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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to add to the knowledge bases of teaching and professional development. It is a phenomenological study of the classroom teacher and a group of seven elementary school teachers who reflected upon, wrote about, and discussed their lives as classroom teachers over a one-year period. Teachers kept written diaries which contained their thoughts and feelings about daily events and circumstances that affected them as teachers. The diaries provided topics for discussion at weekly seminar sessions on teaching and professional development. Biweekly participant observations in each classroom were made by the researcher. In this report, a description of the last third of the project is presented. Methods of analysis in teacher portrait construction are discussed. Portraits of four teachers constructed from the multiple data sources (diaries, transcriptions of seminar sessions, slides of each classroom and school, observations of participants' teaching and field notes, and informal conferences and interviews with each teacher in each school) are offered. An outline and brief description of the final report is presented. Also included are two appendices, an article and monograph: (1) "Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: Collaboration and Professional Growth" and (2) "Keeping a Personal Professional Journal." (JMK)

"Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: An Empirical Base for Professional Development"

Progress Report #3

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NIE-G-81-0014

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for

"Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life:
An Empirical Base for Professional Development"

C O N T E N T S

Project Abstract

Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: An Empirical Base for Professional Development

This study was designed to add to the knowledge bases of teaching and professional development. It is a phenomenological study of the classroom teacher and a group of seven teachers who reflected upon, wrote about, and discussed their lives as classroom teachers over a one-year period. Teachers kept written diaries which contained their thoughts and feelings about daily events and circumstances that affected them as teachers. The diaries provided topics for discussion at weekly seminar sessions on teaching and professional development. Biweekly participant observations in each classroom were made by the researcher. Teachers were selected from seven school districts within a 30-mile radius of Kent State University and included classroom levels from kindergarten through grade four in urban, rural, and suburban settings.

The research is based on a conceptual framework generated in a previous study of teacher perceptions of professional growth (Holly, 1977). From this perceptual approach to development elements of the framework included: content of professional development seminars relevant to the participants, flexible organization responsive to evolving purposes, a climate of collegiality, acceptance and exploration, and time over a period long enough for development to take place.

Major questions addressed include the following.

1. What do teachers think about on a daily and weekly basis?

2. What are the events, interactions, and characteristics of the setting which have a significant impact upon their teaching and learning?

3. To what extent do activities and courses which are planned to assist them in their teaching actually help them?

4. What happens when teachers consciously reflect on their teaching?

5. How do teachers help other teachers?

6. What do responses to these questions suggest for the improvement of support systems for professional development?

Data sources include diaries, transcriptions of seminar sessions, slides of each classroom and school, observations of participants teaching and field notes, and informal conferences and interveiws with each teacher in each school (including interviews with principals, children, parents, and staff members to varying degrees depending on the opportunity).

The phenomenological approach taken was one designed to enable the researcher to better understand and gain insights into the classroom life of teachers from their perspectives and to describe the everyday and cumulative experiences which affect their and their students' lives in classrooms.

Progress Abstract

The project formally spanned from January 1981 through February 1982, but classroom visitations and interviews were conducted in the spring of 1982 and occasional consultation with the teachers for data verification will continue until the final report is completed. The project turned out to be far more time consuming and complex in analysis than was anticipated. The second part of the project was begun with a two-day workshop on writing and teaching in August of 1981. Seminars and writing began with the commencement of school. As analysis progressed, and with the help of an outside consultant, project participants began to look more deeply into their teaching. For some teachers this "self scrutiny" became increasingly difficult and uncomfortable; most notably for two teachers who all but stopped writing outside of seminar sessions. The project formally ended with a seminar session devoted primarily to reflections on professional development, the project, and the processes of writing, discussion and classroom visitations. Teachers' writing from this session is included at the end of each teacher's portrait in this report.

Data analysis consists of: reading and taking notes on each teacher's diary, researcher observation notes, teacher comments on tape transcriptions and personal interviews; rereading, coding, categorizing, noting patterns and themes; reading and note-taking of transcriptions of seminars at the beginning, mid point including at the close of the school year and in August and September at the beginning of the following school year, and at the conclusion of the seminars (November and February) writing portraits* of each of the seven teachers incorporating information from the diaries, seminar transcriptions, field notes, analytical notes, slides of each teacher's classroom and interviews with each teacher and others in their schools. While walking back and forth between and among the data sources, and occasional discussions with the four teachers and consultants, I have moved from specific factors related to an individual teacher to those which appear to be significant themes of the teachers as a group. At intervals throughout the process related research and readings have been consulted. A tentative outline of the final report has been written and some portions of the document completed. The remaining analysis and writing includes comprehensive portraits of three teachers and modification and expansion of the last sections of the report. Allowing for consultation with the teachers and outside consultants, submission of the final report is scheduled for January.

