The Plot of the Teachers Meta-Narrative*, configures the themes into a plot for this meta-narrative.

A plot is constructed by relating and/or sequencing events, happenings, actions, and experiences, thus conveying a sense of meaning and orderly movement. The plot of this meta-narrative, just reviewed, configures the common themes revealed in this study. As a construction it relates the themes in a meaningful way in a single meta-narrative, at the same as time it preserves the integrity and unity of each teacher's story. Sequence and emphasis may vary in particular stories, but the plots of the teachers' narratives are contained in the overall plot of the meta-narrative.



***Figure 5 - 1. The Plot of a Meta-Narrative of Six Teachers' Experiences
of Their Students' Stories of Learning***

Whether particular to each or common to all, a "plot provides the systemic unity to the story; it is the glue that connects the parts together. Thus the final writing begins with the construction of the plot outline" (Pollinghorne, 1995, p. 18). Having constructed and described the plot of the metanarrative, I advance to the *storied analyses*, my re-storying of the teachers' narratives that returns their stories to them.

A Story for Chuck . . .

"I dropped a line into the creek and pulled out a whale . . ."

The structure of the physical campus at UW - Green Bay was a metaphor for what the institution represented. Interdisciplinarity was its goal and its mission. Curricular programs emphasized and encouraged study across disciplines. Students were challenged to put together relevant courses, creating programs of study that had personal meaning and public and professional significance.

Chuck was reminded of this as he walked through the underground maze of tunnels connecting all the buildings on campus. Winters were fierce in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and this December day was no exception. However, this maze of tunnels, purportedly engineered to make winters easier on the students, spoke of more than convenience to Chuck as he headed back to his office after his last class of the Fall term. He was struck by the student designed and painted murals that covered the tunnel walls and by the high level of excitement heard in the voices of the students he passed. "Relief due to end of term," he thought. He could agree today that the tunnels were friendly places, even if he preferred to experience winter first hand and was philosophically opposed to conveniences that kept people indoors in the winter.

He was thinking about students, his students in his Cognitive Psychology course. They were present to him in a different way than other classes he remembered. In a similar way he felt sensitized to the visible ways the university encouraged connection -- the tunnels, the mazes, the web of channels that led to and

from everywhere on campus, and the mixture of students' voices and faces that presently populated these mazes. He was aware of the students he passed and greeted as persons, not simply as "cognitive entities." He smiled to himself as he thought how he, a cognitive psychologist, had regarded students. Unknowingly, he had behaved as if they were separated into minds and bodies. The bodies they checked at the door and the minds walked into class to learn. He was struck once again by the unexpectedness of it all -- discovering his own attitude; discovering how students connected the classroom and their most personal lives and powerful experiences; admitting that their lives influenced them as learners; discovering that they perceived him to be a trustworthy listener; and on and on. His students' stories of learning written while in his course this past semester revealed what he didn't know he didn't know.

Their stories complicated teaching for him. He had been told, and he believed he was an effective teacher. He thought a lot about teaching but reading his students' stories, he became aware he thought little about his students' learning. Of course he understood learning theories and cognition -- these were areas of expertise. What he had not understood was the importance of a teacher particularizing his students and thinking of them as individual learners. He had not personalized learning, and he assumed his students hadn't either. "Never in his wildest dreams" had he imagined that his students used course content to make sense of their most personal and powerful experiences.

The narratives of one student in particular challenged his conceptions about students and "learning as usual." She was probably one of the best students he had ever taught, yet he was troubled by the stories she told. She not only produced insightful and compelling work, she personalized it and expressed things "very close to the core." Somehow that made it different. He didn't know his students behaved this way, adapting complex frameworks and concepts they learned in class and using them to conceptualize their whole lives, not just their student lives. This awareness brought with it a heightened sense of responsibility to the students as persons.

It was so simple now that he recognized it -- his students were persons who took on the role of student as they did other roles. Being a student was not unconnected with the persons they were. Yet he had thought of them as students, even more than learners. As such he had not expected much carry over from classroom to life.

It was so complex now that he recognized it -- he had to rethink who he was as a teacher interested in learning. For too long he had spent time thinking of a teacher as disseminator of complex disciplinary concepts. This was inadequate, insufficient. It didn't begin to get at the challenges teaching presented. Complexity wasn't sufficient nor did it necessarily promote learning.

Arriving at his office Chuck turned his attention away from his reflection to the business at hand -- the students' final projects. Even on task, he found himself recalling the students' stories of learning as he critiqued their papers. As distractions they were confusing; as insights, they were helpful. It had seemed like such a

harmless request to ask his students to tell stories of learning. Having experienced the "potential of narratives to express things" he had not expected to hear, he found himself wondering how to respond and what to think about what the students wrote. He glanced out the window at the December snow and thought of another of nature's pleasures, fishing. Respectfully engaging his students' stories of learning was just like "dropping a line into a creek and pulling out a whale."

A Story for John . . .

"Teaching is not just telling and learning is not just listening . . ."

It was Tuesday evening and John just completed his most intense workday of the week. The four hours in the Study Center would be enough to cause fatigue. But on Tuesdays his day did not end with the Study Center. He met his graduate class in Bioremediation early Tuesday evenings. It was an intense group of graduate students, but then he wondered if there was any other kind of graduate student. Purdue University's program in Agronomy was demanding. Students knew that when they came. But they came because they understood they would be well prepared when they graduated. John usually lectured to these students and then opened the class up to questions. Tonight had been no different. True to form, the students asked about anything and everything.

Now he was exhausted but ready to run. One of the best things about summer days in Indiana was the lengthened light of day. So at eight o'clock, it was

light enough to run. Because of the hour, he decided to run on campus. The traffic would be light and the rolling hills of the campus were sufficient challenge after the stress of the day. He left the nearly deserted building that housed the Department of Soil Sciences and before long had established his stride as he began his run. Only the grey limestone buildings on campus looked dreary, anticipating the sunset. Otherwise it was a typical late spring evening.

Getting into stride on the familiar campus usually allowed John to slip into a reflective mood. Before long he was thinking about his students, most of whom were undergraduates. This semester he was feeling uncomfortable in lecture. His concern arose more from his own experience that his lectures were not connecting and at times, really boring, than from anything his students had said. His concern made him restless. As he ran he reviewed this strange mixture of discomfort and discovery he was experiencing. From past experience, John recognized these feelings as signs he was changing.

In the Study Center he watched how students talked with each other. He was impressed by the attention they gave to another. He also observed that they used little technical language and frequently told stories about learning from experience. They seemed to connect with each other much better than they were connecting with him during lecture.

Impressed by what he observed, he asked his undergraduate students to tell him a story about a time they experienced the land. He wasn't prepared for what he

received. At first disappointed, he continued to review his students' stories and eventually heard what he was not initially prepared to hear. His students learned from experiences of the land, the farm, family business. "Hands-on" activities helped them learn. The stories they told were about what they did and what they learned as a consequence. When he thought about it, he recognized he learned this way. He had just never connected it with the classroom. Yet things seemed to change in the classroom when he asked two of his students to tell the stories they had written. The two students who told about farming organic soils were terrific. The surprise for him was that the other students didn't take notes, they really listened. And they asked questions!

John's reflection was interrupted by a couple of his students who waved as he passed. His experience of his students had changed as he came to know them personally. Some, like the two who passed, actually seemed to get excited about soils in the Center and that excitement carried over into the classroom. He was doing more activities and projects in class that actually required their participation. Relevant projects took them out of the classroom and related public issues and problems in ways he had not thought of doing, or for that matter, felt comfortable doing. As a young professor, his concern was to get information across to the students, to be and appear to be knowledgeable. His concern was with himself as teacher and he had spent his time preparing himself for any eventuality. Sure he had been frustrated but he figured that came with the job.

It was different now -- he was different now. His interest was that the students in his classes learn. He felt more free but wasn't working less hard. He was preparing differently. He was aware now that his focus in the classroom was less on how he came across to the students and more on their learning. This meant he thought about connection -- one student with another, as happens in the Study Center; the students with him in class; the students with the content; the content with the world outside the classroom. "I have changed," he said aloud. And what he also understood was that he could describe these changes to others. More importantly, the changes in him were affecting his classes. Teaching still wasn't easy for him; it really seemed more difficult because there were so many things to think about. The stories of the students and his responses to them sensitized him to the constraints in place in the University that seemed to be in tension with students' experiences. Writing exams for one thing. In fact he thought to himself, "the whole idea of exams has really been sort of bothersome."

