

THE NATURE, ROLES, AND INTERPLAY OF THE  
INNER AND OUTER VOICES OF  
REFLECTIVE TEACHING

By

LINDA SUE WALTERMIRE POWERS

Bachelor of Science  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma  
1971

Master of Arts  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma  
1993

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
July, 1999

**COPYRIGHT**

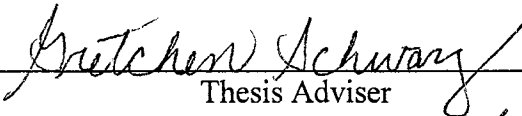
**By**

**Linda Sue Waltermire Powers**

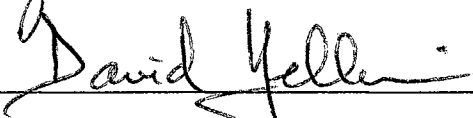
**July, 1999**

THE NATURE, ROLES, AND INTERPLAY OF THE  
INNER AND OUTER VOICES OF  
REFLECTIVE TEACHING

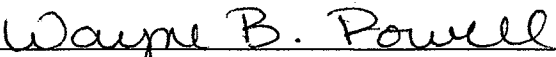
Thesis Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to thank Dr. Gretchen Schwarz, my major adviser and committee chair, who allowed me some freedom throughout the program, but also kept me focused on completion. She has been a mentor, advocate, and friend whom I could call at any time, and no question was unworthy. It is difficult to find adequate words of appreciation for someone who has helped me to accomplish the professional goal that has been the most important to me in my twenty-five year teaching career:

*Respectfully and Deeply*, I thank you, Gretchen.

I also wish to thank the other committee members, Dr. David Yellin, Dr. John Steinbrink, and Dr. Richard Batteiger for their support and advice. Two friends and colleagues who have inspired and encouraged me also deserve my thanks: Dr. David Pankake, and Dr. John Scroggins. Both patiently listened to me and talked me through options when I was momentarily paralyzed by the next step.

The people who have struggled when I struggled, have been frustrated when I was, and also have celebrated my success with me are my family. A very special thank you to my best listener, reader, and encourager, my husband Jack. And to my children, Leah and B.J., thank you for always showing pride in what I do. I am especially grateful to one of my staunchest advocates through all of Life's challenges, my mother, Sallie Waltermire. Thanks to all my family for believing that I could do this.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Age of Educational Reform and Teaching .....	1
The Context for the Problem.....	2
Importance of Teaching in Educational Reform.....	2
Improving Teaching.....	3
The Problem.....	5
Reflective Decision-Making: the Cornerstone of School Reform.....	5
Purpose of this Study .....	7
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	9
Professional Development Today .....	9
Constructivist Philosophy .....	10
The Roots of Reflective Practice .....	12
The Reflective Process.....	14
The Role of Dialogue in Reflection.....	17
Conditions for the Reflective Process.....	18
Summary .....	20
III. METHODOLOGY .....	24
Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research.....	24
Assumptions.....	26
Definition of Terms.....	27
Subjects.....	28
Methods of Data Collection.....	30
Document Examination .....	30
Interviewing .....	31
Observation .....	32
Analysis of Data.....	33
Case Studies.....	34
Biases of Researcher.....	35
A Teacher/Learner Personal Story.....	36

Chapter	Page
IV. FINDINGS .....	38
Interviews with Ann.....	40
Observations of Ann .....	46
Ann's Journal.....	56
Interviews with Rita.....	61
Observations of Rita .....	69
Rita's Journal.....	78
Interviews with Pat .....	82
Observations of Pat.....	91
Pat's Journal .....	101
The Questions and Themes that Address Them .....	101
The Theme of Reflective Practice.....	102
Sub-Theme: Student Learning Centered--the Foundation of Reflective Teaching .....	103
Sub-Theme: Problems, Issues, and Mistakes--Prompts for Reflective Practice .....	104
Sub-Theme: Student Progress, Activities, Behaviors--Subjects For Reflection .....	105
Sub-Theme: Personality Traits, Processing Styles, and Past Experiences--How They Became Reflective .....	106
The Theme of Reflection as Solitary and Social Dialogue.....	107
The Theme of Contemplating School as a Part of the Very Fabric of Life .....	109
Sub-Theme: Conditions for Reflection.....	109
Sub-Theme: Time Spent Reflecting.....	110
Summary .....	111
V. REFLECTIONS ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE.....	113
Discoveries of the Reflective Researcher .....	113
The Essence of Reflective Practice.....	115
Implications.....	121
Recommendations for Further Study .....	129
Concluding Thoughts: Reflective Practitioners, Reflective Conversations.....	131
REFERENCES .....	133

Chapter	Page
APPENDIXES .....	141
APPENDIX A—INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	141
APPENDIX B—LETTER TO SOLICIT NOMINATIONS .....	143
APPENDIX C—PARTICIPANT LETTER & JOURNAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS .....	147
APPENDIX D--INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	150
APPENDIX E--OBSERVATION SHEETS.....	154
APPENDIX F--QUESTIONS TO ORGANIZE JOURNAL DATA.....	158
APPENDIX G--SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS.....	160
Ann.....	161
Rita.....	168
Pat .....	182
APPENDIX H--SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS OF JOURNALS.....	187
Ann.....	188
Rita.....	192
APPENDIX I--SELECTED CASE STUDY REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES .....	201
Case Study: Liz Hansen.....	202
Reflection Dialogue Structure for Case Studies .....	204
Case Study: Rita Henderson .....	205

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Age of Educational Reform and Teaching

We may currently be in the midst of the *Age of Public Education Reform*. Most historic labels are conveniently assigned retrospectively; however, there seems to be constant concern with improving the place called “school.” Most agree the official beginning of this movement came in 1983 when a flood of private and public commissions issued their findings and recommendations for educational reform. Of these reports, *A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), epitomized the host of reform proposals, legitimized the reform movement, and brought it to fruition.

The study was conducted over a period of 18 months and addressed several facets of the American educational system including:

- comparing American schools and colleges to those of other nations,
- assessing the quality of teaching and learning,
- identifying problems that prevent excellence in education.

All the reform reports and proposals of the 1980's seemed to be based on a common premise that our nation's global preeminence in science, technology, industry, commerce, and military defense was threatened by a mediocre education system.

Generally, there were threads that ran through most of the reports. One was that literacy should be a common priority, but that personal growth skills, work skills, and social and civic skills are also important goals of education. Another was the importance

of the New Basics, a common core curriculum or prescribed curriculum that is essentially the traditional college-preparatory courses. Several reports recommended students be required to take more mathematics and science as well as more English, social studies, and foreign languages; that computer science be added as a requirement; that "soft courses" or electives be severely curtailed, and brought under tight control; and that students be frequently tested to assess their progress according to strict, higher standards.

### The Context for the Problem

#### Importance of Teaching in Educational Reform

*Above all, the reports agreed that the crisis in education must be laid at the door of the teaching profession.* Several of the reform reports noted that admission and graduation requirements in schools of education are too low and that the courses offered needed improvement and perhaps radical change. Most argued for a more solid academic grounding in the subjects teachers teach, with less time devoted to pedagogical training. Selection procedures applied throughout the entire teacher preparation process, evaluation of all education programs for quality and productivity, improvement of the certification process, and tightening of evaluation procedures for those who continue to teach were other suggestions.

A number of early 1980's reports also proposed recognition and awards for outstanding teachers, including summer study and travel, well-defined career ladders, and special local, state, and national rewards for excellence. Although the reports agreed on the need for continuing education for teachers, there was little agreement about where and how it should take place, and under whose auspices and what conditions.

The latest reform project, America 2000, begun by former President George Bush has many ties to the Nation at Risk report and earlier reform measures. In 1989, the

nation's governors met in Charlottesville, Virginia, and committed themselves to a nationwide effort to reform education around a core set of goals. These original six goals, with the addition of two more, were formalized into law with the passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994. As with the previous reform reports, *the need to improve instruction is at the heart of the goals for making public education better*. National Goal #4 reads, "by the year 2000, the Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century" (The National Education Goals Report Executive Summary, p. 7).

### Improving Teaching

Because improving teaching is at the heart of improving education, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future was established in 1994 and offered a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellent teachers in all of America's schools. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York and housed at Teachers College, Columbia University, is a group of 26 public officials, business and community leaders, and educators who are broadly knowledgeable about education, school reform, and teaching. Their plan is aimed at ensuring that all communities have teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to teach so that all children can learn, and all school systems are organized to support teachers in this work. *A caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform.*

The Commission has set *the goal that by 2006, every student in America will have what should be his educational birthright: access to competent, caring, qualified teaching in schools organized for success*. This goal is challenging, but no new theory is

required to achieve it. Common sense tells us that teachers need to know their subjects, understand their students, and develop the skills to make learning come alive. However, based on a two-year study, the Commission identified a number of barriers to achieving this goal including:

- Unenforced standards for teachers;
- Major flaws in teacher preparation;
- Inadequate induction for beginning teachers;
- Lack of professional development and rewards for knowledge and skill.

The Commission offers five major recommendations to address these concerns and to accomplish their goal which includes these three related to teaching:

I. *Get serious about standards, for both students and teachers.* This includes establishing professional standards boards in every state and insisting on accreditation for all schools of education, closing inadequate schools of education, and requiring demonstrated performance for licensing, and using the National Board standards as the benchmark for accomplished teaching.

II. *Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development.* This includes organizing teacher education and professional development programs around standards for students and teachers; developing extended, graduate-level teacher preparation programs that provide a yearlong internship in a professional development school; creating and funding mentoring programs for beginning teachers; and creating stable sources of high quality professional development.

IV. *Encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill.* This goal includes developing a career continuum for teaching linked to assessments and compensation systems that reward knowledge and skill; removing incompetent teachers; setting goals and enacting (monetary) incentives for National Board Certification in every state and district, aiming to certify 105,000 teachers in this decade, one for every school in the United States.

## The Problem

Within the context that many feel the American educational system needs improving and acknowledging that improving teaching is at the heart of this educational reform revolution, the question becomes "How do we improve teaching?" Is creating national standards, and hence, national certification the answer? Many find it difficult to believe that certification and standards are truly the agents of change to improve teaching. Fullan (1991) argues that "Bureaucratic reforms may be able to guarantee minimal performance, but not excellence in teaching" (p. 332).

Other goal areas of the Commission are teacher preparation and inservice for practicing teachers. Currently, much is being done to improve teacher education programs, but **to truly impact the teaching profession as a whole, we must look at the act of teaching differently.** We must not see it as a technical process, but rather as thoughtful interaction that prompts growth both for the student and the teacher. As for transforming the teaching profession, Fullan (1993) believes the key is *professional development that rather than focusing on technical skills, focuses on the same skills students need in the next century: decision-making, collaboration, and inquiry.* "Educational reform will never amount to anything until teachers become simultaneously and seamlessly inquiry oriented, skilled, reflective, and collaborative professionals" (Fullan, 1991, p. 326).

### Reflective Decision Making: the Cornerstone of School Reform

While many recognize the importance of professional development or staff development or inservice for teachers to improve the quality of their instruction, like Fullan, more are recognizing that this professional development must be different from



what has been offered in the past. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) suggest that staff development that is linked to a reform agenda must provide for teachers *"to reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners"* (p. 597).

In the past two decades, there seems to have been an increasing influence of cognitive psychology over behaviorism. Focusing on thinking rather than observable behavior, these psychologists seek to describe and explain the mental processes which underlie complex actions. Additionally, the past decade has witnessed a pulling away from "technical rationality" as a model for preparing teachers. Langer and Colton (1994) believe "the development of professional judgment is the cornerstone of any school reform efforts. Reflective decision-makers are intrinsically motivated to analyze a situation, set goals, plan and monitor actions, and evaluate results as they work closely with others" (p.2). These shifts have, therefore, perhaps contributed to a renewed interest in Dewey's view of teaching as reflective practice and an enthusiastic acceptance of Schon's concept of the "reflective practitioner" which emphasizes uncertainty, artistry, and context-specificity as more helpful, relevant images of good teaching.

According to Henderson (1992), reflective teachers are "expert teachers." In contrast to good teachers who only know their subject matter, time management, discipline, psychology, instructional methods, and learning theory, expert teachers tune in to students and what is going on around them, spot troubles before they happen, and are not easily upset (Jackson, 1986). In his study, *Life in the Classroom*, Jackson provides a clear picture of the continuous pressure and stress on teachers to deal with problems of all sorts (Jackson, 1968). Teachers develop the ability to solve these problems through reflective practice. Reflective teachers willingly embrace these sorts of problems and regularly think about the impact and consequences of their actions. Reflective teachers do not necessarily solve all the problems they face, but they never stop thinking and acting on

those thoughts. "They understand that receptiveness to further learning is the key to continued professional development and vitality" (Henderson, 1992, p. 2).

The key, then, to improving instruction for the 21st century will lie with helping teachers come to new realizations about their practices, best practices, and the individual needs of the unique individuals they are teaching. It will be by fostering reflection in educators that we can truly transform instruction in the next century because the action that follows will be based on that situation with that student on a particular day, not on an instructional framework that assumes "one size fits all."

According to Schön (1987), action comes after or during reflection and these two types of reflection are the mechanisms that allow teachers to construct new understandings from their experiences. He largely sees reflective practice as a solitary endeavor. Other researchers stress the idea of reflection as a social practice and make the argument that in social situations our ideas are made clearer to us (Solomon, 1987). Thus, dialogue must play an important role in social reflection. But what about solitary reflection; doesn't it also require conversation, a sort of dialogue with oneself. That is an important area that has not been adequately explored. What role does the internal dialogue of solitary reflection play? Does it interplay with the external voice of dialogue? If so, how and to what end? What conditions are necessary both in the social setting or the solitary one to prompt dialogue or to foster reflection? In order to understand more about how to provide professional development to support the reflective teachers who will transform the educational process in the era to come, we must understand more about reflective practice, the reflective process, and the role of language or dialogue in that process.

### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, is to seek answers to the following questions:

(1) What does reflective practice look like?

What are the characteristics of reflective practice, both as a solitary activity and as a social interaction?

(2) In particular, what is role and nature of dialogue in both? In particular, do the types of dialogue interact? If so, how?

(3) What conditions foster reflective practice as both a solitary and social process?

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Professional Development Today

Accepting that good teaching produces better learning leads to the belief that improving instruction through professional development is key to educational reform in the next century. However, many agree that professional development has to change. Research and experience have shown that widespread, sustained changes in classroom practices require a new form of professional development.

According to Hargreaves (1994), "In the United States, the tendency is to treat and train teachers more like recovering alcoholics: subjecting them to step-by-step programs of effective instruction or conflict management or professional growth in ways which make them overly dependent on pseudo-scientific expertise developed and imposed by others" (p. xiv). However, Lieberman and Miller (1991) offer some perspectives for considering staff development in a different light:

- Staff development as remediation and training is outdated; staff development should be culture building where teachers assume new roles in their own development.
- Depending less on expert workshops, staff development should provide opportunities for teacher inquiry.
- Staff development should ultimately be concerned with improved education for children.

- Staff development should preserve individual integrity and artistry because ultimately teaching is a craft (pp. 107-108).

Sparks, Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), and Hirsh, Associate Director of NSDC, (1997) offer some changes in the way staff development should be viewed and function that align with some of the same perspectives Lieberman offers. Some of those shifts include:

- From a focus on adult needs and satisfaction to a focus on student needs and learning outcomes . . . .
- From training conducted away from the job . . . to multiple forms of job-embedded learning,
- From an orientation toward the transmission of knowledge and skills to teachers by "experts" to the study by teachers of the teaching and learning processes (pp. 13-14).

Acknowledging professional development as a process teachers should do rather than have done to them marks an important step in the reform efforts. Teachers need to examine their beliefs and new knowledge and *come to their own understandings*.

### Constructivist Philosophy

In helping teachers to learn, Shulman (1989) suggests that what is known about learning be applied to teaching. In redesigning staff development for promoting reform in education, the latest known about learning must be applied, in particular that learning is not a passive but rather an active, evolutionary process. Just as students construct their understanding, reflective teachers adapt what they know to what they experience.

Constructivism arose as a reaction against theories of knowledge in Western philosophy that indicated knowledge exists separate from the knower. Piaget concluded from his research that growth of knowledge is the result of individual constructions made by the learner. Piaget (1971) wrote late in his career:

The current state of knowledge is a moment in history, changing just as rapidly as knowledge in the past has changed, and, in many instances, more rapidly.

Scientific thought, then, is not momentary; it is not a static instance; it is a process. More specifically, it is a process of continual construction and reorganization (pp.1-2).

Piaget's ground-breaking work prompted an abundance of studies that forever changed cognitive psychology which in turn has altered the face of education. Constructing understandings of one's world is an active, mind-engaging process (Sigel and Cocking, 1977; von Glasersfeld, 1981). Simply put by Brooks and Brooks (1993), people construct their understandings of the world in which they live. They search for tools to help them understand their experiences. To do so is human nature. Sigel and Cocking (1977) contend the learner's fundamental quest is to resolve discrepancy that he/she discovers. Coming to know one's world is a function of caring about one's world. Brooks and Brooks (1993) indicate that cognitive processes work to address an affectively-driven issue. They point out that "designing, thinking, changing, evaluating--most particularly in response to a felt need--create interest and energy" (p. 30).

Current understanding of how learning occurs maintains that a learner is more than a passive absorber of information; he/she is "actively engaged in constructing meaning, bringing his or her prior knowledge to bear on new situations, and, if the purposes are worthwhile, adapting those knowledge structures" (Steffe and Gale, 1995, p. 399). Discussion provides an opportunity for further development and reorganization of thought through both talking and listening. Dialogue, inquiry, and puzzlement are valued. There is an emphasis on collaboration as a means of cultivating consensually validated, shared meanings. The focus of concern is not solely what the learner knows, but rather includes his or her underlying beliefs, thought processes, and conceptions of knowledge.

Applied to teaching, this theory about how learning occurs would allow a view of teaching as problem solving. The problematic nature of teaching must be recognized and

accepted; there simply are no "givens." Brunner (1994) points out in her book, Inquiry and Reflection, teachers must not shy away from that uncertainty; it does not have to paralyze teachers. Indeed, uncertainty can invite multiple ways of looking at situations. Educators must not fall into the "either/or" trap. Problem solving should not hinge on dichotomous solutions according to Brunner (1994), but rather on the development of multiplicity in our thinking, and especially in our use of language about that multiplicity. Particularly the dialogue involved in reflective problem solving must value multiplicity--"In both critical dialogue and reflection with self and others, a 'dialogic' is created that embraces a difference of struggle and conflict" (p. 55). Dealing with this struggle or conflict involves not only thinking that embraces multiplicity, but also the process of constructing understanding. Through personal experience people come to know, and it is their use of language that makes that experience known to them so that they can examine it and connect it to other experience and ultimately construct knowledge. Solutions to most problems in teaching are highly contextual.

Professional development that will make a significant difference in the quality of teaching for the next century must help teachers to become reflective practitioners who are mentally agile and creative, active problem solvers. Thus, it seems the foundation of constructivist theory is applicable to teacher development and growth: it is key to help teachers as learners to pose their own questions and search for answers through dialogue with others in light of one's past experiences and knowledge--in other words, through dialogic. This has been around for many centuries.

### The Roots of Reflective Practice

Reflection is an ancient one. The elders and prophets of old were sought for wisdom and counsel. That wisdom was based not only on knowledge but on the ability to analyze situations, to recognize the nuances of

dialogic"

problems, to be able to think divergently, and to propose solutions to problems that plagued the people. About the sixth century BC, a wave of philosophers, scientists, and religious leaders independently, and in all parts of the planet, proposed reflective ideas and taught new ways of thinking that continue to shape thought and action to this day. In Greece these reflective inquirers included Plato and Aristotle; in China, Confucius and Lao Tzu; in Israel, Solomon; and in India, Gautama, the Buddha. They exemplified different conceptions of reflection, but all were revered for the lasting strength of their ideas (Clift, Houston & Pugach, 1990).

The teacher as a reflective practitioner has its roots in the work of John Dewey who saw the teacher as an agent that is chiefly responsible for a highly complex process called education. He believed the relationship between the teacher and child was reciprocal. They should learn together, so the teacher is not to be an authority, but rather a guide, a mentor, and a stimulus in the learning environment. The teacher must consider the physical environment of the classroom as well as the differences in motivation, intelligences, and orientation among the students in the classroom.

In order to accomplish this, then a teacher must be a well-educated professional, but more importantly must be actively drawing upon that knowledge, making decisions and adjusting to liberate students so they can grow. Effective teachers, then, are thoughtful, reflective, and act deliberately based on those thoughts. Dewey believed action followed reflection, and that the process was ever-expanding. In his essay "Experience and Education" (1938), Dewey wrote that "experiences in order to be educative must lead out into an expanding world of subject-matter . . . . This condition is satisfied only as the educator views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience" (p. 87). Dewey believed there were some requisite characteristics or attitudes for being a reflective teacher: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. Open-mindedness is an active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, and to recognize the possibility of error in the beliefs that are



dearest. An individual who is open-minded does not look to other perspectives with argumentative delight, but rather accepts the strengths and weaknesses of his/her or others' perspectives.

Responsibility is the careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads. Responsible teachers ask themselves why they are doing what they are doing, why or why is it not working and for whom is it working or not working. Responsible teachers will not stop at whether or not the objectives have been met, but rather asks if the results are good for the students and in what ways.

The third necessary characteristic is that of wholeheartedness, an enthusiastic willingness to examine their attitudes and actions with the attitude that they can learn something new. By defining and assigning these traits to reflective teachers, Dewey seems to be saying that reflective teachers are unrelentingly dedicated to the education of ALL their students, and themselves.

### The Reflective Process

Looking at the process of reflection has begun in other fields and in recent years that process has been applied to the process of teaching, most notably in the work of Donald Schön. His work *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987) is considered the pivotal inspiration for the movement toward teaching as reflective practice. In the book, he defines the components in the reflective process in terms of architecture, but he shares observations that are applicable to teaching.

Schön (1987) starts with several assumptions. One is that inherent in the practice of professionals is a core of artistry. Another is that artistry is an act of intelligence. Thirdly, in artistry there is an art of problem solving that includes an art of implementation and an art of improvisation which are necessary to combine the practice of applied science and

technique. He uses the term "professional artistry" to refer to the kinds of competence that practitioners display in uncertain or unique situations of practice (p. 22).

"Knowing-in-Action" refers to the sorts of knowledge professionals reveal by spontaneous, skillful action that they can not readily verbalize. This intuitive decision-making model does not rely on a series of steps, but rather on knowledge from the interaction of past experiences with the current situation. This interaction may bring about action that the practitioner can not consciously articulate at the time. This way of thinking cannot be described within a technical rationality thinking\action model, since it is neither linear nor conscious. This process is different from "reflection-in-action" which refers to problematic situations that the practitioner is consciously aware of and interacts with through conversation or experimentation. Schön also identifies a process he labels "reflection-on-action," a reframing and reworking of the problem which leads to a reappraisal of the problem. This process may involve dialogue, drawing on past experiences, and a sort of experimentation.

Practitioners frame (appreciate) their experiences through the values, knowledge, theories and practices that they bring to the experiences. Schön calls these repertoires "appreciative systems." When practitioners engage in this activity, they are reframing or looking at their experience from a new perspective. Munby and Russell (1990) describe the reframing process in this way:

Reframing describes the familiar process in which an event over which we have puzzled for some time suddenly is 'seen' differently and in a way that suggests new approaches to the puzzle. The significance of reframing is that it sets the puzzle differently, and it frequently does so in a fashion that is not logical and almost beyond our conscious control (p. 16).

A part of this reframing process is an almost Zen-like mindfulness (Tremmel, 1993). According to Tremmel, one of the key features of Schön's idea of reflective practice is the need for teachers to give themselves up to the action of the moment

and to be both researchers and artists at a single moment. Tremmel argues that the practitioner's being aware of what is going on around him/her while at the same time being aware of what is going on inside is a necessary element of mindfulness which is a critical part of reflection.

Griffiths and Tann (1992), two teacher educators from the United Kingdom, have articulated five different temporal dimensions of reflection and described how teachers engage in cycles of action, observation, analysis, and planning at different levels of speed and consciousness. Furthermore, they maintain that if over the duration of their careers teachers engaged in these distinct levels of reflection, they would be better able to articulate their own theories, critically examine them, compare, and revise their practice.

The first dimension of reflection is likely to be personal and private, and is what Griffiths and Tann call "rapid reflection" because teachers are likely to reflect immediately and decide whether and to what degree to respond. The second dimension is called "repair" and is still reflection-in-action, but with a quick pause for thought. The third stage is review which is often interpersonal and collegial; teachers think about or talk over such things as student progress, curriculum development and as a result, plans may be modified. The fourth dimension is research which is even more systematic action and occurs over time as teachers' thinking and observation are sharply focused on particular issues. Teacher research groups would be a good example. The fifth dimension is re-theorizing and research which involves long term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories.

Griffiths and Tann argue that teachers need to reflect within all of these dimensions at one time or another and that too much focus on one dimension or another will lead to superficial reflection. Dialogue with another is part of the last three dimensions and, even though they don't address it, dialogue with self could be a part of rapid reflection and review.

## The Role of Dialogue in Reflection

Fundamentally, the reflective process is thinking, analyzing, connecting, and making meaning. People use language to facilitate the process of making meaning. In solitary reflection, internal speech becomes thought. In collaborative reflection, dialogue is speech used to create the ideas, look at them and manipulate them so that they may be analyzed. Noddings (1984), pinpoints the purpose of dialogue when she says it is "to come into contact with ideas and to understand . . ." (p. 186). Hence, language is integral in the reflective process; it makes our thoughts and allows us to manipulate them.

Vygotsky (1962) discovered that thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Thought and word are not connected by a primary bond; a connection originates, changes and grows in the course of the evolution of thinking and speech. Thus, if thinking and speaking are inextricably tied, then speech is an important part of the reflective process.

There are two planes of speech, according to Vygotsky (1962), inner speech or endophasy, and external speech. Written and inner speech represent the monologue; oral speech, in most cases, the dialogue. But the relationship between thought and words cannot be understood fully without a clear understanding of the psychological nature of inner speech. "Inner speech" has been defined historically as "verbal memory," or as "speech minus sound" and as "speech reflux inhibited in its motor part." But Vygotsky says it is much more than any of these limited definitions.

He says that inner speech is for oneself while external speech is for others. It is the opposite of external speech in this regard: external speech turns thoughts into words; inner speech turns speech into thought. "Inner speech is not the interior aspect of external speech--it is a function in itself. It still remains speech, i.e., thought connected with words. But speech words die as they bring forth thought. Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings" (p. 149). While he makes clear that inner speech is not

an antecedent of external speech nor is it merely a vocalization of external speech, Vygotsky does not address what interaction is possible between the two planes and how that interplay may affect the development of thought. Applied to reflective practice, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the importance of language in the making of thought concrete for the speaker (or writer) to be aware of it and manipulate it for possible learning.

Schön has been criticized for his lack of attention to the role of dialogue in the reflective process for teacher learning (Day, 1993). Although he acknowledges the conversations teacher have in the situations in which they practice and the conversations between mentors and novice practitioners, he does not address how teachers and other professionals can and do reflect together on a regular basis about their work. Apart from the context of mentoring, Schön (1987) largely presents reflection as a solitary process, not a social one taking place in a learning community. Much of the recent work on reflection argue for it as a social practice. Without a social forum, teacher development is inhibited because ideas are more real when people can speak to others about them (Solomon, 1987). Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) emphasize the importance of social interaction to facilitate growth:

Because of the deeply ingrained nature of our behavioral patterns, it is sometimes difficult to develop a critical perspective on our own behavior. For that reason alone, analysis occurring in a collaborative and cooperative environment is likely to lead to greater learning (p. 25).

### Conditions for the Reflective Process

Developing this “critical perspective on our own behavior” that Osterman and Kottkamp speak of requires those qualities Dewey spoke of, open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness (interest) (Dewey, 1933). The process also requires

the cooperative, collaborative environment that Osterman and Kottkamp emphasized as well as sufficient time and trust.

Teaching in a reflective manner as described by Dewey and Schön can be an intensely personal and challenging endeavor. To question long-held beliefs and to be willing to examine practices and the consequences of actions can be rewarding but also demanding. To be able to sort through issues with a peer or peers requires trust and time, two central requirements in creating a reflective learning community.

The teaching day is filled with students, paperwork, and extra duties. Having time to peacefully reflect or time to dialogue with a colleague or group of colleagues remains an ever-present problem. Not only is scheduling of time for collaboration a concern, but the process itself seems time consuming because answers will not necessarily come immediately with the act of peer collaboration and response; it is a messy process to find solutions to teaching problems sometimes. The process is certainly not a neat, orderly, linear one. Additionally it takes time to build trust which is essential for the peer collaboration that will bring about the cognitive and metacognitive processes in reflection.

In the cognitive coaching research of Costa and Garmston (1994) hundreds of people described how they developed trusting relationships, and they reported certain behaviors consistently: maintaining confidentiality, being visible and accessible, behaving consistently, keeping commitments, sharing personal information about out-of-school activities, revealing feelings, expressing personal interest in other people, acting nonjudgmentally, listening reflectively, admitting mistakes, and demonstrating professional knowledge and skills. Trust grows stronger as long as these behaviors continue, but a relationship can be seriously damaged when someone is discourteous or disrespectful, makes value judgments, overreacts, acts arbitrarily, threatens, or is personally insensitive to another person (p. 36-37). Costa and Garmstrom (1994) also found links between interpersonal trust and trust in the environment, or learning community (p. 37). For example, when teachers trust their principal, they are more likely to trust each other.

Again, as Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) pointed out, a collaborative, cooperative environment leads to greater learning.

Teachers should be encouraged to consider the environment and the social conditions of their practices as well as internally reflecting on their own practices. According to Scheffler (1968), if teachers want to avoid the historic bureaucratic and technical conception of their role, and if they are going to become reflective teachers, not technical teachers, they must seek to maintain a broad vision about their work and not just look inwardly at their own practice. It would seem certain conditions are more likely to produce reflective behaviors in teachers.

### Summary

Thus, indeed if creating teachers who are reflective decision-makers and problem solvers is the foundation on which to effect school reform, then Dewey's notion of the reflective practitioner seems the starting place. Adding to his description of the reflective practitioner as one who is responsible, open-minded, interested, and comfortable with doubt, Schön looks at the timeframes by which the teacher comes to grips with the doubt: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Barriers such as time and trust can inhibit the reflective process as can failing to take context into consideration. Vygotsky's work with thought and language draws attention to the importance of dialogue in the reflective process, both the outer dialogue and the inner dialogue which indicate the social and individual natures of reflective practice.

Studies have shown reflection in an integral part of experienced and competent teachers' thought processes (Moallem, 1994). Others (Sparks & Geogea, 1991) have illustrated how the field of research on teaching is moving from a behavior-oriented paradigm of teaching to a reflective paradigm. If this is so, that reflective practice is associated with competence, it seems important to examine the daily practice of

reflective, competent teachers to better understand this movement in the field. It seems especially important to look at dialogue and the role it plays in facilitating this kind of practice.

There have been fewer than 100 dissertation studies related to reflective practice in the past twenty years. Many studies have focused on reflective practice in specific content areas and at specific levels. For example, Hao (1996) examined preschool teachers' engagement in developmentally appropriate practice and found teachers who engage in reflective thought processes tend to make more developmentally appropriate choices in the classroom. Miller (1998) validated the importance of reflection in teaching as she discussed the process of negotiating learning in the secondary English classroom which requires collaboration and mutual reflection. In a more general sense, reflective teaching has been linked to effective teaching (Kirby 1987).

Several studies have looked at fostering reflective practice in preservice teachers. Dinkelman (1997), found in studying preservice secondary social studies teachers that teacher educators can influence preservice teachers to become reflective, but influencing the quality and content of such reflection is a greater challenge. Bridwell (1996) found the dialogue between student teachers and their cooperating teacher can promote reflective teaching practices. Udelhofen (1996) found building portfolios during student teaching can enhance and strengthen reflective abilities, but its potential for doing so is dependent on the student's predisposition for open-mindedness and responsibility for analyzing teaching beliefs and the student's wholehearted investment in the process of portfolio building and student teaching.

There have been only a few dissertations that dealt specifically with the issues this researcher was interested in, mainly what reflective practice looks like on a daily basis, the reflective process, and strategies for fostering reflective teaching practices in professional development activities. I found only a dozen or so studies from the past ten years dealing specifically with these issues.



Since reflection requires some discernible steps or components, teachers can be taught to be reflective. Deutsch (1996) found that teachers can be taught to identify reflective practice as well as the factors that enhance or impede their ability to reflect, an important step in promoting reflective practice for school reform. Stewart (1991) examined the process of teachers completing activities designed to promote reflective processes to identify whether their reflective processes differed. Age did not appear to be a factor in students' approaches to reflective teaching, but temperament and learning style, while related to reflection are complex factors that do not yield simple relationships to reflective style. But the most important finding, I believe, was that all improved in their level of reflection. However, another important consideration in promoting reflection is the belief and value system the teachers hold. Frank (1993) discovered that teachers' critical (reflective) practices are organically linked to the teachers' core values.

Differing strategies to promote reflective teaching have been studied. Williams (1995) examined the nature of discourse in Reflective Teaching small group discussions. Bogan (1997) found that long-term dialogue discussion groups as a form of staff development requires readings chosen are relevant to the realities of the teachers' classrooms, and facilitator who helps link the readings to the teachers' classroom practices. Such discussions require trust and must be collegial conversations.

However, I found no dissertations related specifically to the interaction between the outer dialogue, or conversations about schooling, and the inner dialogue of reflection. It seemed important to look more closely at how the reflective process is fostered through dialogue, in particular, through the interplay of the inner and outer voices of dialogue.

The questions I posed in order to come to greater understanding of reflective teaching were the following:

1. What does reflective practice look like? What are the characteristics of reflective practice, both as a solitary activity and as a social interaction?

2. What is the role and nature of dialogue in both types? In particular, do the types of dialogue (inner and outer) interact? If so, how?
3. What conditions foster reflective practice?

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study was grounded in the beliefs that drive the qualitative form of research and therefore utilized the methods of data collection usually associated with qualitative studies. The subjects were selected from a pool of reflective teachers nominated by principals, counselors and department chairs. Data was then collected from interviews, observations, and journal entries. Analysis involved looking for themes that emerged from these three sources of data from the three subjects.

#### Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

Langenbach, Vaughn, and Aagaard (1993) differentiate between two types of research referred to as realism, empiricism, materialism, rationalism, positivism, or quantitative research; in contrast to idealism, phenomenology, constructivism, naturalism, postpositivism, or qualitative research. All of these labels in the broadest sense refer to two views of the world: truth-seeking or perspective-seeking (Langenbach, Vaughn, & Aagaard, 1993).

Taking a historical approach to explaining these two types of research, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point to positivism and phenomenology as the philosophical bases on which the modern understanding of quantitative and qualitative research is built. The word *positivism* was first coined in the 1830's by Auguste Comte who saw it as synonymous with science or positive, observable facts. Positivism evolved to mean

objective inquiry based on measurable variables and provable propositions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

The phenomenological approach focuses on understanding the meaning events have for persons being studied. It sees the individual as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having none apart from the person (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Coming from a positivist grounding, quantitative research seeks the truth as verified by numbers. It begins with a hypothesis that is to be proved, and objectivity on the part of the researcher is key. On the other hand, qualitative research seeks understanding of a perspective or situation, and comes from a phenomenological belief system.

Bogdan and Bilken (1992) define the qualitative approach to research through five key characteristics that are present in qualitative studies to varying degrees:

1. *Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.* Equipment may be used such as video cameras and tape recorders, but the data are collected on the premises and supplemented by the understanding of being there. Qualitative researchers are convinced that context is key to understanding the subject.
2. *Qualitative research is descriptive.* The data will include words and pictures rather than numbers. Interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, and other documents such as journals are common forms of data collected. The assumption a qualitative researcher makes is that everything in the environment has the potential for meaning; nothing is insignificant.
3. *Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.* Qualitative research is often concerned with the “How?” and “Why?” of research topics.