*Brief portraits were written on each teacher during the project; comprehensive portraits (25-70 pages each) based upon the research questions have been written for four teachers. Three abbreviated portraits have been verified and discussed with individual teachers.

Overview of Progress Report

In this report a description of the last third of the project is presented. Summer sessions, writing and participant observation ran from late August through November and to the final seminar session which took place in January, while final interviews and observation visits took place in April 1982. Major activities over this include the following: August workshops on professional development and writing, commencement of the new school year, work with an outside consultant and participation in a conference on qualitative research.

Next, methods of analysis in portrait construction are presented. Following these are portraits of four teachers constructed from the multiple data sources. These are presented in the order in which they were written. Finally, is an outline and brief description of the final report is presented. Appendix A contains a publication based on a paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference in 1982 while Appendix B is a monograph prepared for Deakin University stemming from Analysis and Progress Reports 2 and 3 of "Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: An Empirical Base for Professional Development."

Chapter 1

Completion of the Project

Background to Fall Term

During the last seminar session (June 4, 1981), several teachers voiced their thoughts and feelings about the closing of the school year. There was a sense of shared ambivalence revolving around accomplishments, the distance traversed with the children since the previous September, teaching roles, decisions made and responsibilities coming to a close, hopes and plans in the summer, and the completion of teaching-learning relationships with students. For the most part optimism, a sense of satisfaction and affection toward the children (and, in some cases, colleagues) prevailed. When asked what the summer and fall term might hold for the project, teachers reiterated their intentions to write about their experiences over the summer. One teacher suggested a sharing session in which everyone could share successful teaching experiences and ideas. We decided to hold a workshop in August at which time we would spend a day "sharing" and a day writing, reflecting, and discussing teaching, project participation and diaries. This would provide a safe distance and quiet atmosphere away from the responsibilities and hurry of the regular teaching year.

A few teachers spoke of classroom activity, things that "worked" and of feelings of sadness that the children would be moving on to another teacher. One of the teachers (who had from the project's beginning taken a dominant role in discussion) redirected comments to keep the group on task. Where would the group be heading? According to several teachers, it should be branching out to include other teachers and administrators and it should be linking with teacher education at the university so that our "discoveries" would be shared and extended. The teachers began to define their own limits as single teachers and wanted to reach out in forming discussion groups and collegial relationships. Writing about teaching for publication was suggested by Craig, the "on task" teacher and agreed to by others. Craig had several ideas and radiated enthusiasm. In his own school where collegial relationships had been tenuous, noncommunicative and occasionally combatant, he had taken the initiative to open communication channels between the two factions of teachers and to cooperatively discuss and propose staff development opportunities for the following fall. Not only had he approached others, but he took the time and effort to understand their points of view. Craig felt he had been a victim of unfair treatment and misunderstanding in his school so this was a significant step toward reconciliation and unification of the staff.

Craig also suggested that the project group meet for a social occasion including spouses. He directed the planning.

On a Saturday evening in late June a picnic took place. The next group session took place in August with a two-day workshop.

Chronology of Events by Month:
Overview of Fall Term of Project

August (8/10-11) Two-day Workshop

- sharing of teaching experiences and ideas
- planning for the last portion of the project
- personal and group reflection on writings and project evolvement
- reflection writing session and discussion

(8/25) Social Occasion

- group dinner out with spouses and return to project teacher's home for dessert

September (9/3) First Seminar Session

- discussion of difficulties beginning year and of writing
- direction for seminars (tension in sessions; search for typist)

(9/10) Seminar Session

- writing on beginning of school
- discussion of discipline (oral language film--five teachers' approaches)
- topics: What is teaching?; Professional development? The contexts of teaching; Who are you in your classroom? (tension in session)