He had finished his run for this night -- it was always shorter on Tuesday. Even shortened it served to loosen him up so he could relax at the end of the day. He smiled to himself as he climbed the now darkened stairways that led to the third floor and his office. "That tells it like it is," he thought. "It" was the quote he had found written on the board in his classroom several weeks ago -- "Teaching is not just telling and learning is not just listening." It had read, "It is also doing and participating," he added.

A Story for Margaret . . .

"Making the two mesh . . ."

"You were what?" I asked. Reassuringly Margaret repeated, "I was sitting on my students!" I knew Margaret well enough to know she readily used colorful metaphors. "Not to worry," I thought to myself, "I have just missed something in our conversation!" There would be time to pursue this because Margaret, my colleague and I had just started our tour of Sinclair Community College. Margaret suggested the tour be part of our visit to her since this was our first time on campus. Margaret was a teacher in the Early Childhood Education Department at Sinclair and moved familiarly through the buildings, punctuating our conversation with appropriate vignettes about the college that were part history, part experience, part hearsay. It was clear she was proud of the modern facilities at this two year community college in the heart of Dayton, Ohio, and proud to be associated with it.

Resuming our walking tour, my colleague urged Margaret, "Talk more about what you mean when you say 'sitting on your students,'" "I thought that was what a college teacher was supposed to do, " she replied. "You know the routine. A college professor is logical, objective and open-minded." She laughed. "You give out a syllabus and cover the material because that is what students need for the next class. The emphasis is on the course content; you 'give them stuff' they need for the next class. You are the authority in the group. You teach about learners but don't talk about teaching learners. I was teaching my adult students that knowledge was

constructed and then proceeding to sit on them so they didn't have a chance too construct anything. All they did was feed back to me what I told them! I wasn't treating them as constructors of knowledge. I was saying, 'Do as I say, not do as I do.' Children are active learners and they need hands on activities. I acted as if this didn't pertain to the learners in my classes who are adults."

We had come to the library so our conversation stopped temporarily as we got the word on the library. It was clear that Sinclair was built to be functional. It had an enviable media center for a school its size. The latest in information technology made resources not stored on campus readily available to students. The importance of the library media center could be seen in its location -- all corridors seem to lead to it. It was centrally located and showed the value and use given it by faculty and students.

Resuming our tour, Margaret picked up on her train of thought. "What I am trying to do -- and this is something different for me -- is to make the two mesh" "The two mesh?" I echoed Margaret's words. "Yes, the two mesh -- the objective logical professor, the teacher defined by our peers, and the college teaching person I am. That is, what I know, or think and feel about how learners know." Anticipating more questions, she went on, "I'm not schizophrenic." She smiled. "My students' stories taught me this. I wasn't prepared for the fact that their stories would make me reflect and examine my own practice. The difference between how children really learn -- how I believe all learners learn -- and how I was teaching my own students became glaringly apparent to me as I read my students' stories of learning."

We had reached an upper floor where there was a great view of the college and of Dayton. Funny how compatible these appeared -- the sleek, modern, light buildings that made up Sinclair, and the historical city buildings that surrounded it, many rundown, deserted, dirtied by pollution from the nearby expressway. The campus of this college was really inside -- the halls, the connecting corridors between buildings, the open spaces furnished with comfortable chairs and sofas. It was inviting. It said "welcome" to the student body of commuters.

What became clear as Margaret set off with us in another direction was that she had situated herself inside many of her students' stories of learning. In doing so she was motivated to rethink her own pedagogy, and not unrelated or disconnected, rethink herself as a teacher. She had new insights into herself resulting from her students' stories, and the experience was like "being run over by a Mack truck or something."

We had arrived back in the Early Childhood Center. The Department ran a daycare center here where students interned. It was a charming area, authentic enough to make one feel you had passed through one of the magical doors in Wonderland where everything was miniature. It was easy to see what stimulated the colorful images and metaphors that graced Margaret's style of thinking and talking. The walls of these rooms were covered with color and storybook characters the children would enjoy. Everything was downsized to accommodate and stimulate the children. The learning context mattered and reflected the caring concern of the teachers. I was reminded of the rather desperate appearance of most college

classrooms filled with desks that were designed to fit a size 4 petite. Momentarily I envisioned a room for "grown-up" students that had been given as much consideration as the one in which we were standing.

The sound of Margaret's voice recalled me to the present. She had something to tell us before we left. She had applied to the doctoral program in Early Childhood Education at the Ohio State University. Her announcement to me and my colleague seemed eminently appropriate in the light of our conversation. She was going to take the opportunity "to make the two mesh."

A Story for Florence . . .

"It Helped Me Realize . . ."

Florence made sure that she arrived on campus early this morning. There was still plenty to do before the last faculty meeting of the year. This would be an especially poignant gathering as Gallaudet University was closing this northwest campus at the end of the term. It had been a desperate and unpopular move. While it was seen as one way to address the financial crisis the University was experiencing, the decision was very unpopular and had created considerable dissension. The campus that Florence knew and found so familiar was a smaller and more intimate version of the main campus. The northwest campus housed the pre-college programs for Gallaudet students. Just about everything, but especially learning, seemed more attainable on this campus. In September Florence would move to the main campus,

and would join the Mathematics Department there. The move challenged and frightened her.

She refocused her attention on the morning faculty meeting. She had been asked to make a presentation to her colleagues describing how she was using students' narrative drawings in her class. It seems as if most of her colleagues knew a little about what she was doing but no one had a real sense of how and why she was interested in her students' stories. "It is hard for other teachers to see," she thought. The perception of some was that her class had no structure. "They don't understand how I can teach." Florence knew that the invitation to share what she was doing as part of the faculty meeting came more out of interest than disagreement. She appreciated the interest and would use the opportunity to make clear for her peers what she was doing. The why should be apparent, she thought. "I get a lot of information from those pictures about how the students themselves feel as learners with me in my class."

At the beginning and end of each term Florence asked her students to draw a picture telling about themselves as math students. She did this because she realized that it is important for students to think of themselves as learners, to experience themselves as learners. She asks her deaf students to draw narratives rather than write them because, "we are visual people, deaf people are. And though they become more comfortable writing in my class, it seems the drawings are less stressful. With their drawings and our classroom relationships, I get to know the students better."

One of the personal discoveries Florence decided to share with the faculty was that of a student's experience of frustration -- what might come across in the student's classroom behaviors and attitudes as "hating" math. Through one student's drawings, Florence distinguishes between what appeared in class to be the student's intense dislike, even hatred of math, and what was the experience of the student as revealed in her drawing -- frustration. This realization enabled Flo better to communicate with the student because she understood her differently. This example makes Flo smile because she so easily could have gone with her first impulse that the student just had a bad attitude and was not teachable. Flo had many examples like that which were powerful in themselves and made the case for stories of learning much more strongly than any explanation she might give. She was not sure that she could ever explain it to others. One thing she knew was that it served her well in her efforts to help her students develop their own senses of themselves as learners. If she could communicate that, she would have gone a long way toward helping her colleagues understand her own excitement.

A knock on the door interrupted Flo's thoughts. It was Mary Ann, a colleague with whom she worked closely and who often acted as an interpreter for her. She and Mary Ann team taught a course in the nearby community college. They had found a way to incorporate stories of learning in that course where the students were adults. Those students' growing awarenesses of themselves as learners really affected interaction within that class. Several of them had read their stories aloud. A result Flo and Mary Ann observed was that students moved out toward

others and the class interaction took on a vitality and camaraderie not previously evident.

Flo reviewed with Mary Ann what she planned to present to the faculty. Even as she did so she was growing more relaxed with the idea. Flo was a seasoned presenter at professional conferences. For a moment she puzzled over her discomfort in presenting to her own faculty. She knew so many of her colleagues so well that she found herself anticipating what she thought might be their responses. She caught herself here. She would tell them a story of what was happening in her classes. That was all and yet that was everything! Her message would be the story and her students' drawings. She would tell what she herself had realized, what she had made real. Mary Ann smiled and nodded in agreement.