4. *Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.* They do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold prior to entering the study.

5. *“Meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.* Researchers who use this approach are interested in making sense out of their lives (pp. 29-32).

Perspective-seeking qualitative researchers also attempt to interpret the data in a trustworthy manner, but if two qualitative researchers study the same subject, they may come up with different analysis which would not pose a problem to perspective-seeking researchers. They do not usually overtly say that the results of their study of a local situation are broadly applicable outside that situation. This study was a qualitative investigation as I sought to understand reflective practice, its nature and characteristics, and more particularly how dialogue both with the self and with others played a role in the process by talking with and observing teachers who were identified as reflective by their principals or peers. The implications of the study were for improving teaching by fostering reflective practices as the new direction for staff development the next century.

### Assumptions

This study was concerned with teaching and how to improve it through reflective practice. There are, therefore, certain assumptions about teaching, learning for teachers, and reflection that were the basis for the study:

1. Teaching can not be measurably improved with prescriptive methods and programs because teachers must actively construct their own understanding for growth.
2. Reflective teachers are good teachers.
3. Critical or reflective practice does indeed help teachers become better teachers.

4. Reflective process, being a process, can be taught.
5. Dialogue plays an integral part in the reflective process.
6. Reflective practice can be learned by teachers.

These assumptions, no doubt shaded the filters through which I looked at the practice of the three teachers in the study.

### Definition of Terms

*Reflection*, as Calderhead (1989) has very clearly established, is a term used in a wide variety of ways. Lucas (1991) defines the process by its purpose which is to better understand practice in order to improve it. He also acknowledges that it is not haphazard, but rather systematic inquiry. According to Dewey (1933), reflective thinking means “turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration” (p. 3).

According to van Manen (1977), reflection is a developmental process with three levels derived from Habermas (1973). The first level, *technical reflection*, is concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends, which are not open to criticism or modification. In other words, the teacher is only concerned with thinking about the how or means. The second, *practical reflection*, allows for open examination not only of means, but also of goals, the assumptions upon which these are based, and the actual outcomes. This kind of reflecting, in contrast to the technical form, recognizes that meanings are not absolute, but are embedded in and negotiated through language. The third level, *critical reflection*, as well as including emphasis from the previous two, also calls for considerations involving moral and ethical criteria (Gore & Zeichner, 1991). This highest level requires making judgments about whether professional activity is equitable, just, and respectful of persons or not. In addition, critical reflection locates any

analysis of personal action within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts (Smith & Lovat, 1991; Noffke & Brennan, 1988; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Unlike Habermas, Louden (1992) does not see a hierarchical relationship, but four separate, distinct interests which lead to reflection: technical interest, personal interest, problematic interest, and critical interest. The critical interest is defined as the reflection that involves questioning taken-for-granted thoughts, feelings, and actions. Teachers then confront and perhaps go beyond the constraints of these former beliefs.

Henderson (1992), in his book Reflective Teaching, defines reflective teaching as "characterized by practicing an ethic of caring, a constructivist approach to learning, and artistic problem solving. The reflective teacher considers the students' past experiences and personal purposes when introducing instructional content" (p. 172). "Nonreflective teachers rely on routine behavior and are guided more by impulse, tradition, and authority than by reflection" (Posner, 1985, p. 19). Zeichner & Liston (1996) argue that not all thinking about teaching is reflective. They distinguish between reflective practice and teaching that is technically focused: "if a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching" (p. 1). These definitions explicate the notion of reflective practice in words; the study shows it in its day-to-day reality through the word-pictures or vignettes. I used Dewey's characteristics of reflective teachers as a guide for the identification of subjects;

### Subjects

Studying the reflective process requires reflective teachers as the subjects. Within the school district chosen for the study, it seemed the principals, counselors, and colleagues would be the best sources for names of reflective teachers because they are in the school community and have a greater opportunity to observe these qualities and

behaviors of reflectivity than an outsider. So I sent a letter to principals, school counselors, and secondary department chairs with a list of characteristics and behaviors of reflective teachers based on Dewey's work (1933). (See Appendix B.) The characteristics that reflective teachers display are open-mindedness, responsibility, wholeheartedness, a caring ethic, and a constructivist approach to learning. Additionally they often ask questions, think aloud, see mistakes as an opportunity to grow, and show a positive attitude toward change. I received 35 nominations, or roughly nine percent of the teaching population in the district. Due to the constraints of time, I decided to limit the number of subjects I would study. From the pool, I selected three teachers who teach varying levels and have varying years' experience. This was purely a subjective selection process; I could have drawn names randomly from the pool, but I may not have gotten the differing years of teaching experience or the differing levels taught. Additionally, I chose teachers I thought would be cooperative and pleasant to work with over the next several months.

Next, I contacted the three teachers by phone to see if they would be willing to help me with my study. The first three I chose were very amiable and willing to help me with my study; not one of them hesitated about the time they would spend with me or my being in their classrooms. As one indicated, "I see this as an opportunity to grow myself!" Had any of these teachers declined my request, I would have gone back to the pool of 35 names and selected another.

I sent the three a letter indicating my purpose and expectations. I also sent each a spiral notebook and some possible prompts for their journaling. (See Appendix C.) They signed consent forms indicating their agreement to the study. One of the first tasks was to determine the times for interviews and observations that were of greatest convenience to them. All three sent me their teaching and school-day schedule.



## Methods of Data Collection

There is a wide range of data-gathering techniques in qualitative research literature. For example, Glesne & Peshkin (1992) write about participant observation, interviewing one person, and listening to small group discussions. Lindlof & Meter (1987) mention participant observation, the life history interview, the in-depth interview, the informant interview, and unobtrusive measures, which include institutional as well as personal documents and artifacts, representational maps, diaries, and audiovisual records. Maykut & Morehouse (1994) support the value of personal documents like journals and logs, suggesting that the information contained in them may yield the greatest understanding of the phenomenon under study. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) discuss case study, personal experience, observational, historical, international, and visual texts. Despite the proliferation of terms and ideas, the qualitative approach relies mainly on three types of evidence gathering methods: document examination, interview, and observation.

### Document Examination

Document analysis is especially important to archaeologists and historians. It is also widely used in institutional research where the researcher would perhaps look at a policy and legal documents. There is a wide variety of documents including but certainly not limited to diaries, letters, memos, notes, photographs, audiotapes, videotapes, films, articles, books, manuscripts, and journals. Some of these materials provide only factual information, such as meeting times and dates, but personal documents, especially those written in the subject's own words, can provide feelings and perceptions. As Allport (1942) has stated, "The spontaneous, intimate diary is the personal document par excellence" (p. 95). He was referring to the kind of document that a person keeps on a

regular basis that is a sort of running description with reflective commentary about the events in his/her life. As Bogdan & Biklen (1992) point out, "because a diary is usually written under the immediate influence of an experience, it can be particularly effective in capturing peoples' moods and most intimate thoughts" (p. 133). Other materials similar to diaries but not as intimate are logs and journals that provide personal comments and hints about what life is like for the people being studied. However, what is often problematic is the accessibility of documents like memos, letters, and diaries in subject's written words (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Usually personal documents are unsolicited by the researcher, but researchers can ask for access to such documents or as Glesne & Peshkin (1992) suggest, ask the subjects to keep diaries, journals or other kinds of records for the study.

As indicated earlier, I gave the teachers a spiral notebook and asked if from time to time they would record their thoughts about teaching and reflecting. I also gave them a set of prompts concerning reflection that they could use if they wanted but were certainly not required to do so. I chose to have the subjects create journals to triangulate the study; the third source of data would support the reliability of the findings. But I also believed that they would enhance my understanding because as Glesne & Peshkin (1992) point out, "documents provide both historical and contextual dimensions" to the observations and interviews (p. 54). (See Appendix H for selected transcripts of journal entries.)

### Interviewing

Interviewing is a technique of gathering data from subjects by asking them questions and recording their responses. There are several ways of characterizing interviews. For example, interviews can be structured or unstructured; they can be casual or in-depth. Marshall and Rossman (1989) explained: "Typically, qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal, structured interviews. The

researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's meaning perspective, but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses" (p. 82).

Another form of interviewing is called the ethnographic interview, which differs from friendly conversation in several ways. It is not as balanced as most conversations are. Instead, the ethnographer informs the interviewee of the purpose of the interview and then takes control by asking nondirective questions and probing the person's responses. Nondirective questions are open-ended and designed to get the interviewee talking about a broad topic area.

The questions I originally developed were more in line with conducting an ethnographic interview; there were only a few and they were open-ended. But just prior to the actual interview, I revised the questions. I was afraid I would not get the specific information I wanted, so I created more questions that were more pointed. I tried out some of the questions on my husband and practiced my interviewing techniques with him before I went to my first real interview. When I actually did the interviews, some were balanced and friendly conversations while others were more in-depth to uncover what made the reflective practitioner the way she was. (See Appendix D for the interview questions.) (Appendix G includes selected transcripts of interviews.)

### Observation

Observation is the technique of gathering evidence through direct contact with another human being. The researcher watches the behavior and documents what he/she sees. As for the researcher activity, some observers remain unobtrusive and watch from outside the group while participant observation demands firsthand involvement in the world chosen to study. "Immersion in the setting allows the researcher to hear, see, and

begin to experience reality as the participants do . . . . This technique for gathering data is basic to qualitative research studies" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79).

Actually, many believe that participant observation is more than a technique, it is the essence of qualitative research. The researcher assumes that meaning is embedded in people's experiences, and meaning is revealed through the researcher's observations. As Merriam (1997) indicates, "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7).

This study also utilized observation as a data collection technique because to understand reflective practice better, I needed to see and capture in words what it looks like in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. I also wanted to observe reflective actions to see if I could understand better the role of dialogue in that process. Since I had posed some specific questions, I developed three guide sheets to focus the observations I made in the subjects' classrooms. (See Appendix E.) I observed in each of the three classrooms a minimum of four times and often used the focus sheets more than once; I used them until I felt comfortable that I had sufficient data in each of the areas I decided to focus on.

This study invited all three of the main methods of evidence gathering in qualitative research: document examination, interviewing, and observation. Through employing all three types, this researcher triangulated the study, that is built in my study several different dimensions in order to give the findings more credibility.

### Analysis of Data

Qualitative studies generally follow an inductive method of analysis to uncover the answers to the researcher's questions. This study followed an inductive approach of looking for patterns to make some general statements about reflective practice. Initially there seemed to be no patterns in the mountain of information I had collected. I had to

organize the data before I could analyze it. In order to do so, I developed my own process.

The questions posed for the study served as sort of a mission statement for the analysis. I kept them ever in the forefront of my mind, as I read and re-read the interview transcriptions. Then I coded the transcripts of the interviews with one color to mark the responses that revealed characteristics of the reflective teacher and her practice and another color to identify responses that revealed the reflective process. The observations were in a sense already coded because I had taken notes according to the three areas defined by the observation guide sheets. I developed a series of questions to analyze the journals. (See Appendix F.) I looked mainly to the journals to reveal the teachers' reflective process and especially how these inner conversations recorded in the journals interacted or connected with the outer conversations they were having with others. As I read and re-read the journal entries, I looked for answers to the questions about when they reflected, where they reflected, why they reflected, what they reflected on, how they reflected, how they became reflective, and how this internal conversation interacted with external ones. I recorded the dates of entries and notes about that entry under each question on the journal analysis sheet which was headed with the subject's name and the month the entries were made. The journals were kept for four months. (See Appendix F for the Journal Analysis Sheet and Appendix H for Selected Transcripts of the Journals.) There was much thick description which is an explication "of the layers of meaning that lend the events their significance for social actors" (Lindlof & Meter, 1987, p. 8).

### Case Studies

The data collected are presented in the form of three case studies. Though a case can be defined as a process (Yin, 1994), I defined it for the purpose of this study as Stake (1994, 1995) does, as a product of this type of investigation. MacDonald and Walker's

(1977) definition of a case study as "the examination of an instance in action" (p. 181) is congruent with Guba's and Lincoln's (1981) statement that the purpose is "to reveal the properties of the class to which the instance being studied belongs" (p. 371). Becker (1968) defines the purposes of a case study as twofold, that is, "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study" and "to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process" (p. 233). In the study the purpose was to gain understanding of reflective practice. Case studies are often categorized by the intent of the study: to describe, to interpret or to build theory. My goal was to understand and to describe, not to develop theory. Interpretive case studies contain rich, thick description and are used to develop concepts or to support or challenge assumptions held prior to the data gathering. Analytical case studies are differentiated from descriptive studies by their complexity, depth, and theoretical orientation (Shaw, 1978). Including several case studies instead of only one can strengthen the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I wrote three.

After I wrote each case which described the interviews, observations, and journal entries of each subject. In order to facilitate the emergence of themes from these cases, I took my original questions (see page 8) and coded the answers to each of those questions with different colors (orange for characteristics of reflective practice; blue for the two components of reflection as social interaction and solitary activity; green for the role and nature of dialogue in both facets; and pink for the conditions that foster reflective practice) to mark the answers to those questions that was embedded in the cases. Grouping similar answers, I then developed labels for those similarities or themes that had emerged from the data.

### Biases of the Researcher

The following account reveals my personal experiences that have shaped by beliefs and

beliefs and biases about learning and teaching, and hence, about reflective practice:

### A Teacher/Learner Personal Story

As a student progressing through the American public school system in the 1960's, most teachers I encountered kept students in rows and operated from a philosophy that students were vessels to be filled with knowledge. There was little active learning; there were few opportunities to interact with classmates in the act of acquiring knowledge and even fewer opportunities to interact with the teacher. I found I needed that interaction and was often in trouble for talking which was forbidden. In study sessions with my friends outside of school is where I learned the most.

As a beginning teacher in the middle 70's, I had been taught a series of techniques that were to be my toolbox; I was to choose and use the proper techniques as the occasion warranted. This is what Donald Schön (1987) refers to as technical rationality. The assumption beneath this viewpoint was that simply having stock solutions could fix all problems. Teachers did not need to think about the problem or the context, only about which technique to use.

Unfortunately, I discovered that teaching was never that easy; it was a lot messier than that. I don't know exactly when or how I came to realize answers do not come with a technique in teaching. In fact, there are few, if any certain answers. What I found necessary was to watch, listen, and care. These actions seemed second nature to me and served me well. When I was introduced to instructional strategies or activities, I found I had to use them and "make them my own" before I accepted them. I discovered nothing was ever "classroom ready", that is, simply transferable into my classroom with no adjustments.

It was these personal experiences that piqued my interest in effective

teaching for learning. After all, if there is not learning, there really has been not teaching. I believe reflective practice as a way to improve instruction, and it was this belief that prompted this study.

This researcher has to acknowledge that through personal experiences and observations when I was a classroom teacher that the most effective teachers I have seen and known had the characteristics of reflective practitioners. I have seen the benefits of open-mindedness and believe that no really change is possible without it. With all the diversity learners bring into the classroom, a teacher has to be willing to change past beliefs or practices to reach a child for whom those practices won't work.

My own experience as a student and as a teacher taught me people learn best when they can hook new knowledge to previous knowledge and that the construction process is evolutionary and over time, not something that occurs necessarily within the six week unit on a new topic. I believe the learning process involves talking to oneself and to others. Most of all, my experience has taught me that teachers, effective ones, must be wholehearted about the task of helping children to grow.

As a qualitative researcher, *I sought greater understanding* of what these three reflective practitioners are like and what they do; I especially hoped to understand more about the role of dialogue in the reflective process. It is up to the reader of my findings to determine if there are truths there for him/her. I do not propose “answers” that will be absolute for other educators in other situations; I did not seek “the truth”; I sought only another perspective through observation and dialogue.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

As I reflect on what I found in this study, I find affirming the dedication of the three teachers I observed and interviewed. They do on a daily basis whatever it takes to help students learn and grow. This experience reinforced my belief that there are some excellent teachers in American public school classrooms who are making a difference in children's lives every day. I also believe from this experience, that we can indeed help other teachers to be more aware of children's needs and how to adjust their teaching to better meet those needs.

I discovered certain similarities in the practice of the three teachers which I have expressed as themes in this chapter. The theme of Reflective Practice responds to the first question of the study about the characteristics of reflective practice. It is too complex to be captured in one theme, so it is subdivided into four sub-themes: the first concerns the foundation on which reflective practice is built, that is, student-centered learning; the second concerns the issues and situations that prompt reflective teachers to be critical of their approaches; the third concerns what reflective teachers reflect on; and the fourth relates to how they became reflective practitioners.

I also learned that being reflective and making the proper adjustments at the proper time, in the proper way for children to learn is not easy. These teachers worked extremely hard; they seemed driven by their passion to serve children. Additionally, I discovered something I had not set out to find. I was able to piece together a sort of process by which they made the decisions they did, though it is *not* a lock-step procedure,

recognizing it holds great promise for professional development in the twenty-first century. Only after we truly understand this process can we help others to replicate it. What I saw was that there was generally an impetus for critical thinking which could be a problem, great or small; something that merely puzzled them so they were curious; or something that disrupted the status quo and made them uncomfortable. The length of time in this process varied. Sometimes they took action immediately, intuitively. Even if that action were not the answer, they seemed willing to take the risk of immediate action when they perceived a great need for things to proceed in a different direction. If time allowed and immediate action was not necessary, they generally processed the problem by replaying, analyzing or clarifying it and finally evaluating what, if any, action to take.

Dialogue was the great facilitator in this process. The second theme, Reflection as Solitary and Social Dialogue addresses the second question of the study about the role of dialogue in the process of reflection. These teachers often talked to themselves, and replayed events in their minds. They often talked to others—students, peers, friends, and family about school. The inner dialogue often interacted with these outer conversations in that it evaluated, analyzed, or clarified the talk with others.

The third theme, Contemplating School as a Part of the Very Fabric of Life, responds to the third question of the study which asked about the conditions that foster reflective practice. The response is divided into two sub-themes about conditions and time. Basically these three teachers' passionate commitment to their mission as teachers caused them to think about school all the time, in all places.

What follows in this chapter are three case studies that present a description of three reflective teachers' classrooms, and their voices to allow the reader to see and hear reflective teaching as I recorded it. When getting this glimpse of reflective practice, the reader, will hopefully create his/her own meaning about how it occurs, and how dialogue contributes to it. The teachers have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. For each teacher, I have recounted the interviews, followed by a narrative of the

observations, and finally selected entries from her journal. The journal entries address key questions concerning the reflective process, such as When?, Where?, Why?, What?, How?, How they became reflective and how the internal conversation interacts with an external one. Following the cases are the themes that emerged and I discuss more specifically how they address the questions of the study.

### Interviews with Ann

Even though she has only been teaching six years, Ann has the respect of her peers as evidenced by the fact that she was the district's Teacher of the Year in 1997, a distinction bestowed by her fellow teachers. She was also one of the twelve finalists for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Mild-mannered, deeply honest, sincerely sweet, and always soft-spoken, Ann is one of the most dedicated teachers I have known. Ann raised her family, so she didn't start her college degree until 1988, at almost mid-life. Earning scholarships from various sources, she took her schooling seriously and fast, graduating Summa Cum Laude from Phillips University in 1992. During that time she had family and home obligations, plus she served as a substitute teacher for this district. She was hired the year she graduated.

She has remained at the same elementary, one that serves a lower socio-economic population that is highly transient, for the six years she has taught. Ann teaches third grade which is a test year for the state testing program.

I first met her in March of 1997 after she was chosen as the District Teacher of the Year for the upcoming year, 1997-98. I was assigned as the Central Administration support to help her with her portfolio-application for the state Teacher of the Year. I immediately liked Ann and was impressed by her honest, open nature and by her perceptiveness about teaching, especially when she had only been teaching five years. I was not surprised when her name appeared on the list of nominees for my study, and I felt

I would learn a lot from her. (See Appendix G for selected transcriptions of the interviews with Ann.)

I went to her classroom to observe prior to the first interview which she had chosen to take place during her plan period. I wanted to get a feel for the environment of her classroom to give me a context for the conversations that would follow over the next several months. On November 16, 1998, I slipped into a darkened classroom where the students were watching a video on the Mayflower's trip as Ann read a book that was a narrative from the perspective of an eight-year-old passenger on the ship. During discussion time, they asked questions, like, "Did she have a blender?" "You mean did they have electricity?" asked Ann. Throughout this brief half hour, I saw Ann weave in vocabulary development and science, all the while making connections to something they had already studied. I saw a teacher who appeared to be doing what Schon calls "reflection-in-action." She was constantly directing the discussion based on comments and concerns of the students. She rephrased some of their comments for clarification. I also saw children who were excitedly involved, yet cooperative. Even if Ann did need to refocus their attention, she did so calmly, softly and with respect: "Some children are not listening, Please give me your eyes and attention. Now this is a class ready to listen." She respected and accepted their answers with comments like, "Thank you for that answer." Just prior to their going to Music, Ann concluded their work with the story by asking the students to help with a recapping of all the discomforts the pilgrims must have endured on the trip to America. "It's cold." "It's wet." "There is no light." Ann asked, "Boys and girls, does it sound like there is anything comfortable about this trip?" "NO!" they shouted in unison. Ann then tied the experience to their own experiences. "Does this sound like any trip you have ever taken?" They were in agreement that it was not.

The next morning at 9:00, I came to Ann's room to begin the interview process which would require four meetings over the next three months. I taped our first interviews and took notes too. I taped them because I was afraid I would get so involved

in listening that I would forget to write notes, but I also took notes because it helps me process what she was saying. We sat in third grade chairs and as we talked Ann continued to cut out some materials she needed that day. She asked if it was all right. "Really, she said, I'm used to doing more than one thing at a time." I began with asking her some questions about the characteristics of reflective teachers. I wanted to see if she considered herself to be reflective as others did. Throughout the interviews, I also focused on *the reflective process*: what she did, why she did these things, how she became this way, and mainly what role did dialogue play in the reflective process.

One of the characteristics of reflective teachers according to Dewey is that they are willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints. Ann is one of those teachers who is always searching for new ideas. After she listens to a new idea, she may or may not accept it, but she is always searching because she always feels she can do better. When I asked her how she became this way, she said, "I guess I have an innate need to become better with some things. I am just a person who likes to try things; some things make your life easier. I also think maturing as a teacher and a person has something to do with it. I often think, 'Next year, I will do that [a lesson] different.'" Ann also changes things that aren't working on a moment's notice. For example, one day at lunch she was going over a math test and saw trouble. She knew she could not go on with the next math lesson. She related that "after lunch, I pitched out the test, got an overhead, the Judy clock, and called two assistants to take two students who were really lost and work with them individually. I took the paper from Friday and re-taught the operations . . . . Then I tested them to see if they got it." Ann uses tests for more than assessment of the students' progress. She uses pre-tests to see where to begin instruction. And she says, "I use tests to evaluate my teaching . . . . If they don't know it, I haven't taught it right . . . . I really want the kids to learn. I'll try anything if they're not getting it . . . . I take it very personally when a child fails."

Over and over again throughout our conversations, Ann emphasized the uniqueness of her children; they are all different and they change. As she stated, "No two children learn the same. Giving them the same lesson and thinking that everyone there got is ludicrous." She insisted that "you have to know HOW they learn." When I asked how she knows what kind of learner each child is, she responded, "Observation. I watch. I feel. I know--some of it is a 'gut-thing' . . . . Sometimes discipline gets mixed up with learning processing. You have to separate that out . . . . Mainly it is trial and error [to discover learning style]. I stay on the porch the first few weeks of school and watch the kids. Watching them interact with one another [on the playground] tells a lot." She understands that learning is constructed; new knowledge is hooked to old knowledge. However, the background knowledge and experiences the new knowledge is hooked to is very different for each child. To her, evaluating children's needs and making adjustments is a natural part of teaching. "Don't all teachers do this?" she asked time and again.

When I asked if she ever makes mistakes in teaching, she responded, "Oh, yes, all the time, but I try to turn them into learning experiences." So, Ann seemed to have self-doubts, but she was undaunted by doubts and mistakes. She thought these may be part of why she is willing to examine and re-examine beliefs and practices.

More so now that when she was first out of college or in her first year of teaching, she is personally very willing to hear others and would like to be able to watch others. She feels there are not enough opportunities within the school structure to watch others teach. A specific example of a recent re-examining of thoughts concerned the new math textbook series. She did not like it at first, but now that she has gotten into it, she is changing her mind about it.

Concerning adjusting to using the new math series, she indicated, "I should have done more pretend teaching." I asked her to tell me more about "pretend teaching."

"I actually practice a lesson before I teach it to my kids. I try to consider some of the things that might go wrong. I try to think of things from my kids' perspective."

I asked her how she came to use this practice. She paused. "I think it is just a part of who I am. I take it very personally when a child fails." Ann wants children to succeed so badly that she is willing to try anything to make certain her lessons will succeed in helping them to learn. Maybe past experience helped to shape her: "In the third grade, I had the worst teacher ever. She did not care for you personally."

I wanted to know more about trying to get a kid's perspective so I ask her if she ever thinks aloud. She said she does, but she didn't want to tell anyone. "I often think, 'If I were a third-grader, this is what I'd do.'" When asked how she came to be this way, she answered, "Bad genes--My mom thought aloud a lot. It sort of became a habit with me. Besides, I am a verbal person. It's a processing thing for me. I need to hear something and I express verbally to process it. I do it with the kids too; I will say, 'I was thinking last night . . . .'"

I asked her if she ever processes by talking with others. She indicated that she talks constantly with other primary teachers. At least twice a month, the primary level teachers at her school meet to talk mainly about reading. They share what they are doing in the classroom that improves teaching. I asked her why she does this. She said sometimes it affirms what she is doing. Mainly, "I don't want anyone doing anything good that I don't know about."

When asked when she began this practice, she said almost from the beginning of her teaching career. "From my first year, I asked everybody everything. I hadn't received the answers I needed from by coursework." So it seemed talking with others affirms as well as informs.

Besides thinking aloud and talking with others, I asked Ann if she ever held conversations with herself about teaching practices or educational issues. "Yes, I always do," she said. "For example, take that picture of a plant on the PowerPoint presentation over there," as she points to the computer station in her room. "I started by asking myself

‘How will I do this?’ I talked myself all the way through it. Sometimes I talk out loud. Probably a disability.”

When asked why she talks to herself, Ann responded with, "It goes back to who I am--I can't stand to fail. When I get up to do a lesson, I have to know what I'm talking about. It's a rehearsal for me. I can find things I'm missing. Or if I have made an error, I can make a correction."

Ann often takes action as a result of dialogue with herself and others, but not always. Sometimes in the lounge when she hears teachers talk over an idea, she goes back to her room and adapts the idea for her own lessons. She admitted that she weighs what she hears and talks over; she uses maybe 20 to 25 percent of what she hears. As she said, "I am very discriminating in what I borrow! Not everything I do is right. I have worked hard, but if I hear ideas, I'll borrow and adapt. But if I can't see the benefit I won't do it."

When asked how the dialogue with self and the dialogue with others interacts, Ann related that the dialogue with others was often an impetus for the dialogue with herself. For example, she recently talked to a sixth grade teacher about a math activity idea. Then she talked with herself about how she could adapt it to third grade math. And she asked herself, 'How will it work? How will it help them?' The two dialogues became connected as she sort of "walks" back and forth between the two conversations. She also used the dialogue with herself to evaluate what the other teacher had said as well as to evaluate the credibility of that teacher. Ann used the inner dialogue to evaluate the other person and the idea, while the outer dialogue she has had with the person was a sort of impetus to this inner conversation. Ann related "as the inner dialogue comes to the front, the outer dialogue goes to the back." Her use of "front" and "back" seemed to indicate which one of the two types was predominate or most important and that importance shifted.

There seemed to be no set time or place for these conversations. The inner conversations and visualizations that Ann describe never really seemed to stop. She thinks about issues from the classroom all the time. "I dream it. You can't ever get away from it



[thinking about the classroom]. It's ingrained. I think about school issues at school as the day progresses, but also at home. My best thinking time is before I go to bed. I like to think about the day. What I did and how it went. I think through problems and try to think of solutions. Last year I had a problem that I thought about so much I finally had to get sleeping pills because I would wake up at 3 or 4 in the morning. Ann thinks about successes as well as problems. She believes that most of her solutions come intuitively. "I don't know if it is a gift or not. Sometimes I just feel in my gut what is the best thing to do."

"I worry about my class this year. I have an ESL [English as a Second Language] student Crystal who will leave soon when her parents move to the next job or back to Mexico for a while. She has been in ten schools in three years. The parents ask me if I think it [moving] is affecting her. Do you tell them 'yes!' and worry them about something they can't change or do I simply encourage them to support her because I know they will continue to move. I ended up telling them, 'Crystal is very intelligent. Work with her.' Crystal is resilient and smart. I have to believe she will be okay . . . ."

The next part of the case is the narrative constructed from my series of observations.

### Observations of Ann

In order to have a focus when I went into the subjects' classrooms, I developed three observation forms that guided my observations. (See Appendix E.) I did not believe I could observe everything each time, so I focused one form on the characteristics of reflective teachers, the second one on the actions of reflective teachers, and the third one I used twice because it focused on two things very closely related: the reflective process and the context for this process.

Walking into Ann's room, I immediately felt the warmth, calmness, and stability that pervade all that goes on in the learning environment here. We did all the interviews in Ann's room, so I had many opportunities to note the surroundings. The first thing that I noticed about the room was that there was “stuff” everywhere, yet the room was never in a state of disarray; it was extremely neat and tidy. Everything about the room said, “you are important to me, learning is important, and attitude is all important.” It was pleasant and colorful and definitely decorated and arranged to meet the needs and interests of children.

As my eyes panned the room I saw a poster on the podium that read “Intelligence is more important than your IQ.” On the wall nearby were the “Rules for Learning” which included “Listen Carefully, Exert Yourself, Aspire to Achievement, Reason Well, and Nurture your Interests and Talents.” There were other motivational quotes on the cabinet doors and wall. I noticed a calendar wall with all sorts of activities to do with the children when talking about the calendar, a word wall, posters of sounds of all the letters, and small placards of printed and cursive letter examples. There was a place for “Math Words,” and one for “homonyms.” Books were everywhere; the entire chalk rail was lined with books. There were science posters, a number line, and a major focal point was a poster of “Life Principles: mutual respect, friendship, responsibility, self-discipline, perseverance, compassion, honesty, courage, and cooperation.” There was a poster on the door with the parts of a plant labeled. A colorful wall-hanging proudly displayed Ann's philosophy: “A teacher is a special friend whose love and kindness never end.” The daily schedule was printed neatly on the white board behind Ann's desk. There was a space for a writing prompt and a math problem for the day. The one today read, “Arthur is 53 inches tall. His 3-year old brother Andrew is 25 inches tall. How much taller is Arthur than Andrew?” The computer schedule was on the wall. And I saw only from behind Ann's desk a storage room that was chocked full of boxes, but each one was neatly, clearly

labeled. Ann had only one computer station in her room, but there were a TV, videos, and a VCR.

In the center of the room were “pods” of desks, with three or four children seated together. Only two desks were not in pods, and seated only one child; one was near the front of the room and the other was directly in front of Ann's desk. Eleven girls and six boys occupied the seats in Ann's third-grade classroom this year.

Over the course of the semester that I observed in Ann's room, I hoped, through watching her behaviors, to understand more about the reflective process. My first observation was prior to the first interview, to just get a feel for the physical context from which the interview responses would come. The next time I came to Ann's room to observe, all the children were busily working on a project. Though some whispered to one another, all were clearly on task. They were clustered in groups of three, except for one boy. Ms Allen, the assistant was helping the children with their projects. Ann was engrossed in conversations and helping students. When she realized I that I had come in, she acknowledged my presence with “We're doing Christmas around the world. These are second graders.”

Ann announced, “Boys and girls, on the board you see the word *Christmas*. Next we're going to do something called an *acrostic*, especially with things related to Sweden.”

As she moved around the room, stapling papers and talking to the children at the same time, she continued, “Boys, and girls, when Ms. Allen serves you the sweet rolls, I want you to remember your best Edison manners . . . . I want to hear some good manners.”

Softly to one student for whom she was stapling, Ann said, “How's that baby brother? Growing like a weed? Sleeping all night.” (I could not hear the girl's responses.)

“Does anyone remember St. Lucia?” As the children began to shout out their answers, Ann gently reminds them, “Remember to raise your hand.” “Thank you, Joey

for raising your hand.” Joey told the class who St. Lucia was. In telling about her, he mentioned that she was the oldest daughter of the king. Ann asked, “Does anyone remember another word for *oldest*?” Someone remembered *eldest*. “That’s right; thank you,” said Ann.

Ann heard the children saying “Thank you” to Ms. Allen who was serving the rolls, and Ann responded with, “I appreciate the good manners I am hearing. What a nice group of second graders . . . . Just a few second graders are too noisy.”

“Please put the crayons back. Remember you borrowed them, so we have to put them back. I asked my third-graders if they minded if you borrowed their crayons and pencils. They didn’t mind if you put them back.”

Some students gathered and threw away the napkins from the snacks. “Thank you to all the volunteers. I appreciate your help.”

“Now I need you to focus up here (at the board) and we are going to do an acrostic with the word *Christmas*.” Ann proceeded to doing the word game with them. The children called out the words as Ann wrote them on the board. The first was *Christmas* for “C”, then *hat* for “H” because they made Christmas hats. For “R”, one little girl proudly said *wreath*. Ann gently replied, “That is a Christmas word all right, but it has a silent letter: *wreath* sounds like it starts with an “R,” but it really starts with a “W” that makes no sound for us to hear.” The children chose *reindeer* instead. As they progressed through the word, they came up with *icicles*, *St. Nicholas*, *tree*, *Merry Christmas*, and when they got to the “A,” one child said *happy*. Ann asked the children to say *h-a-p-p-y*. She explained the “h” is like the “h” in *hound dog*. She had the children say *h*, *happy*. Another student came up with *angel* for “A.”

As they started the last letter “S,” there was a myriad of hands waving in the air and excited murmurs and calling out of words. Ann paused and very quietly and calmly stated, “I have a rule in my class that you’ll find out next year. If you raise your hand and make a lot of noise, you’ll be the last one I call on.” The fervor in the room calmed and

the students simply raised their hands with no outbursts. Ann called on a girl who contributed *stocking* to complete the acrostic.

It was time for the second graders to leave. Ann used an organized method of deciding order for line up, "If you have on green you may come to line up." Those students came to the door. "If you have on white you may come to line up, please." I noticed all the second graders looking at their clothing to be certain they knew what colors they had on in anticipation of the next color Ann would call. She proceeded with blue, pink, black until all the students were in line to leave.

After the second graders left, Ann explained to me that it was Schoolwide Enrichment Day and the students were traveling to different teachers to learn about Christmas around the world. She was doing Christmas in Sweden.

As the third graders returned, Ann welcomed them and praised that they were coming in like "good Edison Tigers." As they were getting settled, Ann showed me the PowerPoint presentation she had developed on Christmas in Sweden. She also explained that she had developed a PowerPoint presentation for reviewing for the ITBS (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills). She had done it for a workshop and was going to refine it to show her kids in January, February, and March. Ann does workshops for teachers learning about technology at Vo-Tech at night. I wanted to ask Ann what she had been thinking as she responded to the students, but, I was here to watch, not to interview; besides she had to get the kids ready to go to lunch.

January 5, 1999 as I entered the room, Beth was reading a story about a great dog sled race in Nome, Alaska. Pausing frequently to interact and discuss with the students, Ann constantly validated their contributions. She listened carefully to the questions the students had and answered thoughtfully. Ann is a master at curriculum integration; she does it all the time. In this instance she integrated math and vocabulary studies into the discussion of the story. Not only did she ask the students a problem about the difference in distance between the junior and senior races, she asked them how they figured out the

answer. She wrote on the board as they told her the process by which they had come to the answer.