(9/17) seminar session

- discuss project research questions
- focus for next seminar on 'what do I do and why?' and school philosophy
- passed out readings on curriculum, teaching style
- reflection, introspection, and discussion emerged; "Teaching curriculum rather than children"; "Why?"; "If you cover the material you feel like you're getting someplace."
- (Writing very little; tension in session; most vocal teacher is unusually quiet--mentions his inservice education ideas are dismissed by staff)

(9/24) Seminar Session

- writing during session on incidents since school began; reflections on things remembered; most meaningful (growthful) things that have happened this week and today; write about three previous writings--four months ago, two months ago, now--Has it changed? How? What are you thinking/feeling as you look at these three pieces of your work?
- discussion of above
- planning for consultation workshop session
- (turning point in group and personal discussion. Introspection and teaching contexts discussed and written about. Personal support of group members for other members. A few teachers dig deeply into the malaise they find themselves in and ask "Why? What next? What is professional about teaching? What do all of the influences in our contexts mean to our teaching? What can we do about these? Can we? What of the profession? What now--as we face ourselves?"

October (10/3) Workshop Session with Outside Consultant

- teachers discuss writings and project participation, and teaching and professional development as they review samples of their own writing from different time periods
- engage in writing, editing, and discussion with writing consultant
- discussion of current status of project and extension of previous week's session questions (see above)
- suggestions on the writing process and comments on ambiguities noted during session by consultant
- discussion of future directions in project participation

(10/8) Seminar Session in Preparation for Conference

October (10/16) Qualitative Research Conference

- overview and five teachers present brief comments on their experiences in project
- (pulling together as a group; concern for each person).

(10/26) Researcher Log Entry

- administrative, secretarial, lack of diary writing, professional demands, and other problems pose many difficulties to analysis

and progress

(10/31) Dinner and Seminar Session with Guest Administrator from England

November (11/5) Seminar Session

- writing on professional and staff development opportunities
- (winding down project, reactions to conference paper on professional development, parent-teacher conferences; Thanksgiving activities and vacation)

December (12/3) Seminar Session

- writing on why entered teaching, factors influencing, present thoughts and feelings about teaching, future plans or ideas
- (session with intensity from participants, an "unloading" [or catharsis] of present feelings about children and teaching, thinking outloud, little focus; willingness to talk openly and candidly)
- (continuing difficulty with tapes and transcriptions)

January (1/4/82) Last Seminar Session

- structured and directed session; writing and discussion of seminars, writing, and visitations ("let-down" tone in group, suggestions of meeting again, missing visits, and regrets at the conclusion of the project)

February (2/26) Cooperative Dinner

April Visits to Schools, Interviews with Teachers, Time Budgets Kept by Teachers for One Week

Description of Selected Events

Summer Workshop

On the first day of the workshop teaching ideas were shared. Some teachers brought books, teaching materials, and tried-and-true ideas to be used in the classroom and at home by the children during vacation periods. In general, teachers who were relatively quiet during regular seminar sessions were active contributors, while the usually active speakers were more quiet than usual. In the afternoon we discussed possible extentions and directions for group foci. As in June, several teachers reiterated suggestions to enlarge the group and extend exploration to others. Whenever

the June discussion had been general, specific suggestions were now made. Carole, a teacher who was on an inservice education planning committee, asked if the group might put together a session on the project for her district. Kate, another teacher, asked if the group would speak to an educational association to which she belonged. Craig was to have a student teacher and said that he was going to have her keep a diary and try some observation and discussion techniques related to project work in describing teaching and professional development. A discussion of implications of collegial discussion and reflective writing for teacher education ensued. I suggested that these might be good topics to think further on and write about. Following from the teachers' suggestions that they become more involved in teacher education and "inservice," I presented information about a regional conference at the university on qualitative research and asked if anyone would be interested in telling about their participation in the project.

Before the workshop, the teachers had been asked to review their diaries for the writing session that would take place the following day. Several teachers found this to be difficult, or as two teachers described it, painful. Several questions were posed before the writing session began. "As you look back over your diaries, what do you see? What, if anything, has happened since you began? Note changes and thoughts you have as you read. Do you notice anything about the topics or focus of your writing? Any changes? Anything about your style? Ideas? What do you think about and feel about your writing?"

Each teacher faced the diary and approached the writing task differently. A few teachers charged right in, others pondered through their journals, while others sat either quietly or restlessly in contemplation. Whereas introspective writing had been relatively rare up to this point in the project, it surfaced in either the teaches' writing or in their discussion of writing during the workshop.