Flo picked up her folder with notes she would need for the meeting. She wanted to get there a little early to check on the overhead projector. Seeing that Mary Ann was ready to leave, she filled their cups with the fresh coffee she had made earlier. Together they walked down the narrow stairs and headed over to the meeting. In her initial anxiety over what she would say to her colleagues, she had forgotten this would be their last formal gathering as a faculty on this campus. Flo felt sad and strangely aroused as she wondered about the future of the University and her future self. She thought, as she had so many times after she received her students' first drawings, "wait and see." She both hoped for what she couldn't know and expected what she could anticipate.

A Story for Yulan . . .

"I Think It Has Freed Me a Lot . . ."

Yulan pushed open the tall, heavy door of the library and stepped into the sunshine. He welcomed the early Tennessee spring, appreciating the flowering trees that graced the university campus. This morning he would particularly enjoy the walk to his office. He found that in the library he just could not concentrate on this set of his students' papers. For some reason he felt he would be more responsive in less formal surroundings, where alone at his desk in his office he could listen to the stories the students told. "It is a different way of looking at reality, and I guess, learning," he thought as he crossed the street. "I just never know what I am getting into when I read their stories of learning." He knew he was apprehensive before reading the students' papers -- "I am usually nervous that I will find out some things I really both want to know and don't want to know."

It was a short walk to his office, a quick one today because he had not stopped, as was his custom, to talk with anyone. The University of Tennessee had been his academic home for well over two decades. He always liked to greet his colleagues and the students he had come to know. But this morning he was anxious to work on this set of papers because he wanted to be through with them and he wanted to linger with them a while. "Strange feeling, this tension, but not a new experience," he reflected. Some previous experiences with his students' narratives ended with him being frustrated because he assigned grades to them. "I disapprove of

grades," one part of him said. But his traditional professor voice, which frequently acted like an academic conscience, cautioned, "but they are real ways of evaluation that are necessary for the students to have a sense of their own progress. Some students even learn better, thinking they are going to be scrutinized very carefully and graded. And besides, you have to turn in final grades in about four weeks." It was this last practical reality that caught Yulan. He would have to turn in grades in four weeks for his students in his Latin American Cultures course. He shook his head as he pushed the elevator button in HSS.

Traditional grades just seemed inappropriate to Yulan in certain instances. His students' stories of learning were one of those instances. "The narratives they write go beyond anything that I can grade with an A, B, or C. It is a much more noble kind of thing we are involved in."

Yulan had come up with a new way to respond to these narratives. This morning when he packed his briefcase before leaving home, he had given himself the assignment to respond to each narrative by telling his students what he learned from reading their stories. He had just stumbled upon this idea and was excited by its possibilities for the future. "I am going to let them know what I have learned from this paper," he thought. He would let them know what good teachers they were. Actually, he had learned from reading their narratives. He found he shared concerns about larger questions of life and death with his students. They also changed his way of thinking about several things, like grades for instance. Yulan felt that pull, not altogether unfamiliar to him, between what the culture and traditions of higher

education stood for and what he had come to believe. His students' stories of learning had freed him to trust his own instincts and expertise. One result was that he had reorganized his course to evoke a complexity of reactions.

Having reached his office, Yulan began the task he had assigned to himself. First, he would read a student's narrative and then write his response. He would write in ink, green rather than red, because he understood that red ink carried its own baggage. His preference in the past would have been to have control, to know every word he would write. No doubt he would feel more confident if he had that control. But when he did have it, he found he too easily slipped back into past models that typically did not address the needs of a particular student. The students are individual and particular and he wanted to address them with that in mind. He remembered other times he had read what his students' wrote, "They do make me think about things that I would not have thought about otherwise. I get into awarenesses of the them that become very precious to me. This complicates teaching." For example, the traditional category of "student" had been shaken up. During the moments their stories invited him to share and connect with their experiences, it was more difficult for him to function as a traditional teacher. He was learning from them; they were teaching him. This was hardly a traditional relationship.

Writing feed back on your students' papers that described what you learned from reading their writing is certainly not traditional. In the short responses that he would write to his students Yulan would let them know that what they had written affected him in particular ways, enriching him as a teacher and person, making him a

learner. He had already determined the mindset he would bring to this work -- one of appreciation, with a little bit of perplexity. His students would quickly learn that their work was important to him, not just some routine assignment to be casually reviewed and then forgotten.

He began to read their narratives. When he finished the first story, he hesitated before picking up his green pen. When he started to write, his words came slowly at first. As he wrote he felt more of a sense of being in conversation with the student. When he had completed four or five sentences, he knew his response captured what he now knew he had learned from and about this student. He did not feel constrained. Perhaps he even felt more free.

A Story For Tim

"O.K., Let's Hear What Is Going On Here . . ."

Today one of Tim's colleagues was in his freshman arts and humanities class to observe and evaluate him. Peer evaluations were not new to Tim. In his years at Alverno he had evaluated many of his colleagues and they him. It really wasn't a chore most of the time. Most faculty found it beneficial whether they were the evaluator or the teacher evaluated. In fact, it was a great way to find the time to visit a colleague's class. For the faculty at Alverno College, peer evaluation was a way of energizing the on-going thinking and conversations about teaching and learning.

As it happened, this class had been an especially good one to observe, Tim thought as he gathered up his books and papers after class. He heard himself saying, "O.K., let's hear what is going on here." It would be good to get a colleague's perspective.

A forthright question from a student got it all going. At the start of class she raised her hand and said, "You know, why do we have to read this depressing stuff?" As if on cue, a classmate added, "Yea, you know, there are some good things. And, another thing, why is it always stuff by women and nothing by men? You know I thought we were supposed to explore different points of view?" Aware of some student frustration and wishing to listen to what the students had to say, Tim invited discussion -- "O.K., let's hear what is going on here." The opportunity was all the students needed.

They spoke to Tim and each other, and he listened for clues to what was happening. The students made full use of the situation to speak what was on their minds and what they had experienced. Tim listened carefully as each student spoke.

No decisions were reached in class but the conversation remained animated the entire hour. When the students left, Tim had some alternatives for structuring the next few classes that would address some of the concerns raised. It was possible, he believed, to use some other texts to achieve the learning outcome of the class.

When the room emptied Tim's colleague came forward from the back of the classroom where she had been sitting. They had planned to meet after the class to discuss it. Tim was ready, though he felt fatigued. He was ready for a cup of

coffee so he suggested they head for the Commons and talk there. They walked without talking through Alverno's corridors. Tim knew the faculty and most of the students in this small liberal arts college for women. A nod or a wave was the extent of his greeting to friends and familiar faces. He was eager to think and talk about the class, about what had happened, and why he felt good about it.

Tim was well aware that the student population had figured into the department's planning of the course he was teaching. It was a required course, usually taken by second semester freshmen. It was an interdisciplinary introduction to the arts and humanities. Organized thematically, its theme was "point-of-view. The logic of the course was to challenge the women to reflect upon ways in which they had been influenced to view themselves, by looking at stories where women were telling their own stories, and talking about their relationships with their mothers, the culture, or whatever. The texts were primarily literature and the stories during the first month of the course were pretty tough stories -- bittersweet at best. It was evident today that their impact was taking its toll.

Tim and his colleague reached the commons, found a table in a quiet area where they could talk, and picked up some coffee. "You must be exhausted, you were all over that classroom today," Joan said with a smile. "I've been told that before," Tim said, laughing. "As a teacher I sort of physically draw lines between students when they are talking to each other. It struck me, if I had enough arms, you know if I had 30 arms, then I would be going all over because of different students. I mean not just the student speaking. You've got 30 people in there, all with different

experiences. It's not confusion, or panic, its possibilities. You heard that today."

"Right," Joan answered. "But what made you pick up that student's question, her remark?" "I like to make appropriate changes as we go along based on what I am hearing from the students, and the more I can find ways to help them say how they are or are not learning, the easier it is going to be for me to listen to them. Like today, it is possible to modify a class session on the spot, based on what I am hearing the students saying. I listen for clues that tell me something about what I need to deal with that wasn't planned. I hadn't planned today to address their experience of the works they have read. It became clear after those initial comments that not only did we have to address it but we could learn from it, too."