Ann not only scaffolded problem solving and modeled thinking through a process, she allowed students time to think and re-think. During the discussion process Eddie gave a wrong answer to one of the questions, but Ann did not tell him it was wrong, she simply repeated the question and allowed him time to rethink his answer and answer again. He got the right answer the second time and Ann reinforced that. She frequently asked them to compare what was happening in the story to their own lives and experiences.

Constantly aware of who was listening and engaged and who was not, Ann prodded gently to refocus some students' attention: "I'll wait till everyone's ready to listen and I know that by your sitting up tall and having eyes focused up here." Always calm, quiet, and polite, Ann used lots of praise to keep kids connected to the whole class activity. She said "Thank-you for your answer or contribution" frequently. I noticed her move close to a student who was off task. Another time, she moved toward a boy who was turned around, and gently turned his shoulders toward the front.

When they were working on summary sentences, Ann reminded them to choose their words carefully. She called on students to read their creations, and reinforced ones that made a good model by repeating them.

Another time I observed Ann and the students in a math lesson. She began with a review, then started the lesson for the day: counting money. Relating the importance of this concept to their own lives, Ann cautioned, "Counting money is important. Just because a machine tells how much [change] to give you, does that mean they gave you the right amount?" The children shook their heads from side to side. "How will you know if you can't count money? We have a problem on the board and we are going to use our problem solving plan."

"First of all what do we know?" As they moved together through the problem, Ann helped the students to ignore irrelevant information in the story problem. She allowed Sabrina to move to get a better view of the problem on the board.

"After we know what the problem is, we need to know how we will solve it, so what is our plan?"

Some of the children said, "We could add." "O.K.," confirmed Ann, "We could use addition. Is there any other way to solve the problem?" "Subtraction," contributed Chris. Ann did not give the children an algorithm; she let them construct their understanding of the process that had to occur to solve this problem. After they solved it, and added some new words to the math word wall, Ann brought their focus back to the practicality of the concept. "If you didn't know how to do this, could you lose some money?" "Yes!" they all agreed.

The next time I came into Ann's room, the children were quietly working, some by themselves and some in pods of four, reading a science-based fiction book and answering comprehension questions. Ann asked the class, "Boys and girls, are we using complete sentences for our answers?" She reminded them of the directions and asked that anyone who had not used complete sentences to correct that. She inquired if someone could refresh their memories on what a complete sentence is. She had a volunteer who said that it must have a subject and a predicate, begin with a capital letter and end with punctuation.

She was bent over helping one group of students, and I heard her say, "Yes, don't forget your punctuation. I'm glad you caught that." I was seeing what I perceived to be reflection-in-action as Ann moved around the room and had to think of the right questions on the spur of the moment to help students with their comprehension of the book. I saw her asking what appeared to be "on the spot" questions to help them glean meaning from what they were reading, but I was unable to hear what those questions were.

One little boy got up and came to ask Ann a question. She bent down to him and whispered. He returned to his seat and raised his hand. She then went to inquire about

what he wanted. Always calm, always polite, always using quiet tones, Ann constantly monitored and reinforced her expectations about behavior.

She reminded the class to check their spelling. She modeled what she wanted them to do: "I ask myself, 'Am I right?' Then I check the dictionary to see if I am right."

The boy, who had gotten up from his chair, wanted to know how to spell a word. Ann did not spell the word. She wanted him to solve the problem and to use a dictionary. So she helped him. She scaffolded the task so that he could manage it. The word was *government*, so she asked "What sound does the word start with? What letter is that? What is the next sound? What letter do you think comes second?" Ann moved a little ways away to check on another pod. Joey was looking in the dictionary, and she came back to check on him. She did not leave him floundering, looking for a word he couldn't spell, but at the same time, she did not do the looking for him.

Ann came to where I was sitting taking notes and explained that Joey was a classic example of learned helplessness, and she had to push him or he would do nothing for himself even though he is very capable.

Another time when I came into Ann's room, they were getting ready for a science test. Ann prompted, "All eyes on me" to get their attention before the instructions. "I like the way Sabrina is ready. Everything we studied in Module B is on the test. I want you to think back on what we have talked about." She allowed them some think time.

She handed out the test and asked, "What do you do if you don't understand the question?" One student responded, "Reread."

"That's right, what else can you do?"

Another said, "Skip it."

"That's right. These are our test taking tips."

Ann went over the directions with them, "I want you to answer the questions in complete sentences. Put your hand up if you believe a complete sentence starts with a capital letter." The class raised their hands.



"I want you to put your hand up if you believe it ends with punctuation, has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought." The class raised their hands. "O.K., good I know you know what a complete sentence is, and I won't worry about that." As they prepared to begin the test, Ann encouraged the students, "O.K., Do a good job. I want quality." Ann moved around the room, monitored, and answered questions as the children earnestly worked.

She made her way over to where I was and shared as an aside that the test was really just to tell her what they knew so she will know what to re-teach. She would go over it with them and give them the correct answers because bottomline, she wanted them to know the material.

Morgan finished the test early. She came up to Ann and announced, "I'm finished." Ann said nothing; she simply raised her hand. Morgan said, "Oh!" She returned to her seat and raised her hand. Ann then went to address Morgan's concern. As the students finished the test, each got out his/her independent reading book and began reading. I looked at Ashley's paper when she turned it in. For the definition of *photosynthesis* she wrote: "The sun's light shines on the plant. It helps the plant to grow and it gives out oxygen. The plant stores sugar and starch. Carbon dioxide comes in the plant like sunlight. Water comes up the stem and meets the sugar, sunlight, and carbon dioxide." I was impressed with the level of academic achievement Ann was getting from these children.

Ann monitored and knew what was going on at all times--in all parts of the room--almost magically. She floated around the room, answered questions, and never appeared flustered. I saw students ask her a question; I saw her pause, and then respond.

She displayed amazing organizational skills. Most of the tests were turned in and the students were reading when she announced, "Boys and girls, I am going to give you bathroom breaks." A few minutes later, "A-G may go to your bathroom break." The process continued periodically until all have had that opportunity.

The intercom came on, and a voice called Curtis to the office. Ann explained to me that he was in a fight earlier. " He is normally a quiet child, she said, but when he gets angry, he explodes."

I noticed that Colton turned and frequently looked back at me. I thought he was checking to see if I was still here and taking notes, but then I figured out the clock was on the wall behind me and he was, I think, watching the clock. I asked Ann about him and when she explained his home life to me I am amazed that Colton is even at school. I saw his art work displayed in the hall, and it showed unusual talent. Ann said he was her success story of the year; she had been able to hold on to him through his art.

Ann turned her attention back to the class, "How many have not finished the science test? Just a few? Then, turn it in now and I will let you finish this afternoon when we go to computer lab. The rest of you put your reading books away. I promised some people they could take a five's test today. Even if you're not taking it, I want you in a math mode. I want you to practice every night for 15 to 20 minutes to learn your times tables. How many of you used your flash cards last night?"

Ann then gave a timed test on the five's. Morgan, of course, finished first.

Ann, "Oh, some of you were very close. [Ann had seen Chris erase.] Class, I want to caution you not to erase on a timed test because that slows you down."

Ann then went over the five's times table with them. They wrote down what they did not have and she said, "Now what are you going to do with these tonight?" In unison, they shouted, "Study!"

Ann reminded them, "The only person you are competing with is you." As she was moving toward the door, Ann hit her leg on the trash can. Tiffany exclaimed, "Oh, Ms. Glover, are you all right?" Ann answered, "Yes, I am. Thanks for asking. I'm just kind of clumsy." The students seemed to adore Ann, and this was just one example of their concern for her.

“Right before we go to lunch, I want you to do something for me. On the board you see some numbers, please go through these and round them off. I found out from your last math test that you did not know *estimate* and *round-off* mean the same thing.” Ann did some of the numbers with them and asked them to do the others on a piece of paper. As she moved around the room looking at their papers, she reminded them this is an activity to learn, not for a grade. “I just need to see that you know it. If you get stuck, skip it, and we’ll do it together.”

Ann used a page with a numberline on the overhead to go over the estimation work. To show they knew how to round the number from the exercise, the students came up to the overhead and put a mark on the numberline. Ann constantly articulated the difference between *about* and *exact* to reinforce what they are learning about estimating. Next, they solved a short story problem involving estimation together. Ann asked someone to explain what they did. Morgan explained. But Chad explained the process differently. Another student had a sort of mixed-up answer, so Ann said, “Let me see if I understand,” and restated the girl’s answer. “Is that what you meant?” The girl said, “Yes.” Whether that was what the girl really meant or not I’ll never know, but I do know that Ann helped a vulnerable little third grader save face in front of her peers.

### Ann’s Journal

The journals gave me an opportunity to look at and learn more about the characteristics of reflective practice from the participants' own written reflections. To analyze this data, I formulated seven questions and looked for the answers to those questions in their journals. I found what they reflected on, when they reflected, where they reflected, and how these internal reflections seemed to be interacting with outer conversations they were having with students and peers. I gave the participants spiral notebooks at the onset of the study; the participants showed varying degrees of diligence

in and commitment to responding in the journals than others. I organized the information I gleaned from their journals around the following seven topics: When they reflect; where they reflect, why they reflect, what they reflected on, how they reflected, how they came to be reflective, and how the internal dialogue, or the self-reflection of the journal writing, interacted with outer dialogue, or conversations with others. (See Appendix F for questions to organize journal data.) (See Appendix H for selected entries from their journals.)

### When?

According to Ann's journal entries, she reflected on school most of the time at the end of the school day (Oct. 26, 27, Nov. 2, Dec. 1, 7). But she also reflected during the school day. On November 4th she wrote, "I pretended to be a 3rd grader today during math lesson . . . . I asked questions I thought they would ask. It seemed to work. I think it gave them a lot of insight on how to think through a problem before they answer it. Almost everyone put their hand up when I asked them if it helped." Sometimes when she was making lesson plans, Ann reflected: "I think I'll stop in math next week and just go back and review" (Nov. 10).

### Where?

Ann did not give many clues in the journal entries as to where she was. She did write about thinking she had done during lessons which led me to believe much of her reflection went on in the classroom. I noted, too, when I was in her room that her journal was on her desk.

### Why?

Most of the time it seemed that Ann reflected to take action because a previous action, either hers or the students'. If a lesson had not worked and she felt she needed to

re-teach it, she thought about what she should do (November 6). She wanted to understand the students' perspective, so she often thought of a situation as they might think of it. Other motives for her reflection were to adapt lessons and just basically to better prepare students. How to understand and help students who have more challenges than most kids seems to be a source of reflective behavior for Ann. For example in the December 1st entry, Ann wondered about Maria who had been suspended, but more importantly about her being a third grader couldn't read. Originally Ann thought the girl had just arrived from Mexico, but had since learned that Marie had been here for three years and in the public school system but still had no phonics skills. Ann was beginning to wonder if a learning disability was at the center of Maria's academic problems. In this entry she thought about Maria and vowed to investigate this further. To try to understand puzzling actions, to take action, to make adjustments, and to solve problems were all answers to the "why" of reflective self-talk for Ann. She also evaluated lessons (Nov. 20) in order to re-teach them (Nov. 24). Ann evaluated the whole day sometimes in her reflections: "We had a pretty good day today" (Oct. 26). She even evaluated her own feelings: "I feel good" that most remember the concept (Oct. 26). She even evaluated materials such as a textbook (Oct. 27). Ann sometimes changed a lesson for the next day as a result of thinking about what she had heard or seen that day (Oct. 27). She also reflected as a part of planning. "I'm not sure I'm going to start out with chapter 1 or go on to 2 first, then 3 and then do Chapter 1" (Nov. 19).

### What?

In the October entries, I found Ann reflecting on a reading lesson (Oct. 26), the difficulty of an assignment (Oct. 26), student progress (Oct. 26), individual students (Oct. 26), curriculum (Oct. 29), and a video on block scheduling (Oct. 29). In November, the entries indicated that Ann's thoughts centered on behavior of a student (Nov. 2), student progress (Nov. 2), class progress (Nov. 2), her relationship with students, and on a new

student (Nov. 4, 5). In the December entries, Ann was concerned with the lesson format that used PowerPoint (Dec. 3); she was wondering what helped students to learn (Dec. 3). As with other entries, Ann reflected on an individual student and his accomplishments (Dec. 7). Student learning problems and their progress or lack thereof were always of concern to Ann in her journal writing.

### How?

Only a few of Ann's entries addressed how she reflects.

She pretended to be third graders sometimes and tried to understand the lesson from the students' perspective (Nov. 4). She asked questions she thought they would ask.

Constantly she made a connection between behavior and attitude (Nov. 5). She indicated the new student seems low academically, so she called his last teacher and discovered that not only had the student had difficulties academically, he had low self-esteem. Ann related the two, "He also has behavior problems that I imagine stem from his academic problems."

### How became reflective

I found nothing in Ann's journal that indicated how she became reflective.

### How the internal conversation interacts with an external one

Several entries gave indications that the external conversations prompt inner dialogue with herself. For example, on November 3, she talked with Colton's dad to try to understand Colton, then later she thinks back on that conversation for more answers or explanations. She also talked to the teacher at the last school where the new student last attended to better understand the student's challenges (Nov. 5). She talked to a counselor to find ways to help Eddie (Nov. 5) which seemed to be replayed in her head to continue her workable relationship with Eddie. What Anthony said sparked an idea for diagnosing

the problem in math (Nov. 6). The outer conversations are often the impetus for bringing a reflection into being. Implicit in the December 4 entry is that Ann had talked to another teacher about Maria's needs in reading; Ann was taking action as a result of that conversation. She had thought about it and decided to put Maria in first grade reading during reading time (Dec. 4).

Through the interviews, observations, and journals with Ann I was able to understand more about reflective practice and the process of thinking constantly about one's practice with student learning as the goal. That seemed to be what drives Ann.

## Rita's Interviews

A veteran elementary teacher, Rita has been teaching "these little ones" as she calls them for about half of her career. You would never guess that she has been teaching twenty years when you see her youthful face that literally lights up with her twinkling eyes and perpetual sunny smile. This is a lady who holds a pajama party to cap off the Nighttime, Lullabies, and Rhymes unit, complete with a tent and s'mores! The children and Rita, garbed in their pajamas, read stories in the tent with a flashlight.

Pursuing a childhood dream, Rita began college after high school, but put that dream on hold after only one year to get married, and later to raise a son. At the age of thirty-three, "the old familiar passion returned, only stronger." With a promise to herself and family that they would come first, she returned to school in the late 1970's, graduating from Northern Oklahoma College in 1977. Then she continued at Northwestern Oklahoma State College where she graduated in December of 1978. Rita taught first, 2nd and 4th grades at Blackwell for ten years before coming to the current school district in 1989 where she taught 6th grade for one year and kindergarten for nine years. In the summer of 1990 she returned to school for a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. She has been a site Teacher of the Year and is held in high regard by not only the early childhood teachers in the district, but also by those at the university level who frequently send her student teachers to mentor.

My first interview appointment with Rita was November 16, 1998, at 3:20 p.m. I arrived a little early, and Rita was standing outside with the students who were lined up (sort of) against the building waiting for the bus or their mothers in order to go home. Rita was busy corralling little ones, zipping up coats, and tying shoes, talking to and waiting with the kindergartners, but older students would come by and tap her on the arm, hug her or simply speak to her. Very few children went by without acknowledging Rita in some way. When her students were all safely on the bus or in a car, Rita and I walked in



to her kindergarten room, the first classroom on the left inside the brand new building that serves one of the lower socio-economic sectors of the community. A schoolwide Title I school, most of the students here are on free or reduced lunch. There is a high population of Native Americans, and the district's elementary ESL (English as a Second Language) program to serve the growing Hispanic population is located at this site.

At the heart of what she does, Rita believes learning must be fun, but it must also be substantial to be learning. When I asked her if she ever asks herself why or why not something is working, she replied, "Oh, yes a lot, I change a lot! I do a lot of changing every year. I make decisions based on student interests and ability." And when I asked her how she became this way, she indicated that bad school experiences when she was in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades made her realize that teachers have to differentiate curriculum for different abilities and vary activities to keep students interested.

Committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn, Rita emphasized that "kindergarten is very taxing; it takes a lot of time." She made the point that teaching in general requires time and commitment, but early childhood education does especially, "The young ones need so much more." In emphasizing how difficult yet rewarding her job is she commented, "it drains you . . . getting hugged all the time. They [the students] need your understanding and praise. But it also fulfills me . . . Together we [the students and Rita] fulfill each other." Rita expressed a tremendous responsibility that she feels: "Someone has to get these kids started off. You have to let them know you *love* them and *care* about their learning."

Continuing to describe her students and their willingness to learn, Rita reminded me that "They learn from everything around them. But first I have to help them focus in. . . and I have to make them feel safe and secure." Rita asserted that feeling safe and secure as well as being rested and fed are all important to being able to learn; a lot of the kids she has don't have support for these prerequisites at home. Other beliefs Rita expressed about

learning included: repetition is very important in early learning, making examples relevant to their lives; and most of all programs and curriculum must be age-appropriate. I asked her to elaborate on the last characteristic. She responded that curriculum can't have a lot of "play stuff" that is not directly related to what they are learning. Also with the young ones, there can't be so much graphics on a page that they can't sort out the activity. And manipulatives are so important! Learning, according to Rita, is a constructive system, and learning styles are evident even in kindergarten. I asked her how she determines the students' learning styles. "Watch and observe," she responded, "I have no formal assessment." She established learning centers that appealed to the different learning styles. She watched the kids to see what they preferred. The kinesthetic migrated to the sand box; the linguistic learners spent most of their time in the book corner; the auditory students liked the recorder center where they can go and listen to a book. When I asked Rita how she came to her understanding of how children learn, she indicated it was a combination of things: coursework, workshops, and experiences in the classroom, but mainly watching and observing her students.

I asked Rita if she ever made mistakes in teaching. "Oh, yes," she replied. So I asked her what she does when she discovers what she has considered a mistake. "I back up, recover, and do it over." I asked her to explain this process further. She said she looks at the mistake and tries to find an alternative. For example, if the class just "didn't get it" when she teaches something, she looks for a better way to teach the concept and she re-teaches it.

I asked her how she became this way. Her answer was that from childhood experiences with her parents and teachers she learned that there are alternatives and there are solutions. She has learned over the years that offering little ones alternatives helps them to become autonomous. When I probed further I found that Rita had a dad who had a bad temper and gave no second chances, but her mom always gave a second chance to

Rita. In school, she had not been a fast learner and she was a "talker" who frequently got in trouble for talking. A teacher decided she couldn't keep Rita from talking, so she capitalized on it and made Rita her "Telephone Girl" who delivered messages whenever the teacher needed. She praised Rita for the good job she did as "Telephone Girl." Rita said she learned to regulate her talking in class because the teacher had given her an outlet for it and because it wasn't something that got her in trouble any more. What she learned from that teacher is that there are alternatives; something negative can be turned into something positive. Rita has always "tried to find a better way to do something" as a result, she believes, of these childhood experiences.

She has applied what she learned to her instructional practices and to guiding the behavior of children. She believes "if you can explain instead of just telling a child 'no' or 'don't do that' and offer alternatives that you can help the child develop autonomy." She often conferences with her kindergartners one-on-one or in pairs if there is a problem and helps the child or both children to find an alternative.

Rita spends a lot of time preparing lessons and materials for her kindergarten class. She spends at least 2 to 2 1/2 hours every day after school plus 30 minutes to 1 hour before school. She also spends three to four hours preparing class materials in the evening. She explained that the children are so little there is a lot they can't do, so preparation time for activities is greater in these early grades. She even comes back on week-ends sometimes, at least one afternoon per week-end. Why? "Because I want to make sure everything is done so I don't have to spend much time [during the schoolday] away from the kids."

When asked if her attitude toward change was positive or negative, Rita paused, "Positive, but there have been times when I was nervous or a bit hesitant about a change." An example she thought of was the move toward inclusion in the district. At first, she was hesitant, but as she came to understand more, she was in favor of it. "I wasn't really

against it, but I was sort of close-minded at first." She indicated her main concern was that she was not trained to deal with children who have severe special needs. She wondered about the liability and the responsibility. However, it had turned out to be a positive change because she came to see how valuable inclusion was for the children. The other children really benefited from being with the special needs children, but Rita still doesn't feel adequately trained.

"Why is your attitude toward change mainly positive," I asked her. "Because change usually means growth, and that's what you're moving toward in teaching. Of course I would not go along with a change that I thought was detrimental or wrong. I would speak up."

Rita considers herself to be willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints concerning educational issues. When I asked her how she came to be this way, she responded that she thought her mother had a tremendous influence there. "My mother was this way. I could go to my mother and ask about something that might be considered shocking, and she would listen even if she didn't agree. We could argue our points, and she would listen and weigh the ideas." Rita indicated she also learned as Director of Campfire to be open minded and weigh various opinions on things. Through her church experiences, she was encouraged to respect other beliefs. Even politically, she has learned not just to accept Republican or Democratic ideas, but to weigh both sides. Thus, it seems her life experiences have influenced her and various forces have shaped her flexibility of thought.

Besides being open to understanding a variety of perspectives, Rita seemed willing to learn new things. She cited going back to school to get a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education as an example of a need to learn more when the status quo was not working. She had elementary certification but when she first taught kindergarten, she realized that the day to day-and-a-half training offered at that time for teachers moving to

kindergarten was not enough. Teaching the early grades is very different from the other elementary grades. Learning what she did when she went for her Masters was well worth it.

Seeing that Rita seemed open to change and was willing to listen, weigh and even to learn new things, I wondered more about her thought processing and what role talking with herself and others played in this process. So I asked Rita if she ever thought aloud. She said, "Quite often. Sometimes, I'm not really aware. There are too many things going on and I will say 'Where did I put that?' Sometimes, I think aloud to implant something in my brain--to help me get it to stick."

I asked her how she became that way. She responded that the influence probably began with her mother who would articulate her thoughts so Rita could hear how she was responding to something or reasoning through it. Rita, in turn, did that with her own son when she wanted to give him a model for how to reason through something. She also does so with her students, and even with her husband. It seems to inform others of her thoughts in a less threatening way and it gives a model of a process for reasoning.

I asked her if she often talks with others about teaching? "Sherry (the other kindergarten teacher at the school) and I talk a lot!!!" In this district for a time due to a lack of space in the elementaries, there was a Kindergarten Center and all eight elementaries bussed their kindergarten students to a building the district rented from the city. Rita alluded to that configuration when she says, "At the Kindergarten Center we talked a lot and shared!" She indicated "the kindergarten teachers talk to upper grade teachers about students because we have had them before." But Rita said she also talks with neighbors and friends about educational issues. She indicated she probably talks to others more than most teachers because talking about teaching and learning is something she thoroughly enjoys. She loves to go to conferences and conventions to talk with other educators. As she said, "My hobby *is* school. It is the *main interest* in everything I do."

Besides talking to others about school, I asked Rita if she talks to herself about school issues, specifically does she often talk a teaching situation over in her head? "Yes," she answered without hesitation. "When?" I asked. "Mainly when I go to bed. For about an hour, I run the day through my head. I ask myself such questions as 'How can I present something differently?' 'How can I back up and do something again?'" When I inquired how this is beneficial to her, she responded that mainly it was helpful when she makes lesson plans; she uses the ideas she has come up with and conclusions she has drawn in preparing future lessons. When I asked her how she came to do this, she responded that it is basically her personality. She watched her mom talk to herself, and she has always talked to herself to figure things out. She also learned that her son learned to talk things over with her first or rehearse them before he went to talk to his father. She applied this to her classroom; Rita talked through the lesson or unit with the kids sometimes before she did it. Sometimes after a unit was finished, she talked with the students; their feedback helped her in adjusting the unit for the next time.

I asked her if the dialogue she has with herself and the dialogue she has with others ever interact. "Yes," she says. "For example when I plan a unit, I talk to the kids, then I take what they say and mull it over in my mind. Then I pull out the relevant stuff, tie it to their experiences. I weave together things I want to happen with what they want."

I asked her when she thinks about issues from the classroom. "All the time, but mainly after I go to bed. School is on my mind a lot. When there's something I'm concerned about, I'm consumed with it." I asked her if she replays the situation in her head? She said, "Yes, and some of it is vivid. I replay it like a video." On a scale of 1-10, Rita gave herself a ranking of "at least an 8 or 9" in being imaginative. She loves to make up stories, and she loves puppets. This imagination goes to work on school issues when something goes wrong, and she creates and re-creates situations in her mind. When I asked why she is this way, Rita responded that life in general makes us step back and

reconsider and reevaluate actions and events. She said she has always wanted to be the best that she can be. "In teaching I never stop trying--that's my basic problem."

"Why do you say *problem*? I asked. "I don't know . . . . I just haven't achieved everything I could. There are so many things I'm interested in. I want to do it all."

She attributed being imaginative and being able to visualize scenes in her head, partly to the time she grew up in. Rita talked about students today being used to visuals, videos, and instant replay; she didn't have those things, so her imagination developed as a result of her creating the pictures. "There was no instant replay, so we had to imagine it. The brain is different today."

Committed to her students and their success, Rita reflects on school "24 hours a day . . . . When there is a problem that arises, when we start a new unit--*all* the time." As she pointed out, "more times than not, nothing's ever really the same. I don't know what they'll say or do next." She also finds that the longer she's been teaching, the greater the tendency for the teaching to be automatic and she said, "You have to tell yourself that you have to be fresh."

I asked her if she sometimes replays an event, thinks about it, and recreates it? "Of course," she said, especially when she was doing something new. She often "puts on the brakes, thinks about it and goes over it and the first formed ideas are wiped out." I asked for a specific example, and she told me about the paper unit. She had given the children six or eight different types of paper. They couldn't handle that many. One child was tearing it to pieces. "Instead of saying 'No, No, No,' next time I didn't give them all the paper at once. We sat in groups, and they felt the different pieces one at a time, switched and responded."

"Another example was one time we were talking about families and how not all families are not the same. I was aware and thought I had planned for all different types adequately, but I had one little boy who was in tears after the lesson and I asked why. He

said, 'You didn't say my family. I am in a foster home. Nobody wants me in a real family.'" This is one type she had not considered, so she had to think on it and recreate part of this lesson with the rest of the class. Rita asked him how he would like her to explain to the other boys and girls about his kind of family. She reminded him he is as important as the rest. She explained his family to the class as a temporary family called a foster family.

In situations like this one, Rita didn't have a lot of time to think about what to do. But I asked her about conditions that prompt her best reflection. She said the best time is in the evening after Don (her husband) has taken his shower and gone to bed: "The TV is off and I put on some music, get a cup of hot chocolate and just think about the day, especially if I've goofed up a lot or I think about the work I need to do." She had told me earlier that she thinks about the children and school 24 hours a day, so I asked about the conditions at school that best prompt reflection. Again, she reminded me that she is thinking all the time, but when the children go to art or music, she has time to think. Also after school, "before I pack up, I stop and sit in the rocking chair--actually I do that whenever I need to take time to breathe." Rita told me, "I replay the day every day--good or bad. Sometimes something good happens and I bath in it--that's nice. For example, a student Jessica told me yesterday when I was coloring, 'You're doing a nice job, Mrs. Martin.' Or the other day I received a note from a parent thanking me for spending extra time with her son. It said, 'I want to thank you for taking your time when you don't have to.' The rewards come from appreciation and small everyday things."

#### Observations of Rita

The first day I entered Rita's kindergarten room, I saw her on the floor with the kids in a circle. She was passing around plastic cups with plastic bears in them. A white



sheet of paper was in front of each child. What she was about to do was tell a story (which is really a math story problem) and they were to act out the story problem using the bears. Rita gave a gentle reminder, "I need your ears. I need your bears to be quiet." Then she whispered, "Just your ears."

The mat became a playground in the park and the children added and subtracted using their plastic bears as Rita related the narrative, "Two bears were swinging in the park. Show me two bears." Another bear comes, and there are three and then two more come and there are five. Everybody counted the bears together. I saw that Salvador had too many and Rita noticed too, so she stopped for a minute and said, "O.K. Sweetie, touch and count with me." He realized he had one too many. The narrative continued with the Mommy bear calling one home and another mommy came in a car and picked up two. Another bear had to go home to eat. The one left didn't want to be left alone so he went home too. There was a procedure for putting up the plastic bears just as there was one for passing them out.

There were learning aids EVERYWHERE in this room. Letters in lower and capitals were on cards on the lockers and on the wall. There was a calendar board with a calendar, a weather wheel and an *All About Me* section. There were shelves of folders, chalk boards, chalk and erasers, and every little table had glue bottles, cups containing pencils, and boxes of Kleenex. There was an art center, a sand box, a listening center, a computer center, and in one corner was a carpet with the design of a whole city of roads on it and a box of block cars was nearby. Also reminders and encouraging words were all around the room, like the Tony the Tiger poster which said, "You're Great!"

After the math manipulatives (the bears) were put up, it was time for a story. There was a procedure for getting papers and back packs at their desks before they had the snack and story. Using colors to designate who would go next, the children waited eagerly for Rita to call out a color they had on so they could go get things ready to go

home. For those who didn't carry backpacks Rita had an abundant supply of Wal-Mart plastic sacks to carry work home in. One little boy was singing Christmas carols as he got a sack for his treasures. All the while Rita was putting bears up, getting things out, and checking with students about what to take home; she was never still but interacting with children at all times.

The assistant passed out the cereal, but all children waited until all had been served before they ate. As snacks (Fruit Loops) were being passed out to those who were back in the circle, the school counselor came into the room wearing antlers and a blinking red nose. Some of the children broke into singing "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer." (She was there to check on the shoe size of one of the little boys, perhaps for a donated Christmas gift.)

As Rita read the big book, the children sat on their X's (spots marked with masking tape) and listened intently. Of course, she invited their participation by asking questions about what they were reading as well as asking them to predict.

The next time I went for an observation, the two kindergarten classes were together in the adjoining kindergarten classroom. The other teacher was leading the opening ceremony for the day. They recited the school creed and sang the school song. They sang another song called "Zippity Do Da" with a lot of different beginning sounds substituted for the "Z," and "D's". The kindergartners welcomed a new student. And the teacher led a discussion of a vocabulary word from last week, wondering if any students had used it or heard it. She reminded them of a story that illustrated the word.

Then she gave them another word to listen for and use. But first they said the word together, stretched the word, said it out loud, and whispered it. Several times during the activities of opening, the children were asked to stand, stretch, or do motions of some kind so that they were not sitting the whole time. This was just one of many examples of being committed to doing whatever it takes for children to learn. Another

was listening to them, and these 5 year-olds needed to be listened to a lot. When they were having the discussion of the vocabulary word of the week, most all of the children had something to add; it was not always relevant, but the two kindergarten teachers were careful to validate what the children said. During discussions as the other kindergarten teacher asked questions and the students came up with responses, Rita would encourage the students with comments like, "Wow, these guys are just too sharp for us."

A little Native American boy was supposed to go with the assistant somewhere, but he wouldn't go. I couldn't hear the conversation, but Rita put her arm around him and talked to him one-on-one. The conversation ended with a pat on his back, and he sat next to Rita through to the end of the opening activities.

After Rita's class went back to her room, it was time for the calendar board activity (many activities dealing with letters and counting). A student leader led the class in doing the activities. They went over the day and the month and all the things at the board in both English and Spanish.

I noticed Rita constantly modeling a democracy. She asked the students for suggestions; she gave them choices. She listened intently to these young children and responded with respect. She introduced the new student as a "new friend" and they all welcomed their new friend. Once when the class got ahead of the class leader who was taking them through the Board exercises, Rita stopped the class and apologized to the leader, "I'm sorry, we just went too fast." After the student leader finished, she asked the class to give him a "celebration" (applause in different forms). Even when she corrected a student's behavior it was with calm respect, "Excuse me, Travis, could you scoot over so you won't be tempted" [to bother the boy next to him].

As she prepared the students for the next activity, she reminded them that yesterday they talked about Dr. Martin Luther King and some other famous African Americans. Today there were clouds with Dr. King and other black leaders on their

desks. They were to discuss at their tables what they thought a good leader would think the world should be like. "The student teacher and I are going to come around to your tables to hear what you think. But first let's think together, 'What do you think a good leader would like the world to be like?'" She took suggestions from the students:

"No smoking,"

"No drinking,"

" No hitting,"

"No being drunk,"

"No pinching,"

"Not breaking the law,"

"Make people feel better,"

"No fighting,"

"No taking drugs. . . ."

Rita said, "Think some more and as you color your pages, share with one another other ideas. Miss Cody [the student teacher] and I will come hear your discussions."

After that activity, it was time for a story. But prior to reading, Rita asked questions of the children who were now seated in a circle around her on the floor. (They seemed to spend a lot of their time together on the floor.) I noted that Rita constantly asked the children reflective questions, like, "We shouldn't judge people because they are different, should we? . . . . Some of you went to the parade Saturday. Who was it for? . . . .Who was he?" Rita then talked about people being cruel to those who are different. "Being different doesn't make people bad, does it?" She constantly modeled questioning with students. She did "think alouds" and answered her own questions.

For example, I had heard a couple of "think alouds" when they were doing the calendar activity earlier. Rita had said, as she looked for a plastic number three, "I put the

box away, I need to get it out because we need a three." At another point, she had made an error, and she asked the children, "Did Mrs. Martin pay attention?"

The next time I visited Rita's room, the children were standing in a circle, holding hands. Rita told them, "Everybody take a deep breath, let it out slowly. Again. Quietly. Drop hands, Sit." Rita sat on the floor with the children, "What did you do while I was gone [yesterday]?"

"We made shapes."

"What are these shapes called?"

"Tangrams!!!"

"That's right. Tangrams."

One little boy spoke up, "Mrs. Martin, he's my best friend in the whole universe."

Rita observed calmly, "That's wonderful to have best friends." Several talked about their friends. After a short time, Rita softly said, "1-2-3, all eyes on me." And the children complied.

They each had a zip-lock baggie of colored plastic shapes in front of them. "How many pieces will you have?"

"Seven!!!!"

"That's right. Count your pieces to see that you have seven. Do you remember the names of the shapes?"

"Ears only." (One of Rita's regular subtle reminders to be quiet.)

They took the pieces out of the baggie according to her directions which also allowed them to review shapes and her to see that they knew them. She had given them a pattern, and she asked them to lay the pieces on the page (pattern). Then she asked them to do it without the pattern, just to fit the pieces together in the rectangular outline of a box. She and the student teacher crawled around the inside of the circle, cheering the

students' progress. "Bravo! Bravo, Whitney." "Mark got it!" "Nathan got it!"

"Hallelujah!"

One little boy was so excited about the activity and his success with it, he asked, "Can we do another one?"

Because she had no more patterns prepared, she paused and responded, "After you have gotten it once, turn your card over and make one of your own design on the back [of the card]."

As she watched one child make a shape, she said, "Tell me about this," He goes into an elaborate explanation.

She asked the next one. But he couldn't tell what he had made, so Rita said, "You think about it and tell me later." One little girl made an "automatic machine" but I couldn't hear what it did as she and Rita visited about it.

When it was time to put up the manipulatives, there was a procedure. Rita began, "1-2-3, look at me. Put the big yellow triangle in your baggie first . . . ." She proceeded with instructions according to the shape until all pieces were in the baggies.

Next was treat and story time (both of which seemed to happen frequently). But everything was a "teachable moment" for Rita. As she read the story title, she tells why she chose this book; she tells the title, the author and who it is illustrated by. "What does *illustrated* mean," she asks. The children knew that it meant to have pictures. "Listen for the rhyming words. Where do words rhyme?"

"At the end!!!" shout the children (they confidently know this one which tells me they have talked about rhyme a lot.)

She asked about the pictures as they read. Rita was thinking of questions and responding to the children's answers with no script. Along the way she got in animal sounds, vocabulary, counting, and even some interpretive questions like, "Why is he hiding berries?" What a morning!