In fact, most teachers seemed to delve more deeply into their teaching and into their personal and professional lives on paper or verbally than they had during the previous six or more months of the project. Up to this point, most writing and discussion were descriptive and centered on others: teachers, administrators, parents, family or students. The focus of writing during this session was an individual choice, but all teachers addressed themselves as teachers. Writing had been discussed throughout the project as a difficult endeavor, and as they looked at their past writing, some of the reasons for this became clearer to them.

(Je) It was all me--very subjective and writing with emotionality.

It's painful! I look at my words, phrases and grammar.

(J) You have to deal with yourself on paper--have committed self on paper and to action . . .

(Cr) I see patterns, topics and phrases repeated.

(C) I found myself needing to clarify a lot of things--a lot another person wouldn't understand. I had to make additions and clarify.

(Je) My partial words and phrases!

(J) My grammar!

I was surprised to see the dates--if I had started earlier, it could have helped me make decisions and see problems sooner.

Teachers were often surprised at what they learned about themselves.

(K) I always knew it, but I see it again: how much attention the negative gets. It is more interesting. I wrote about trouble. The hardest thing for me is to reinforce the kids who are doing well. All this attention to three or four kids.

(Cr) Yeah. When things are going along well you don't think about "why." But you need to so you know when things fail what you can do.

(Je) Your mood and your well being are so much of it (your classroom).

(J) When you're on a natural high it's a high for everyone. When you're on a low, it's low for your kids.

During this session and in sessions that followed, when one teacher changed the discussion from description to introspection, to an aspect of teaching that they had seemingly not been aware of before, at least one teacher--usually more--followed suit. The teachers who followed more often than not were ones who had difficulty focusing on their own teaching.

(C) I saw a couple of things. "Why would I get so pissed off over this?" And then I hoped that I'd do something better the next time.

(Cr) Me too--I'd call the kids names! I could feel myself sink into the gutter! I'm not going to let

that happen this year!

(M) Thank goodness we have the summer to think about all this.

(Je) It's so true.

Discussion ran in cycles, and after several teachers faced behavior in themselves that they questioned, another teacher usually intervened with "safer" comments, a change in the topic, or the introduction of someone else's problems. When this happens, "I" is replaced with "we" or "you." With seeming inevitability, the topic of duscussion is changed to finding fault with others. In the following instance (which directly follows the comments above--"It's so true") the students and then the university are the targets.

(R) Why do we put kids beside you to reinforce their behavior? They really want your attention and we give it to them.

(K) It's so easy to see in someone else's classroom--on a visitation . . . . I saw a teacher hold a bad boy on her lap; the kid hit another kid over the head. She holds him the whole time! Kids who are doing what they are supposed to and sitting off by themselves! And that was a model school. All the teachers have master's degrees.

(Je) What does a master's degree do? So what? That doesn't make them better teachers (much verbal support and laughter from others). I tell 'em I'm getting hours for the pay raise. Boy, if I pick something up along the way I can use, great! When's the last time (a professor) was in the classroom? That's why they're in the (university) classroom!

(Cr) I'm antsy, but I find myself in the same thing. It's hard to stay in the classroom.

Discussion continues for 15 minutes on university courses, the need for relevance and individualization of master's degree programs at which time it is suggested by one of the teachers that participants and spouses go out to dinner before school starts. (Two weeks later this occurs.)

In summary, the workshop necessitated reflection on the previous year's teaching and writing. For most teachers this was not an easy task. Some found it a painful process, while others found pleasure and challenge as well as new awarenesses of factors in their teaching that were difficult to face. When problems were identified sometimes they were faced, but other times they led to finding fault with others (university and problem children, for example). Most

teachers uncovered and began to differentiate complexities and interacting elements in teaching and professional development. Perhaps related to the distance of time and removal from the immediacy of teaching, the teachers were able to see the flow of events and "hurry" that their writing conveyed. They were able to relive some of their experiences, but with the advantage of being spectators. Often, feelings that they felt during events written about returned as they read them. Some teachers discovered themes and patterns in their teaching.