"That's what really intrigued me," Joan replied. It came off as if it was planned. Yet I knew better!" Tim laughed, "I was clearly feeling my way and feeling kind of uncomfortable about where the next question would come from. But it was always there. When I really listen to the student, the question is there. What I felt most keenly was the presence of all those individuals. I was acutely aware of the complexity this created because it is so different from meeting a student in your office one-on-one. The classroom is such a complex place. As I listen to what each student says and I try to respond to her as a particular person, at the same time staying in touch with all those other individuals, I feel pulled in many directions. There is this tension, but it is a creative tension." They sat in silence for a moment or two, then Joan said, "I observed what you did and said but I had no idea of what you were

experiencing. I did wonder about your choices at times, but I was never concerned they were without direction and purpose. I think the students experienced this too. It wasn't a gripe session. Far from it. But to tell you the truth, as much as I enjoyed this class, I am disappointed I missed out on a discussion of *The Joy Luck Club*. There is no way I could have anticipated this experience," she laughed. "Well, yes and no," Tim said. "I guess I want to take full advantage of the possibilities of my request to 'let me hear what is going on here!' Especially when they want to tell me."

He was already thinking ahead to other possible texts that would connect with the students at this time. "Some humor wouldn't hurt," he thought, as he downed the remaining coffee in his cup.

CHAPTER 6

THE SENSE OF AN ENDING

"This conclusion suggests that we should not just become more aware of our practices as partly constituted by narrative, but also, and because of this, begin to see our lives and practices as in some significant way changed by our narrative understanding, . . . to see our own pedagogic values and purposes as contingent and revisable" (McEwan, 1995, p. 180).

Kermode's (1967) title, *The Sense of An Ending*, is a gentle way to suggest closure, rather than termination for this study. The themes that were individually described in Chapter 4, have been reconfigured or emplotted into stories in Chapter 5. These stories are on-going, "contingent and revisable" in McEwan's words. Implicit in them is change that anticipates future selves. Consequently, it would be inappropriate to think of this as research that is finished, completed, ended.

This is a phenomenological study that has taken narrative seriously. As the texts of teacher' narratives revealed, their stories ordered and gave meaning to

experiences often seen as ordinary and routine. Phenomenology offers a different way of seeing, a way of "relearning to look at the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xx). It is the ordinary that is frequently the most difficult to see -- perhaps in the case of the students' stories of learning, to hear -- and understand. The world of the college classroom is typically experienced as ordinary, even routine. The texts of the teachers' narratives revealed how they ordered and gave meaning to what happened in the classroom and in other learning contexts. In so doing, the teachers came to know what had not been known; understand what perhaps had previously been experienced, but unreflected; and especially to make the ordinary extraordinary. This is significant for educational research which so often misses the ordinariness of the world of the classroom in its search to resolve a crisis; to determine reasons why some students and/or programs excel and others miss the mark; or to find better or more effective approaches to learning and/or teaching without relating the two.

In articulating the findings of this research, it is important to remember that the teachers in this study are veteran, excellent teachers, tenured at their institutions, and recognized by their colleagues and students for teaching excellence. The experience of transformative change revealed in their narratives becomes even more significant because the intent of the project was to engage teachers who already were thinking seriously about their teaching rather than to provide remedial assistance to needy teachers. Hence there were no promises of fool proof teaching strategies or ready remedies because these teachers had no need for them. The teacher participants in this study had voices of their own, and they possessed senses of themselves as

teachers. The idea of the research was to describe, so as to be able to understand, their experiences of engaging their students' stories of learning. The teachers would describe their experiences in their own narratives.

The narratives the teachers told in the interviews made them and me aware of their present and past selves as teachers. Some of the teachers already envisioned other plots (Chuck, Margaret, John) which would shape their future actions, as well as change how they would experience future events and happenings. The possibility of other plots, of different stories, is empowering. It is important not simply to rewrite the narratives of teaching that have historically omitted teachers' voices. Rather, it is important that teachers tell their own stories as a way of reflecting on self and practice. "The wonderful mimetic power a story can have [is] its capacity to work its way into one's thinking life" (Coles, 1989, p. 204). And exploring one's thinking life, "as a teacher can, and often does, open up alternative ways of construing ways of acting and being in the classroom, and from there, of shaping another career path" (Jalongo, as quoted in McEwan and Egan, 1995, p. 131).

The teacher participants in this study, present for our consideration their experience that teachers become aware of possible future selves when they tell their own stories. When told from within their experiences as teachers, in the worlds of their classrooms, and in relation to their students' stories, the teachers' stories are likely to lead to significant changes in self and practice even to reconstruction of self as teacher.

This research is also significant because it brought together narratives of students as learners and their teachers. I was able to explore the experience of the teachers in relation to the learning experiences of their students. Educational research sometimes pretends teaching and learning happen in isolation from each other. What this research has revealed is that new ways of knowing their students indicated change in the teachers themselves. Focus shifted from self as teacher, the knowledgeable expert standing in front of the class, to self as teacher in relation to student as learner. "The event, the learning event, belongs to the student, and the teacher experiences it through inclusion" (Witherell and Noddings, 1991, p. 7). The teachers' narratives tell of their experience of inclusion and its transformative impact on who they understand themselves to be.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH TO THE CONVERSATION

The particular findings of this study advance our **understanding** of the experience of teachers who engage their students' stories of learning. Importantly, new understanding comes from within their experiences rather than from a researcher observing teachers' performances. Important findings are:

- A teacher's focus on his/her students' experiences of learning informs and motivates transformative changes in self as teacher and in one's pedagogy.

- A teacher's awareness of his/her own story, particularly a sense of present and past selves, can lead to changes in the plot of his/her story in anticipation of a future self.
- A teacher's self-reflection in the context of students' stories of learning relates the teacher's experience of self with the self as experienced by the student.
- Students' stories reveal aspects of their lives and themselves, previously unknown to the teacher, which can alter the teacher's relationship with them.
- Students' stories provide clues which influence pedagogical decisions.
- A teacher's narrative is part of an interlocking set of narratives. Through reflection on their own narratives teachers became aware of the implicit narratives of their institutions, of higher education, of their discipline, which at times they experienced in tension with, or as constraint on, their own stories and/or those of their students.
- Teachers better understood and could talk about certain complexities of teaching when they engaged their students' narratives and told their own.

- Teachers experienced their students' stories as having a personal impact, and the kind of impact differed among the teachers.
- The experience of teachers is a legitimate source of new knowledge about teaching and self as teacher.
- Teachers who gathered their students' stories of learning over the semester, made student learning a central part of their teaching.

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

What this research has made explicit is a particular relevance for narrative in education, particularly in research on teaching and learning. The transformative changes experienced and narrated by the six teachers participating in this study, reaffirmed earlier findings (Kramp and Humphreys, 1993, 1994, 1995) which found that attending to students' stories of learning profoundly influenced pedagogy. For these six teachers, their practice of teaching was re-viewed, even re-experienced in relation to learning. In a context where the learner is at the center, the emphasis is on connection and relationship; pedagogical decisions and choices are integral and appropriate.

Higher education has its own narratives as particular institutions of higher learning have theirs. This research makes apparent that the plots structuring those narratives are different from the narratives of the teachers in this study who engaged their students stories of learning. For example, the plot of the teachers' meta-narrative configured the themes or constructs of the teachers' experiences: *telling ~*

listening/hearing; not knowing ~ knowing; complication; connection; responsible response; and change. This generic plot, mapping out the experiences of teachers who engage their students' stories, differs from traditional stories of higher education in which the voice of the teacher is seldom heard and even less frequently valued. Notably, faculty development is carried out to fit the conventional narratives of higher education rather than the meta-narrative heard when teachers who engaged their students' stories of learning tell their experiences. The narratives of the teachers posit a shift in focus from teacher as technician to teacher as learner, and constructor of knowledge, as well as constructor of self as teacher. Typically, faculty development sets out to "fix" the teacher who is "broken." And frequently this amounts to the laying on of new strategies and techniques without thought as to how they relate to the teaching context, the students, the discipline or the teacher's perception of self and practice. Pressure to grow incrementally rather than integrally reveals a misplaced, decontextualized, depersonalized emphasis on change. This research challenges that approach.

In a related way, this research has implications for those who make, plan, or manage "change" as a business -- change in higher education, in particular institutions, in departments within institutions, etc. Awareness of the prevailing, even if implicit, narratives of higher education, or of the institution, is critical to understanding how change can, or if change will, take place. Such awareness could also inform implementation of any prescribed change. Consideration must also be

given to the teachers' narratives, especially to those aspects of their narratives that complement and contradict the existing stories in which they are embedded.