Rita has two sections of kindergartners a day. I tried visiting both sections equally. The next time I visited her class was in the afternoon. Rita was so involved with a student that it took her a while to notice I was there. The children were working at their tables on "d" and *go* and all the words they could make from *go* and the consonants of "fr," "l," "h," "j," "b," and "c." After they finished their papers, they played at centers, but the centers also focused on letters and sounds.

I slipped around and visited with the children. I was amazed at how on task these little ones could be with all the freedom that was given to them. At the computer station, two children explained they are working on *dog*. Taylor also told me her aunt had a ring like mine.

I sat at a table with three children who talked to me about spelling their names and about the hard work they had to do. One asked me what I was doing. I told her I was writing, too. That seemed to suffice: they were writing; I was writing. Then a little boy came up and told me I was in his seat, so I moved to another table.

Nearby Rita was tying a little boy's shoes, "Joseph, honey, we need to spend more time on our work than our shoe strings. At that time Fatima who speaks little English, brought a paper to proudly show Rita. Rita oo'ed and ah'ed over Fatima's picture. "Are you going to take this to your mom? Do you think she will like it. Will you show it to the new baby, too?"

Rita talked to the kids all the time. One child came up to Rita who was taking down a display and asked what she was doing. She said, "I am putting up Jack Frost because the groundhog told us we wouldn't have much more winter." As she moved around the room, she commented, "I like the way Jessica is working." Rita patiently traced some letters with Taylor. "Very good Jaimie. Look how nice you're doing. Look at those nice letters. I bet Mom and Dad will be proud."

One center was an art center with individual OTAG projectors which enlarge pictures so that the children could trace pictures to paint. One was a recording center where two children listened to a recording of The Grouchy Ladybug.

Rita was helping a child with an activity when Justin came up and tapped and tapped and tapped on her shoulder. She never became irritated. It was like she was oblivious to it until she turned and answered his question.

I heard her complimenting the children as she moved around the room: "Nice job; thank you for working."

"Someone made a mess with the glue. Who did that?"

"What dearest?"

One little girl forgot and called Rita "mother" but Rita responded anyway as if she were "mother" (and in some ways she is).

"You're really a good artist."

Alan fell out of his chair a couple of times and sheepishly said to me, "I'm having trouble sitting in my chair."

Rita let three students write and draw on the white board. She drew a line to separate their work from what she did. She moved Taylor so she could see the work on the board better.

Rita passed by Alan's desk and commented, "All right, Alan. This is good, sir! Will your mom practice with you tonight?"

Then as transition, Rita put on a song called "Clean-Up Time." The children sang and went about the business of cleaning up and collecting on the floor at the circle area.

Rita: "Excuse me. Who was in the writing center? We need to clean it up."

The next activity was to cut and paste groundhog pictures. So after group explanation everyone was back at his/her table busily on task. As they were working, the



children talked softly to one another. I heard Alan say in his groundhog voice, "I saw my shadow."

Alan was having trouble remembering some of the letters. Unsympathetically Taylor reminded him of all the times he hadn't been here, like when they did "C" and when they did "L." So he asked Mrs. Martin when she came by, "Was I here when we did "L"?"

Jessica reported to Rita that she didn't have a pencil, so Rita gave her one and said, "You may keep it if you don't have one."

I heard Rita tell one of the children, "Your handwriting is very neat. You must be very proud of your handwriting." Soon it was time for me to leave.

#### Rita's Journal

Next, I looked for answers to questions I framed about when, where, why, what and how Rita reflected in her journal. I also looked for how her inner thoughts interacted with outer dialogue. Of the three subjects, Rita was the most dedicated at writing in her journal. I had talked with all three about the methods of data collection that I would use in the study and I had given them notebooks when I encouraged them to record their thoughts about school, this process, or whatever they wanted over the several months' period. At the beginning of our first interview session, Rita told me that she found the journal "really helpful", especially in thinking about how things affect the kids. Rita was so devoted to writing in her journal that she even wrote on week-ends and during the Christmas Break. (See Appendix H for selected transcripts of the journals.)

### When?

Though Rita told me that she reflected on school 24 hours a day, she wrote in her journal mostly at the end of the day. As I mentioned above, she even wrote on week-ends and during her Christmas Break.

### Where?

Mainly Rita seemed to write in her journal at home, but she also wrote at school.

### Why?

Rita often wrote about planning for upcoming activities (Nov. 7, Dec. 6, Jan. 1). But she also wrote to solve problems, like what to do about unfinished projects (Dec. 9). "Things are really getting on the fast track. Seems like we'll never get everything done. We have several projects started, but none completed. Hopefully we'll just keep working and things will smooth out if we stick together." Frequently her reflective writing served the purpose of evaluating. She evaluated the kids' reaction to games, planning the Christmas program better (Dec. 12), and even a whole day, "We had a Great Day!" (Dec. 18).

### What?

Rita reflected on a variety of subjects, from a lack of parent response (Nov.1) to children's behavior (Nov.2). She wondered about their lack of attention span (Nov. 2). and whether or not the children would like the science kits (Nov.3). Several times Rita wrote about beneficial professional development activities she had attended, like the hands-on science workshop (Nov.4).

Time and materials seemed to be important issues to Rita. She wrote about both a lot. On November 12th, she worried about the amount of time to finish an activity and

how they would get it done. She thought about whether to do an activity or not next year (Nov. 13). She wrote in the entry on November 22nd that she didn't know where she would get the items for the Friendship Feast unless she bought them herself.

Frequently she wrote about the students' reaction to a particular activity. On December 1, she wrote that the kids "made Santa Calendars today, and the kids loved them, and couldn't wait to take them home." She put a lot of thought into what to make the kids for Christmas and reflected on an idea for what they could make and how she could manage the project (Dec. 1). The training date for student teacher mentoring had changed, but Rita adapted. It was a problem because the new date would back up to some other training Rita had signed up to do and that would take her out of the classroom a lot within a week (Dec.2).

She really wrestled with the task of filling out the checklist of skills on the students, but that report deadline was looming in the near future and she didn't know how she was going to assess 47 five-year-olds individually. She considered asking for mothers' help but their assessment of the students' skills was not consistent and didn't always work out (Dec. 3). She thought about how hard the students have been working and how excited they are that Christmas is coming (Dec. 4).

She seemed to think a lot about the students' reaction to activities. For example, she noted the children liked some games, even though the games were not electronic. Besides evaluating the students' reactions, Rita often reevaluated planning, curriculum, and even the students' reaction to a visit from Santa (Dec. 18).

Rita wrote about going to school during Christmas Break to take down Christmas decorations and put up new bulletin boards. While at school one day, the other Kindergarten teacher came and the two discussed information about all-day kindergarten that the other teacher had gotten from the Internet. Rita wrote about a district meeting that would take place the first day back to school after Christmas vacation; it was about

all-day kindergarten. She evaluated the feeling she had after the meeting: she felt supported and hopeful.

The first day back from the vacation brought time for Rita to think not only about her own feelings at being back, but on her perception of the students' reactions. She thought they seemed ready to be back at work. Perhaps, she thought, they had enough of "free time."

Rita also responded in her journal to articles she had read, like the one on teacher shortages. She was hopeful that the legislators would take positive action about remedying the shortage (Jan. 1).

#### How?

Rita often reflected on her own, but she also mentioned thinking about and discussing educational issues with her husband (Nov.8).

#### How came to be reflective?

There were no entries that revealed how Rita became reflective.

#### How inner dialogue and outer dialogue interact?

Rita's conversations with her husband were for the purpose of solving a problem. Rita had evidently been thinking about why the students' magnetic stars would not stick to the board. Don helped her solve the problem (Nov. 8). In other instances, Rita interacted with the other kindergarten teacher at her site to validate one another's views on all day kindergarten and to increase their personal knowledge on the subject. It was evidently something Rita had been thinking about a lot (Dec. 31, Jan. 4).

## Interviews with Pat

I first met Pat about ten years ago when she came to teach English at the high school where I was English Department Chair. She had taken her bachelors degree from Oklahoma State University in the late 1960's. Immediately after graduation she taught 7th and 8th grade language arts for one year in a local parochial school and high school English for four years in a nearby small town. Then she had her son and took time away from her career to stay at home with him until he was in school. Her husband was transferred to Houston, so she went to the University of Houston for some graduate courses when her son was small. When her husband was transferred back to this community, she took some graduate courses at Oklahoma State University and taught high school English for a year. But the local oil company where her husband worked lured her to work there as an assistant analyst in the computer and telemarketing department. That position offered more salary than a teaching job, but Pat's heart was in the classroom, and she returned to the high school English classroom in 1991.

When I think of Pat, I automatically think of dedication and high standards because of what I observed when we were at the same site and from what I hear from parents and students. She has a reputation of expecting a lot of her students, and they, in turn, rise to the level of her expectations. Currently she teaches 9th grade English, both honors sections and "regular" English. Her Honors English class is a double period and both 9th and 10th grade English are compacted into one year.

When I contacted her to be a participant, she was more than willing to help me with this project, but she wanted me to know she was planning to move and that they were getting ready for her son Darren's wedding. Therefore, I did not bother Pat until I had finished the interviews and observations with the other two participants. Our first interview was scheduled during her planning period on January 6, 1999. When I arrived, Pat was on her way to the teachers' workroom to quickly grade a couple of make-up final

exams from first semester. I followed her there to the Scantron machine, and we visited about Darren's wedding until she gave up on the key that the machine would not accept, possibly because the secretary had ordered a different form the last time.

We went back to her room which was on the second floor of a building built in the 1930's. By and large, the building seemed dark inside because there were few outside windows in the halls and there was lots of wood; the floors were covered in maroon and black tile. We walked through a wooden door with nine small frosted square panes into a room that was as sunny, organized, and immaculate as Pat is. There was one computer station. The walls were adorned with posters of animals and inspirational sayings. The first thing I noticed when I entered the room were the baskets of red silk geraniums that hung in every other window. There was a small space of bulletin board between the ceiling and the top of the chalkboard. It was covered with plaid wallpaper and topped with a border of library books. Student book reports were proudly displayed with a clothesline draped across the top of the chalk board.

As we settled into our first interview, I asked Pat if she was committed to doing what it takes for students to learn. She said, "Yes, and for that reason I don't know how long I'll do this job. As my husband says it's a 'Life-eater.' But there is no way to do it half-way!" To do this job right, Pat declared you have to do planning, provide feedback, and look critically at what kids write. She is committed to helping students grow as writers and that takes more than numbers [as grades]; it takes a tremendous amount of time to provide the feedback they need to improve. Pat insisted that she will not stay [in the profession] when the passion is gone. "I look at those faces, and I can't do less . . . . Something inside of me puts such a priority on what I do that when that goes away, I'm outta here. That wouldn't be fair to the kids [to stay with no passion]." When I asked her to rate herself on a scale of 1-10 on commitment; she did not hesitate to say "10." She paused for a moment, "I'd be better off if it weren't [a 10]. I'd be stronger if I weren't."

"Why?" I probed. "It's wearing me out . . . . I find it very hard not to be [so dedicated]. But I'd last longer if I weren't."

When I asked her how she became this way, she attributed it to her personality. But as I probed further, she reflected on her work in the computer department at Conoco and realized she did not have this kind of commitment to that work. However, she did craft shows when Darren was little and she had a very strong commitment and passion for creating designs for fireplace screens. Her work with them was very well executed and careful. As she thought through the ideas of how she became so committed to teaching, she again reiterated, "Some of it is my nature . . . and I love these kids. I like people this age. If you don't like kids this age, you have *no* business here," she confirmed.

About that time the bell rang, and her third hour students soon began filtering in. So I made an appointment to call Pat to set up another interview. When I talked to her about setting up the next interview, we couldn't find a time that didn't interfere with something she needed to get done on her planning hour, so we decided to try phone interviews and the rest of our interviews were conducted over the phone at night.

When we talked next, I asked her if besides being committed to getting students to learn, did she consider herself to care a lot about students, teaching, and learning. Pat was quick to respond, "Oh yeah, it's my biggest asset or biggest downfall. I care too much! I care more than the kids sometimes. I care about them in every way, but I probably don't care about them equally . . . . But you have *got to care* or hang it up!"

Through our conversation, Pat related a story about a boy from the American Legion Children's Home for whom she bought a GameBoy without telling him where it came from. But she stressed that it is important "to see their needs and to try to meet them. But not with just things, with your time, a pat. And it's not that you never get angry." It's simply, in Pat's philosophy, that teachers must care because some kids have such need. She has just always wanted to take care of them. I asked how she became this way, and she said, "Maybe it's the Stray-Cat Syndrome." I needed further explanation on

this response. "It's the way I got Hooch [one of her dogs]. He was starved to death and I bought a hamburger for him. I *had* to take him home. Even as a kid if something needed something, I took it in until it got going on its own. I always want to do that for kids--jump start them." That's what she was doing for Jason this year. He was a 9th grader who was close to dropping out at the beginning of this year. A poor student, but certainly capable, Jason was not accepted by the other students. He did not seem to fit in. He had long hair and no designer jeans. Because he smoked, other kids pulled away from working with him because they found the residue of cigarette smoke unpleasant. But Pat decided he was in some way like Hooch or the stray cats that she has befriended and nurtured back to strength--worth saving. Jason needed someone to show he/she cared for him as a person and as a student. Pat has shown that she cares about Jacob; she has encouraged him to get his work in; she has checked on him when he is absent; she has extended deadlines, and Jacob has flourished this year rather than becoming a drop-out statistic.

When I asked Pat how much time she spends at school outside of what is required by the contract, she said that she stays at school till 4:00 or 4:15 every day (school is out at 3:00). So an extra six hours a week is given to extra classroom work, but she also gives 15 to 18 hours a week on school work at home, and often on week-ends, she devotes a whole day to school work. She admitted that she tries to quit working on school work by 9:00 or 10:00 each night.

Convinced that her dedication to teaching is exemplary, I wanted to find out what she knows about learning. She said that learning has to be attached to things; it has to be grounded to something within the person. I asked her to elaborate. She said that it seems that kids have less and less experiential knowledge. She often asks them about current events and a lot don't have that knowledge-base. She believes people develop a mental database and the ability to access is based on intelligence. Everything new has to branch back and hook to something already there. If there is no hook, it'll slip away. She



believes that as teachers, we have to recognize that. "I want them to know that sometimes when I ask them to know something, I want them to put it in their data base so that they will be able to learn lots and lots of other things that will hook to it."

I asked Pat if she ever makes what she considers to be mistakes in teaching. She quickly responded, "Oh, yes, everyday. I make gobs of mistakes. It's pretty hard not to." If she makes a mistake during a lesson, she simply says, "I blew it!" She explained that she never tries to cover it up, but rather compliments the kids if they catch it and says, "I'm glad you brought that to my attention."

I asked her what caused her to develop "this behavior" ( I meant acknowledging mistakes and correcting behavior, but she thought I meant the making of mistakes) and she said, "Practice!" as she laughed. In a more serious vein, she related that she can admit and correct mistakes because she has confidence that she knows what she's doing most of the time. And "I feel my students know I know what I'm doing. There is an element of trust. Because they trust me, I feel it would be a disservice to cover up errors." Besides she added that her attitude about making errors builds their confidence. It creates an "environment of feeling secure on their part and my part . . . a risk-taking environment where it is okay for anyone to make an error." She extended this idea with an example. John, a student in her first hour, moved to a nearby town for a short time; then he moved back and asked to be put in Pat's class because he said it had "a neat environment." I probed a bit on what made it "a neat environment." "Oh, I don't know," she responded but as she thought on the question for a minute, she concluded it was the rapport she had with the students. They liked her, and she liked them, and therefore, they just liked it in her class.

Being conscious of the interview interfering with her grading time at night, after thirty minutes, I asked her if she wanted to stop here for this time and she responded that she was fine with the time, so we continued.

I asked her if she would consider her attitude toward change positive or negative. She responded that she is not a person who *loves* change. "But I'm probably positive. Experience has created this. I used to be more set in my ways. The more you see the benefits from positive change, the more you embrace it. For example, if there is a new way of teaching that is superior, I embrace it. Like at the AP [Advanced Placement] conferences. I get new materials and ideas. I use what works and discard what doesn't. If I see a benefit, I change. If not, I don't."

When we talked again about a week later, I asked her if she considered herself to be willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints concerning educational issues. She said, "Well, I'm pretty stubborn and opinionated, but I think I can say 'yes.'" When I probed for an example, she cited the "grammar thing," referring to a disagreement she and I had several years ago over the importance of grammar. She went on, "I used to be a hard-line grammar advocate." As she continued, she defended some grammar instruction, but said, "I listened to you and others and especially the people at the Advanced Placement conferences that I attended. I began to see that the connection between worksheets and writing has to be coaxed, we can not assume the connection is made." She went on to describe how she changed her ways and her priorities. "It [grammar instruction] needs to be done but does not occupy a major part of the curriculum."

I asked if she was willing to learn new things, even if it meant examining attitudes she may have held for a long time. "Yes," she responded and cited again the "grammar thing." Not only had she *weighed* her and others' viewpoints as she said in the previous answer, but she was willing to *learn* something new. She said that she "had always assumed that knowledge of grammar was a prerequisite for being able to write." She learned that is not the case and that a person has to be willing to accept change in ideas that impact practice even though it hurts.

On a scale of 1-10, I asked her to rate herself compared with the most teachable teachers she knows. "Seven or eight; I am one of the harder ones to convince. I have to be shaken and stirred."

I asked for an example of when she has done some re-examining recently. She described a joint history/literature project she and a history teacher have done for the past two years. "I am rethinking it because it doesn't seem effective. I was looking for something different when I ran on to this project of creating a Utopia . . . .When things don't work, you have to re-think it. If it is not having the desired effect, you must look for something else." I asked her how she determines something is not effective. She responded, "The students weren't happy. Not much learning is going on if they're not happy--Don't you think?"

She elaborated on the importance of students enjoying learning, "This year in regular English 9 for the research project they had to pick something they *liked*. I didn't care if it was skateboarding. A good time is necessary."

I asked her how she became reflective and flexible in her teaching. She confessed, "I started out unteachable. Then I had some hellacious classes where I learned I wasn't doing things right, so I looked around and saw other teachers who were having success." She said observation helped and that having her own child helped; before Darren she felt she had no real knowledge of kids. Failure in dealing with students motivated her to try other techniques. Having and dealing with her own son helped her to know how to deal with young people.

I asked Pat if she ever "thinks aloud." At first she said, "No." Then after thinking about it for a minute, she changed her mind and came up with some examples, especially in the teaching of poetry. She recounted that one day she had discussed a Dickinson poem and a Shakespearean sonnet on the power of the "inner eye" or imagination that can take a picture and reconstruct it again later. And she had time so she thought she would also have the students read a Longfellow poem on the same subject, but she had really not had

time to think it through. She just brought it in at the last minute, and so she and the class went through the poem together and figured out the meaning. She led them through steps in thinking. She also related that sometimes in grammar, she also thinks aloud to problem solve more or less for herself, but also as a model for the students. She believes if she doesn't model thinking to analyze poetry especially that the students won't be able to analyze on their own.

I asked Pat if she ever talks to other teachers, administrators, parents, or students about teaching. She said that she rarely talks with peers at school about school. "There is no time at school to visit with other teachers about issues and practices. I stay in my room between classes to visit with the kids. I eat lunch in my room to get things done. It's a survival thing--to use every minute. It's not a priority with me. Next year when we have team planning --that will be an opportunity [to talk to peers]. I do believe we could benefit from watching peers teach."

I asked her if she ever "talks" a teaching situation over in her head. "Oh, yeah! . . . . Not orally, but in my head! It is just a part of planning, and I make detailed plans."

The next time we talked, I asked if she had ever taken action as a result of dialoguing with others or herself. She responded, "Yes, I think everybody rehearses in their mind, then decides a course of action." She volunteered an example: "Yesterday, I had a situation. The research papers from first hour were really poor. They hadn't taken time, so the papers were sloppy, careless, really a pathetic performance. So I thought to myself, 'How am I going to handle this? What am I going to say?' And I rehearsed in my mind what to say to them. Then after I said my piece and talked through the process, my next problem was 'How am I now going to bridge from this to starting Romeo and Juliet? How was I going to restore peace and get them in a work mode?' It had made me very nervous to confront them. It really rattles me."

"Why?" I asked. "I hate to chew them out, but they have to know there are consequences. I hate confrontation. I don't like to hurt them. I can tell they're angry and hurt when I have to confront them. I hate that."

"Did you start Romeo and Juliet?" I asked. "No." Instead she went over outlining with them to help them get their papers better organized. "What would have made the hour better?" I asked. "I don't know," Pat responded, because she felt they had to know her disappointment with the effort they had put forth. "Did you have to do that first, before you started a new lesson?" I asked. "No, I guess I didn't," said Pat, "however, if I had saved it to the end of the hour, they would have left mad . . . . I just have to think on this some more."

I asked her if the dialogue she had with others and with herself ever interacted. She reiterated that she talks to students, to herself, but not to other adults. "I'd like to have more opportunity for Pre-AP and AP training. But as far as getting together with others, I don't have time. Now as far as the dialogue with students and with self that connects and interacts all the time. Like today, we were using poetry terms, but on the scansion part, they were talking about how we didn't do enough practice, not enough variety. That tells me that next year when I do rhythm, I need to provide more types if I think that this is a skill I want them to have." Pat told me that she also has had the students write reflective letters to her in which they tell her about their own writing and about the class. That, she says, was great feedback. She insisted that kids can be brutally honest, but also insightful. "These kids are immensely underestimated," according to Pat.

"When do you think about issues from the classroom?" I asked.

"Twenty-four-seven," she responded with no hesitation. When I asked if she replays events from the classroom in her head, she said, "yes." She confessed that she used to do more of that than she does now, "I have to protect myself from that. I used to lay awake at night."

I asked her what prompted these replays. She replied, "A mistake. If you handle something badly or you handle it what you think is well and it doesn't turn out." She added that a parent call can also prompt replays. I probed further, "Do you, in essence, hold a conversation with yourself in your head?" She responded, "Yes, it is verbal, not just an impression. There is a stream of words."

Considering these replays and conversations, I asked Pat how imaginative, on a scale of 1-10, that she thinks she is. She responded, "An 8. I'm not a very imaginative person . . . . I'm a better 'elicitor' than an 'imagineer.'" I prompted. "That's why I'm a good teacher. I'm also a good problem solver. I can create questions on the spur of the moment and reframe questions to elicit responses from the students . . . . Uh, I'm an off-the-cuff person. I never start out with examples or questions. I make sure I really know the material, and that's where I start. I don't take time to sit down and write out all the discussion questions before a discussion."

"So, you react almost intuitively or automatically sometimes?" I asked. "All the time," Pat answered confidently.

"Are there conditions that best prompt your reflections on school?" I asked. "I wish I could say there were, but mainly it is stimulated all the time in the classroom. Especially when there is a good discussion going on and that makes me want to inspire it further. It [her reflection that comes automatically and intuitively sometimes and the consequent responses] feeds on itself." She summed up the conditions that prompt reflection on school work, students, and their learning, "I just live this stuff . . . . I never get away from it."

### Observations of Pat

I usually went to observe in Pat's classroom during my lunch hour, so that was during one of her double-period Honors English 9 classes. The heading "Opener" was on

the Board and under it was an activity so that students had a task as they entered the room. (I didn't write the assignment down, but I imagine it had something to do with complements because they were a part of the day's agenda.) The students were busy as Pat floated around the room passing back papers while talking with students. She bent down to a girl near me and said gently, "Beth, I want you to do this again because I don't think you understood this at the time. Do you understand now? Do you want to show me?" Pat used every minute of the two period block and changed activities often, all the while interacting with the students.

This first activity was a review lesson on a grammar concept they had been working on. Pat and I have had many conversations about grammar as a part of high school English curriculum. She used to think it should be the bulk of 9th grade curriculum, but now she has different priorities. Grammar is still a part, but not the majority of what she teaches. In this district the 9th grade students take the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), though the teachers have reported to the district curriculum division that the tests don't align with the English curriculum well. In this district, the focus is on literacy and developing capable, competent readers and writers; the ITBS tests are in a multiple choice format which is not conducive to assessing student's writing achievement. Grammar is easier to assess with multiple choice items, so the language arts section of these achievement tests emphasizes grammatical concepts. The local Board of Education and the community insist the nationally normed ITBS tests are an important part of the assessment picture; one that, they believe, shows how these students perform in relation to students nationally. Therefore, Pat knows if she doesn't teach the skills that the students will be tested on, they will be at a disadvantage and frustrated by taking a test over material they don't know. So Pat teaches grammar as necessary.

Today, Pat's students worked 20 minutes on complements, a grammatical term to identify nouns and adjectives that fulfill the function of completing the meaning of the predicate verb. Pat was like a cheerleader with constant encouragement and reminders of

how this connects to what they will do next. "Verbals and phrases are coming up, and this will help you with them; they can serve as complements." She interacted with the students all the time, "How are we doing' here?" When a student across the room from where I was asked about the difference between a linking and action verb, I heard Pat break into the James Brown song in her explanation, "It's like in 'I *feel* good, na, na, na, na.'" I heard her tell another student, "If you finish, take a look at your vocabulary words." Pat gave a two-minute warning. She said they are going to go over the paper because "I'm not about to grade papers this week-end--it's my son's wedding." As they went over the sentences that the students did as an opener, Pat encouraged them with "Good," "Good for you!" and at the conclusion of going over the activity, Pat asked for a show of hands for who made fewer than three errors." The whole class raised their hands. Of course they should have because she had let them work in pairs and had explained problems to students as she floated around passing out papers; she had already insured all would succeed.

Transition to the next activity was a reminder that book reports would be due at the end of this week, and she encouraged them to apply what they have been talking about concerning writing: "Let's use this activity [the book report] as an opportunity to practice good writing."

The next activity was a vocabulary quiz over some words from the Odyssey which they were reading and studying together. When she announced to get ready for the vocabulary quiz, there were some moans and remarks, like "I forgot." "Can you give us two minutes to review?" a student pleaded. "Yes, I can, in fact, grab a partner and I'll give you five minutes." As the students were busily going over vocabulary words together, Pat circulated and talked to them, mostly to a student or two, but sometimes to the whole group. She realized something, so she made an announcement, "Someone has a birthday tomorrow? Yes, it's Jaime. I doubt that Mrs. Miller, [a retired English teacher who is the



sub] will mind a little birthday candy as you watch the movie of the Odyssey tomorrow." A couple of kids volunteered to bring treats, and the business of review went on.

After the vocabulary quiz, Pat had one more new complement to add to the review they did earlier. This short introduction occurred just prior to a break between the double periods. Pat prepared the kids for the last one by asking someone to name all six. She had three sentences on the board that illustrated and helped explain this last type. She announced, "there is *one more kind of complement*." A girl sighed out loud. Pat sighed, too, "I feel the same way. This is one you won't see much, but I would like to at least introduce you to it." Pat explained it and contrasted it to the objective complement which they had last. The whole lesson took less than 10 minutes. I watched the kids--they were engaged. I watched Pat as she involved them; she had identified with them emotionally, and she had tied this to earlier knowledge. Most importantly she encouraged them, "I know you will have no trouble with this because you have done so well with all the other complements." During the break in the middle of the double period, most all the kids stood up and moved around, but all did not leave the room. They stayed and visited with each other and with Pat. The second half of the double period was devoted to reading and discussing the Odyssey.

The next time I visited Pat's class, she was telling the students a funny story she heard on the news that morning. After she finished, a student also had a funny story she had heard, so Pat invited her to share it.

Then a student had a comment about the assembly from the day before. Pat also shared some of her thoughts on the assembly. I saw and heard respect for their opinions and an environment that allowed and encouraged thoughtful analysis and response. Pat asked, "What was your take on taking this student and putting a huge shirt and giant shoes on him?" One student said, "It didn't seem motivational to get the audience to laugh at a student." Indicating she was weighing her reaction, she thought aloud with "I'm not sure what I thought about that." She also weighed what students said and clarified, "Hmmm,

are you saying . . ." She joked with one girl who thought "the boys in the assembly were cute." Another time, Pat must have zoned out on a rather lengthy comment from a student because she said, "Wait a minute, I didn't hear what you had to say and I want to." Pat took time to talk to the students and to really listen to them. The fact that she valued their opinions on such things as current events and school activities seemed to impact their willingness to discuss literature with her. I have never seen a group of ninth graders remain so engaged in a class before. This occurred every time I visited, and their engagement was sustained throughout the two periods.

When appropriate to draw the discussion of the assembly to a close, Pat had the students get out their homework on participial phrases. She explained the main reason for even working with participles is to avoid awkward constructions in their writing. She asked them to recall the dangling participial they had spotted in a textbook last week and how that hampered communication. She instructed the students to trade papers and when "you find a misplaced modifier like that one, yell it out." As she had the students evaluate the placement of modifiers, she made a joke out of some of the misplaced participial phrases.

When they had finished going over the assignment, Pat announced, "Take out a sheet of paper for a pop quiz." The students gasped and whined, but Pat reassured them, "This is so easy." Some complained, "But not when all the verbals are mixed together." Pat encourages them with, "Keep your wits about you. It'll only take you about ten minutes to do this." Then she gave them hints to help them be successful, "Notice . . . that is tricky. Be careful with number four." At the beginning of the quiz, Pat had modeled doing one item, so that they knew exactly how to do the quiz.

I noticed several examples of Pat's reflection-in-action during this visit. In several instances Pat planned to do something and then changed. For example, she was going to go over the quiz with them, but changed her mind, and took up the papers. She paused to comment about what they did yesterday and asked the students to get out the essays in

progress. She said that she planned to spend today to help them plan their essays because what she saw yesterday was some floundering in organization.

Pat scaffolded the organization process by getting the kids to think about what they wanted to say. She asked questions to help them get their ideas concretely on paper; then they could begin to put some order to these ideas. As Pat was working with the students individually, I overheard one student's comment, "I thought about this [essay] in the shower." Pat responded, "I do some of my best thinking in the shower." Pat moved around the room conferencing with students.

She also went over how the essay would be graded, so that they knew from the beginning what her expectations were for it. As I left the room, I noticed the bulletin board above the chalk board said, "Welcome, Class of 2002--the future belongs to you."

The next time I visited Pat's class, they had finished the Odyssey film which they saw after they read the work. When I came in she had returned their essays on the Odyssey and was talking about the good things she had seen in the essays. "I saw good work in the use of transitions." She talked to the students about how the essay tests were graded. In reviewing the traits of good writing, Pat asked the students to define the traits. She asked if there were questions about how the papers were scored.

The next activity was to discuss and evaluate the film. Pat prompted a response from the students first with an open-ended question: "What did you think of the film?" Then she asked, "How was it different from the text? What was added? What was missing?" I was amazed at how the students responded and how attentive they must have been to the film and to the text in order to come up with the responses that they did to the questions.

The next activity was one on gerunds. First, Pat illustrated some gerunds used in various noun functions on the board. It appeared to me that Pat was reflecting in action as she made up a sentence. Thinking aloud, she said things like, "That's not going to sound good" and changed part of the sentence.

Heading off problems she anticipated, Pat said, "Folks, I anticipate one problem. This will trip you up, so pay attention to this on the board." Then she offered support, "While you work, I'll come around and see how you're doing." Pat monitored their work. I heard her correct a misconception: "Oh, when an object of the prepositional phrase is a gerund, don't include the prepositional phrase as part of the gerund phrase."

Before I left, Pat made her way over to talk with me a minute. She wanted to know if I had suggestions for a poem to start the poetry unit. I suggested a dramatic monologue that might tie these two units together: "Ulysses" by Tennyson. She said that she might try it because she needed a dramatic monologue anyway; last year she had used "My Last Duchess" but she wouldn't use it again because the students just couldn't relate to the poem at all.

The next time I went, the class was well into the poetry unit. As I entered the room, they were finishing a vocabulary test over poetry terms. That day they also finished discussion of "Maggie May," started a writing assignment, worked on subordinate clauses, and talked about the Winter Dance which is the formal dance for Freshman to be held that week-end. On the chalk board was a list headed "sound devices" and included "alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, rhythm, parallelism." Also on one board was a model for poetry analysis called the "TP CASTT" which is an acronym for the things to look at in analyzing a poem, including such things as theme, title, connotations, and shifts.

As they were discussing the poem, and especially the central figure of speech, "as small as a world and as large as alone," I was surprised at the students' perception and at their engagement with a rather obtuse poem. One girl brought up that when your world is full of friends and acquaintances, it shrinks or seemly becomes small because you are comfortable, but the absence of that, or aloneness, seems big and swallows you up. Several of the students shared personal experiences that illustrated understanding of e.e. cummings' words in this poem. What is more, they really seemed to listen to one another!

I was amazed. I noted what seemed to be reflecting in action as Pat tried to elicit more discussion and different thoughts, "Well, are there two ways to look at this one line? I was thinking about this one . . ." The discussion went on until break time.

When the students returned from break, Pat invited them to think about the poems they had read recently that relied heavily on sound devices for meaning. She asked them to turn to a section in their literature books on "Writing about Sound." She pointed out some of the poetry sound devices writers use which were listed on the board. Then she asked the students to choose a poem they read together and write about sound. "Locate the sound techniques, but more important is the effect of those techniques on the poem. For example, if you choose 'The Bells', perhaps you would focus on only one stanza because each is a different sound . . . . Mood--what do the sound effects do to create a mood? Purpose? How do sound devices contribute to what the poem says?"

She gave the students time to get started on the assignment and she circulated around the room to monitor. But the students had a difficult time getting on task. Pat joked with them, "Can I interfere with your fun for a moment? I expect you to get started on this assignment." After a time, Pat changed the agenda rather than to continually remind them to write. She asked them, "Should we do some work with clauses now, and you work on these papers over the week-end?" They agreed, but they reminded her that this week-end was the Winter Dance. So she said, "Let's make the sound paper's draft due next Tuesday." I never saw the students as off task, but evidently Pat did, so they put the papers aside and went to a clause exercise.

The atmosphere was always comfortable. Students seemed attentive, cooperative, and engaged. They talked out sometimes, but not disrespectfully. They visited and joked with one another when they passed in papers, but they got quiet quickly when Pat spoke. She kept them going with "Hang in there, I know it's Friday, but no rest for the wicked. Give me your attention for just a few more minutes. This will be easy for you. And I have a little hand-out for you entitled 'Everything you wanted to know about clauses but were

too lazy to look up.” She joked with them, and they in turn joked back. One student gave an answer and then realized it was wrong, so she quickly added, "Just kidding." On one of the sentences, Pat asked why the clause began with "whoever" instead of "whomever"? A student quipped, "It takes less space?" Pat took the answer in stride, and responded, "True, it does, but space isn't really the problem here; is there any other reason?" After they worked through the adjective clauses, Pat took some time to visit with the kids about the big dance tomorrow night. She asked about dresses and plans and genuinely seemed interested in an event that was important to them.

The next time I visited Pat's class, I arrived, thinking it will be her third hour, but I find a very different class, her first hour. There had been an assembly of Native American dancers that morning, so the schedule had shifted. Instead of picking up with third hour, the rest of the morning would run on an abbreviated schedule that included first, second, and third hours. This was a regular 9th grade English class, and the lesson was on how to do bibliography cards. This class, though by no means disrespectful, was certainly not engaged in the activity. Pat wanted them to read an article, create a bibliography card, and produce two note cards for the article. She had handed out magazines and index cards after modeling the format for a bibliography card and putting it on the board. Knowing time was limited and that the students probably needed additional support, Pat allowed them to pair up for their work, but cautioned that they must complete one set in the time they had. She also reminded them that they would need index cards like the ones she had given them today for their own research projects.

The next time I visited her class, the schedule was back to normal. Third hour was discussing a passage from Julius Caesar on integrity, trust and one's word. The students talked freely with Pat about this passage. All seemed engaged. Kyle spoke up with an opinion about why the conspirators followed Brutus. About that time one boy behind Kyle, but in the same row, hit another boy. Pat didn't create a scene; she said simply, "Boys, I don't know what you're doing, but we don't need it."