As a group, the teachers focused on themselves as teachers. Collective reflection became a process of professional development as they shared and discussed ideas and aspects of their teaching which they felt were successful and brought into the open to examine aspects of their teaching of which they were unaware. They listened and responded to each other's ideas, thus enlarging their own teaching repertoire and gaining information about each other. An openness and honesty in the climate of discussion was promoted that would continue throughout subsequent sessions. The admission of one teacher to a problem in teaching seemed to enable others to face similar criticisms and to discuss them and, in some cases, to write about them.

Personal insights were many. Jerry decided to try to write factually, to let his emotions onto the page after he put down the "facts." Carole was surprised at the "little things" that disturbed her in the classroom and the time that she spends on teaching responsibilities. Marcy found that she is a "very verbal" and "action-oriented" person who finds it difficult to put her personal thoughts on paper. Judy was surprised at the interest she has in problems that "seemed so obvious" at the time. Ruth confronted her reasons for not writing and wrote of the loneliness and human dilemmas of teaching. Craig enjoyed his "style" as he discovered it in his writing but wondered why he gets caught in power struggles with the children. Kate found returning to her writing an uncomfortable process, and, asked herself why she is both more and less comfortable talking to project teachers "who I really respect, but this takes me to another level of self-evaluation and self awareness. I think about what I'll say before I say it here."

As the teachers reviewed, thought about and discussed teaching, they began the psychological transition into the new school year. Most approached the new year with ambivalence, feelings of hopefulness and readiness; yet regret at not accomplishing all they had planned in the summer; and thoughts of "starting over." Ideas and plans for increased reflective writing and extending the project were discussed though the reality of the school year and human difficulties would divert all but a portion of the plans. Jerry anticipated the fall as he looked wistfully at his writing from the previous year. In a few weeks he would feel

full-force his yearning to return to the past. "As I read, I wanted to go back to my kids, capture the feeling one more time. They were great. I know this year's going to be a bummer in comparison, a let-down after last year."

Fall: Beginning the School Year

"It's a good thing we started [the project] in January! Can you see us trying to begin in September?" For each teacher in the project beginning the school year was filled with uncertainty, a feeling of "starting over," and for most teachers it was complicated by unsettling conditions or events at home. One routine was replaced with another. Usually the break with routine and "starting over" included other members of the family. Juggling roles, responsibilities and routines of family members occurred concomitantly with changes at school.

For Judy, disruptions were several. Having moved to another house during the summer she was still unpacking and wallpapering. At school she was moved to another room. Her principal informed the teachers during the first day of school that they would be adopting a new program on "assertive discipline" throughout the school. It was each teacher's responsibility to follow the new rules. Also during the first week of school, Judy learned of several problems--past and potential--related to some of her children. Mainstreaming of a child who was severely physically handicapped, another child who "didn't listen to me" (whom Judy later learned had a hearing problem), along with the new discipline plan were almost more than Judy felt she could cope with adequately. She struggled with trying to adjust to "assertive discipline," though she admitted it didn't "feel right." She felt "mean" and wrote on several occasions of her loss of confidence, giving a child a "love tap," trying to establish routine and summing up the day as "a terrible day" or "not a good day." She guarded her interpretation of the children's behavior. "David talks and plays sneakily. Carolyn (teacher next door) told me about this. Wonder how much is her influence and how much I'm seeing objectively? Something to consider . . . I'm really exhausted. . . It's so hot. I've really been a disciplinarian." A few days later, Judy worte, "There's so little chance to interact with my colleagues. Even Carolyn and I have less time and I can tell. I feel the need to sit and 'chat,' but then the first few weeks of school are so hectic. . . NOT ENOUGH TIME!!!" Not the least of Judy's difficulties was breaking away from her three-year-old daughter, Sherry. A few weeks later, and feeling optimistic, Judy wrote, "I'm feeling much more positive now . . . It's good to be back--except I miss Sher." During the spring, Judy would give birth to her second daughter, Anne.

Each teacher faced problems, if not of similar content, of similar toll to their energy supply and psychological health. Marcy, for example, had taught in a small, rural school where she felt quite isolated. Little collegial interaction took place; relationships were generally described as "strained." For example, when the half-time principal left to become principal at the high school, the teachers decided not to give him a farewell party.