To narrativize is to construct a story; to construct a story is to politicize. An implication of this study for educational research would be to make explicit existing narratives about teaching and learning that shape higher education, particular education institutions, and policy-making bureaucracies. These narratives, as constructions, envision particular forms of teaching and particular images of teachers. Such research would not only make explicit the narratives which order the thinking and actions of such institutions and direct the making of policy, but would also shed some light on ways in which these narratives relate to teachers' narratives -- where they are compatible and where they might be in tension. Further analysis could be done on narratives of the teachers who participated in this study to describe the narratives in which theirs are embedded and the ways the various narratives interrelate.

Another implication of this study has to do with the creation and role of theory. Narratives are dynamic orderings of events. This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to use stationary procedures and traditional stable models to reflect this research. In their narrative constructions, the teachers told stories of their action, and of the events and happenings they experienced. Frequently their stories included reflections on what they had experienced, in which they analyzed and self-assessed their own processes and behaviors. These are data rich in possibilities for theory-making. The more effectively researchers describe and interpret data found in

narratives of experience, the more adequate, comprehensive, and dynamic theories will we have available to help us understand teaching and/or learning from within the teacher's and learner's experiences of processes. Through their narratives and the narratives of their students, these teachers came to know more about teaching in the process of doing it, more about themselves as teachers, and more about their students as learners. Their narratives became a way of reflecting on their practice and on themselves practicing.

DENOUEMENT

In this study the basic units of analysis have been the stories the teachers told in interviews about their experiences of their students' stories of learning. The advantage of focusing this study on the stories the teachers told is that the basic units of analysis were established by them -- the people studied -- rather than by me acting as an observer. The definition of the object of investigation was left up to the teachers (Turner and Bruner, 1986). In their stories, the teachers described their experiences of their students' stories of learning. In telling them, they came to know them; in knowing them, they went on to respond to them personally and professionally.

My analysis of the teachers' stories is a first step in better understanding them as fine teachers who continue to rethink their senses of themselves. The original FIPSE project lasted two years. In the academic year that followed, the teachers continued to gather their students' stories, incorporating them into the courses they taught. Students' stories of learning have become part of their pedagogy.

They continue to make learning explicit in their classes, and do foster among their students a developing a habit of reflection.

Having begun and ended with the teachers and their stories, this study has addressed the personal dimensions of a teacher's experience of his/her students' stories of learning. I limited this study to the teachers' personal stories and to no others. The important narratives of the cultures of higher education and particular institutions, of disciplines and departments, have gone unexamined, not because they lack significance, but because the experience of the individual was the object of study and was sufficient for this study. If anything, having done this study, I am more aware of the need to explore those other narratives implicit in the contexts in which these teachers practice teaching.

Bruner (1987) argues that "a life as led is inseparable from a life as told." This study convinces me of the relationship between one's stories and one's life. The six teachers, whose stories form the focus of this study, suggest that when teachers experience their students' stories of learning, they come to re-view and re-tell their own stories as teachers. This process often led to transformations in their practice and in this senses of self as teachers. For some it was even like "dropping a line into a creek and pulling out a whale."

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APPENDIX

EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIPT

Side A.

- M - Thanks J _____ for beginning this project with me and for agreeing to be interviewed. What I would like to do this afternoon is to ask you to think about some specific times you experienced your student stories of learning. Then pick one...any one...and tell me about it.
- J - Well, I guess my most vivid memory or what really stands out to me about the whole process was in the Spring semester of last year and ended up with soil science course which as you well know consists of this Study Center and so forth, where we do a lot of interactions with the students and they are involved in many hands-on types of experiments. What I thought was pretty interesting was I had on many occasions the opportunity to sit down and observe students. But on one occasion, there were two female students who were involved...I will never forget this...ah, describing soil profiles. The one student was actually trying to teach the other student about the soil profiles through the use of stories. And so, I had the opportunity...I just sat there and instead of walking up to the student saying, "Can I help you out?," I sat and watched them and as she told the story about her experiences with soil. "Well, we have the soil on the farm and this is a really good soil because you can do these sorts of things with it and my dad...my father...planted these sorts of crops on this sort of soil." So, what this person was doing is basically telling a story about her experience with soils from the past to this student who obviously connected with that story much better than I could probably going up there and giving this sort of technical description of what these soil profiles were. But there are many...not many... but there are examples of that in the Study Center all the time. And, I think that obviously, that probably had quite an impact on me because I remember going back and reflecting on that a little bit...here were these students telling stories to one another about their learning. And so, what I have done this semester, in fact in lecture today, was to tell the students that the whole point behind this class is involvement. And ah, students teaching other students, TAs teaching students, and so forth, and one of the ways that you could probably learn is by reflecting on some of your experiences with soils in the past. And that we really welcome that sort of involvement in working together, and so forth. So, I think seeing the students teaching other students using terms that are not so technical and expressing the same sorts of information that you would express in probably a totally different way...that is what really struck me. But you don't need to be real technical...I mean you can relate it to some personal experience in your life a lot better ...students seem to respond to that. So, enough of that, I see

that happening all the time, especially in the Study Center. Not so much the first couple of weeks but as time goes on and students become comfortable with the environment and one another and the people that are there, you see a lot of that sort of activity going on. They are telling stories and relating their experiences about soils. Their experience with this particular soil.

M - You said that this experience had an impact on you. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

J - I think the impact was that it made me realize that I have a tendency to be too regimented in lecture...too structured and that it is O.K. to tell stories about your experiences. The students like to hear those stories and they can relate to those stories. So, as far as impacting me in the changes I have had and what it has meant for me is that I have tried to become a lot more mellow in class instead of being this highly organized...still highly motivated, responsible...you have to get this sort of information. I am much more reflective in the sense that what I do in the classroom is...especially when I realize that there are students in the class who have experience with some sort of soil or management process on the soil. I will ask them to tell a story about their experience with that soil. In fact I had a student today...another great example...I didn't know the students very...it has only been...I only met with them once, so I don't know them all very well. And, I had shown slides of soils from the Chesapeake Bay area and they have all these sea shells from the Indians. Native Americans back in the old days used to dispose of certain things in certain areas. And they disposed of all their sea shells in one area. So they have these huge land fills with just sea shells in them. And so they make great soils. So I showed these slides and the different soils and how wonderful they can be and all of these great things. This student comes up to me after class and says, "My father has a soil like that." And if I had only known...because what I said was, "Oh here is a soil from the east coast...and isn't this unusual...what is this and they all guessed that it was sea shells and so forth." But this student, if I had known that, would have been a great story for that student to stand up and talk about. And I probably will come back to him in a couple of weeks. But those sorts of things... instead of being so swept up and...and what do I want to say... getting this information across...if you really step back and have students tell about their experiences if they can and this class lends itself to that, I think, a lot more so than some of the other classes do. You need to take advantage of that. But it is a very difficult thing to do because in a sense what you are doing is...you have ... I hate to use the word "control" but you have to have some control over the class and to rely on student stories all the time, other students I think would get turned off a little bit by that. So, you have to use them at strategic times. And, if you know that a student has a good story to tell or you know that they have some background in that...you know, with that sort of soil or that environmental

issue...those are great things to call on in class. I mean, that isn't anything that you could say or do, in my personal opinion.

M - It sounds like what you are saying here then is that being aware of the students' stories, you can plug them in...

J - Oh yes, you can.

M - ...at various times.

J - ...if you are aware of them.

M - You mentioned that it was difficult and you talked a little bit about why it was difficult. Could you unpack that idea?