After looking at a key passage or two, Pat asked for an overall picture of the scene. A girl summarized it beautifully. Pat asked her a question, and the girl responded with a passage to support her answer. Pat said, "Yes, let's look at that passage. It says something key about not only the play, but also about life." Pat read the passage again. Animated commentary on the passage ensued. Questions were asked, and opinions were given. These kids had strong opinions about what they read.

Pat asked about Portia and Brutus' relationship. Kyle said, "it's not good." This seemingly startled Pat as if it were not the answer she had expected, so she asked him to find support for his answer. Kyle's point was that if Brutus really trusted Portia he would tell her what was bothering him. Pat validated his comment with "Kyle, I think I know where you're coming from." But Jaimie pointed out that women's place in society then was not what it is now. There were comments, responses and more responses.

Leading into the next scene and the next part of the audio tape, Pat asked the students about dreams to spark their interest. She simply had to say "Listen" as she started the tape player, and the room was instantly quiet. "After listening to the next portion, I want you to contrast Calpurnia and Caesar's relationship with that of Portia and Brutus." During the tape, Pat teasingly got on to Jason, "here he is talking about his noble wife and you're giggling. You're going to miss it." Pat was able to discipline with good-naturedness. The student responded to her warning, but he was not humiliated in front of his peers. He sheepishly smiled at her and defended himself quietly, "I knew where we were." After Pat stopped the tape, the discussion began. They seemed to not only understand the language and follow the plot, they seemed to understand motive and have amazing insight into the complexity of the issues in the play.

## Pat's Journal

Pat had several major changes going on in her life when I was doing my study. Her son was planning a Christmas wedding. Additionally she and her husband had sold their home and purchased a condominium which they were re-decorating and planning to move into just weeks before the wedding. Once when I asked Pat about her journal, she said she had simply not had time to devote time to it; she had recorded a few entries early on, but had not written in it for the last two months. Later, when the study was over, I asked again about the journal, and she said she had discarded the entries she had because she didn't think I needed them since the study was over.

### The Questions and Themes that address them

As I began the study, I developed some questions to focus this inquiry into reflective practice:

1. What are the characteristics of reflective practice? Specifically, what are the characteristics of reflection as a solitary activity and as social interaction?
2. What is the role and nature of dialogue in both? In particular, do the types of dialogue (with self and with others) interact? If so, how?
3. What conditions foster reflective practice?

These questions served as the mission for the data collection, so after I collected and organized the rich data from the interviews, observations and journals, I wrote the case narratives. Then I looked for similarities by coding that information to the questions that I perceived the data answered. Finally, I developed labels to articulate these groups of similarities or themes. What follows are the themes and how they answer the questions for the study.



The theme that addresses the first question is “Reflective Practice.” Because of the complexity of reflective practice, I divided this theme into several sub-themes which allowed me to explain what I discovered about the characteristics of it in a more organized fashion. These sub-themes denote the why, what, who, and how of reflective practice:

- Student Learning Centered--*the Foundation of Reflective Teaching*: This sub-theme addresses the essence of why these teachers were reflective. Everything these teachers did was driven by providing quality learning experiences for their students.
- Problems, Issues, Mistakes--*Prompts for Reflective Practice*: Discussion of this sub-theme captures what brought about the reflection.
- Student Progress, Activities, Behaviors--*Subjects for Reflection*: All their reflection was in some way related to students, but this sub-theme denotes what it was about the students they reflected on.
- Personality Traits, Processing Styles, and Past Experience--*How They Became Reflective*: This sub-theme refers to how the teachers became they way they are.

The second major theme that emerged was *the theme of Reflection as Solitary and Social Dialogue* which responds to the second question of the study about the role and nature of dialogue in reflection. And the final major theme is *the theme of Contemplating School as a Part of the Very Fabric of Life* which responds to the third question in the study. This theme is divided *into two sub-themes, Conditions for Reflection and Time for Reflection*.

### The Theme of Reflective Practice

Though they were certainly distinct individuals and very different in many ways, I discovered many parallels among the three subjects in what they believed and did in this complex process called reflective practice. The similarities centered around the focus on student learning that served as the foundation for the questioning and adapting what they

do in their teaching; there were similarities in the reasons they reflected; there were commonalities among the concerns they reflected about, and there were similarities in the way they came to have the characteristics of reflective teachers.

### Student Learning Centered--*the Foundation of Reflective Teaching*

All that these three teachers did in the classroom was driven by helping students to succeed. That is something many may take for granted or assume happens in all classrooms, but it does not. For years, teaching was thought of as an act that teachers needed to understand, and if teachers used the "right" techniques and required enough repetition, students would learn. But current research tells us that knowledge is not transmitted; rather it is constructed. Facilitating that process requires much time, effort and attention to the uniqueness of the learner and the learning situation. These three teachers are all deeply, deeply committed to doing whatever it takes to help students learn. That is, I discovered, is *the foundation* of being a reflective practitioner. Only when teachers are completely committed to helping students learn will those teachers question all that they do in the classroom as to whether or not it brings about the desired effect. If it does not, there is a willingness to look for something else that may work.

Being committed to learning means the teacher must understand how children learn. All three of these teachers talked about adapting activities and strategies for differing developmental stages, learning styles, and content or skill backgrounds of their students. All three talked about assessment as a means for determining instruction, and all agreed that observing and talking to children were good ways to determine what the children knew and how they learned. They integrated subjects and made real-life applications for the learning, so that children could connect new knowledge to old or see the relevance of what they were learning. For example, Ann talked at great length with her third graders about the importance of being able to count change properly before they started a math

problem that involved that skill. Rita constantly talked with “her little ones” about manners, safety, and respect, all of which were often reinforced in what they read. In every lesson I observed Pat connecting the rich messages in the literature they read to the students’ daily lives.

All three teachers had rules and or structures in place that made the class run smoothly. For example, Ann in a calm voice would issue gentle reminders about behavior with, “Give me your eyes and attention.” When she noticed the class appeared attentive, she would compliment, “This looks like a class ready to listen.” All understood that a warm relationship with the children is a prerequisite to learning. Children will not learn in a cold or hostile, or chaotic environment. All three were warm, friendly, and had a wonderful sense of humor. In very different voices, with very different mannerisms and methods, all three teachers set expectations, made them clear and reinforced them, but always with a genuine and caring attitude. Because of the fairness and the respect they showed the children, that respect was reciprocated. These three showed a DEEP value for human life, especially young human life. They understood that children’s immaturity causes them to act the way they do; instead of condemning children for immaturity, these teachers seemed to see their role as helping the children grow. With each of these teachers I was reminded of the fine balance between firmness and permissiveness tempered with understanding that my mother had. She had a plaque that read something like, “Dear Lord, help me to remember every day that You’re not finished with this child yet.” These teachers showed with their behaviors and words that they truly like young people and like their role in helping them to grow.

#### Problems, Issues, Mistakes--Prompts for Reflective Practice

Though they did from time to time mention successes as something they thought about, mostly these teachers seemed to think most about opportunities to do things

differently, to do them better in order to promote student learning. All three are very capable, confident teachers, but paradoxically they all had self-doubts, always believing they could improve in their pedagogical practice. They seemed to be constantly analyzing and adjusting what they did because they wanted to improve student learning, to better understand a student, to reconcile an issue, or to correct what they perceived to be a mistake. They all talked about lessons that they had changed for the next day, unit, or year because they believed something about the lesson could be better. For example, Ann changed a math lesson because she discovered the language she was using was confusing to her third-graders. Rita changed her attitude about full inclusion of special education students, and Pat came to understand from some of her interactions with colleagues as well as her experiences that teaching grammar in isolation was a mistake. All expressed a willingness to listen to another point of view and a willingness to change if they really saw a need, but not simply for the sake of change.

#### Student Progress, Activities, Behaviors--*Subjects for Reflection*

Their reflection focused on students, but specifically on their growth, on activities to promote that growth and on student behaviors. For example, Ann puzzled and puzzled over an Hispanic child who had been in a local school for three years and still could not sound words out consistently. Because she watched, thought, and talked to another teacher, Ann found a solution to helping Maria learn to read. She also thought a lot about Eddie's behavior and how to maintain a positive relationship with him so that she could reach him academically. Rita thought about where they would get the supplies she needed for some special projects. Pat wondered how to reach a real hard-case adolescent. She reflected on how to make the Oklahoma History unit more successful, or if they should do it at all.

Personality Traits, Processing Styles, and Past Experiences--*How they became*  
*Reflective*

With each question about traits related to being a reflective teacher, I asked the three how they became the way they were. Each time, they gave pause and seemed taken aback. This is one aspect of their practice they had not considered before. The general response was one of surprise that I would ask such a question followed by their own inquiry, "Isn't every teacher this way (flexible, caring, committed, imaginative, etc.)?" Committed to and absorbed with their passion of helping students to learn, no matter what it takes, they assumed ALL teachers were like them.

In general, their responses were linked to their personalities, learning styles, and inherited traits from their mothers, or to past experiences, both positive and negative that led them to be the way they are. Ann concluded that she talks to herself because she is a verbal person, and she has over the years developed the habit of talking herself through things; it is "a processing thing for me." Rita indicated that she often talks to herself in the kindergarten room because there are so many things going on that she needs to shut them out to process. She would sometimes, without even being aware of it, ask herself questions like, "Where did I put that?" Rita also indicated that her mother talked aloud and through things so that Rita could hear her thought processes. She, in turn, did the same with her son who tended to be hyperactive; hearing Rita's thinking calmed him and helped him to understand how to respond in given situations. Rita enjoyed using this technique with her students, "It's fun to think aloud with the children." In turn, she said she has come to use the think aloud strategy with her husband a lot, too. Pat indicated that she more or less stumbled on to thinking aloud with the students through teaching poetry. She used a poem at the last minute one day, one that she was not very familiar with, so she asked the class to think through the poem with her to interpret the meaning. It worked so well, she does that a lot now.

### The Theme of Reflection as Solitary and Social Dialogue

All highly imaginative, these three subjects not only talked to themselves about their practice, student progress, student behavior, and the success, or lack thereof, of specific assignments, but they also visualized interactions with students and often replayed situations that happened in their classrooms. Ann talked about thinking aloud so that the students could understand her problem-solving strategies. Rita often thought aloud with her kindergartners, and Pat said she thinks aloud to help her figure something out. Most all used the solitary reflection to solve problems, to plan, or to replay events they wanted to understand better.

I thought it was interesting that the three were so much alike in practice and in their responses, but very different in their journaling habits. Journaling could offer another outlet for solitary dialogue. One teacher wrote every day, even week-ends; one wrote most every day, and one did not keep a journal at all. All are reflective and similar in most every other way, but very different in the way they approached and utilized the journal. Their feelings about writing may differ. Time is a barrier to writing for some teachers, especially at school. There are levels of reflective behavior, and those are more readily seen in the written dialogue with self where thoughts are made concrete. I did notice a difference in the levels of complexity of reflection in the journals, but I did not discuss it because it was not part of the study; it is, however, a topic worthy of study.

All three were adept at thinking on the spot to ask the right questions to help children construct understanding. Pat mentioned that she thought throughout the literary discussions she had with the students, and never started with a preconceived set of questions. She asked and adapted as they discussed; however, she does know the material really well before she enters into a discussion with the students. Perhaps that implies that a prerequisite for being able to reflect-in-action is dependent upon a firm knowledge-base in content or pedagogy.

Additionally the three talked with others; they talked to students, colleagues, friends, and spouses about their practice. Ann talked to other primary teachers on a regular basis about teaching reading. She also talked to students to find out what they knew. In one instance she used such information to rethink the lesson during lunch and re-teach it. Rita talked to the other kindergarten teacher daily. Pat did not talk to peers as much as she talked with students and then adjusted what she planned to do. I thought it was interesting that the two elementary teachers spent a lot of time talking about teaching with their peers, while the secondary teacher rarely saw her peers, and tended to interact with students more than peers about the educational process as well as content issues.

When asked how the inner dialogue, or conversations with self interacted with the outer dialogues, or conversations with others, Ann said the inner dialogue was often prompted by the outer dialogue. When she talked to a peer about a new technique or activity, she would then "talk to herself in her mind" to evaluate the credibility of the peer and the credibility of the idea for her students. Sometimes the talk with herself was on how to adapt the idea to fit her students. Rita talked about getting ideas from her students for a unit (outer dialogue) then she would "mull over what they said" (inner dialogue) and "pull out the relevant stuff," which she could tie to their experience base. Next, she would "weave together" what they had said with what she had thought about to create the unit. So for Rita, the inner dialogue not only evaluated, but shaped the ideas from the outer dialogue. Pat indicated she did not talk with peers much, but she did talk with the students and then thought about what they said and took action. For example, recently her students told her they did not feel prepared for doing the scansion part on the poetry unit test, so she took what they said to heart and decided in a conversation with herself that "when I do rhythm next year, I need to provide more types . . . if I think that is a skill I want them to have." As she was relating this example to me, she seemed to be weighing the validity of the skill at all for next year. Pat also had her students do reflective letters in

which they told about their own writing. She talked with herself a lot about what she learned from the letters.

### The Theme of Contemplating School as a Part of the Very Fabric of Life

#### Conditions for Reflection

I found that trying to discern the conditions that prompted reflective practice of these teachers was extremely difficult because they thought about school all the time, day and night, at school and at home. However, I did find that the evening is a popular time to pause and think over the day. Rita described in detail an almost daily ritual which occurs just before bedtime when she gets a cup of hot chocolate or tea and sits in "her chair" for quiet time to replay, review, and critique the school day.

I wondered if the socio-economic level of the school was a condition that impacted their reflectiveness. Both Rita and Ann teach in schoolwide Title I schools which means the majority of the school population is on free or reduced lunch. Both of those schools serve highly transient populations in neighborhoods full of low-cost rent houses. Both teachers mentioned the economic status of their students a lot in their thoughts on the students' problems or as reasons for the child's difficulties. So whether it is a condition that impacts a teacher's reflective practice or not, I'm not certain. The majority of Pat's students, on the other hand, are from the upper middle class socially and she did not ever mention socio-economic status in talking about students.

I don't know if knowing a lot about their students' age level impacts their reflectivity or not, but Pat talked a lot about her students' challenges as young adolescents indicating she seems to know quite a bit about her students' developmental stage, as does Rita concerning her kindergartners. Perhaps involvement with subject matter is a



condition that impacts reflective teaching; this factor of reflective practice deserves further study.

### Time spent reflecting

The overriding finding in the conditions was the excessive amount of time these teachers spent thinking about school. Also interesting was that all three mention acting intuitively on the spur of the moment, making me wonder what goes on in their minds at that split second. As I mentioned earlier, the reflective process can take a long period of time, or it can occur in an instant. I believe the instantaneous responses are encapsulated versions of what happens over a longer period of time in the reflective process. But they were not able to articulate the shortened version of the process; they described it as relying on their "gut feelings" a lot. Ann indicated "I truly believe that I do react much of the time intuitively. I don't know if this is a gift or not. Sometimes I just feel in my gut what is the best thing to do. I'm sure lived experiences play a big part in intuitive thinking. We do rely on past experiences to guide our decision making. Many times I wake up around 3:00 a.m. thinking very clearly and realizing I forgot something or I could have done something differently and probably been more successful. I think this unconscious thinking is sometimes clearer than when we try to reevaluate the day and we are tired."

When I asked Rita when she thinks about school, she quickly answered, "Twenty-four hours a day." Naturally when a problem arises she said she thinks on school, but also when she is planning a new unit. She has to think all the time because, "you never know what they'll (her kindergartners) say or do! Nothing's ever really the same." Pat told me she thinks on school "24-7 . . . all the time! I never get away from it; that's why I'm exhausted come summer . . . I'm immersed in it (school) . . . It's energizing and exhausting at the same time."

## Summary

The three teachers, Ann, Rita, and Pat are unique individuals, yet, as reflective practitioners, they share a lot in common. Through them, I wanted to better understand reflective practice, especially to see exactly how these behaviors Dewey talked of manifested themselves in the day-to-day teaching in teachers' classrooms and to try to understand how they became the way they are. I discovered certain themes, or similarities, that emerged to respond to the questions I posed at the beginning of the study. What I discovered emerged in three themes:

The first theme was "Reflective Practice" which I sub-divided to more clearly talk about the why, what, who, and how of reflective practice. What I found was that *reflective teachers care most about helping their students to learn*. Without this passion to fuel the desire to reflect, I do not believe one can be a reflective practitioner. Dewey used the term "wholehearted" but that term is not strong enough; it is a *fiery passion* that creates giftedness which sets these teachers apart from others. These teachers' reflection seemed always to be for the same purpose: to better facilitate learning for the child, not to improve the technique of their practice for their sake, but for the child's sake.

The second main theme that emerged was that of "Reflection as Solitary and Social Dialogue." From this study, I am convinced that dialogue, both with self and others, is a necessary component in reflective practice. It was their use of language that allowed them to access the rich thoughts they were having. It was language that allowed those thoughts to become concrete so that the teachers could manipulate them to analyze, clarify and evaluate them.

The third major theme was "Contemplating School as a Part of the Very Fabric of Life." The fact that they are committed to helping students to learn spills over into all aspects of their lives. School is so much a part of their lives, they can not separate it from all that they do. It was difficult to identify the conditions for reflection because they think about school issues all the time in all places. Time is a definitely a barrier to the reflective

process; reflection on action and for action requires time to think and sort through the issues and possible solutions.

These groupings and sub groupings of similar ideas are not definitive nor mutually exclusive. Identification of these themes in the language I chose is not meant to be the final statement on reflective practice, but merely a way of talking about the meaning I saw, read, and heard in my interactions with three reflective teachers. Hopefully these cases serve as a window by which reflective practice as it occurs on a daily basis can be observed, and the reader can glean his/her own meaning from them.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REFLECTIONS ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

#### Discoveries of the Reflective Researcher

The operant word here is "discoveries." This researcher does not claim to have the definitive truths on reflective practice. After all, reflective teaching has been a topic of educational study since the 1930's. What I had hoped to accomplish was to increase my own understanding of reflective practice so that as one who works in professional development, I could help educators understand that the "answers" to their professional problems and concerns lie within themselves. I want to facilitate the structures and strategies in professional development activities that will allow teachers to see that by prompting thoughts through dialogue with themselves and others, they could discover those answers. Problem solving in teaching is a messy, inexact business; we may not find the solution immediately, but only after several tries. And even then that answer or solution may not work during the next lesson or semester, or with the next child. I want to help teachers to acknowledge and feel comfortable with this messiness and inexactness of teaching, and to desire to continually search for their own answers in their own voices and in those of their students and peers.

The first step was to better understand the reflective process myself because, even though I, as a teacher, shared some of these subjects' characteristics and behaviors, I never knew WHY I did things the way I did, nor HOW I became this way. I simply very often did what I FELT was right and was willing to try something else if that didn't work. I, too, have always been very verbal so talking to myself and others came naturally, and I

somehow sensed that dialogue had something to do with my continual questioning and the constructing of my understanding. As a researcher, I merged my desire for professional knowledge with my personal desire to understand reflective practice and sought greater understanding, much in the same way I continually sought greater understanding in the classroom--I talked with others, I observed and I wrote my thoughts.

Thus I began this study with some personal assumptions and biases. I believed, and still do, that reflective practice does indeed help teachers become better teachers. I believe that the reflective process, by its very nature as a "process" has definable steps that can be taught, that dialogue plays an integral role in the reflective process, and that the reflective process can be learned by all teachers who have a desire to learn it. Reflective *practice*, on the other hand is NOT a prescriptive process that can be learned as steps. I posed these questions:

- What does reflective practice look like? What are the characteristics of reflective practice, both as a solitary and social activity?
- What is the role and nature of dialogue in both types? In particular, do the types of dialogue interact? If so, how?
- What conditions foster reflection, both as solitary and social activities?

Do I have "answers"--probably not, but I have greater understanding based on my interactions with these three teachers, and though I can not generalize beyond these three or beyond this point in time, I can use this new found understanding as I continue to work in professional development. As a reflective researcher, I learned more about the process of inquiry. Most importantly, I recognize that all that I have learned may not be readily apparent to me now but may surface in the future as I think back on this experience. As I grow in experiences, other layers of meaning may emerge and be available to me that I am not able to discern now because of the limitations of my experiences. I believe as I grow, this study may grow in significance to me. What I do know now and truly believe is that the heart of educational reform lies with effective teachers and will never happen until as

Michael Fullan (1991) says, ". . . teachers become simultaneously and seamlessly inquiry-oriented, skilled, reflective, and collaborative professionals" (p. 326).

### The Essence of Reflective Practice

Several understandings about reflective practice have emerged through my interactions with three pedagogically thoughtful and effective teachers and examination of the emergent themes. First and foremost, reflective practice is not centered on learning pedagogical techniques, but rather is centered on student learning and a commitment to helping students to succeed. These three teachers all seemed interested in growing and learning, but not for learning's sake or necessarily for increased pedagogical skill except as it may help them help a student succeed. For that reason they were always searching for new ideas and techniques. For instance, Rita went to an inquiry-based science workshop to learn more about how to teach science to her little ones. She wrote in her journal on November 3, 1998: "I really enjoyed the Inquiry-based Science System techniques. Many things I have done before, but they showed us how to expand these ideas . . . I think the children will like the activities." She also indicated that she thought it would require the children to think critically and discover things for themselves.

Reflective practice starts with a passion for wanting to help children succeed. These teachers were constantly puzzling over what worked or didn't work, and why something did or didn't work in order to help children learn. Their reflection seemed fueled by their passionate commitment to help children to learn. Ann said, "I really WANT my students to learn . . . When a student fails, I fail . . . I must teach them the very best way I can. They DESERVE it" (interviews, Nov. 19 and Jan. 5). Rita told me that teaching was a personal investment to her and that she was committed to teaching in general, but *especially* the young ones; "they [kindergartners] need so much more" (interview, Nov. 16). Intensely passionate about teaching, Pat stated she does not know

how long she will be able to continue to teach--"There is *no way* I can do it [teach] half-way" (interview, Jan. 6). Teaching was more than a job to them; it was a ministry, a passionate calling to serve children. These teachers were so committed to helping children succeed that schooling was woven into the very fabric of their lives; it was difficult to separate where school ended and their lives began. They thought about school all the time.

Because they cared so deeply about their students, they had a warm, relationship of reciprocal respect with their students. There was a bond, a connectedness that forced them to feel failure if their students failed, a bond much like between a parent and child. Something that the teachers never talked much about was discipline. But their classes were all very well-behaved. I noticed structures in place that allowed the classes to run smoothly, so indeed learning, which was the top priority could take place. There was little mention of rules, but a constant attention to behaviors. Never was there any loudness. All three of these teachers were very soft-spoken with their students. The atmosphere was one of mutual respect, though it was something that these teachers seemed to take for granted; they seemed to have seen it as a prerequisite to learning and have taken care of it, so they did not seem preoccupied with discipline. In fact, discipline was never brought up in their conversations with me. Sometimes they pondered the behavior of a child in their journals. However, the presence of discipline was something I noticed in their well-organized classrooms. They all three laughed and smiled frequently, and their students seemed to adore them. Rita wrote in her journal the day she returned from the science training, "The children were so loving and full of hugs when they came in today. They all told me they missed me so much and didn't like for me to be gone. You would have thought I was gone a lot longer than two days. It did feel good to be missed, I must admit" (journal, Nov. 5, 1998). On more than one occasion, I heard children slip and call Rita "Mommy" and she answered them, never correcting them for what they had called her.

Part of wholehearted commitment to student learning is knowing how learning occurs. In order to make adjustments to facilitate learning, one must understand that learning is constructed and that learners have different modalities for and rates of processing. Adapting to the learner was always in the forefront of what these three teachers did on a day-to-day basis. They understood and appreciated the individual differences related to learning and constantly worked to accommodate those differences. For example, Ann explained, "You're teaching to all these different children; you always have to look at what to do to reach them" (interview, Nov. 16). "No two kids learn the same. Giving one lesson and thinking everyone sitting there got it is crazy . . . They must have background knowledge to hook to. They have different backgrounds and experiences . . . You have to learn HOW they learn" (interview, Nov. 19). She went on to describe the types of learners in her classroom: two are auditory learners; some visual; and some kinesthetic.

When asked how she knows what type of learner each is, she answered simply, "I watch." She spent a lot of time during the first of school watching the students in class and on the playground. Rita was also a "kid-watcher" to determine the type of cognitive processing style a child had. She watched the type of center children were drawn to. She arranged her reading groups according to cognitive processing style, so that she worked with the visual learners together, the kinesthetic learners together, and so forth. This grouping allowed her to select manipulatives and strategies that best communicated with the learner. Pat told me that new learning has to be "attached to things [experiences]." And she was concerned that "kids have less and less experiential knowledge" to hook new knowledge to (interview, February 3). All three of these teachers talked about learning as hooking past experiences to new ones to construct understanding; therefore they would be called constructivists.

Teaching is complex. One characteristic that stood out with the three subjects is that they were comfortable with this complexity. It was clear to them that



teaching is messy, not clear-cut or delineated in steps. It is sometimes, circular, and sometimes there are dead-ends. But they seemed willing to question: "Why is this circular? What do I do about this dead-end?" Ann said in one interview, "I'm always searching . . . I always feel I can do better" (interview, November 16). She described an incident one day when the kids just didn't get the math concept she was presenting, so she spent her lunch hour re-working the lesson to present it again after lunch. In another instance, she discovered that the children needed some easier vocabulary to understand what she was talking about, so she re-taught a lesson using language a third-grader could understand. Rita shared that she frequently changed units based on the children's interests. She watched the children's behavior and reactions, and if discipline problems arose, or the children seemed bored, she knew something about what they're doing must change, and she took action.

These three seemed undaunted by the uncertainty of teaching. Though they all have received recognition for excellence in their teaching and seemed confident in their knowledge and abilities as a teacher, paradoxically they also expressed self-doubt. They knew they didn't know all the answers and that didn't seem to bother them. They accepted that fact and continued to look for what would work this time. Mistakes were often not seen as mistakes, but as something that didn't work this time or as something that led them to a better option, or as an opportunity to grow. For example, Pat learned from the students' poor performance on the scansion part of the poetry test and their feedback that she had not spent enough time letting them practice determining the different types of rhythmical patterns in poems. She saw that as an opportunity to assess the importance of the skill. She was re-thinking the time she would have to give it in order for the students to learn it well versus the importance of the concept at all.

Reflective practice requires a flexibility and imagination that allows a teacher to see different options and requires the comfort with risk to try those different options. It also requires a willingness to listen to other ideas and to change when better, more

sensible options are recognized. Pat talked at length about the great grammar debate she and I had several years ago. She used to be convinced that spending a lot of time on teaching the students basic grammatical concepts was essential. I was of the belief that the time could better be spent on teaching them about writing, bringing up grammar only when it was relevant to what they were doing to develop their writing craft. She was adamant about the importance of the grammar foundation and that it must be the emphasis of her 9th grade class. Then she attended some Writing Project workshops and some AP (Advanced Placement) conferences and talked with others who were convinced that grammar taught in isolation was an effort in futility. Over time, she changed her mind about the preeminence of grammar instruction in her classroom. The outer dialogue she had with others prompted a change in her thoughts which impacted her beliefs and change occurred. Pat said she is not one to immediately change something that she thinks is good, but she does listen to others; she reads, and most importantly, she analyzes what she sees in her own experiences in the classroom.

Language plays an important role in sorting out the options and evaluating them. Highly verbal, these teachers talked to themselves and to others for the purpose of solving problems, generating ideas, or evaluating ideas and options; they used language and conversations as a processing strategy. Daily they puzzled over events and situations from their classroom and often used language to make these happenings reappear, or make thoughts concrete so that they can more easily analyze them.

This replay of events in their minds or in conversations occurred deliberately sometimes and at other times, it seemed almost automatic or intuitive. Schön (1983) distinguishes between these types of reflection; he refers to this first type as “reflection-on-action” and the second type as “reflection-in-action.” Talking to others often allows “reframing” to occur, that is the thinker sees the situation in a different light.

Language as thought (the inner dialogue) or as social dialogue (the outer dialogue) often facilitates the moments of enlightenment and helps shape them into actions. Later language evaluates those actions. All three of these teachers replayed events in their heads, talked to colleagues and spouses, but most importantly they interacted with their students to shape their practice. Pat asked her students write reflective letters to her about the class and what they were learning. From those letters she had many epiphanies about what she needed to alter in her instruction. Rita talked about interacting with the students to shape a unit of study. She asked the students about their interests, and she thought about their responses; then she pulled from what they had said and weaved it together with things she wanted to happen to create the unit. Pretending to be a third grader, Ann often talked through a lesson before she presented it. She also frequently talked to herself to evaluate a conversation she has had with a colleague over a teaching technique or activity.

One of the most important characteristics of reflective practitioners is that they are *willing to reframe; they are willing to change*. They searched for new ways to grow personally in addition to finding ways to help children learn. When I asked all three of these teachers to talk with me and allow me to observe them, they delightedly saw this as an opportunity for them to grow.

To label this section as “the essence” or reflective practice as if there were ONE thing that defined it is a misnomer. Rather, reflective practice is intricate and complex, like a beautifully designed mosaic or a skillfully performed ballet. But from these three reflective teachers, I saw pieces of that mosaic and steps in that dance. I saw the characteristics of reflective practice as:

- being focused on student learning, with all one’s energy and total commitment;
- being personally invested in children, with a deep respect for their Spirit, individuality, and potential for growth;
- knowing how learning occurs and choosing strategies that will facilitate it;

- being pedagogically and content knowledgeable;
- trusting one's own actions, but never too much;
- being comfortable with the complexity of teaching;
- being flexible;
- analytical and evaluative;
- inquisitive;
- risk-tolerant, not satisfied with the status quo, always seeking something better; and collaborative--sometimes.

I discovered use of language as thought (inner dialogue) or as conversation (outer dialogue) is an important tool in facilitating the analysis, the questioning, the search for solutions, and the evaluating of ideas or actions. Though climate of the school was not in the scope of the study, it was clear that these teachers talked to people they trusted: colleagues, spouses, and their students; therefore, it would seem that trust and relationships are important prerequisites for reflective dialogues to occur. As far as where reflection took place; it happened everywhere, all the time with these teachers.

### Implications

Believing that reflective practice is effective teaching, and believing that reflection is a process that can be learned by teachers who want to become reflective practitioners, it would seem that what we know and learn about reflective practice should guide the professional development of the 21st Century.

It should be clear from past mistakes in the delivery of professional development that "one size does not fit all." Just as teaching reflectively is a complex, multi-faceted process, so is the process of offering appropriate, meaningful professional development.

However, there are some implications for professional development based on what this study revealed about reflective practice.

First and foremost, reflective teachers have a passionate commitment to helping students learn. What this says for professional development is that some professional development must focus on keeping the passion for teaching burning within the heart of every teacher because that passion may be the impetus for their wanting to grow and change. As Harris (1999) points out in an article in Educational Leadership, a survey of 152 preservice teachers were asked *why* they are interested in becoming a teacher, and eighty (80) percent responded with one of the following reasons: “*a need to make a difference in a child’s life, a desire to help children learn, a calling to share knowledge with kids, and a feeling that they could have a positive effect on the future by working with kids*” (p. 76).

I do not believe that passion is in and of itself enough to make a teacher truly effective, but I strongly contend that it is the foundation. I agree with Palmer (1998) when he asserts that “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). He continues that “Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness . . . . The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts--meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self”(p.11). Fried (1995) touches upon this same notion of connectedness when he describes passionate teachers as “alive in events both in the classroom and in the world outside school . . . and they help students to relate learning with living” (p. 27). He includes other characteristics of passionate teachers like loving to work with kids and having the capacity for spontaneity and humor, yet taking their *mission* seriously. Hansen (1995) combines both of these ideas when he discusses teaching as a vocation or calling but asserts it would not be so “if the individual kept the practice at arm’s length, divorced from his or her sense of identity” (p.3). It would seem being passionate about teaching stems from feeling

connected to the children, the content, the learning, and the service associated with the profession.

So if most teachers start with a passion, and that passion is the foundation for creating reflective practitioners, the question becomes how do we keep that passion alive? The answer would seem to be that we need to feed it, to fuel it. In the classroom, students often become passionate about learning and flourish when they are made to feel valued and competent. The same notion may be applied to teachers: helping them to feel valued and competent may fuel the passion. A major role for professional development in the next century should be to foster a sense of pride and value in being a teacher. Mainly I believe this can be accomplished through having teachers write and share their stories about their experiences, their practices, and the art of teaching. The one-shot workshops get a bad name because they do not provide sustained, supported opportunities for growth, but from time to time they can serve a purpose, that is to have a motivational speaker rekindle the inspiration to go forth and make a difference! More importantly, I believe, at the school sites, giving teachers the responsibility to take charge of their own professional development will not only allow more meaningful growth options, it may help give them the confidence and build the credibility they deserve, which may in turn keep the passion for teaching alive.

Along with the responsibility for their own growth and inquiry, teachers need the skills to facilitate their own growth. For instance, if teachers at a site are interested in growth that requires they coach one another, they would need the skills for peer coaching. Similarly they may need skills for organizing and facilitating study groups. Professional development in the 21st century to create reflective practitioners needs to provide teachers with the *skills* to facilitate their own growth.

Reflective practitioners know students construct learning; thus, professional development must allow teachers to construct their professional learning.

Reflective teachers when puzzled by an action or situation, begin to question what has happened or why, which leads to analysis or investigations, which usually lead to action, and then reflection on that action. This process indicates that *growth is a highly contextualized and personalized endeavor*. The implication for professional development is that it should provide opportunities for personally meaningful inquiry such as through study groups. These opportunities for growth would allow teachers to study problems and issues relevant to them while searching for answers to their own questions, not those of the Professional Development Director for the school district. A study group is not a place where growth or change is *forced* on teachers, but rather where they are invited to live a learning experience.

Birchak, et al. (1998) defines a study group as “a voluntary group of people who come together to talk and create theoretical and practical understandings with each other. This talk integrates theory and practice, sharing and dialogue in powerful ways.” It is a group that focuses on “transforming teaching through dialogue and reflection and on creating a sense of community among teachers” (p. 28). The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) offers packets of materials on various issues to facilitate English teachers coming together to read and discuss issues in the discipline. Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL) is researching study groups as a means toward instructional coherence. (This researcher has the opportunity to get training in facilitating study groups with SEDL in Austin this summer in order to be a part of their research project in the fall. I will have a study group at the high school in our district and we will study flexible use of time together with the goal of creating a schedule that meets the needs of the students at this high school. Maybe the teachers will grow in their understanding of the flexible use of time in a high school; perhaps they will solve the scheduling problem at their site, and hopefully I will grow as a facilitator of professional development.)

Another important form of inquiry is teacher research. Ironically very little of the recognized research in the field is done by practicing classroom teachers. Of the thirty-five articles in the Handbook of Research on Teaching, 3rd edition, none were written by teachers. Mainly these studies were conducted by authorities from outside the classroom, looking in. As Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1994) point out, this is problematic. I concur. It is more than “problematic,” it is antithetical to creating reflective practitioners. It implicitly doubts the authority and expertise of teachers as knowing about their field. In order to foster professional confidence in teachers and to produce research on teaching that is more context-based, we must promote teachers are researchers. Teacher research, which Lytle & Cochran-Smith (1994) define as “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers in their own schools and classrooms,” is a viable form of professional development (p. 24). As Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1992) argue, practice improves and learning increases in the classrooms of teacher-researchers. “A view of teaching as research is connected to a view of learning as constructive, meaning-centered, and social. . . . Teachers who are actively researching their own practices provide opportunities for their students to become similarly engaged . . . . What goes on in the classrooms of teacher-researchers is qualitatively different from what typically happens in classrooms” (p. 318). Richardson (1994) also argues for teacher research as a form of professional development. She cautions that the success of teacher inquiry will depend, at least in part, on teachers having the choice associated with topics as maintaining control of the process (Richardson, 1994).