The district was suffering as most small districts in northeastern Ohio were, with lack of funds. Marcy requested a transfer to another building "in town" (as opposed to the rural school where she was) and after a summer of knowing she might not have any job and exploring other career possibilities, she was notified that she would be transferred to town. Grade-level placement was uncertain but as the year began, she found herself in a fourth grade classroom. As Marcy preferred to work with older children, she was pleased. She was happy to find that one of her closest staff members, the cook, had also been transferred and would be right across the hall. Unfortunately, the newly appointed principal had been a co-worker of Marcy's several years before and had the previous year prevented approval of Marcy's request for transfer to a building she was then principal of because "she and I have severe personality clashes and it would not be a satisfactory arrangement." Aware of this, but undaunted, Marcy began the year with high hopes for the colleagueship she remembered from several years spent in another district.

Though the jump from second grade to fourth, and from a large room to a room where not even a chair for a visitor could be squeezed in, and a move from a school where the principal was a close personal friend to one where the principal was an avowed critic of Marcy, and to a school year when her duties would be substantially increased (she would be track coach for junior high school girls, necessitating arriving at school at 5:30 a.m., and she would have lunch and recess duties far in excess of previous years) due to financial problems, Marcy fairly bubbled into the new year. Three teenage daughters with active extra-curricular schedules (track, drama, music) in a different school district and a husband who was superintendent of a school system many miles away, combined to make the beginning of school a challenging, if difficult to coordinate, period in the year for Mary.

For Carole, little transition to the new year was necessary. She taught school all summer and didn't feel that she had the chance to step out of teaching or to form different routines. The biggest adjustment that she had to make was to resume her life as a married woman after a year and one-half of separation. She didn't have a great deal of enthusiasm for the marriage, but after a year of counseling with her minister and her husband, they felt ready to try again. It was a very difficult fall for Carole and for her

husband. Additional changes at school exacerbated normal fall adjustments. Because of cutbacks in school funds, several programs and aids were cut. In Carole's case, cutting out the foreign language support program posed real difficulties, since eight children in her room spoke only partial or no English. Carole had experience in working with children from many different cultural backgrounds in her ethnically diverse first grade classroom, but she had relied on the program to assist the children with English.

Curricularly adjusting to a new reading series and mandates from the elementary supervisor to increase the amount of time devoted to reading, including an additional time period in the afternoon, meant that there would be less time for other subjects. She was concerned that there had not been enough teacher input in the changes in the reading program but didn't allow this to occupy much of her thinking because she needed to concentrate on the myriad of responsibilities in starting her young children off to their first year of full-day school. Communication difficulties and increasing reading tasks were only a few of the challenges she faced. Her work in district and state educational organizations kept her aware of difficulties facing the profession at large. During this time, the district teachers organization (as many others) was debating disaffiliation with the state and national organizations--a move Carole felt was not in the best interests of long-range goals. She felt caught between the realities within the district and her own views. (The district did disaffiliate, and Carole remained a member of both groups.)

Jerry's prediction that the fall would be a let-down became reality for him. He, like Judy, also a second grade teacher, lamented the time and energy he spent on establishing routines and discipline. He later would write about his growing dissatisfaction with his role as "teacher as teller." His wife's growing discontent with her job as a school psychologist and with subsequent health problems weighed heavily on his mind as he drove the 25 miles to and from school each day. Uncertainty and current difficulties juxtaposed with fond memories of the previous year to accentuate his vague longings for "simpler times."

For Craig, who had looked ahead to September from June with optimism and plans for staff development, the fall began with setbacks and complications. At home, his daughter began high school. For her, this meant a new school and a different group of friends and, as perceived by Craig, a change in the self he had come to know and a break from home, her neighborhood, friends, and some of her academic habits. Relationships became increasingly strained between Craig and his daughter and between his daughter and wife (stepmother to his daughter). At school, he faced several setbacks. A significant number of this year's kindergarten children were tested to be "well below grade level" in language development

just when the school district was increasing their demands in reading and readiness at the kindergarten level. Craig felt dissonance between his interpretation of the children's developmental levels, what could and should occupy their time in kindergarten, and the "letter books" mandated by district administrators. Last year had been difficult enough but with the children's "immaturity" and perceived lack of support from home, the prospect of bringing these children along academically appeared difficult at best.

Added to these personal and professional factors, the enthusiasm in June and the overtures Craig had demonstrated in staff development were, he felt, to go for naught. The parents in the parent-teacher association requested an informal meeting to meet and get to know their children's teachers at the beginning of school, and when the teachers were asked by the principal if and when they might like to spend an evening in this way, the majority of teachers voted a resounding "no." For Craig, who felt this was an opportunity to increase communication between teachers and parents and who pointed out the generous financial support of the parent group to the school each year for materials or equipment, this was a serious professional mistake. He also outlined several ideas for inservice education to take place during meeting time to which several teachers responded that inservice wasn't "pursuant to school business. It's not in the contract."