J - Well, I think that you ought to be sort of spontaneous in class. You want everything to flow properly to some sort of end point at the end where you can summarize everything. So, I think that when you are a young faculty person that you are not thinking about all of that sort of stuff. What you are thinking about is this information that you want to get across. So, you don't have the spontaneity it requires to incorporate stories into your lecture. In the sense that, maybe you don't have the rapport that you would normally have with students and as time goes on you establish a better rapport with students, I think. I mean, as you are older, for some reason when you are a young faculty person, you are very stiff. Young meaning...it could take five, six, seven years to get into a position where you feel comfortable doing that. So, if I think of myself as a young faculty person trying to incorporate student stories into my lecture...it would have been very difficult to do that. It just wouldn't have been spontaneous...spontaneous it wouldn't have been natural. For some reason, maybe because I have changed in the way I view teaching, that has become a much easier thing to do. Say, hey, this student has done this sort of work with the soil or has this on the farm or has a land fill next to their house with these sorts of problems...why don't you tell us about that...what are your feelings? It is just so much easier because you aren't frightened either about...about what the consequences are going to be in terms of...they may say something that you don't know...because you are all worried about that at the beginning, I think, when you start out your career. But as time goes on, you sort of ...it is not that you are any less prepared...you are more open and that is an important way to be. It is very difficult...I could see myself doing a lot more of that sort of thing especially in the introductory courses. But, because of the way the course is set up it doesn't lend itself to that. I think there are a lot of students out there that have interesting experiences and interesting experiences to offer. But when you only have 50 minutes a week, then it becomes...you do have to be kind of picky in how you

work things out. Because you do have this message or some sort of idea that you want to get across.

M - I hear you've really laid down some dynamite words back there when you were talking about a concern for consequences and you were talking about control. Talk a little bit about how you feel about those. You also used the word change. Can you explore that and unpack that in terms of yourself now?

J - I think as a young faculty person just starting out in a fairly technical field that you want to make sure that you say the right thing in that you really don't...your lectures or presentations don't...are really tightly packed ... and you don't leave yourself any time for any sort of spontaneous sort of interaction. I mean, sure you will say, "Does anyone have any questions?" I mean, the standard sets of things, yes-no responses, and so forth. You may solicit something a little bit beyond that but you are not interested in that. You are not...this is probably going to be real off the wall...but I think you are more interested in how you come across than whether the students are really learning anything or not. What you want to do is come across as this highly incredibly knowledgeable person who knows it all and that you sometimes lose sight of what of it is all about. I mean, you can go in there and be motivated and be highly organized, but at the same time, are you really teaching them anything? And that is sort of the realization that I have come to because I have always been highly motivated and highly organized. But when I...over the last couple of years when I have come out of lectures I have said, "What have I talked about? What have they learned?" And ... I don't know. I mean I am at the point where ... I was at the point where I was not sure about what they were learning in my lectures. And I still feel that way...I think maybe most people do, but I still feel that way. But I have tried to make some changes in that. One is to let students tell about their experiences. Whether it is a summer job or...I mean, if you know the student's done something connected with what you are talking about...let them tell their story. Because everyone listens then. It is amazing. I mean, you have a class of about 120 students and they are all sitting there...you are lecturing...some of them are paying attention and some of them are not but as soon as you call the student to relate their experiences... the whole thing changes. Because, here is a student standing up talking about their experiences.

M - Can you think of a time when that happened in class and tell about it?

J - Oh yeah, the time was last semester, in the week on organic soils. We have a real interesting week on organic soils. And I was just doing my traditional organic soils lecture and then it dawned on me that through the stories that I had received in class and read, there was a student in there...actually two students...who farmed organic soils up in northern Indiana. And so, there I

was just kind of breezing along and I said, "This isn't connecting." I could just tell, I mean, I start to wonder and you...I have a real sense when my lectures are not very interesting anymore. I mean...and maybe I am a little harsh on myself...I tend to think wow...this thing is really boring. Unless I am soliciting some sort of reaction in terms of maybe a little laugh or a smile...something like that...that I am not connecting. I just felt like I wasn't connecting with the students. So it dawned on me...I can't remember the student's name now...but I said, "Why don't you guys tell us about your experiences with organic soils." I just turned the class over to them and just sort of sat on the front...in fact I think I even sat out with the students ... which is one of my big things now is I just sit with the students when somebody else is talking ... and let them talk about their experiences with organic soils, tell their stories about what it was like when the soils were, you know, 15 years ago...what it was like to play out in those kind of soils and how they have also blown away. The students learned from that. There is just no doubt about it. Because they are asking questions and so forth. I didn't even have to do anything.

M - Those were your clues...that they were asking questions?

J - Yes, yes ... they were asking questions of the students not of me... not looking at me but at the students. Part of it was I didn't present myself as a focal point for the class. I just sat down and turned it over.

M - After you had done this what was the impact of this experience on you?

J - The impact on me was that these students could explain it better or more clearly than I could. I mean they could... from their using their own terminology, their own words, and their own experiences was much better than anything I could have done. I mean, there is just no doubt about it. So, when you have those opportunities and you know about them...you don't know about them unless you talk to the students and they tell stories about living on the farm...you don't know, you can't take advantage of it I guess. You have to be in the position where...how do you explain...I don't know...you have to be pretty easy going. I think that is something that comes with age. Some people are naturals at that. It wasn't for me and I have to come to the point that ... I had to come to the realization that these students have something to offer too to this class and their contribution is going to be pretty interesting and it is, generally speaking, pretty interesting. Instead of just the traditional yes-no type of questions that you would ask. You can ask them what their experiences were or something like that. You can do a lot with the class but you have to incorporate...like I said, "It has to fit." It can't just be something off the wall. I mean, I know a lot of faculty members who go in who are not very well prepared and use that as their lecture. You cannot do that. There

has to be...there is a goal in mind. I don't know...that is not the right word...there has got to be some of end point that their stories are going to contribute to the big story. That is what you want. It is not going to be just a free- for-all type of thing as a faculty member who hasn't prepared for lecture. In fact in a sense...incorporating those sorts of things...you probably need to be more prepared.(laughs) I mean, to look further and beyond at all sorts of aspects because you don't know what you are going to get from the students. I mean, the student may say something in his or her story and then the other students will say, "Well, what does that mean?" They may not be able to answer it and so it defaults to you. In a sense, it makes you have to be more prepared. But, I see a lot of faculty people who use that...they think that they are engaging the students in discussion or whatever....what it is this totally disjointed adventure for 50 minutes (laughs) ... and they get nothing out of it. What they get from a really good story is a lot...they get a lot from a really good story in terms of it helps to fill in the information and they are hearing it from one of their fellow students. It makes a great contribution to class.

M - It seems as if you are using these in a thoughtful way not as fillers.

J - I am using them in a thoughtful way.

M - And it also seems that as a result of this that you said you have to spend more time preparing.

J - Oh yeah. You have to know where they fit in.

M - Yes, talk about that.

J - I think you know, you prepare your lecture, you are getting organized and so forth and you are thinking well maybe this student has something to contribute. Now, that's ... you going to call on a student--there is 120 students in the class--what sort of response are you going to get from that student? Are they going to freeze up? Are they just going to say a few words and sit down? Are they going to tell a really a great story that you can use? See it could be prepared for every aspect of that--it was just by chance that it happened with these two fellows and they went on for like 20 or 25 minutes. They told everything about organic soils that I was going to say. I mean, in a story form. Everything that I would have said in a lecture--list this type of approach--they said in a nice little story.

M - You're going to teach this course again--how would your reflections on what happened impact on the second teaching of the course?

J - I think it has because I am teaching it this semester and what I have found myself doing is cutting down on the amount of material that I present. And ah, trying to, I guess, I will try to make it more real--connected to the real World in some sort of fashion. I am trying a lot more to do that sort of connecting to the real world. For example, today in class I had some newspaper clippings and I read a couple of things on soils out of the newspapers that talked about sands soils or clay and so instead of me just saying, "Sand is such-and-such of particles, silt is such-and-such, the **Atlantic Journal** had a thing on, you know, sand is like a beach ball--silt like a little marble--and clay is like a pin head. There was a story but I try to do more of those sorts of things. Once I get to know the students more I use them a lot. I'll use them a lot. In fact, I stil use them. Even last week in the Study Center when they were involved in going through the various exercises, I said, "Why don't you explain this to so in so. Why don't you? Instead of me doing all this teaching--just sort of being there to guide things along to fill in the missing pieces." I try to get that across to the students--their contributions in classes. You have interesting stories to tell that would fit into what we are talking about and you should feel free to tell those stories and things. So I have become very different. I don't know whether that is good or bad because it makes for sometimes--I shouldn't say that. I think I am becoming more realistic, I guess, more human in terms of being a faculty person.

M - Talk about that. What is realistic? Describe yourself.

J - I think we have these incredible expectations of students and I know that I did. You have a tendency to be very harsh on students. And ah...