The fact that dialogue plays such an important role in the reflective process, professional development should allow teachers the opportunity to develop both the inner and outer dialogues. An important strategy for encouraging dialogue that promotes reflective practice may be the use of learning circles (small groups of learners who come together to support each other in learning). Collay, Dunlap, Enloe, and Gagnon (1998), in their book Learning Circles, Creating Conditions for Professional Development, propose



that teachers can form healthy communities of learners that foster and support professional growth with the use of learning circles.

Encouraging teachers to write their stories is another important opportunity to grow. Mattingly (1991) in her article in Schön's Reflective Turn, reiterates the importance of stories as a basis for reflection,

Storytelling and story analysis can facilitate a kind of reflecting that is often difficult to do, a consideration of those ordinarily tacit constructs that guide practice. Stories point toward deep beliefs and assumptions that people cannot tell in propositional or denotative form, the "practical theories" and deeply held images that guide their actions. (p.236).

Encouraging teachers to write their stories and analyze the assumptions and beliefs that surface is a powerful opportunity for growth. As Schwarz & Alberts (1998) indicate in the Preface to Teacher Lore and Professional Development for School Reform,

Teachers who read, write, and discuss narratives of teaching must look at their own thinking, beliefs, and practices. Questions emerge, old issues are seen in new ways, struggles are recognized, and research is required. Story is a powerful medium for learning, and school reform in the twenty-first century demands teachers who never stop learning (p. xii).

Not only should teachers be encouraged to write and analyze their stories, they should be encouraged to revisit the stories from time to time to peel back more layers of meaning that are available with additional experiences.

An important characteristic of reflective teachers is that they are knowledgeable, both in pedagogy and content. Introducing teachers to new strategies and offering them opportunities to grow in their content areas are still and always will be important goals of professional development. However, the key to the success of introducing them to new content or strategies is choice. Teachers must choose the areas in which they want to grow. Providing sustained support when teachers are trying to implement something new

is vital. Just hearing about a new strategy is not enough. Implementation requires time, encouragement, plus ongoing support such as modeling and frequent review or refresher courses.

The most important implication of reflective practice for professional development activities to help teachers reframe and reflect. There are some specific activities that must become a part of all we do to help teachers grow. One is to frequently practice reframing which can be facilitated through “pretend teaching” or role playing activities and exercises. Another strategy for reframing situations is through journaling. Opportunities for teachers to question, to problem solve, and to practice the strategies to do so must be an integral part of the school environment. Staff meetings can be utilized for more than a list of the most current announcements. These meetings should offer the opportunity for a staff to read and discuss a case study that is rich in educational issues. As an example of this type of activity, I have written a couple of cases with reflective questions that could be used for discussions or for individual contemplation and response (see Appendix I). Teachers can be encouraged on a daily basis to reflect in journals, *but schools must show the importance of this activity by allowing time for reading, writing, and discussion as an everyday ritual.*

Most importantly teachers must be offered structures for practicing the reflective process as a solitary activity and as a social interaction, such as the ones offered by Hole and McEntee (1999) in “Reflection at the Heart of Practice” from Educational Leadership, May 1999. The first protocol or guide is for Guided Reflection. The first step in guided reflection is to collect situations for reflection. Tripp (1993) encourages thinking about ordinary events, which often are the richest in underlying trends, motives, and structures of everyday practice. Then four steps follow:

1. *What Happened?* It is important to write the facts, just the facts, about what happened--no analysis or judgment.

2. *Why Did It Happen?* Attempting to understand the why is the beginning of reflection. This step involves looking at the context in which the event happened.
3. *What Might It Mean?* It is only through reflection that one can realize all options and that indeed there may have been other options from the one chosen. In Experience and Education (1938), Dewey wrote that “Every experience affects for better or worse the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences” (p. 37).
4. *What are the implications for my practice?*

The Critical Incidents Protocol is for shared reflection and includes the following steps:

1. *Write stories.* Each group member writes briefly in response to the question “What happened?”
2. *Choose a story.* The group decides which story to use.
3. *What happened?* The presenter reads the written account of what happened and sets it within the context of professional goals.
4. *Why did it happen?* Colleagues ask clarifying questions.
5. *What might it mean?* The group raises questions about the incident in the context of the presenter’s work. They discuss it as professional, caring colleagues while the presenter listens.
6. *What are the implications for practice?* The presenter responds, then the group engages in conversation about the implications for the presenter’s practice and for the participants’ own practice. A useful question at this stage might be, What new insights occurred?
7. *Debrief the process.* The group talks about what just happened. How did the process work?

Following a protocol may be an avenue introducing teachers to the reflective process. Educators may be reluctant to endorse the following of a protocol for the reflective process fearing this process will be reduced to a prescriptive, lock-step procedure that produces something far removed from what the creative process really is--much like what happened to the writing process. However, I believe that protocols like these may be useful to introduce some teachers to the notions of questioning and reframing. One strategy is not for everyone. And this researcher would never endorse reflective practice being reduced to a prescriptive set of steps to be followed with no thought or creativity.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Because this is such an important and rich topic that has not been explored to its fullest, there are many aspects of this subject that deserve exploration. A few emerged while I was analyzing the data I had collected:

- First and foremost, this study should be replicated, involving other observers, readers, and subjects for reliability.
- One important issue that was not addressed in this study is gender differences in reflective practice. I studied only female teachers. In fact, almost all the nominations that came to me from principals were female, so I wonder if male teachers are also reflective, or are the qualities associated with reflective teachers gender specific? If men are reflective, how might their reflective process differ from the reflective process in women?
- Another area that may need to be explored in greater detail is that of the teaching environment of reflective practitioners. Are there issues, such as socio-economic factors in the conditions that affect reflection? None of these schools seemed encourage reflective practice, yet these teachers were reflective. What does reflective

practice look like in schools that encourage reflective teaching? Are there schools that discourage reflection?

- Given that the Effective Schools research indicates the principal as one of greatest influences in effecting school improvement at a site, what role, if any, does the principal play in fostering reflective practice? How do principals become reflective administrators?
- More attention must be given to the barrier of time in creating reflective teachers and how to solve that problem. Does block scheduling have an impact on cultivating reflection?
- I am convinced of the importance of dialogue, both the inner conversations and the outer ones that teachers have, but there is little time within the structure of the school day for such dialogue, especially at the secondary level. In this study the secondary teacher did not talk with her peers as much as the elementary teachers talked with their peers. Isolationism in secondary schools may inhibit reflection. Creating collaborative attitudes, behaviors, and environments as related to reflective practice deserves further study.
- Looking at reflection among novice teachers could prove enlightening. The three teachers I worked with had varying degrees of experience. One had more than twenty years, one more than fifteen, and the one with the least experience had six years. The richness of one's experiences adds to the interpretation of new events and situations, but does one have to have only teaching experiences to enrich the reflective process? What about young people who have had many life experiences? Are those young teachers more effective in their reflection?
- All three of the teachers in this study were very verbal and used language naturally in their processing. Are people whose cognitive processing style is not verbal as reflective or as successful with the reflective process?

- More attention could be given to the strategies that foster reflection. Journaling appeals to some, but not to all teachers. Are some strategies more effective for larger numbers of people than others?
- More work should be done on "Where does wholehearted commitment to teaching come from?" This characteristic seems to be foundational to reflective practice. Reflective teachers see their work as a mission and really do not know why they have such dedication. Exploring this area may provide insight for the profession as a whole.

### Concluding Thoughts: Reflective Practitioners, Reflective Conversations

Creating a cadre of American teachers who are reflective practitioners is key to improving our country's educational system. These three reflective teachers I studied convinced me that there are some wonderfully successful teachers who are committed to seeing that children succeed in school. If we can only learn enough from teachers like Ann, Rita, and Pat, we could redesign professional development to truly facilitate the success of teachers.

That renewal, I believe, must focus on building the confidence of teachers, not in treating them as Hargreaves (1994) says, "as recovering alcoholics" that we must fix. Rather, we must help them to know that they have answers and solutions they need for teaching that creates learning, and they can develop the strategies for getting at those answers. Professional development needs to focus on the processes needed to become successful teachers, not on programs and strategies for which they may or may not have a purpose or need. Creating reflective practitioners must also focus on helping teachers acknowledge and feel comfortable with the uncertainties of teaching. Not satisfied with or complacent about, but unafraid so *that they will search for other options*. Professional development in the next century must allow avenues for dialogue and encourage it because as these three teachers told and showed to me: dialogue with the self and with

fostering the flexible thinking and problem solving that are key components in reflective practice. As Ann and Rita told me, dialogue helps them process; that processing is at the heart of making adjustments so children will successfully learn.

I have only begun to understand reflective practice and I thank these three wonderful, dedicated teachers for welcoming me into the busy world and sharing with me what they understand about the magic they work every day, their esoteric art--the art of reflective teaching.

## REFERENCES

- Allport, G. (1942). The use of personal documents in psychological science. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Becker, H. S. (1968). Social observation and social case studies. International encyclopedia of the social sciences (Vol. 11). New York: Crowell.
- Birchak, B., Conner, C., Crawford, K. M., Kahn, L. H., Kaser, S., Turner, S., & Short, K. G. (1998). Teacher study groups: Building community through dialogue and reflection. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Bogan, P. (1997). Structured dialogue as staff development: A case study of one public high school's dialogue (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 58, 2605.
- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (1992). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods (Rev. ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bridwell, S. M. (1996). The nature of student teacher and cooperating teacher feedback conferences (Doctoral dissertation, Emory University, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 1567.
- Brooks, J., & Brooks, M. (1993). The case for constructivist classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.
- Brunner, D. (1994). Inquiry and reflection: Framing narrative practice in education. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Calderhead, J. (1989). Reflective teaching and teacher education. Teaching and Teacher education, 5(1), pp. 43-51.



- Clift, R., Houston, W. R., & Pugach, M. (Eds.). (1990). Educating reflective practice in education: An analysis of issues and programs. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1992). Communities for teacher research: Fringe or forefront?" American Journal of Education 100(3), 298-324.
- Collay, M., Dunlap, D., Enloe, W., & Gagnon, G. W. (1998). Learning circles, creating conditions for professional development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Costa, A., & Garmstom, R. (1994). Cognitive coaching: A foundation for renaissance schools. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. Phi Delta Kappan 76(8), 597-604.
- Day, C. (1993). Reflection: A necessary but not sufficient condition for professional development. British Educational Research Journal, 19(1), 83-93.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deutsch, G. L. (1996). Influencing factors along the road to reflective practice (learning styles, school improvement) (Doctoral dissertation, University of Hartford, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 1569.
- Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York: Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (1933). How we think. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1938). The theory of logic. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Dinkelman, T. D. (1997). Critically reflective teacher education in secondary social studies: A preservice case study (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 58, 3891.

- Frank, R. A. (1993). Critical cartography: Mapping teachers' journeys toward critical pedagogy (reflective teaching) (Doctoral dissertation, Clarmont Graduate University, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54, 2039.
- Fried, R. (1995). The passionate teacher: A practical guide. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fullan, M. (1993). Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform. New York: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (1991). The new meaning of educational change (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Glesne, C. & Peshkin, A. (1992). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gore, J. M., & Zeichner, K. M. (1991). Action research and reflective teaching in preservice teacher education: A case study from the United States. Teaching and Teacher Education, 7(2), 119-136.
- Griffiths, M., & Tann, S. (1992). Using reflective practice to link personal and public theories. Journal of Education for Teaching, 18(1), 69-84.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981). Effective evaluation. San Francisco: Josse-Bass.
- Habermas, J. (1973). Knowledge and human interests. London: Heinemann.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). Changing teachers, changing times. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Harris, S. (1999). Remember our first love. Educational Leadership, 56(8), 76-77.
- Henderson, James G. (1992). Reflective teaching: Becoming an inquiring educator. New York: Macmillan.
- Hansen, D. (1995). The call to teach. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hao, Y. (1996). Relationship between teachers' use of reflection and other selected variables and preschool teachers' engagement in developmentally appropriate practice (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 3805

- Hole, S., & McEntee, G. (1999). Reflection is at the heart of practice. Educational Leadership, 56(8), 34-37.
- Jackson, P. W. (1968). Life in classrooms. New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston.
- Jackson, P.W. (1986). The practice of teaching. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kirby, P.C. (1987). Reflective practice as a predictor of teacher effectiveness (Doctoral dissertation, University of New Orleans, 1987). Dissertation Abstracts International, 49, 1771.
- Langenbach, M.; Vaughn, C.; Aagaard, L. (1993). A broad introduction to educational research. Boston: Allyn & Bacon Press.
- Langer, G., & Colton, A. (1994). Reflective decision-making: The cornerstone of school reform. Journal of Staff Development, 15(1), 2-7.
- Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1991). Staff development for education in the '90's: New demands, new realities, new perspectives. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lindlof, T. R. & Meter, T. P. (1987). Natural audiences: Qualitative research of media and effects. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Louden, W. (1992). Understanding reflection through collaborative research. In A. Hargreaves & M.G. Fullan (Eds.), Understanding Teacher Development. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 178-215.
- Lucas, P. (1991). Reflection, new practices and the need for flexibility in supervising student teachers. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 15(2), 84-93.
- Lytle, S., & Cochran-Smith, M. (1994). Inquiry, knowledge, and practice. In S. Hollingsworth & H. Sockett (Eds.), Teacher research and educational reform: Ninety-third yearbook of the national society for the study of education, part I (pp. 22-51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- MacDonald, B., & Walker, R. (1977). Case study and the social philosophy of educational research. In D. Hamilton, et al, (Eds.), Beyond the numbers game. London: Macmillan.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mattingly, C. (1991). Narrative reflections on practical actions: Two learning experiments in reflective storytelling. In D. Schön (Ed.), The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice (pp. 235-257). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Maycut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1997). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook for new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Miller, B. (1998). Learning together and apart: Negotiating learning in a high school English classroom (collaborative learning, reflective teaching) (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1998). Dissertation Abstracts International, 59, 1448.
- Moallem, M. (1994). An experienced teacher's model of thinking and teaching: An ethnographic study on teacher cognition. Paper presented at the annual meeting of AERA, New Orleans, April.
- Munby, H., & Russell, T. (1990). Metaphor in the study of teachers' professional knowledge. Theory into Practice, 29(2), 116-121.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

- National Commission on Teaching and Learning (1994). What matters most: Teaching for America's future. Washington DC: National Commission Teaching and Learning.
- National Education Goals Committee (1994). The national education goals report, executive summary. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Noddings, N. (1984). Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Noffke, S., & Brennan, M. (1988). The dimensions of reflection: A conceptual and contextual analysis. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the AERA, New Orleans, April.
- Osterman, K., & Kottcamp, R. (1993). Reflective practice for educators: Improving schooling through professional development. Newbury, CA: Corwin Press.
- Palmer, P. (1998). The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1971). The psychology of the child. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston.
- Posner, G. J. (1985). Field Experience: A guide to reflective teaching. New York: Longman.
- Richardson, V. (1994). Teacher inquiry as professional staff development. In S. Hollingsworth & H. Sockett (Eds.), Teacher research and educational reform: Ninety-third yearbook of the national society for the study of education, part I, (pp. 22-51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scheffler, I. (1968). University scholarship and the education of teachers. Teachers College Record, 70(1), 1-12.
- Schön, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Schwarz, G. & Alberts, J. (1998). Teacher lore and professional development for school reform. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Shulman, L. (1989). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. Harvard Educational Review, 57(1), 1-22.
- Sigel, I., & Cocking, R. (1977). Cognitive development from childhood to adolescence: A constructivist perspective. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston.
- Shaw, K. E. (1978). Understanding the curriculum: The approach through case studies. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 10(1), 1-17.
- Smith, D., & Lovat, T. (1991). Curriculum: Action on reflection (2nd ed.). Wentworth Falls: Social Science Press.
- Soloman, J. (1987). New thoughts of teacher education. Oxford Review of Education, 13(3), 267-74.
- Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1997). A new vision for staff development. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Sparks, L., & Georgea, M. (1991). Promoting cognitive, critical, and narrative reflection. Paper presented at AERA, New Orleans, April.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steffe, L., & Gale, J. (1995). Constructivism in Education. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Stewart, L. M. (1991). Exploring the process of reflection used by preservice teachers: A case study (reflective teaching) (Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991). Dissertation Abstracts International, 53, 126.
- Tremmel, R. (1993). Zen and the art of reflective practice. Harvard Educational Review, 63(4), 434-458.
- Tripp, D. (1993). Critical incidents in teaching: Developing professional judgement. New York: Routledge.

- Udelhofen, S. K. (1996). Two case studies investigating the portfolio building process during student teaching (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 2008.
- van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical, Curriculum Inquiry, 6, 205-228.
- von Glasersfeld, E. (1981). The concepts of adaptation and viability in a radical constructivist theory of knowledge. Sigel, I., Brodzinsky, & Golinkoff (Eds.), New Directions in Piagetian Theory and Practice. Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Vygotsky, L. (1962). Thought and language. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Williams, D.A. (1995). The nature of discourse in small group discussions during reflective teaching (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1995). Dissertation Abstracts International, 56, 3549.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research: Design and methods. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zeichner, K. M., & Liston, D. P. (1996). Reflective teaching: An introduction. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Zeichner, K. M., and Liston, D. P. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. Harvard Educational Review, 57(1), 23-47.

**APPENDIX A**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW**



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 07-07-98

IRB #: ED-98-131

**Proposal Title:** THE NATURE, ROLES AND INTERPLAY OF THE INNER AND OUTER VOICES OF REFLECTION

**Principal Investigator(s):** Gretchen Schwarz, Linda Sue Powers

**Reviewed and Processed as:** Expedited

**Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):** Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

---

**Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:**

Signature 

Date: July 31, 1998

Interim Chair of Institutional Review Board  
and Vice President for Research

cc: Linda Sue Powers

**APPENDIX B**  
**LETTER TO SOLICIT NOMINATIONS**

To principals, counselors, and teachers:

For my dissertation, I am doing a study of reflective teachers to learn more about the reflective process and conditions that foster it. I need your help to identify possible participants in my study. Please look at the attached guidelines for identification of reflective teachers, and if you know teachers at your site or in this district who exhibit several of these characteristics and who demonstrate several of these actions, please send their names to me by Sept. 11 on this sheet. Your nominations will be kept confidential.

From the pool of nominees, I will randomly select three to contact for my study. Thank you in advance for your help in this process. If you have questions, please call me at 767-8000 or 765-8693.

Linda Powers

---

I have noted these teachers to display several of the characteristics and actions of reflective teachers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

(Please limit your nominations to five.)

*Guidelines for Identification of Reflective Teachers*

**I. Characteristics:**

**A. *Open-minded***

The teachers seem willing to listen to the other viewpoint or to consider the feasibility of something new. This does not mean they will change their position or mind, or necessarily accept the "something new"; it simply means the teacher will listen, weigh, and withhold immediate judgment.

**B. *Responsible***

The teacher carefully considers the consequences to which an action leads. Responsible teachers ask themselves why they are doing what they are doing, why or why not it is working, and for whom it is working or not working. Responsible teachers will not stop at whether or not the objectives have been met, but rather are the results good for the students and in what ways. They are creative problem solvers and are committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn.

**C. *Wholehearted***

Teachers who show an enthusiastic willingness to examine attitudes and actions with the attitudes that they can learn something new.

**D. *Caring***

Teachers show an abundance of a caring ethic. Deeply committed to teaching and learning, these teachers "go the extra mile" to help students learn and to improve the profession.

**E. *Constructivist Approach to Learning***

**Teachers seem to understand that learning is an active evolutionary process that occurs as learners connect and experience.**

**II. Actions**

**A. Reflective teachers ask questions.**

**B. Reflective teachers often "think aloud". You are able to hear their "thinking" as they share their thoughts about practices, programs, or innovations.**

**C. Reflective teachers may make mistakes but are not overly harsh on themselves. They see mistakes as an opportunity to grow.**

**D. Reflective teachers may spend more time at school and with students than others which is generally a sign of their wholehearted commitment.**

**E. Reflective teachers show a more positive attitude toward change and are more willing to consider new ideas.**

**APPENDIX C**

**PARTICIPANT LETTER & JOURNAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

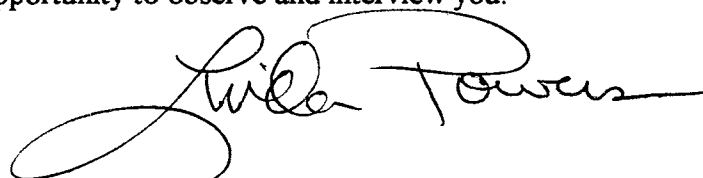
October 1, 1998

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my study of reflective teaching.

1. This project is part of completing my doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction from OSU.
2. I am studying reflective teachers in order to better understand reflective practice to inform the fostering of reflective practice as the goal of professional development for the 21st century.
3. I will publish the results of my study as a dissertation.
4. You were “nominated” by principals, counselors, or peers.
5. The only benefit for you to participate in this study is to contribute to the body of educational research on this topic.
6. Your identity will be kept anonymous and confidential.
7. I would like to interview you and observe your classroom several times over the next three or four months.
8. My goal is NOT to judge or evaluate, but to understand.
9. I request to tape our interviews, but I will destroy the tapes after my study is completed.
10. There are NO right or wrong answers to the questions I will ask you; you are the expert and I want to learn from you.

I appreciate the opportunity to observe and interview you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Towers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "L" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

## Journal Reflection Questions

Record any thoughts you want, like. . .

1. **When you reflect**
2. **Where you reflect**
3. **Why you reflect**
4. **What you reflect on**
5. **How you reflect**
6. **How you came to be reflective**



**APPENDIX D**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### Original Interview Questions

1. Please describe a situation, concern, or success about teaching that you and a peer have discussed. (This single question could be followed by probes to get extension, clarification, or verification.)
2. Describe the nature of that dialogue for me, please.
3. How did that dialogue with your peer impact your thinking?
4. How did dialogue with yourself about that situation or concern impact your thinking?
5. Have you taken action as a result of that dialogue? as a result of your own thinking?
6. What was the result of that action?

Reflective Teaching Study  
Interview Questions

1. Do you consider yourself to be willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints concerning educational issues?
  - On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being perfect, how do you rate yourself as a critical thinker?
  - Can you think of a particular example?
  - If so, how do you think you became this way?
2. Do you consider yourself committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn?
  - On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being perfect, how would you rate yourself compared to the most committed teachers you know?
  - Do you find yourself asking yourself why or why not something is working?
  - If so, how do you think you became this way?
3. Are you willing to learn new things, even if it means you must examine attitudes you may have held for a long time?
  - On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being perfect, how would you rate yourself compared with the most teachable teachers you know?
  - Can you think of a specific example of when you may have done some re-examining recently?
  - If so, how do you think you became this way?
4. Do you consider yourself to care a lot about students, teaching, and learning?
  - On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate yourself as a caring teacher?
  - If so, how do you think you became this way?
5. What do you understand and believe about the learning process?
  - Can you describe your best understanding of how learning occurs?
  - How did you come to this understanding of learning?
6. Do you ever "think aloud"? (Give an example to the interviewee.)
  - Do you do so often?
  - If so, what do you think led you to this behavior?
7. Do you ever make what you consider to be mistakes in teaching?
  - If so, what do you do when you discover you have made what you perceive to be a mistake?
  - What caused you to develop this behavior?
8. How much time do you spend at school outside of what is required by the contract?

- Can you make an estimate of the the number of hours you spend on school work outside the school day?
  - Why do you spend this time at school?
9. Would you consider your attitude toward change positive or negative?
- Why do you believe you have this attitude?
10. Do you often talk with others (teachers, administrators, parents, students) about teaching practices?
- Do you do this more or less than other teachers you know?
  - When?
  - Why?
  - How is this helpful to you?
  - When did you begin this practice?
  - Why did you begin to do this?
11. Do you often "talk" teaching situation over in your mind?
- Why did you begin this practice?
12. Have you taken action as a result of that dialogue with others or yourself?
13. Do the dialogue with others and the dialogue with yourself interact?
- How?
14. When do you think about issues from the classroom?
- Do you replay events in your head?
  - What prompts these thoughts?
  - Do you, in essence, hold a conversation with yourself in your head?
15. Do you see these events replayed in your head?
- On a scale of 1-10, how imaginative do you consider yourself to be?
  - Do you sometimes imagine how the situation would have turned out differently had you changed a part of the event? In other words, do you recreate the situation and create it again?
  - What prompts this behavior?
  - How did you come to act this way?
16. When do you reflect on school issues and events?
- Do you react almost automatically or intuitively sometimes?
  - At other times do you replay the event, think about it and come to a different or new conclusion about how to respond?
17. What are the conditions that best prompt reflections on school work, students and their learning?

**APPENDIX E**  
**OBSERVATION SHEETS**



Observation Sheet #2  
Reflective Actions and Context

1. Thinks aloud.
2. Corrects errors.
3. Attitude?
4. When reflects?
5. Where do I see evidence of reflective behavior?

Observation Sheet #3  
The Reflective Practice

1. Use of dialogue.
2. Reflects in action?
3. Reflects on action?
4. Memory seems sharp.
5. When does the teacher seem reflective?



**APPENDIX F**

**QUESTIONS TO ORGANIZE JOURNAL DATA**

## Journal Analysis Worksheet

Subject:

Month:

1. When reflect?
2. Where reflect?
3. Why reflect?
4. What reflect on?
5. How reflect?
6. How came to be reflective?
7. How does this internal conversation (the reflection in the journal) interact with an external one?

**APPENDIX G**  
**SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS**

## INTERVIEW #1

Interviewer: Linda Powers

Respondent: Ann

I wanted to go back, Ann . . . today is November 19. When we talked on the 16th, I asked you a couple of questions that I would like to add a question to. The first one was, and we've already talked about this, do you consider yourself to be willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints concerning educational issues? What I'd like to add is on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highest, how do you rate yourself as a critical thinker concerning educational issues. This is your opinion. Cause you're the one that knows how you feel.

I think that I would probably rate myself between a 7 and an 8, because most ideas, I'm willing to try, and I think that as far as trying new things, I am more than willing to try it. At least, once, and see how it works out. It may not be that I choose to continue with that practice, but if I feel like it's something, if I can see any kind of educational value to it, and the reason I leave it at maybe a 7 or 8, is this, there are some things, that if I felt they were just not good for my kids or too far to the left and I could not see an educational value to them, I might be reluctant to try those.

We talked also last time about the question, do you consider yourself committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn, using the same scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself compared to the most committed teachers you know?

I know it sounds kind of like you're beating your own drum, but I feel like I would give myself a strong 8 on that, because I really do want the kids to learn, and I have done some pretty crazy things in order to try to get, you know, I'll try anything, especially if I know it's something that they're just not getting. And that includes slowing down, and sometimes repeating a lot of what I teach. It depends on year to year in your class that comes in, and our classes, especially at Liberty, are so level. I'm giving some of the Star reading tests right now, and I've got students reading from first grade to seventh grade levels. So when you've got that much spread in your classroom, there are some kids that need to go on, they're very bored. I do a lot of pre-testing. I pre-tested on plural nouns this week, and all the students that showed mastery of that field, they're doing something else. But I've got a group that I'm going to work with, I worked with them yesterday in small groups to try, most of their problems are small, like just changing a "y" to an "I" when they are making a plural word, like that word cherry. And I just need to go back over that again, when I gave the lesson, they didn't quite get it, so I'll go back, and I'll just test that small group tomorrow. And then, I'll see where I'm at. And if I have a couple, I'm probably going to ask, like Mrs. Bowens, she comes into my room twice a week for 40 minutes, I'll send that little group out with her, like on a Monday, for 40 minutes, and have her reteach for the 3rd, or maybe the 4th time, until I feel like they get it. But the rest of us will be on to something else. But those same kids will still get that

new lesson, it's just that they, during reading time, or something, they are going out to get the little mini-lesson.

I think we were on question No. 3. You've kind of already answered this, but you might have something else to add. Are you willing to learn new things even if it means you must examine attitudes you held for a long time?

Yes, I have a lot of self-doubt. It's usually when I think I am doing my best, that all of a sudden, I realize, I'm not. It's just part of who I am. But, yes, I love to hear really good master teachers, I love to go watch them. We don't get enough opportunities to do that, and I think that no matter how long you've taught, sometimes I think that the longer you've taught, the more you need that, than when you're right out of college. You're fresh, you've heard the newest innovations in education. If, you know, go to a teaching college, you get into the game, you go year after year, you kind of get into that comfortable, "this works, this works", and sometimes we are the folks that need that new stuff worse, and we need to hear fresh, new ideas and hear these new teachers. They may not be as good on discipline as we are, but they have some good ideas that we maybe we never even heard of, or maybe we need to hear them again.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highest, how would you compare yourself with the most teachable teachers you know? That's really what the question is getting at. How teachable are you?

Are you referring, like how would you rate yourself as being able to learn new things?

And examine your attitude, and even when those attitudes may be ones you've helped a long time, how willing are you to do that?

Personally, I think I'm very willing just because I have a lot of self-doubts. In lots of parts of my life, but even in my teaching, and the minute - like I said while ago when I really think I'm doing good, all of a sudden I get really worried because then I think, I'm really not. Because I don't have too much self-confidence. So, I think I'm really willing to listen. And I love to hear other people, their ideas, I have not had one original thought since I started teaching. I just take what other good people do and I make it work for me.

But, on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you be?

On that one, I'd be close to the top. Probably a strong 9, because I'm always looking. There are a few things like discipline I think I do pretty well, but I would have to really listen, and if I really thought it would benefit me, there's a few areas like that, especially with methodology, and stuff, I would love to hear anything new to try.

Can you think of a specific example of when you may have done some re-examining recently?

I made a big mistake. Last year I felt like, well, I don't know if it was a big mistake because I'm making it work and I'm seeing now, but last year, since I've taught, all I've ever taught is Saxon math. And I felt like Saxon was not deep enough in the critical thinking area. I was always adding to it, with other textbooks and looking for things. So, I was very much for wanting a new curriculum. The new curriculum we had adopted, I was very unhappy with it at first, and I was very upset with myself with being one of the promoters of wanting to do this. As I'm getting into this new curriculum, it's been difficult for the kids. It's been difficult for me to teach, but it's deep. It goes in where I wanted it to go, and I'm not having to use any supplements with it, and I see that part of the problem is just my first year teaching it, even though I really studied it this summer, I didn't do enough. I should have gone in and actually done some pretend teaching, and thought of maybe some of the problems I would at the beginning run into. I'm writing down all this as I teach it, and next year, when I start the year, I'll present it very differently that what I did this year. But now that I'm in to it, I like it. Because it's got a lot of that deep thinking. It goes down to these layers, which I wanted it to do, but I've had to provide for my kids. And I think it's the kind of math that we need to move toward, and not that Saxon isn't good, I think it's good, but I think it's too topical. I think it's not deep enough at least for my liking.

You mentioned in your answer just now, "I should have done something." Would you elaborate on that a little bit? What do you mean by "pretend teaching"?

I always before, especially material that I'm not familiar with, I actually go through the lesson, I used to make my own children listen, but they're gone now, and they're probably happy that they don't have to do that, but I do a lot of, oh, I'll come down here on Sunday to work, and I'll actually teach the lesson and try to as I teach, think about some of the things that might go wrong, some of the questions they may ask, that maybe I don't have an answer for, where some of it might lead? I don't do it with everything, but material, especially social studies and science, and math, that I feel less competent in teaching, than in teaching reading. I feel very competent in teaching reading, because I feel like that's one thing I do pretty good. But with the others, there's always, you know, those questions that I want to be able to answer them for them, but also, sometimes I will think of things that I haven't thought of before and lead them in directions that I want them to go in, but maybe I wouldn't, when I am up teaching. Because you're also, you're not only teaching, you're watching, you're doing discipline, you've got so many things going on in your mind, that sometimes you can't think of all those neat things until you're finished that you would have liked to done with it.

Thank you. How do you think you became this way, as a teacher, that you're willing to reexamine, that you do have doubts, but those doubts aren't defeating you, you search for a different approach, different material, how do you think you became this way?

I think part of it is somewhat who you are. I think we talked about this last time. I take it very personally when my children fail. And that's just, you know, I look at how I taught them, what I did, and how I could have made it better. It really bothers me when I send a

student along to another grade, that I don't feel is ready, that I did not give the skills, and you know, at the end of the school year, I try to look at each student, where they're at, not only just with testing, but every teacher has that gut feeling, you know, how you did, how this child progressed through your school year, and I don't want to have that feeling that I did not do everything I could to make that child successful, because kids don't forget. I had a third grade teacher - she was the worst teacher I think that ever taught, she was horrible, and to this day she still - things that she said, things that she did are still coming into my mind, and I think, you know, of all the kids she must have damaged along the way, emotionally, you know, and I think, kids don't forget.

Was she a teacher that, in your mind now, didn't examine or re-examine or change to meet kids needs, is that why she sticks out in your mind?

I think, definitely, that was it. She did things the same, every single day. She never varied from the pattern of what she had set. I was lucky, because I was a pretty smart kid in school, but if you were not, you could tell that she did not even care for you personally, especially if you were not smart on top of that. And I felt like the kids that couldn't make it, to her, they were just a waste of time. And third graders know that.

So, you think this experience, I just need to clarify, might have shaped into the way you are now?

I think it did. And yet, my sixth grade teacher, who was just the opposite, showed me that it could be so different.

Do you consider yourself to care a lot about student teaching and learning?

Yes.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate yourself as a caring teacher?

Well, I would hope I would be a 10, but then, with all my self doubt, I wouldn't, I just wouldn't be able to put myself at a 10.

How do you think you became this way? To care?

I think it goes back into, I mean, the way I feel, first of all, you would not do this job unless you really cared, because it's a very difficult job, it's hard. It's taxing physically, emotionally, and I just can't imagine that anyone would want to do it that didn't really want to be there, and be in teaching. The day I would not care was be the day I would just quit, and do something else, I can't imagine. And I'm a big one for, and this is probably not very popular, but I think that people that are in teaching, that have that attitude need to get out. And I know that things like tenure can stop that kind of thing,

but I think it's something that some day we are going to have to re-evaluate. And also, I think, not only that, but our teacher training programs have got to have talking.

What do you think we would sort out people initially who shouldn't go into the profession because they don't care?

I graduated from Phillips University, which is, makes me sad now, because it's gone, but what Phillips did, before you ever got into your methodology classes, you were sent into school. We had, it was a lot, it was probably 60 hours or the first year in the classroom, and they sent us to Adams Elementary, which was a pretty rough elementary school in Enid, Oklahoma, with low socio-economic and lots of discipline problems. And that in itself did a lot of the weeding out. It was surprising how many people dropped elementary ed, a few of them moved up to secondary, and a lot of them left teaching, you know, chose another major. I think that in our teaching schools, we don't start putting people into classrooms until they are practically finished, and then they get in there, and they're like "whew", you know, but hey, I'm already here, my parents are paying for it, I've got to do this. And then I think part of it is, I think a lot of people go into teaching, thinking and probably loving it, but they have no idea of what the reality of the classroom, and public, I think, public education, and they just get burned out. But you're vested into a career, and you can't afford to change, nor do they have the time, or, who wants to go back to school, when you've taught for seven or eight years, and try something new?

What do you understand and believe about the learning process as they're really two separate issues. What do you understand about learning, and then what do you believe?