M - Give me an example.

J - I think that, I mean you give these really--kindly regimented lectures and you expect them to memorize all this information. Then we put back on the exam and what I have come to the realization is that it is not the right way. I mean, there aren't learning it, not learning the material. They are forgetting the bulk of it and in fact my department head made this statement to me last year. He said, "Yea, they are just going to forget 90 percent or 95 percent of what you teach them." And I said--that was a challenge to me to change it so they would remember some things. And what I realize is that they are not going to remember a whole bunch of numbers or equations--what they are going to remember is how soils--how they experience soils and how they can experience it in their lives. So that is what I am trying to do and that is a real change from ... and when the change has to come in also is in the way you write the exams. That's a very difficult challenge because you are stuck with the same old format that you have been in and the questions are sort of technical based questions. You need to change those. How you do that in a

220 student class to get them all graded in a reasonable amount of time--that's a difficult thing to do. I think that I have become--mellow is not the correct word--but much more realistic.

M - It seems like that you are groping for a word that describes you.

J - Yeah.

M - You have used mellow. You have used realistic. You have talked about change. You have talked about ways--even a sense of experience of teaching.

J - Yes.

M - You have grown in the experience of teaching. Ah, think about yourself now and think about an exam you are going to have to make up soon.

J - Right.

M - Share with us how you might think about constructing that exam or what might be some of the questions and so on that would enter your mind as you deal with that exam.

J - Wow, that's a challenge I am going to have to face here pretty soon. I think that writing an exam is such a difficult thing to do especially if you are trying to tie in --I think you can tie--I can do beginning soils science and tie it into everyday types of things. And that is what I try to do. In fact, I started to do that towards the end of last year. You know, some practical types of essay questions that deal with real life types of things. And that is what everyone I think is trying to do but it has taken me so long to come to the realization that ah...they don't need to be...I guess "who are you trying to fool types of exams" or trying... someone told me...actually an old retired professor who I really have a lot of respect for and is a great teacher said, "J, you write all these great instructional objectives, you teach from the instructional objectives, why don't you write your exams from the instructional objectives?" I said, "Well, I do." He said, "No you don't." And ah, so anyway, it made me realize that--"hey, I teach them all. I give them all these guidelines. I tell them what basically we want them to learn. Why don't we ask some more relevant types of questions instead of fooling around and asking them all these things that they are going to forget very soon. But, what that translates into is "how do you write an essay exam for 220 students and get it back within two days?"

M - Oh, my heavens, a real constraint.

- J - Yeah, there are some real constraints and so how do you make it more realistic? I have in other courses such as the soil bioremediation course that I teach--done away with exams. I have these projects where they have two big projects for the semester where they would have to be in charge of cleaning up a contaminated gasoline station in their home town. How would they go about doing it? Where would they get the information--you know at the local library and all this sort of stuff. So, yeah, I have tried to do...but you can tests like that--that is also a shock to them because they don't have any idea. They are saying, "Where is the information that you taught us in class? How does that fit into all this?" So they are--they are confused by all those sorts of exams too. I have always felt that especially--not always...but the last five years or six years--the whole idea of exams has really been sort of bothersome. I just as soon not give any exam. I love to go in and just give a presentation that is really engaging them and just forget about the exams and feel like, hey, they walked out of the room. They are excited I could tell by the looks on their face. I mean, they came up to me after class and asked me questions. Those are all great ways to figure out whether or not they have connected with your lecture or not. I mean I would just soon to do away with the whole examination. But the bottom line is that some students would take advantage of that. But then my thought is that we should be able to reach those students in some fashion.
- M - What I hear you doing is wrestling with just a lot of things that seem to be in tension or create tension for you. It seems like as you become more experienced as a teacher what indeed is happening is that teaching is becoming more difficult.
- J - Yes, much more difficult. There is so many more things to think about.
- M - What are some of the things?
- J - They are interpersonal things...you never think about those things when your starting off. I mean it is just you--that is all you think about basically and you getting across this information. But the whole idea of something like Professor _____'s research on humor in the classroom. I really enjoyed reading that and I can remember thinking about how you have these teachable moments...teachable micro seconds is what I like to call them, after you can get some humor going...and trying to incorporate those into the classroom. Realizing that once you have them on account of you caught them in some sort of humor thing then that is a great thing to do some teaching after that. I think that there are so many things to think about, like using humor--I think humor is very important, and the use of the stories, students telling stories. You have to think about all of that and how it fits together and how you can take advantage of that. That is where it becomes very complicated. Much

more complicated than giving a traditional lecture where you just go through a set of notes.

M - I hear that in your examples. Ah, you have a wonderful term there--teachable micro seconds. Could you think of one, a specific one, a time when you...tell us what happened and what you did?

J - Well there are...lets see...well, can I use today as an example? Will that be O.K.?

M - Absolutely...right away. That is fresh.

J - It is fresh. That is why I want to use it. But, today we did this little thing and I did two lectures for beginning soils, basically they are repetition. I mean I give a lecture at 12:30 and one at 1:30. And ah, the first lecture is kind of always a little bit rusty for some reason...something doesn't seem to go right...it doesn't click. But the second one, I just much more relaxed and I pretty much decided to do what I want kind of an attitude and whatever works. So that is kind of what I do and is see how it is working and gauge it that way. But today we had to measure the...to figure out what it would take to transport a cubic yard of soil, whether you would need a couple of wheel barrels to do a load...trash cans and so forth. So anyway, I sort of laid it out as I brought in a cubic foot of soil in a box, and rolled it up into the middle of the lecture room and said O.K., "What we are going to do today is calculate what a cubic yard of soil weighs and what we need to transport that. You are going to do that and here are all the things that you could use to transport that soil...the Chevy truck and all other stuff." And then I said, "Before we do that we really need to figure out what a cubic foot of soil will weigh." I always try to pick out the most macho man in the class and have him come up and try to lift this cubic foot of soil. So I said, "O.K., now before I have J. here look at this cubic foot of soil...how much do you think this weighs--well, 20 pounds, 30 pounds, 40 pounds." Anyway he comes and tries to pick it up and it weighs almost 100 pounds...you know a cubic foot of soil. So they are all laughing because I make the point that you know, S., my technician out there put this on this cart which is really high and she is very short. It was really kind of [inaudible] ???.... As soon as I did that they were all focused on him trying to pick this up. They were all laughing and I just went right to the board and said a cubic foot of water weighs 62.4 pounds and soils usually have a bulk density of about 1.3. So it 1.3 times as dense and told them that. We went through the calculation on a cubic yard of soil. That was at about...I guess we were about 25 minutes into the class. Finished all that, put it away, and started on another what I call vignettes. These are my lectures now short vignette stories. That is what I call them. Anyway, ah, I got done with lecture and I said, "Now, how much does a cubic foot of soil weigh." They

knew exactly. How much does a cubic yard of soil weigh. They knew exactly. So they have...I mean they usually don't remember numbers at all...I mean they just do not. But they knew what a cubic foot of soil weighed. I said, "Well, how much does that soil in that box weigh." In unison, 70 or 80 of them said, "82.1 pounds or something like that." So they knew numbers. Those are moments where you can really capitalize because they are really focused. It is real practical too because then you can translate that into a cubic yard. Then you realize that you have to use a three-quarter ton pickup to haul all that soil even though it is not very much. There are so many things you can do at that point...talk about soils...I mean real practical things. Like everyone is interested in changing the texture of a soil. That was a really nice time to talk about how you can't do that. Because a cubic yard of soil weigh almost a ton and you have a hundred acres...that is...I don't know how many tons that is. That is almost two billion tons of soil. How--now can you change the texture of your soil? It is impossible, you know, so it is a real moment and you can just see that. They are not even writing anything down. They are just listening to me. They are all listening.

M - What about J.?

J - He was good natured. Usually I can pick out the students that are pretty good natured about it. I had a woman do it in the first period. So I try to kind of mix things up. It was pretty funny. Yeah, that works. Sometimes it really clicks and those are moments that they are interested in what you have to say. And also, they are real practical. So that was kind of a highlight. But there are many highlights like that. Where you have got them...you have said something that sort of struck them as being interesting or maybe humorous and you just know it and then you can capitalize on it and teach something that is relatively sophisticated. I don't try to do too much. And then I have got what I call another vignette. I know a short story about soils for this week. This is what we are going to do. We do another thing on texture or we drop marbles and glycerine all these sorts of things. What I have done I guess the bottom line is that I try to be a lot more interactive or the students in terms of they have a lot to offer to the class. I try to bring in...I have decided that the lecture is not a great format to do any sort of teaching. I have just...it was very interesting on Monday when I went into my first lecture...somebody had put on the board in the Study Center that teaching is telling...I can't think of it...teacher and learner thing. Teaching is not just telling and learning is not just listening. I mean that's...it is not...and that is how you explain it to the students. I said, "I am just not going to stand up here and lecture to you and tell you stuff. You are going to do things. You are going to do things during lecture. You are going to do things in the Study Center. I am going to rely on your experiences and learning is not just listening...it is doing and participating. So and I have realized that especially as a result of this study

and all the conversations...wonderful conversations...that I have had with those people in the FIPSE group...great experiences. For me to hear about all these different ways of teaching. Things that I had never even thought of. It has made me realize as I wrote in my report that the lecture is not the great format that I used to think it was. That you really need to have some highly interactive type of...however you can do it...drawing on personal experiences, or experiences of students...having displays. But that is what you need a lecture to be. That is what a lecture should be and to do that every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, you know. How do you do that? I only have to do it on Monday....one time a week and I can do it. I mean I know I can do it now. But Monday, Wednesday, and Friday...I don't know.

- M - I think really what you have gotten at...very distinctly...are the very dimensions that make teaching such a challenge for us and a living thing, very dynamic.
- J - It does not get any easier. It does not. People think ah you have all your notes. I can remember someone out there, _____, a man who said to me, "Well, you have taught this course eight times. You should have a good set of notes. I mean why do you need to prepare 2 hours before lecture?" I always try to take minimum of 2 hours before the lecture to get organized even though I have taught this material so many times. I still take all that time to do that. Because what I am trying to do is trying to think of ways to make it interesting instead of just the same old stuff. And it takes time to do that...a lot of time.
- M - It sounds like there is something additional here too. It sounds like in a very real way physically and intellectually you are trying to connect. I hear you talking about connecting. You use the word "connecting" when you talk about your students.
- J - Right.
- M - What do you mean when you say...
- J - ...connect with the students?
- M - Yeah. Or rather not what do you mean...let me rephrase that question. Ah, what do you do?
- J - ...to connect with the students?
- M - What do you do?

J - It may be right or it may be wrong but I learn all of their names in a very short span of time. So by the third or fourth week of the semester I will know most of their names.

M - Now this is in a lecture?

J - Yeah.

M - How many?

J - There will be...well there is about 110 in each lecture.

M - My word!

J - Of course I make a real point of trying to learn their names. What happens usually is though I end up...I will have two discussions which have about 40 students...35 to 40 students and I will know all of their names very well. I have a tendency to gravitate towards them in the lecture. But through the Study Center I get to know a lot of other students. So, I try to connect by I guess bringing on a more personal level. Most students...I have never had a student that didn't respond to me knowing their name. They really respond to that. Then there are all sorts of other things. The Study Center offers a great opportunity to connect with the students. You walk in there...you are just _____. You are not just a professor. You are just like a student. I circulate around asking questions..."Hey, what is going on? What sorts of other things do you do? What courses are you taking? What did you do this summer? Did you have a job?" You know I am interested in the whole aspect not just the student as student but what are the things that they are interested in life. Students connect to that. I mean...we take a lot of pride here doing that here in the _____ department as a whole.

M - Were you in the Study Center today?

J - The Study Center is not open on Monday but I was in the morning.

M - This morning?

J - Yeah, just to cruise around and see what they were doing.

M - Pick up...think of something and think of a particular student that you interacted with and share that.

J - Well actually in the Study Center this morning since there are no official hours on Monday, ah, there was this student just sitting at the table who had gone through beginning soil science several years ago, ____ was his name. We

just sat and talked a little bit about his summer experiences, some of the courses he was taking, and that is what is just great about the Study Center because students come back there and hang out. They remember you. You remember them. You may not remember their name right away but their face and so forth. So you just talk about things in there. Not just soil but other sorts of things. But tomorrow when I go in there...there will be all sorts of students in there and it will be great. It can also be incredibly tiring if you do it the right way. I mean if you go into the Study Center and you spend 4 hours in the Study Center ... straight...you are exhausted when you walk out of that room. Because you spend the whole time talking and interacting with the students...the entire time. "Hey, how are you doing? What is new? You understand what is going on? Can you tell me what is going on? Why don't you tell so in so what is going on, maybe you can help them out." You know fixing things, straightening things out, and you are exhausted when you leave the Study Center.

- M - It sounds like you are always doing something. It sounds like in a way you are always creating moments for the students.
- J - Oh yeah. Yeah...always. I mean there are always moments for them to tell about something. There are students that come up that got all excited about soils...it is hard to believe. "Hey, I saw this when I was driving by the road the other day. What is that?" They are excited and they want to tell you. They just haven't had the opportunity to in the past. they just haven't had the opportunity I think.
- M - John you are a runner.
- J - Yeah.
- M - Do you get tired of running.
- J - Oh yeah.
- M - Exhausted?
- J - Sometimes I get exhausted!
- M - Could you tell about that exhaustion and you said earlier "when I leave that Study Center after 4 hours sometimes I am exhausted." Could you ...
- J - Mentally exhausted!
- M - How does that feel?

- J - What it feels like is that you can't do anything. I mean really it is hard to carry out any sort of conversation after I come out of the Study Center. I am just very tired. The students are my full attention. You are talking to them the whole time. You are just mentally very tired when you come out of the Study Center. You just don't feel like doing anything.
- M - What do you do?
- J - I want to go to the track and run.
- M - Laughs
- J - To try to get recharged.
- M - Sure.
- J - There are days when I just talk to people the entire day...I mean the entire day. You know how exhausting that can be.
- M - Yes.
- J - I mean you are in meetings or you are in the Study Center. Like tomorrow I am in the Study Center for 4 hours and then I have to lecture bioremediation class from 6 to 8 at night. This is a pretty intense group of graduate students who will ask you anything and everything. You have to at least know some things and so the preparation...I'm just...on Tuesday nights I just can't do anything and even on Wednesday mornings I don't want to do anything. I want to do some physical labor thing or something. I don't want to have to do anything like thinking. Because I am really tired. I have had a long talk with the several of the older professors that have been involved in the course and one of them that is over in upper administration now said that he would like to limit his time to 2 and 2-1/2 hours. That he just couldn't do anymore than that...it is just too involved. One of the older retired professors likes to spend huge lumps of time in there. Now, I prefer 2-1/2 to 3 hours in terms of what I can handle because I am tired. And if you do it right you are.
- M - I really appreciate your sharing your experience with us today and again thanks...thanks for the energy that you have put into this interview. I appreciate it. Thanks!

VITA

Mary Kathryn Kramp, Mary Kay, to colleagues and friends, received her Ph.D. in Education from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in August, 1995. Her entrance into the doctoral program in Cultural Studies in Education, in August, 1992, was not the beginning of a professional career, but rather an enrichment and extension of her twenty-five years of teaching in high school and college.

After thirteen years as a high school teacher, she joined the faculty at Alverno College, Milwaukee, WI, in 1979. As a member of the Arts and Humanities Division, the History Department, and the Valuing Department, she designed and implemented a variety of courses. Prominent among them were a course on women's experience of the American Revolution, and a required course for students who transferred to Alverno, that introduced them to Alverno's ability based curriculum, and assessed their prior learning. In the context of Alverno, which emphasizes excellence in teaching and learning, she extended prior graduate work in Human Development (M.A., 1984, Saint Mary's College, Winona, MN), and American History (Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, 1962-65), and her undergraduate work in American History and Education (B.A., 1961, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN).

While at Alverno, she consulted with K-12 faculty, faculty in higher education, and with professional organizations. She gave numerous workshops and presentations on teaching and learning, performance assessment, and assessment as

learning. She brought this experience to her graduate study at The University of Tennessee, together with an active research agenda on students' and teachers' narratives, and on-going research projects. The latter, supported by the National Center for Adult Learning (NCAL), 1990-1992, and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), 1992-1994, she co-directed with W. Lee Humphreys. Her doctoral dissertation builds on this research on narrative and educational research.