I think what I understand and you don't really get it in college, but until you get out there into the ranks, that no two kids are the same. And a lesson, when you get ready to present, I know, in my first year, I cringe when I think about some of the things I did. Getting up and just giving a lesson, and thinking that because you got up and gave it, that everybody sitting there got it, understood it, or that they had background knowledge to connect to that or they even had any idea what you're talking about. And those types of things, I think that, you kind of learn by trial and error, at least in the beginning. And that all these kids come in from all these different perspectives, all these different backgrounds, all these different experiences, and they are all so different so that you've got to have a lesson that first of all, before you ever start, that everybody understands what you're talking about. I love the story about the little kid that moved from the big city to the deep south and so the teacher's telling a story and it's about a trunk that's up in an attic, and they lived in a southern kind of plantation house, and this little girl goes to the attic and everything, and the little boy from New York City, when they got ready to take the test, he flunked it, and the teacher said, "Well, you sounded like such a good reader when you read it, what's the problem?" And he said, "Mrs. Brown, where I come from, an attic is someone that stands at the corner of the street, and your mom says stay away from him." So, they were trying to get across a point of background knowledge that any two kids don't understand a thing, the same thing, it may be totally different for



another one. So, you've got to get all of that straightened out before you can even start teaching. That I understand.

What do you think your----

From my limited experience, what I understand about lying, is that kind of thinking that kids are so different, and as you get to know your students, their background, who knows what, how they learn, a lot of them, most of the kids I see today, are not auditory learners. I may have two really strong auditory learners a year. And it's really funny, but usually my really strong auditory learners are the ones that cannot read. Because they've learned, they've adapted, they've had to, to survive, so they learn to listen. And then the kids that are good readers, I've got one this year that's reading on 7th grade level, but she has the worst auditory skills I've ever seen. Everything has got to be visual, and she's got to have hands on all the time, because she's not a good listener. Reads like a dream. It's so strange, because they're all put together so differently. So, I know that what I understand is that I've got to make changes, and allowances, and prepare my lessons knowing all of that, knowing I've got all these different kinds of learners in my class.

How do you determine what kind of learners they are?

Well, a lot of it is just observation. What a tool for me that is! I can watch them, usually within the first few weeks of school, I can pretty tell you everything about them. It's just a gut thing, you watch them, you feel it, you just know. This little girl I'm talking about, I've watched her, and even when giving directions like put your books away and let's start, it was like she wasn't doing it on purpose, she would still be reading in a book, or something. I'd have to say her name a couple of times and then she'd just recognize what we were doing. And it wasn't like she was being defiant, or anything, it is just she, and I think sometimes that people get discipline mixed up with those types of problems. And they are not discipline problems. The kids really are not there. It takes a while, and you can come up with lots of different things, like when this little particular girl, sometimes I just go by and tap on her desk, that tells her you need to get your stuff put up. And then, one of my little students this year, she is ESL, and not reading very well at all, but if I do something orally, she can answer, any comprehension question I give to her. I mean she knows what is going on, she's really bright, she can't do pencil work, that's just not her thing.

How did you come to your understanding of learning?

To go back to just observing kids, just watching them, and you know, we are always telling them to be observant, you know the more you listen, the more you learn, the same goes for the teacher. Just watching her. It can be even at recess. The first unit, the first six weeks of school, I stay out on the porch and watch them at lunch. I just grab my sandwich and go out there because just watching them play tells you a lot. First of all, you know who's going to be fair, who's the fair player in the room, who's aggressive,

who's passive, you know, who likes to do what, just watching them interact is a powerful thing. And then, watching them in the classroom, too.

Do you ever think aloud to the kids?

Yes, but I never tell anybody cause, I talk to myself all the time. And you know, my mother does, too, and I used to get so upset with her. And now, I'm doing it, so I don't know, but my mom is losing her hearing, so I think maybe I'm losing my hearing and that's why I'm talking to myself. I do things in public. Yesterday, I always like to do with my kids, if I were a third grader, this is what I would do. Or going through a math problem, I always say, if I was a third grader in Mrs. Grover's class, and I needed to solve this problem, I think this is what I would do. And I walk them through from a third grade perspective. But I do that with a lot of stuff. I like for them to try to look at the world, not just problem solving, but everything, through the eyes of somebody their age.

Do you do this often?

Yes! I don't know if I should admit to that, but.....

What do you think led you to this behavior? Bad genes? Your mom does it? Other influences?

I think that I'm just a verbal person. And it's not that I like the sound of my voice, I'm very low for a woman. I do not like the sound of my voice, and so I think that it is just something that is a habit, probably watching my mom all those years doing it, and then sometimes, I need to verbally hear things as I think them through to make them more concrete for me.

So, just to clarify, it helps you process?

It does. I think it's just a processing thing for me. And you know, I've got kids in my room, and they read, and they have to say the words out loud, and if it bothers everybody, you know, I let them go out in the hallway, but most of the kids it doesn't bother, but every year, I have at least two readers that have to read very softly, but to themselves. I don't know why but they just have to do that to understand what they read. I wish I knew more about how these types of things work, but I don't.

## INTERVIEW #2

Interviewer: Linda Powers

Respondent: "Rita"

.....Misbehavior where you either back up and redo something or you find an alternative to that. How did you come to be this way?

Well, a lot of my things go back to childhood, to tell you the truth, but I was kind of in the middle. I had a father who had a very bad temper, and you did it right the first time or you didn't get a second chance. And then I had a mother that would talk to you, set you down, and let you see the error of your ways and give you a second chance. I always appreciated my mother very much doing this, because I used to get in trouble a lot. I was never a real sharp, easy, fast learner. I had to learn by doing things over and over because I was just an average learner. I probably could have been a lot better than I was, but anyway, I was a talker and in 6th grade I got in trouble all the time for talking in class, not for doing anything wrong, just talking, and he helped me - I can't answer why - but he was a very good study of people, and he told me one day, he said "Rita, I just really don't know what to do with you because I cannot help you quit talking. I've asked you enough." And he said, "We're going to have to figure out a way to do this." So he sent me - he was a principal, teaching principal, and his classroom was right next to his office. So he set me beside the office door, away from the other students, but not for punishment, he said. I'm sure it was to get me away from everyone else, now that I can look back. But I was the telephone girl, and when the telephone rang, it was my job, and my responsibility to go answer it. He taught me how to answer the phone. And then he would tell me that I did a good job, and that this was a very good job for me to do, and that I was very responsible. And I grew from that, and that helped me learn that there are alternatives, and he was one of the teachers, not the only, but one of the teachers that I admired, because instead of coming down hard on the students, he tried to find a better way to do it, to explain to them why he wanted them to change, and how we could change, and we would brainstorm together on ways to change our behaviors if it was not a good behavior.

Just to clarify, your interactions with your mom, and the way she was, and then earlier teachers, specifically the sixth grade one, you developed this notion that there is more than one way to do things and to think about them.

And if you can explain to the child that this is what we're doing, instead of just telling them, don't do that, and let them in on it, they are much more responsible for their behavior and they become better students, because they understand why they are doing this and why it's wrong. And you also have a solution, to help them with a solution, and they help with a solution so they feel like it's more personal. That's how it made me feel, and I feel it's how the parents feel. And when we have conflicts, even in kindergarten, we have conferences with whoever is involved, two of them involved, three of them involved, we sit down and have a conference and they have to talk among themselves,

and figure out a solution, and I leave them alone to do that for a while, then I come back, we talk and see why it happened, and what can be done about it, and it helps a lot with my discipline. I don't have that, I don't put names on the board, and all that stuff. And some days it's worse than others, but you know, they have to take responsibility that way. And I don't think they are too young to do that. It seems to work, sometimes. The majority of the time.

Developing autonomy is a part of developing this behavior. And do you have a solution?

And a lot of our children don't even realize that. A lot of the children's parents don't realize that. They haven't been shown that, or taught that. And so I think it's a new awareness for them. I've even had parents tell me that, "What are you doing? My son came home the other night and he was talking to his brother, and they were fighting, and he said, all at once he said, 'Wait a minute, there's a better way to do this.' And they said, 'let's sit down and have a conference.'" And she said, "I was just aghast at what he was doing." And when they do it with their siblings, it must be right.

How much time do you spend at school, outside of what is required by the contract?

Oh, I don't usually go home before 5:00, almost any night, and sometimes 5:30, so it probably 2, 2 ½ hours after school.

2 hours after school. And what about before school?

I try to get here, well, I used to try to get here by 7:00, but I haven't made it lately. But I get here usually by 7:30, so it's 30 minutes before, at least, sometimes 45 minutes.

Can you make an estimate on the number of hours you spend on school work, outside of the time you spend at school, in other words on weekends, and even after you go home, if you have papers to read, or things to cut out, or you have to go get supplies for tomorrow's project, or anything related to school, that you're giving up your time outside of school. Do you have any idea how much that would be?

Well it's at least 3 or 4 hours an evening because I'll fix dinner and then I'll sit down and start on school work, and sometimes it's 10:30 before I can quit and go to bed, or 11:00. And if I have a big, big, major project, it may be 12:00 or so, because I don't want to take away any more time from the children than I have to. But they're so little that there are some things they can't do. I've also learned to limit some of the projects, because, unless I, unless they are new projects and I've just tried them, I don't realize how long it takes.

So, what about on weekends? Is it about 3, or 4, hours?

It is probably about 15 hours a week. On the weekends, I used to come back, like every Saturday or Sunday, but the last couple years, since Don and I have been, just on our own, and the empty nest there, uh, have felt like I have needed to be with him, and not

leave him alone so much. And so, I try not to go, come back to school, I try to get everything done by Friday evening, so I can go home and spend Saturday and Sunday with him. But used to, I used to come back at least one afternoon a week. I mean the weekend, and spend like three hours on a Saturday working. But I've tried really hard not to do that. He is really getting where he doesn't want to be left alone too long.

Why do you spend all of this time at school, and after school?

Because I just want to make sure that everything's done. I guess I'm not really a perfectionist, but I want everything organized. I do want things organized and done, so I don't have to spend so much time getting it together after the kids get here. And if it takes me that long, it takes me that long. The time element doesn't bother me as much as what the children get out of it. I don't mind putting the time in, if they get something out of it.

Would you consider your attitude toward change, positive or negative?

Well, I've been known to be hesitant, but I don't know if that's negative or not. I think positive, generally. There have been times when I've been very nervous about the change, or hesitant, because I didn't know for sure what was going to happen

Why are you hesitant?

Because usually, to me, change means grow, progress, and that's what we are trying to accomplish with teaching, and we want things to progress and to grow, and be positive, and generally, anything that will perpetuate that is good. Unless it's proven detrimental. Or if it's something that I think is just completely wrong, for what I'm doing, for my children then I will, I've been known to speak up, I'll put it that way.

Do you often talk with other educators or just let me say, others, (teachers, administrators, parents, students) about teaching practices? Do you talk to other people at college or other students.....?

Well, Sheila and I talked a lot about what we're doing, and if it is beneficial, and if we should waste our time, or take our time to do it. And at the kindergarten center, we did quite a bit of that, because we were right there together. And we shared a lot, what was good, and what was bad, what we want out, and what we'd like in. And that's what was one thing that was so wonderful about that. And I miss that and in what little we ever do get in the lounge to speak with the others at different levels, it's usually shoptalk, and since we've had the children before, they'll ask us what did you do to help this child through this, or what was the technique that you found worked best, oh, yes, we've done a lot of that. Even my neighbors, when they come over, or friends, if they're either having trouble with their children, or whatever, I've had the longest line, I've had two friends of my sons that grew up and were practically at our house more than they were their own. And they've called and asked me - they had pre-schoolers, 3, 4 or 5 year olds,

and asked me what they can do at home, or what the children like to do, and I've gotten things together, and sent them, and mailed them, and they've been very appreciative, but they, but I've told them, to emphasize, don't pressure, don't push. Make it fun, make it enjoyable, so they don't get burned out, but don't pressure and try to get them to know everything, and so, yes, that way.

Do you think you do this more or less than other teachers?

Well, more than some, and less than others. I don't know, I have a lot of teachers tell me that I do too much, probably. But, or that, a lot of that, of course, I only have one child, which makes a difference, too. And he was older, when I went back. I was older, and he was older, so I didn't have the little bitty ones, but like she has three children, and they are going three different directions. I realize she doesn't have time to do a lot. And it's just something I thoroughly enjoy. I really like making the games, and thinking up the things. It's kind of like a hobby, or a therapy, and I was doing this even before I was teaching, because my sister was, she was teaching middle school, which was a big difference, but I would go to conventions and conferences with her, and we'd take our kids, and we'd find games and things, go to the teacher's stores, and I was the one that I always wanted to be the teacher, and she never did, and it was just vice versa, until my son was older, and I finally got to go back. But, it's just been, I've always really enjoyed it, I liked it, I liked making things, and I love crafts, and stuff, so it just kind of follows along, I guess, but like my sister used to tell me, her hobby was school, and she just, when she goes to a craft shop, and when she goes to Wal-Mart, she's looking for things for school, I guess you'd call it a habit, or just something you enjoy doing, or, and it's my main interest, on everything I do. I have just always loved kids, and children, and think it's just kind of developed.

Rita, do you often talk a teaching situation over in your mind?

Yes, I'll go to bed, and it just takes me about an hour to go to sleep, because I run the day through my head, and I think, how can I, where do I go from there? And how am I going to present it now, and if it didn't work, how can I back up and do this again, better? And, I'll lay in bed an hour before I go to sleep. And I can picture myself, what I'm saying, and again, when I make a mess of things. I'm a very visual person.

Why do you think you began to practice, what caused you to walk into situations?

Well, I just think basically it's my personality. I've always done things like that. When I was growing up, if I had problems, I'd always talk it over with myself first, because I'd ever go over and talk to mom or dad. I was one of those kids that always told off on themselves, no matter what it was, because I knew it would be found out anyway. So I would always talk to myself, and then I'd try to figure out how it sounded, and then I'd go in and talk to mom. My son is basically the same way. And he would always, and then we'd sit and talk it over together, and I learned from him, even before I went back to school, that he liked it that way, and he would thank me, and would say, "Thanks for

talking to me," or, even though he would talk to his father, he would come and talk to me first. And I'd say, being with my own children, and I've taught Sunday School for years, and I think being with kids, I had Camp Fire Director for a year and a half. And this dealing with children is directly, that's always the way I've got through to them.

Have you taken an action as a result of dialoging with others, or with yourself that prompted you to take action?

You mean take action, and actually putting it to work? Because maybe if I'm not sure how I want to present something, I might just talk to the kids before I ever begin it as a unit. And see if they're even interested. Or if they, or if it sounds good to them. And then, when I get feedback from them, it shows me if they are interested or not, or they might even come up with some ideas that I can use to expand on, or work into.

Do the dialogue that you have with others and the dialogue you have in your own head, ever interact?

Physically or mentally?

Physically or mentally, either one. Is there ever a connection or draw together a conversation that you've had with others. People have conversations with each other.....

Well, like I said when we were planning a meeting, I'd talk to them first, and then I'd mull it over and pull out the things that would be relative to the kids, things that they could understand and experience, and then I'd try to tie it to experiences they could have or will have, so that they could have some idea. Well, to me, I think that I'd weave them together, and put the things that I want them to get out of it, as well as the things they're interested in, and try to make them come together, and be unified and consistent.

When do you think about issues from the classroom?

All the time. You mean issues that we bring up, or kids bring up, or.....

No, instructional issues. Dealing with this kid or that kid, or how to teach, this particular conflict or that particular conflict. Not issues they bring to the classroom. Instructional issues. When do you think about it? All the time as you mentioned earlier, you think about it when you go to bed.....

It's just school on my mind a lot. It's such a big part of my life, I can't, or don't do anything, that I don't relate back to school. And it varies. If it's something bothering me, or something I'm concerned about, good or bad, it just kind of consumes me until I get it solved or get taken care of.

Do you replay events in your head?

Some of it is very, very vivid, and I can replay it like I replay a ball game or something. It's like a video and I bring it back, and I'll look at it over and over, and I'll just, what did I do, what did I say, what do I need to have changed?

So, in essence, you do try to sometimes hold conversations with yourself in your head?

Yes, I've even been known to, if I am excited about something, I'll be talking about it or thinking about it, and I'll even burst out loud, and "Well, that's it, that'll work." And people will look at me and, I'll say sorry - and it'll be different. It's not just always at home, I'll be maybe, even we've gone somewhere and seen, maybe a video, or a movie or something, and something will strike me, and I can do that, I just forget where I am at, and I'll just burst out - I can, do that! I can do that!

On a scale of 1 to 10, how imaginative do you think yourself to be? Because it takes imagination to be able to recreate visual images in your head like that video. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself?

I am a very visual person. And I've always been a very kinesthetic, very visual, very aware of my space, ever since I can remember. And that's the way I learn things. I learn quicker that way, than I do by writing or other things. I don't know, I think it would be at least an 8. Maybe a 9, I may not be as creative as some people, my problem is, I can think it and I can see it and I can feel it and I can taste it, I'm just not an artist, I'm not a real good artist, so I can't actually draw it like I can imagine it, I imagine it much better, and when I put it on paper, I think, "Oh, golly, it's not what I wanted at all, because I cannot, I don't have talent in the way of being an artist, or anything, but I can tell somebody if they have the talent they can make it. Like for 5 year olds, I can trace very good, but, and I can get it down to what I want, but as far as drawing it or illustrating it, but I can sure picture it in my mind well. And I love to make up stories and plays and original things like that. That's why I love puppets so much. And I sit and watch the Disney channel more than I do anything else, because I love to watch the colors and the creativity and the fantasy, it's just breathtaking.

And I think you answered this question when you answered another one, but I want to make sure that I got it right. Do you sometimes imagine how the situation would have turned out differently had you changed part of the event? In other words, do you recreate a situation in your mind, and then create it again?

Like if I had done it differently, it would have turned out differently.

I think you said that awhile ago.

Especially if it's something that didn't turn out.



What prompts this behavior? Or maybe you just answered that. If I understood you correctly, it is usually when something goes wrong. Or you perceive that it's gone wrong so you create it and then you recreate it differently.

It could be something that didn't work, so I want to step back and do it over, or if it is what I'm creating, is not exactly, it doesn't work, but it's not what I wanted. It might have worked with the kids, or at home, but it's not exactly what I wanted. So, I'll say, "Well, that worked OK, they enjoyed it," but it's not exactly what I wanted to get. So, I either have to add to it.....

And how do you think you came to act in this way?

By making mistakes, and knowing I had to do something better, and improve and be a better teacher, be a better person. I mean, I think it's just life in general kind of tends to make us step back and look, and think, I do that at home with my kids or child. Or when it didn't work, or it could turn out well, or we had a row over it, or something, I'd have to say, "Well, obviously I'm not doing it right." It's created a different picture.

It is a desire to improve on something better. Why do you see, why are you that way, wanting to improve it?

I don't think I've got it. I know we are always talking to the kids, and have Great Expectations, build your self esteem, and I have a wonderful family who have always made me feel very loved and accepted so following, it's not that - I'm hard on myself. And I've always wanted to be the best I could be, but at the same time, I've felt, I have a problem with that, but I, it's not to the point where I don't think it's real obvious, but to me, I'm hard on myself because I want to, whatever I do. I want to keep trying to do it better and improve and be the best because I don't think I'm up there. And I don't know if the family knew it, I had an older sister, and she was always straight A's, and always did everything very well, and maybe that had something to do with it. She always pleased the parents and didn't have to go back and redo it. I was always the one that would make the mistake, or fall on my face, and have to go back and redo it. And maybe I was striving to be to the degree she was, or I wanted to please as much as she pleased, and that might have started it. And I still have the girlfriends we ran around with, we're very close, in a lot of respects. You know, they were always prettier, or slimmer, or something was always better. I never envied them, but I was always trying to live up to them. And I think I handled things---- I know I'm never going to be popular---

Do you consider yourself willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints concerning issues relating to education?

Most of the time.

Can you think of a particular example or time when there was an educational issue that was presented to you that was opposite of what you believed, or wasn't anything you

could immediately buy into, but you gave it some thought, maybe changed your mind. Can you think of a specific issue or example of an issue that caused you to pause and say, "Well, maybe I do need to reevaluate what I think about this?"

One that comes to mind, is inclusion. I wasn't exactly really against it, but I also felt at the time, I guess I kind of closed my mind, because I felt that I wasn't really trained for this. How will my other children act, and how much more work will it be? Also, what would the other teachers, the special teachers that were trained for it, what would they do? And to be selfish, I thought, they are trained for this, I am not, but they get more money than I do, so that was a selfish thing for me to think to do. But that did pop in my mind. And there were all kinds of things, like will I be setting myself up for a law suit, if something happens to these children, if these children don't learn, or if they have an accident, and I was responsible for them. But, when we went to, of course, we haven't had a whole lot of training in it, but when we did go do some things for it, I saw how valuable it could be to the special children, the at-risk children. And I saw when it started working, how valuable it was to the other children, how they accepted them. Of course, I don't know if it works that way in the higher grades. But in the lower grades, of course they are a lot more acceptable anyway, things are more accepted. But they readily accept more things now out in life than - they don't make fun of kids and things as much as they used to so that has a lot of that. I sometimes still don't feel real adequate, because I don't think we've been trained for it. We've had a lot of workshops, but to me, that's not actual training.

So, if you see yourself as most of the time willing to listen to and weigh other viewpoints, how do you think you became this way?

What made me become this way?

To look at other ways, other viewpoints? The other side?

Well, probably, the way I was brought up because my mother is this way. She's very open-minded. And we were always able to go in and ask her anything, even shocking questions, other parents were shocked, my mother would, she would much rather have us come in and ask questions and want to know things than find them out in other ways. She's always been very open and my sister, I have an older sister, who has always been kind of like a second mother and I was able to talk with her so they've always been real open, and a lot of times we didn't agree, we'd sit down and hash it out. And I think that helped me a lot. And I also was director of Camp Fire, I saw a lot of different views, we were trying to get leaders and people to work with children, and we'd have to check them out and see how they feel before we let them work with the kids. I saw a lot of things there that I think twice about, and we've always, I think church has a lot to do with it, too, because we've always gone to church and they gave us instructions in church, and it just kind of melted into that. We looked at all religions. We went through every religion there was and talked about it and talked about it, pros and cons. And I was brought up that way, you don't just make a flat statement without checking it out. And that's the

way my family was politically. Just because they're Democrat or Republican, you check them out for what they truly believe, try to be non-partisan if you can.

So, what I understood from that, just to clarify, there were influences from your family, your mother's life, and/or professional experiences from your church, politics in your family, talked away. Do you consider yourself committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn?

I think for the most part, I try to see if it will benefit the children, if it's not beneficial, and some fluff in kindergarten has to pass, because you know, they have to have a little fun with it, too. But, still, if it's not beneficial to them and there's not some part of teaching somewhere in it, I don't particularly keep it. I may try it once and if it doesn't really work out well, I won't try it again. But I think it's got to mean something or they have to enjoy it or they have to get something out of it.

Do you ever find yourself asking why, or why not, something's working?

Oh, yes, a lot. A lot. That's why I change a lot. I don't do the same, I do some of the same things every year but I do a lot of changing every year. If there was a project that I don't think this particular group would enjoy or they're maybe more advanced, or further behind, or whatever, sometimes I won't do the same things next year. Because some classes are more ready to go, and they're more, the majority of them, are further along, so I don't need to do certain projects. I think it depends on the class, and I think it depends on children you have.

Do I understand you to say that you make a lot of decisions based on student interest and ability, and those vary - your decisions to do things vary. How do you think you became this way, that you will vary based on student's interests?

Well, it's just from experience with them. Because it, you know, if it doesn't hold their interest, if they don't get something out of it, you're going to lose them. And then you're going to have more discipline problems. And they'll start getting bored, or start waning off in another direction. I learned this when I taught 5th grade and 6th grade and 4th grade, and it doesn't matter what level, what grade. You'll lose them if you don't make it more meaningful to them.

Are you willing to learn new things even if it means you must examine attitudes you may have held for a long time?

If something is proven to me that it doesn't work, I don't usually stick with it. There is one thing - I don't even know if it's in that category or realm you're talking about - when they told me, when I wanted to do kindergarten here in Ponca, they told me if I wanted to stay, I had already taught a year - if I wanted to stay in it, I had to get my Early Childhood. And I had the attitude at the moment that no one else or very few had their Early Childhood, why should I be the one that would have to go? If they didn't have to

go, why should I go? But I went, because I wanted to do kindergarten that bad. And it was a long haul. And then shortly after that, they opened it up to just a weekend, a one to two day thing, where you could go in. After I had spent 2 ½ years getting my Masters in Early Childhood and I was, right at first, I don't know if you'd say bitter or very upset about it. But then, I thought, well, there's advantages both ways because I can go clear up to 3rd, and they can only teach kindergarten. And I could understand at the time because a lot of those teachers that taught twenty years, or fifteen years, and I couldn't really blame them for not wanting to go back full-time two years, although I didn't want to either.

But with that training, did it end up being helpful?

Oh, yes, Early Childhood was wonderful and then I went ahead and, I just lacked 6 hours getting a Masters, so I went ahead and did that. And I didn't think it would make that much difference having a masters, but it has. And Early Childhood was wonderful. I just thoroughly enjoyed it and I have learned so much about the early childhood, clear back from birth on that it was well worth it, and I think that I'm really glad I went back. As I look at it, it turned out real well.

Do you consider yourself to care a lot about students teaching and learning?

I'm not sure I understand, about that student side.

Do you consider yourself to care a lot about students teaching and learning? The focus of both of these questions is going to be on care and commitment.

Me to them?

And the process of you to them, and the whole process of teaching and learning. Do you consider yourself to be extremely committed to it, to care a lot about, have a lot of personal investment in it?

Oh, yes, very much so. I think if I didn't, I wouldn't be in kindergarten. I wouldn't be staying in it. Because it is very, it can be very taxing and take a lot more time. I taught clear up to 6th, and it takes a lot more time to do kindergarten than any other grade I've ever taught, but that's because of their youngness, and they can't do a lot of things themselves, but you have to get all the things ready for them. I really feel very committed to teaching in general. But teaching the young ones, too, because there's so many things nowadays, especially, that are not being done by the family unit. And these children come to me, wanting so much nurturing and so much more than, I don't know if, than they used to, because I guess there's always been children that way, a little neglected, but it seems like there's more all the time. And I think that at this tender age, when they are just starting out, that, in their early childhood, that they need so much more from you and I, and it kind of drains you, because they all want to do everything at one time, and they all want to be hugged at the same time, but they need so much more beside

just teaching. They need your understanding, they need your, just a pat on the back, they need that extra hug, they need a lot of praise, they need that self-esteem desperately. And it helps fulfill me, because I've always loved children, and I've never had enough in my personal life that I, I mean I wanted a lot more than I have, so that kind of fulfills a need in me, and I think that's, so together, it fulfills a need for each other. And it helps us both, in both ways. But I just really feel that someone's got to get these kids started off, and take the time to teach them something, and if something doesn't work, to try something else, and you need to let them know that you love them, and that you're here for them. Just as much as you need to teach them numbers and letters.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest rank of care and commitment, where would you rank yourself in this scale?

Oh, gosh.....

Rank yourself. You're the only one that would know how much you care.

On 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest?

Yes.

Oh, goodness, the way my heart hurts for these kids, sometimes, it's got to be, I don't know, I'd say, at least 8 or 10. Sometimes I just get, you know, you just go as far as you can go, and you've got to stop and take a couple of days on the weekend, and just completely get away from it. But because it is very draining, but I don't know, I felt very responsible in the higher grades, too, but I feel so much more strongly drawn like this is where you're needed, even if it is more work and more time consuming. This is where you're needed and give more. I guess I need more back, too. I need the hugs as much as they do so maybe I feel like I can give more and I can be more effective at this level.

What do you understand and believe about the learning process? What do you understand about how kids learn, I mean from your courses and such, and what do you believe, which may or not be based on courses or things you've read, but you believe it.

Oh, gosh, well, I think they learn, they learn from everything around them to begin with, and they never stop learning. We never stop learning. But, if you are talking about formal learning, I think, first they have to have a clear mind, and there's a lot of them that don't have. They have to have a mind that's focused in on their learning, or it's not going into their mental processes. And this is one thing I think is so important, is to make them feel safe and secure and fed and rested, which is a lot of things they don't get. But all of those things are necessary if you want a good strong learner. And a lot of these kids don't have that support in that background to be a good strong learner, so speaking from early childhood, they need a lot of repetition. They also need a lot of, whatever you're teaching them has to be related to their life. It can't be related to a queen's life, or a movie star's life, or somebody else that they can't relate to. Things you teach them have

to have a meaning to them in their own life, and then it will stick with them. Instead of giving them an example about going to a banquet, going to a fancy party, and doing all this, related to when you are going to the grocery store with mom and dad, or when you have to run down to the store, and buy something for her. Or, you don't talk about fancy cars. You talk about their little car that may or may not work. And so, it depends on where the kids have been and related to. But, anyway, I think that you have a program, a curriculum, especially with curriculum, that you are working with, I think it has to be very appropriate to the age you are working with. Sometimes, we are putting in like, we may have a curriculum that, well, I've worked with a curriculum that may be either too much for the children, or it's not appropriate, or, it has to be adapted so much, it's not even a good series to have. Besides having things that relate to them, you can't have too much, I know, looking at this room, it's kind of hard to say, you can't have too much, too many things with it that is just play stuff and not direct to what you're teaching, because they get off track. And we do have a routine that, for instance, we were looking at some workbooks one time, and the workbooks had so much on it, and so much, so many graphics, that by the time you got to the work part, there wasn't much there at all, not much meat to it. So even if you do have to have some of this other, and the Great Expectations is wonderful, it gives them something to think about, and whatever you teach them has got to carry over. And when they leave school, they don't just forget about it. It's something they have inside them, and it's something that they will remember and use. And I've seen a lot of differences we've had that these kids will really respect more, and accept things, and think about things before they react. I don't really know, I'm just rambling.

As far as the learning process, where did you, or how did you come to understand how kids learn?

I just think it's a mixture of life, a lot of things, making a mixture of your classes, your college classes, your workshops that you go to, of experiences with the children. For instance, when I was teaching 4th grade, a little boy just could not get division. He worked, and he worked, every night after school, and finally, we had just repeated it over so many times, and I would try to relate it to things. He had an ostrich farm, and we would relate things to ostrich eggs, and we'd relate things to different chores with his dad, until I finally got some plastic eggs, and said these are ostrich eggs, and we worked, and finally one day, after about 3 weeks, he just sat up straight, and said, "I get it!" You know, after working all that time, he just lit up, and said, "I get it! That's why we did this, and we do this." And I said, "Yes, and the numbers are just representing those things, they are representations of those things, and you just work it out the same way, but you don't have to carry the eggs around with you." "Oh, I see it now," And he woke up, and so it's a constructive system that you use with them. But it's like I said while ago, it's got to have meaning to them. And you've got to put it to them, how they can understand it.

Do you see learning styles.....?

We had a lot of the learning styles with it. And when I taught in Blackwell, I taught 4 different reading groups. And it's so different out here, because you take one, and you teach different styles of one thing, but I had 4. I had visual, and auditory, and the linguistic, and the kinesthetics, and each one had its own program, own book, own cards, own charts, everything, So that's all I did in the mornings was reading group, and I could see very distinctly then how they took this on and how they changed differently. And then some of them couldn't even intermingle. But like some of my kids here, I've had kids hang upside down on the chair, and you'd swear that they were not learning anything, but they, you can hang down there with them, and say "What did I say?", and they can repeat everything you said, and they'll give you back the answers. Or one of them will be laying over here, reading a book or something, and they'll turn around and say, "You said....." So you never know how they are listening or what their style is, but it doesn't take long, after you watch them awhile, to discover what it is.

So that's mainly how you determine what their learning style is, by observation?

A big part of it is observation.

Do you give them any formal assessment?

I don't think we give them any type of formal things. We used to screen them, but they've dropped that quite a while ago.

That is all for today. Because I have to process all of this, too.

November 19, we are going to start question 5. Do you ever think aloud?

Quite often. Someone will say "What did you say?" And then I'll realize I'm talking out loud instead of thinking.

OK. That was my next question, do you do so often? Why do you do this, or what benefit does thinking aloud have for you?

Well, sometimes, I'm not always aware I'm doing it. I just think I get too many things going and then I think too much, I get kind of upset with myself, and I'll say, "Now, where did I put that?" Or, "What could I have done with that?" And it's just a thinking out loud kind of thing. But at other times, when I'm really trying to get something implanted in my brain, because I'm very kinesthetic and a very feely touchy person anyway, and I think that helps me to really get it to stick, if I say it out loud, and auditorially hear it and think about what I'm saying. I think it helps.

Now just to clarify all the ways that you process or facilitate?

When I was small, mother would used to say, you know, she would give me instructions of more than one or two things at a time, she'd make me wait, and look at her, and she'd say, "Tell me what I asked you to do?" And I'd say it over to her.

Do you think that's why you developed this behavior, or why you are teaching?

I think a lot of it is because of when my mom would do that, and then I in turn did it with my son because he was, wasn't really hyper, but he would start getting excited. He was very excitable. So we had made a plan that if he got excited, he would jump up into the chair and take a deep breath. And then I would call him over and say, "Now, what was it mommy asked you to do?" Or, "What was it you were supposed to do?" and repeat to me, like my mom used to do to me. So it's just a kind of handed down thing. And in turn, I do that with my children. I even do it with my husband, and he says, "I'm not one of your students, I can remember." So it's just a learn thing, I guess, that works for me, so I just continue to do it.

Do you ever make what you consider to be mistakes in teaching?

Oh, yes.

If so, what do you do when you discover what you perceive to be a mistake?

I usually back up, if possible, if it's possible to recover and do it over, I will do that. Or perhaps if I look at it as a mistake and it didn't work, or it was not a good thing to do in the first place, I'll try to find something to do to replace it that works better, like for instance, when I was in the older grades, if a majority of the class failed, or not necessarily failed, didn't understand something, or if it was a paper that they did as a follow-up just crashed, and very few got it, then I would just throw that out and do something different or reteach it, or find a better way to present it. And then, a different follow-up. Hopefully, that they would understand that, if I had made a mistake.

OK. What I'm hearing you say is you either back up and do whatever you have for teaching, or you find an alternative approach.



## TAPE INTERVIEW #3

Interviewer: Linda Powers

Respondent: "Pat"

Today is January 6, 1999. It is 9:50 a.m.

Number 1: Do you consider yourself to be willing to listen and weigh other viewpoints concerning educational issues?

Well, I'm pretty stubborn and pretty opinionated, but I think maybe I could answer that question and say "yes" because, for example, I used to be a hard line grammar advocator, and I still am a hard line grammar advocator. You'll see parts of a sentence lying on my desk right now, as a matter of fact, I'm getting ready to do some today with the honors kids because they need that review before we do verbals. So we're still in the grammar, but I listen to you and to other presenters at various things that we attended and especially the AP conference we went to, I really began to see that connection between doing worksheets and actual writing that really has to be fostered - you have to coax that along. You can't automatically assume that you can sit in a class and do 14 exercises on direct objects and suddenly the student will understand syntax. So that seems to be off the track of what your question asked, but in a way, it's a good example for me because I changed in my way of thinking at least in the priority to making grammar something that I feel needs to be done, but I feel doesn't need to occupy the major portion of the class period, so I try to find ways to get the practice in, get the concept across without eating up time that we need for other things.

On a scale of one to ten with ten being perfect, how would you rate yourself as a critical thinker?

My husband would probably rate me as a 2. How would I rate myself?

You know better than he does how much you analyze and weigh---

I think maybe that's a strength I would have, maybe an 8. It certainly is something that I need to practice and do more of. It seems like life oftentimes gets so full of the little "have to do" things that sometimes the real analytical issues kind of slide. For instance, I have things that I carry around with me literally weeks on end thinking now when I get a moment, I'm going to really look into this, really take a look at this. So I wouldn't give myself the highest score simply because I don't put in the time. But I think by nature I do think about things such as consequences, cause and effect, and examine all the time why

my kids perform the way they do, behave the way they do, try to avoid little aversions I know that we have. Think of ways to trick them. We were talking about our excuses as we do in Odyssey right now, he's crafty this morning. In first hour, I kind of thought that's how we teachers have to be. We have to be crafty. If you would consider that critical thinking, then I guess it is.

How do you think you became this way? You mentioned a while ago you constantly weigh - I think you said examine - why your students do what they do? By nature, I guess it's about consequences, cause and effect - how did you become that way? How did that come about?

Well, part of the problem is probably the way I was brought up because my parents never could agree on anything, so consequently I had to always come up with a two-fold approach to almost anything and I would present one approach to one and the alternate approach to the other one thinking surely that one of them would work, so I grew up analyzing their behavior and in self-defense, kind of my best chance, trying to think about how to do things. But on a more serious level, with teaching, they're really two objectives. The first one is self-preservation for everybody in teaching. You have to save your sanity. It's hard. So when I think about the types of things we're doing, I know that some things are so much more successful. The students enjoy them more, they get into them more. You can tell by their responses that they are really liking what they are doing. Now as long as I keep those students happy - now by happy I don't mean sitting there and just visiting with each other, I mean happy doing meaningful work, it makes my goal a hundred times easier, so it pays off. It's self preservation. I don't have to worry about discipline and such matters. I don't have to worry about control much, as long as they're happy, I'm happy. So that's point 1. And the other point, there's an objective here, and of course we always have to keep in mind the skills we are required to teach and for these students to acquire them. So I have to think of ways to work those skills in where they don't notice they are learning them, if that makes sense. They kind of learn unwittingly. They think they are enjoying themselves by having a good discussion or just whatever, but if you work about it and think about it, and are creative - and it does take a certain amount of effort to do this - I think it's just a more enjoyable environment for everybody. I don't even know if I answered the question correctly. Somewhere back there I seem to recall a question.

You said there are two objectives to teaching self preservation and getting the student to learn. Both of these objectives are met by constantly analyzing. You can't do these things without analyzing them.

No, you notice what works and what doesn't, and you mentally file away what works or physically write it down. In some respect, you have to hang on to what works and discard what doesn't and keep your eye on fixing those things and

you end up with a more workable day. When I first came back to teaching, I had a lot of unworkable days, they were miserable days. And I find that the more I do on the thinking end, the better off I am and the better off the kids are. Certainly they are learning more.

Do you consider yourself committed to doing whatever it takes for students to learn?

Well, I do and for that reason, I'm not even sure how long I'm going to do this job. And I have to say that's a real downer to think about, but I think you experienced that yourself because you're one of the best teachers I know. And I'm not just saying that because we're on tape either. Because I've had that conversation with a lot of people. There is a whole circle of us who feel that you're cheating that entire Ponca City High School by not teaching English any longer. But back to what you said. It is a life beater - and my husband is very tired of it. There's no way to do it if you do the planning, you do the feedback, you give the individual attention, you think about individual needs, you critically look at what the students have written and you have to because in spite of everything that's said about rubric, for instance, I use a rubric for everything I grade but you know what, the rubric only helps me be consistent from one paper to the next. I use it as a measuring stick for myself so that I'm not extremely hard on one paper and extremely easy on another one. So when it gets right down to it, that student has spent several hours on the paper and if I just write numbers down on a rubric they don't know what they did that are strong things and they don't know the weak. So I find that I end up doing a tremendous amount of writing on papers, and that's all well and good except that it's very hard to have a life. So I would say yes, that that kind of commitment is not conducive to a long-term career in education. I think people burn out. That's probably not something you necessarily want brought up or hear but I feel real strongly about it, I am really struggling with that right now especially right now. It's very hard, during the short story analysis, for instance, and those are the three parts, two of analysis and a letter of reflection and each one of those is taking a half hour or better and then you watch the hours drag by.

I think it's interesting, though, that you said you will be relieved. I've seen some people who I thought were excellent teachers who were beaten up by the energy necessary for the commitment and they stay.

But that's dangerous.

When the passion and commitment are gone and they are just going through the emotions.....

I will never do that. I could never, ever do that because I look at those little faces out there, and it's a funny thing. Honestly, I'm not saying this out of vanity, even though it sounds a little bit vain, when I look at them, I can't do less. I feel such a

responsibility, when I'm here at school, like right now, for instance, we've had to move, we've redecorated the town house, we've got the wedding going, everything's going on, and yet oddly enough, when I walk in this door at 8 o'clock in the morning, I don't think of anything else. I can honestly - frankly, it's kind of amazing, it is for me anyway - to think that with everything else I have going that something inside me puts such a priority on what I'm doing here that I never give it a thought. Now at 3, 4, and 5, then I'll start to run, we'll go out tonight and gather up the hurricane lamps and start to decorate. When that goes away, when I start spending my days reading the newspaper or half here, then I'm out of here because that's not fair to those kids. And they know.

Would you say on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being perfect, you're the only one who knows this, that's the reason you have to be the one who rates, how will you rate yourself as far as commitment?

10. And in saying that, I would be better off if it weren't. I would be probably a stronger teacher - honestly - if I weren't because there's a question of what kids like.

Why do you say that, why do you think you would be a stronger teacher?

Because I think that it's wearing me out. I think the commitment - I hope that I'm not in the paranoia stage. Not to the point where it's almost an obsessive-compulsive type behavior. I don't want to obsess about this job because obsession is neurotic, but I find it very hard not to obsess, you know I'll wake up in the night thinking. I think most teachers do. You get some of your better ideas in the night when you're sleeping. I might last longer, maybe not be a better teacher, but last longer effectively if it was a little bit less so. There's some leeway, you know. There's a lot of good teachers out there who have lives.

How do you think you became this way?

Oh, I think it's my personality anyway. Unfortunately.

Did you have this kind of passion toward what you did with computers at Conoco?

Oh, absolutely not. But I did have, you remember, when Marilyn was little for about 10 years, I actually did craft shows, I did special orders. I did all sorts of wall hangings, fireplace screens, they were machine appliqued, I did designs on them. I sold thousands of dollars worth of those things, but it took a lot of commitment to sit there at the sewing machine and the detail is what made my work sell, I think, was the detail, well executed, I don't want to say perfect, well executed, careful, and I'm a careful person. So some of that is in my nature and people walk in and look at my desk and can't believe that I'm a neatness freak

and I don't have - I know where everything is. And again, that's sometimes as much a weakness as it is a strength.

Next time we'll pick up here and think about it in the meantime. Just whenever you have a minute, quiet time, whatever. Why are you the way you are?

Oh, I just love them. Honestly, I do. That's just a trite answer and you aren't looking for that at all. You have to start out this job - if you don't like people this age, you're stuck from the beginning. I didn't like spending my days with computers at Conoco. I found that out in three months. They're stimulating, they're fun. They're also aggravating. But being with people this age is very uplifting in a way. But look at the kind of kids I have had, too. And someone asked me that a few years ago when I was teaching all regular kids and they were struggling, that was a little bit tougher. You get a class of kids like that, and there are going to be some you just want to reach out to. And every year I seem to have a project. I've got a project this year, his name is Jacob. And he is coming around!

APPENDIX H  
SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS OF JOURNALS

## ANN'S JOURNAL

Monday, October 26, 1998

We had a pretty good day today. We did a really good activity in our reading lesson. We took a paragraph from our story and made a bar graph of how often we used each letter. First, they had to make tally marks and then make their graph. It was difficult for a few students. Next year when I do it, I will do it with partners. I feel that for some students it would have been helpful, plus it's a natural cooperate activity.

I feel good that most of them remembered what they were doing since we studied graphs in August and September.

I am worried that Mitchell is not going to get enough books read for the reading party. He is a slow reader and not very motivated. Called mom and asked her to work with him at home. I'm having trouble coming up with ways to motivate him. It's hard for me to tell what he's interested in. An interest survey I gave him came back blank.

Tuesday, October 27, 1998

Studied extended time today. About half of the class was lost. Tomorrow, instead of going on to the next lesson, I am going to reteach lesson 2-13. I don't think the textbook did a very good job. They assumed the students already had a concept of extended time. I think it may be because last year we were using Saxon math, and we are in a new math series this year.

Wednesday, October 28, 1998

I have three students who can't tell time. I'm going to send clocks home for them to practice on. I'll give them to parents at Teacher/Parent meetings. I hope Anthony's grandparents show up. I need to talk to them about reading sufficiency.

I tried pair shared reading partners today. All but two groups did really well. I can never put Chris and Chad together again. I don't know what I was thinking. From what I could hear, it sounded like everyone did pretty well. We'll see when they take their test on Thursday. Everyone has just about completed their sandwich for the reading contest. It has been a great motivator to get everyone reading.

Thursday, October 29, 1998

I hate to stop our desert unit in science, but I have to because I want to get in the Thanksgiving unit in social studies. It covers several of our PASS skills. Wish there was more time during the day. I know there has to be a better way to schedule. My students seem to be gone so much. I know how important music, art, and PE are but if somehow we could make more time.

After watching tapes on parallel block scheduling, I feel that it might be the answer to get more time on task.

November 3, 1998

Coalton had another bad day. We visited with dad and hope that will help.

We worked on getting ready for the science test tomorrow. Played "Family Feud" with the test questions. Games like this seem to be the best way to get them ready for tests. It keeps their interest and they seem to remember it better.

November 4, 1998

I pretended to be a 3rd grader today during math lesson. I walked them through a subtraction problem where they had to borrow. I asked questions I thought they would ask. It seemed to work. I think it gave them a lot of insight on how to think through a problem before they answer it. Almost everyone put their hand up when I asked them if it helped.

November 6, 1998

I had one of those great teachable moments today. After grading their math tests, I knew many students were struggling with place value. We were doing our morning review sheet which had a problem on place value. I called on Anthony to answer. His answer was wrong, but it was the same concept that most of them had missed on their test. I asked everyone to raise their hand that had the same answer. We went through the problem step by step. It was so easy to see what they all were doing wrong. I pulled out the test I had graded and went over the test question they missed. We practiced and corrected our tests. Tomorrow we will practice again.

It is funny how they all can get the wrong concept. I know next year when I teach place value, I'm going to do a lot of things differently. I'm so glad that Anthony said what he did because it lead me into a great reteaching lesson. When more than 4 or 5 miss the same question on a test, I know I've done something wrong, and I need to reteach.



November 10, 1998

Busy day! I'm trying to make sure everyone has just about finished their animal report. I sent the grading rubric home for parents to sign so that they understand what I want and how the paper will be graded. All but 3 came back. It will be a miracle if I get those 3 back. I will send notes home tonight to the ones without phones.

I'll be gone the next 2 days, so I've got massive lesson plans to get ready. I don't want the subs to teach any new concepts, so I'll make everything review. It will be a good practice and review time. These kids need that. I think I'll stop in math next week and just go back and review. We can revisit place value and subtracting with borrowing.

November 20, 1998

We did a great hands-on activity today. We did big words. The students took letters and put words together. They made as many words as possible within 15 minutes, while at the same time they were looking for the big word. It was alphabetical. Moving the letters around seems to help them a lot. This is a very visual and kinesthetic activity. Kenny is still putting his letters backwards, B's are D's, etc. When he is tested, I'm sure they will find that he has some form of dyslexia.

November 24, 1998

Retaught lesson on estimation. I found out what everyone was doing. They weren't reading the directions. They were rounding everything off to the nearest ten, instead of to the nearest hundred, then estimating the answer. We went back over the directions and redid the paper orally. Everyone seemed to understand.

I gave them a 20-problem test on estimation. After I graded it, almost everyone made an A. Anthony and Cristal got D's. I still feel they just don't understand it yet. For Cristal, it is the language barrier.

November 30, 1998

Ana got expelled for bringing a weapon (knife) to school. I'm going to have to work hard to catch her up when she gets back, since she is already so far behind. Her behavior is keeping her from learning. I've tried so much. I'm not sure where to go from here.

December 1, 1998

I have purchased a CD Rom for my computer that should help Ana. It has a dictionary on it that says and writes the work both in Spanish and English. Tomorrow she will be back after being suspended. I'm hoping this will help build her vocabulary up. She needs it so bad. I found out today, that she has been in school in Ponca City since kindergarten. I am puzzled why she has such poor reading skills and no phonic skills. When I first got her, I thought she had just arrived from Mexico. I'm going to investigate this further to see what I can find out. I also have Cristal now whose English is limited. She seems a little more advanced than Ana.

December 3, 1998

I'm working on a Power Point presentation for lesson 3-15 in math. It's looking really good. I hope this new format of presenting a lesson will be powerful and help them to learn. I think the visual effects will help a lot.

December 4, 1998

We did centers today. I put Ana on the magnetic letters and words. I put them on the side of the file cabinet. I had Ana make simple questions with a subject and predicate. She did pretty well. Starting next week, I am going to be sending Ana to Kassie's class. Kassie is going to teach her phonics and start her over in the reading process. I hope it works because I don't know what else to do. It's so hard when they get to third grade and can't read. It's hard for me to find time to individualize instruction on that level. This year, except for Ana, I have a good class of readers. Ana is really a smart girl, so I know if she will just listen and get her behavior under control she can learn.

December 7, 1998

Monday's are the very best day of the week. I only have one plan period, which is at the end of the day. I can teach straight through. I accomplished so much. This is the only day we get everything done. Even Eddie did his work.

December 8, 1998

I gave a test today on everything they have learned in Chapter 3 in math. Almost everyone missed questions 20, 21, and 22. These questions were on patterns. I'm not sure what happened. We had patterns in Chapter 2 at the beginning of the chapter. Everyone seemed to do OK on the test. I've decided to start in January and incorporate the daily patterns from Saxon math into my daily lessons with this new math series. I feel this will take care of it. I will retest in February and make sure that it is working.

## RITA'S JOURNAL

Sunday, November 1, 1998

After checking through my list of parent-teacher conferences, I noted out of 45 scheduled conferences, nine parents were unable to come.

Some of these same parents are the ones I need to conference with on the reading sufficiency plan for their child. Hopefully a conference can be scheduled that both a progress report and reading plan will be discussed and set up.

Monday, November 2, 1998

The children were a little rowdier today. Usually, after a long weekend, they are, but I think especially after Halloween candy and all the rain, it is worse.

Some of the children have become "very comfortable" in the class and are becoming a little less attentive. This is a common thing but will have to find more interesting centers and units to keep their attention peaked.

Hope this Science seminar I am going to tomorrow and Wednesday has some good ideas to develop.

Tuesday, November 3, 1998

I really enjoyed the Inquiry-based Science System techniques. Many things I have done before, but they showed us how to expand these ideas. Also each unit is organized so well and the kit has almost everything ready for the teacher. That's what takes up so much time usually is running around gathering everything up.

I think the children will like the activities. It shows the children critical thinking and steps to find out and discover for themselves.

Wednesday, November 4, 1998

Our presenter, Ellen Foss, is very nice and so easy to be with. The trading of ideas and communication is very inviting.

She was talking about how often she travels to make presentations. She usually sends the materials by Fed-Ex several days before her arrival. Materials like food coloring she purchases from local stores because of fear of spillage. I told her about the food coloring pellets invented by a Tulsa, Oklahoma, mother for her children. At lunchtime, I went to "Barely New" and bought her an

introductory package to let her try the pellets. It would help to eliminate the liquid food coloring problem. She really liked them.

Thursday, November 5, 1998

The children were so loving and full of hugs when they came in today. They all told me they missed me so much and didn't like for me to be gone. You would have thought I was gone a lot longer than two days. It did feel good to be missed, I must admit.

If we stop and think how much some or a lot of these children depend on school and teachers, it is sometimes disturbing. Sometimes it is the only place they feel safe and or cared about. They depend on us being there for them for almost everything they don't have at home. That is pretty heavy!!!

Friday, November 6, 1998

Since I went to the Science Workshop, I got behind in art projects. We need to get Indian Heritage Week planned and started. It may have to carry over into the second week.

I'm very glad it is Friday. This has been a very full week, but then again, aren't they all!!!

Saturday, November 7, 1998

Slept late! It was raining again. It sure felt good to not get up with an alarm in my ears.

Need to clean house and make out plans for our school Friendship Feast and Indian Heritage art work. I think we'll do sand art, totem poles, rattle sticks, picture writing skins, and drums. Need to start collecting materials.

- paper towel rolls
- paper plates
- sacks
- coffee cans
- salt/baby food jars

Sunday, November 8, 1998

I was discussing with Don about how the student magnetic stars would not stick on the board very well, using the small strip magnets.

He found a roll of galvanized steel sheeting in this shop. We went to school, got the board, and he faced the board with the sheeting. He framed it

around the edges so the students wouldn't cut their fingers. It works great. The kids will really like this!

Tuesday, November 10, 1998

David Neave, the new Spanish boy who came for the first time yesterday, is a delight to have in class! He's very bright and already knows most of the letters. He can even recognize some words. He understands much more than I thought he would and works independently as soon as he knows what to do. He is very sincere and has a caring, patient disposition.

David came in for my evaluation today. For the most part, it seemed to be okay. I introduced the new Science Unit on paper. We discussed and looked at the different properties of paper. I believe the children found a new awareness of the possibilities of paper and realized how much they take it for granted.

We had a staff meeting today to discuss Jessie Clark's placement. I'm very concerned about how he will react or what is truly the best thing for him, not just what is expedient for others. He has had so many strikes against him ever since or before he was born, but still keeps his spirit and boundless energy in full steam. He will need all of this and more to overcome his many problems. I'm also concerned the toll it takes on his classmates with the interruptions or outbursts he sometimes surprises us with.

I'm deeply concerned with the issue of "inclusion" and such programs as to what is truly best for all concerned. Are the "Special Needs" children getting all they need?

Monday, November 23, 1998

We won't have a regular routine for these next two days in preparation for the Holiday.

Today, we made decorations for our Friendship Feast on Tuesday. The children made the woven construction paper place mats for the table. Since it was our first attempt to follow a weaving and color pattern, it was difficult but challenging for them. After about the first two strips they began to catch on. A few had to have a lot of help. We will definitely have to do more weaving in order to become more skilled. It really made them think about each step they did and how it would turn out. When they completed the mat, they were very proud of their accomplishment!! I was, too!!

Tuesday, November 24, 1998

Friendship Feast was to celebrate our friendship, learning and sharing. After we arranged and covered tables with colored paper, the children decorated it with their wonderful art. Sand art bottles, woven mats, miniature pumpkin turkeys, and sack pumpkins. They were so proud and congratulated one another.

We read the storybook, The First Thanksgiving, then each person sat in their place at the table. We had enough parents at each feast (A.M. and P.M.) to help serve and join in the festivities. The children used their manners and shared as we have been working on so hard. I was so proud and felt like a milestone had been passed.

When we all shared one special thing we were thankful for, the answers were not trivial or selfish, but the children really seemed to genuinely come from the heart

Deborah Gooch, Nathan's mom in the P.M. class, brought the cutest favors for the kids today. They were turkeys with a sucker taped on them. They were made out of a plastic spoon and craft sponge material. The kids thought they were really cool! She is so creative and so good to us!

Monday, November 30, 1998

Made Santa Sack Puppets at Art table. Children need more help with it, so need to spend more time with the project than I had expected to. Even though we've made several sack puppets before, they act as though they don't know how to put it together.

It takes more time to work with the Spanish students. Because they don't understand but a few English words, I have to take more time to explain what I want them to do, then show them by modeling because it wasn't clear when I talked to the class as a whole.

I've been putting children that are understanding the concepts well close to the Spanish children so they can watch and understand more from their peers as well.

The English speaking students are very willing and happy to help. In fact, I haven't seen or heard any derogatory remarks or actions by either group. They are going on as if there are no differences at all. "Great"

Tuesday, December 1, 1998

Made "Santa Calendars" today. The kids loved them and couldn't wait to take them home. They each got a baggie of 25 cotton balls to glue on Santa's beard for each day of the countdown to Christmas Day.

Nathan's mom, Deborah Gooch, has a great suggestion on what to make for our mothers' Christmas present. It was a votive candle with cutouts glued to sides, then dipped into a scented wax to adhere cutouts to candle. The holder will be a silver or gold sprayed baby food jar lid. The kids could do the cutouts and glue, but an adult would dip the candles.

Thursday, December 3, 1998

Have to start evaluating students so will be able to complete report cards for January. It is so hard to evaluate 47 - five year olds individually in so many areas, especially around Christmas time. Some can be done through observation, but to be sure they really know and understand the concepts, it has to be done one to one. With only a part time assistant, it is even more difficult.

I've asked mothers to go in to help, but it is not consistent or they don't show up when they say they will. Either they forget or something comes up and they can't make it.

Friday, December 4, 1998

Showed Christmas video and popped popcorn for a treat. This gave me a few more chances to evaluate. The kids have been working hard and deserve a break.

They're beginning to get more excitable thinking about Christmas coming.

Saturday, December 5, 1998

Went Christmas shopping!

Made cheese balls and candy.

Cheese balls - for school party faculty

Candy and cookies - for Don to take to work and lounge goodies at school.

Worked on making clothespin angels for one of my gifts to kids.

It's hard to make or find something nice for gifts when you have so many students.

#### Sunday, December 6, 1998

Finished clothespin angels. Ended up making 50 of them.

Put up Christmas tree and decorations. Don put outside lights up.

Went to school for an hour or so to get decorations started in room. Kids will make rest to complete bulletin board and gifts.

#### Monday, December 7, 1998

Started on last 4 letters of alphabet. Have to do one each day this week to finish.

Today is "Uu". Review shapes and evaluate. I believe most of them know all the shapes.

#### Tuesday, December 8, 1998

Started on "Christmas Around the World" stories and cultures. Today we talked about Holland, Sinter Klaus, and the wooden shoes. I had a model of a wooden shoe and passed it around. The children were really fascinated with it and why they wore them.

Linda Powers came by for a few minutes to see if I had time for an interview. When she learned we were having our Faculty Christmas Party tonight, she said she'd come back after Christmas Break.

Had a great time at party. Don went and enjoyed it, too. They announced Randa was the "Lincoln Teacher of the Year." She certainly deserves it. She is so good with the students. She's such a genuine and sincere person. She is great to work with and very compatible in all groups.

#### Thursday, December 10, 1998

Made "Salt Dough" hands with the fingers signifying "I love you" as in sign language. These are another gift ornament for my students. These are always a big hit. Especially since we've learned it with our sign language in class!



Friday, December 11, 1998

Got out the big box of Language Arts and Math games today. After discussing how to play the games and how to take care of them, the kids divided up and started playing. They really enjoyed them even if they weren't electronic or on the computer!!!

Monday-Thursday, December 14-17, 1998

Finished "Yy" and "Zz" letters and activities. Reviewed alphabet and songs.

Kids are really "high" with Christmas anticipation.

Finished all gifts and went to Middle School Thursday to watch 4th and 5th grade dress rehearsal for Christmas Program.

Friday, December 18, 1998

Watched Christmas video, "Wee Sing," Christmas caroling. Had all-school Christmas caroling in gym in P.M. It really was too long! It lasted over an hour. Kids were really good, but we all got tired of sitting on the floor that long. We need to plan better next year. (This is the first year to do it.)

ONG and Evans & Associates brought every child in Lincoln a sack of fruit, nuts and candy. Also, a big sack of goodies (paper products and pens) for each teacher. Also, a surprise visitor (Santa). The kids faces really lit up!!

Our parties were wonderful! The mothers of both classes really outdid themselves.

We exchanged a gift of a book between kids by playing musical chairs. Then we played "Put an Ornament on the Christmas Tree" with blindfolds and all.

Each child took their gifts they had made for their parents and their gifts from me. We had a Great Day!!

Sunday-Tuesday, December 27-29, 1998

Enjoyed being home and puttering around.

Tuesday - Took a former student out for lunch and bowling. He is now in 5th grade but was a former kindergarten student.

He has continued to keep in touch through the years. He calls about once a month and we have a get-together about 3 or 4 times a year. His mom is very sweet and is glad we're still in touch.

Wednesday, December 30, 1998

Went to school and worked for about 3 hours taking Christmas decorations down and new bulletin boards up. Got centers ready and papers organized!

Don had a bad cold so he stayed home from work this week and was taking medicine and long naps.

Thursday, December 31, 1998

Went to school and worked again. Sheila and kids came. We talked and discussed information she had gotten over the Internet about all day kindergarten programs. We discussed different daily plans and schedules.

We have a meeting of all kindergarten teachers, Dr. White and Elizabeth Watson, Monday at 3:30. They want us to bring all we can about all day kindergarten. We really want it to go over, so will try to be positive!

Friday, January 1 - Sunday, January 3, 1999

Made lesson plans for next week and worked on report cards to go home next week.

The vacation is just about over. The parents are anxious for school to start, but I think kids have mixed emotions.

Read article about shortage of teachers again in Oklahoma. Also, heard the temporary uncertified teachers didn't pass the test.

The legislature surely will do something positive about this now! But don't hold your breath!

Monday, January 4, 1999

1st day back after Christmas Break! I was a little reluctant to get back into the routine, but as soon as I saw the kids and those beautiful smiles, I had newly renewed energy and enthusiasm!! The many hugs and "I missed you" endearments always is the best rewards anyone could get.

After the initial excitement of talking about Christmas and its wonders, the kids settled down and were ready to get to work. I think they had had enough free time and were anxious for the work-jobs and concentration of learning.

After school the kindergarten and 4 year old teachers met at the administration office. I believe it was reassuring to us that we would have an all day program. Also, there will be a couple different committees to get the scheduling and structures set.

Sheila had some great information from the Internet about all day kindergarten and at least 3 different schedules from teachers of all day programs.

We're getting very excited about all this! I only wish it would have taken place years ago. I won't benefit that long from it, but the teachers after I'm gone will!

**APPENDIX I**

**SELECTED CASE STUDY REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES**

## CASE STUDY

### Liz Hansen

Elizabeth Hansen is an eighth grade language arts teacher at Crestview Middle School. She taught two years in a small rural school while her husband was completing his law degree. When he graduated, he was accepted into a well-respected firm in a large Midwestern city, and Liz got this job in an outlying suburb. They had bought a lovely home; Jim was happy in his work; and their life was otherwise great, except Liz hated going to school. She had loved her student teaching experience and the first two years at Stockton. She had never had any discipline problems before, but these kids talked constantly and were rude and uncooperative. As she got ready for school every morning, she had knots in her stomach thinking about dealing with the “monsters” all day. They didn’t seem to want to learn English, no matter how hard Liz worked.

In the first few days of school, Liz saw what problems these kids were going to be, so she decided to really crack down on them. She made rules, adding to the list daily. She found that she had to yell to get the students’ attention and that she was spending all her time correcting students. She was not keeping up with the curriculum that was to be taught; the students did not seem to be learning, and she went home exhausted every night. Her school life seemed out of control.

Ms. Baker, the principal, stopped by Liz’s room one day and promptly informed Liz of something of which she was already painfully aware: “You have no control in this class. You simply must get tougher with these kids. Send them to me if they won’t straighten up.” So Liz started sending kids to the office for even the slightest infraction against her rules, thinking that would make students take the rules more seriously. However, the referrals did not help to create a climate in her classroom that was conducive to learning.

Since all seemed to have failed, Liz decided to bribe the kids into being cooperative. She bought candy bars, pencils, and other goodies to reward students for getting their work done or for being quiet. Unfortunately, it wasn’t long before she was running out of ideas and out of money.

Then one Tuesday morning when she signed in, Liz saw a notice on the bulletin board announcing “Fred Jones Positive Classroom Discipline” workshops for the next six consecutive Wednesdays after school. She thought this might be helpful, so she signed up.

Liz found the first few sessions interesting but didn’t think room arrangement would really make any difference, so she didn’t bother with it. She also didn’t have time

for limit setting, but the responsibility training really caught her attention. She decided that since she really liked this game called “Dictionary Person” that the students would too. The first time they played it, the kids loved it, but after about three weeks, the kids were not responding to it as an incentive. Liz found herself shouting frequently, threatening constantly to take their time away, but they didn’t seem to care.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What is Liz to do?
2. What is she doing that shows she has the potential to be a successful teacher, and in what areas does she need help?
3. Pretend you are a peer she has come to you for advice and help. What would you do and say?

## **Reflective Dialogue Structure for Case Studies**

- 1. Read the Case.**
- 2. Think (Dialogue with Self)**
  - \*Respond to questions.**
  - \*What questions do you have?**
- 3. Dialogue with a partner. (or small group)**
- 4. Reflect on the dialogue with others and evaluate the responses of others. Then re-evaluate your own original thoughts.**
- 5. Write your response to the case.**

**Rita Henderson**  
A Case Study

Rita Henderson is a 7th grade language arts teacher at Elmwood Middle School. She has both elementary and secondary certification but has taught upper elementary and middle level most of the eight years she has been in the classroom. Her last assignment was 5th grade at nearby Haysville Elementary, an upper middle class suburban district. But her husband was moved from assistant manager of the Beason Department store to the manager of the smaller Beason store in nearby Elmwood.

Elmwood is a Title I school that serves a high population of economically disadvantaged Hispanic students. Rita had loved teaching at Haysville, but the move to Elmwood had come three days before school started; her room was in the older part of the building; there weren't enough textbooks; few paper supplies were available, and there was no technology in her classroom. She hasn't made many friends on the faculty which has a low turn-over rate and most of the current staff has taught together for fifteen to twenty years.

Today when you enter Rita's classroom for her first observation of the year, this is what you see:

It's first hour and the students are milling around talking to one another. When the bell rings, they continue to talk because Rita is not in the room yet. When she comes in with her fresh cup of coffee, she tells the students to sit down and read in their SSR books until she checks roll. Some comply; some don't. So Rita tells Darren, Joe, and Kyle that they have detention after school for talking. "You know the rules; I tell you once and that should be enough. When it's time for SSR, you are to be reading, not talking," she says not particularly loudly, but with an icy edge to her words.

After she checks roll, Rita brings her plan book to you for your review. As you look at it, you see picture perfect plans that Madeline Hunter would be proud of. For the next twenty minutes, Rita is writing on the board and looking over the grammar textbook. Finally she tells the class to put away their reading books and to get out their grammar books. You notice that Luis, Jorge, Maria, and Isabella are simply watching and following the actions of the other students. You know that they have only been in this school for the past month. However already they have picked up a lot of conversational English.



"Today, class, we are going to talk about direct objects. Open your books to page 81. Julie, will you read the first section on page 81 aloud. (She does.) Susan, will you read the second paragraph. (She does.) Holly, will you finish up that page? Thank you."

"Will everyone look at the sentences I have on the board. Julie, tell me the subject of the first sentence. Right. The predicate? Good. The direct object? That's right."

"Let's do one more to be sure you've got it. Susan, will you do this sentence?" (Susan tells the subject, predicate, and direct object.)

Now class, I want you to do the exercise on page 82, sentences 1-20. I'll do the first one with you, so will you get out paper and pencil and head your paper properly. The students visit with one another as bookbags shuffle and three-ringed binders click. Rita stands with her arms folded, "Class, I'm waiting..."

"Jason, do you think we could start now?" Again Rita's words are not particularly loud, but with the same icy tone.

"I was just asking Jorge if he understood what we are doing," explained Jason.

"You mind your business, and Jorge can mind his. If he needs help, I'll help him in a minute."

Rita finds the direct object in the first sentence of the exercise by asking "who?" or "what?" of the verb, and she points out that direct objects always follow an action verb and are NEVER in a prepositional phrase.

"Now, class, I want you to work quietly. If you have a problem, raise your hand and I will come to help you."

Three hands go in the air almost immediately. Rita calls on one, "Jason?"

"Do we have to write the full sentence?" asked Jason.

"What do you think, Jason? Don't we always write the complete sentence? How many times have I told you that I want you to be literate adults and literate adults write in complete sentences."

"Elijah?"

"When is this due?"

"For everyone else, it is due tomorrow; for you it is due at the end of the hour, so you better get busy."

"Susan?"

"How many points is this worth?"

**"This is a regular daily work paper worth 30 points. Now I need for you all to get busy or you won't get this done today."**

**Rita moves around the room, but the arrangement of the desks makes it difficult for her to get to the back row, so she moves mainly among the first three chairs of each row. She does notice that Luis, Jorge, Maria, and Isabella do nothing, so she moves toward the dark-eyed cluster of students. She kneels down between the two rows so that two of the Hispanic students were on her left, and the other two were on her right. She patiently and slowly goes over the directions again and does one sample sentence with them. Then she asks if they understand, and when Luis nods, the others follow suit, but Rita seems oblivious to the bewilderment in their dark eyes.**

**Some students finish in 10 minutes while others obviously don't even know what a direct object is. As the ones who finish begin to visit, Rita shushes them. But the visiting is growing because the ones who don't know what they're doing have quit and are also talking.**

**Visibly frustrated, Rita makes another assignment. "Class, when you finish, you may start on your essay over any topic you feel strongly about. I want you to choose a controversial topic and convince your reader of your viewpoint on the topic."**

**Making another assignment quiets the class for a minute, but only for a minute. The class is talking again, so Rita assigns three more detentions which quiets the class until the last few minutes of class. At that point, Rita announces, "If you have the direct object exercise finished, you may have the last five minutes for free time. Of course, the last five minutes are almost deafening.**

## Rita Case Questions

**Rita came with great recommendations and during the interview said she loved kids and teaching.**

**How does she help students feel accepted?**

**How does she help students develop a sense of comfort and order?**

**How does she help students perceive tasks as valuable?**

**How does she help students believe that they can perform the classroom tasks successfully?**

**How does she help students understand the tasks they were assigned?**

**To what extent do the students demonstrate that they feel positive about themselves, their peers, their instructor, and the tasks they are assigned?**

**How will you help Rita understand the importance of relationships with students and clarity of tasks in creating an atmosphere conducive to learning?**

2  
VITA

Linda Sue Waltermire Powers

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

THESIS: THE NATURE, ROLES, AND INTERPLAY OF THE INNER AND  
OUTER VOICES OF REFLECTIVE TEACHING

MAJOR FIELD: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BIOGRAPHICAL:

Personal Data: Born in Perry, Oklahoma, June 16, 1949,  
the daughter of Elmer Peyton and Sallie  
Waltermire.

Education: Graduated from Perry High School, Perry,  
Oklahoma, in May, 1967; received Bachelor of  
Science Degree in Language Arts Education from  
Oklahoma State University at Stillwater in May,  
1971; completed requirements for the Master of  
Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in July,  
1993; completed requirements for the Doctor of  
Education degree at Oklahoma State University in  
July, 1999.

Professional Experience: English teacher, Billings High  
School, August, 1972 to May, 1976. English  
teacher at Ft. Gibson High School, August, 1976 to  
May, 1979. English teacher at Billings High  
School, August, 1979 to May, 1980. English  
teacher at Blackwell High School, August, 1980 to  
May, 1981. English teacher at Ponca City High  
School from August, 1981 to May, 1995. Chair of  
the English Department at Ponca City High School  
from 1988 to 1995. Instructional Specialist,  
Ponca City Public Schools, August, 1995 to May,  
1996. Curriculum Facilitator, Ponca City Public  
Schools, August, 1996 to present.

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Education

Association-National Education Association, (OEA-NEA), 1972 to Present. Noble County Teachers Association (NCTA) Treasurer, 1972 to 1973. NCTA President, 1973 to 1975. Muskogee County Teachers Association (MCTA) President-Elect, 1979 to 1980. MCTA Delegate to OEA Delegate Assembly. OEA Northern District Nominating Committee. Kappa Kappa Iota (education sorority) Secretary; Vice-President; President. Ponca City High School Executive Committee, 1986 to 1988; chairperson, 1987 to 1988. Delta Kappa Gamma Honorary Education Society, 1985 to present. Ponca City ACT (Association of Classroom Teachers) Delegate to OEA Delegate Assembly, 1987 to 1998; Secretary, 1987 to 1989; President, 1990 to 1992; Vice-President, 1994 to 1998. Oklahoma Academy for State Goals Education Task Force, 1989. OSU College of Education Board of Directors, 1989 to 1992; co-chair of Special Projects Committee, 1990 to 1992. Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English. National Council of Teachers of English. ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). OASCD (Oklahoma Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).

Professional Honors: Outstanding Young Women of America, 1984. Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, Outstanding Secondary Teacher, 1988. University of Kansas Recognition of Outstanding High School Teachers Award, 1989. Who's Who Among American High School Teachers, 1990, 1993, 1996.