Jerry writes of his feelings as he anticipates the first day of school. "Like ghosts from a dream I hear the echo of their laughter and singing. I hear the dead quiet of concentrated effort and I feel a sense of loss.

"Then as I attack the physical appearance and the colors begin to brighten the room as do the flowers of spring to any given meadow, my senses flow again as water rushes from the river into the locks to raise a boat or ship to navigational level. Thus I begin my journey toward another year. I get high with anticipation and anxious to fill the room with the select 25 who await their grand entrance. They cry out . . . do you see me?. . . Can you turn me into a third grader in just a few short months? You bet I can! I'll be ready and waiting come September first and I'll bet your butterflies go away before mine."

For each of the teachers the beginning of fall term was difficult; with unanticipated, and in most cases, unpredictable complications from home and school. Financial cutbacks and insecurity about the future loomed in the background and affected not only their roles and responsibilities as teachers but more importantly their morale. Memories of the previous year's accomplishments and children's growth and competence both as individuals and as a "class" were brought into sharp contrast with the hesitant, wide-eyed expectancy, newly clothed and combed,

undisciplined, stretching, active, and growing "little ones" who presented themselves all at once at the classroom door,

"Are you my teacher?"
"I brought my snake for show n tell!"
"Jami hurt my feelings on the bus."
"This is a new dress."
"Can I go to the bafroom?"
"Are you David's mother?"
"Can I . . .?"
"Would you . . .?"
"I wanna . . ."
"I hafta . . ."
"When'll it be recess?"
"I'm hungry."

During the first several weeks of school, most teachers felt themselves buffeted by "highs and lows" as Kate writes, "It's amazing how moods and attitudes can change so quickly. At one point on Thursday (and I seldom have this thought), I wondered as I walked to the closet, "Why am I doing this? I felt totally defenseless. Then Friday was better. . ." In October Kate looks at this, her sixteenth year of teaching, and puts into words what some others have implied (usually her writing is in complete sentences and well though out; here it seems to pour out). She titles it in the margin "people as the school's resource."

"No sense of renewal this fall--no sense of starting over.

"Unsettled times--schools in a decline.

"60's--new programs, new possibilities.

"Now--holding our own or declining.

"Feelings of futility, of having exhausted resources--material and spiritual retrenchment rather than growth--staying in teaching . . ."

Fall was a turning point in the project. Teachers became more reflective, more introspective and more aware of the broader contexts within which they taught. They began to identify elements in their teaching, and professional development over which they had no control, and then a few teachers began to focus on factors that they could influence. A particularly significant discussion is recounted in excerpts of a transcription of a seminar session presented in the portrait of Jerry (see pages). The deeper and the more broadly that the teachers looked at their personal, professional lives and the more they were able to see interrelationships in different dimensions, the more uncomfortable they became. Writing in some cases ceased in all but seminar sessions. Several factors might contribute

all but seminar sessions. Several factors might contribute to this, among them the dawning awareness of existence and environmental contexts.

Chapter 2

Procedures for Analysis and Portrait Construction

Though the final report contains a comprehensive presentation of data sources and methods of analysis, in this section methods of analysis for constructing teacher portraits are presented. As the portraits evolve, responses to the original research questions (and additional ones) are discovered. In general, the process has been one that takes immersion in the data for several weeks for each portrait.

Then it is necessary to pull back and visualize the larger contexts within which the teacher can be seen. The construction of the portrait of Carole is an example. An outside consultant pointed out inconsistencies in the "picture." At the time, I identified so much with Carole's point of view that I could feel only discomfort, an unease that I couldn't do anything with until later. Returning several weeks later, I was able to see where "Carole" was among the inconsistencies. I began to more clearly differentiate fact from inference from my interpretation and to be better able to draw more from the data. I had difficulty portraying perceptions as perceptions--a problem the teachers also had in their diary writing. The multiple data sources are invaluable in triangulation but it becomes difficult at times to present in the portrait where the information is coming from.

To construct the portraits and to check validity and accuracy I have traversed back and forth among and between the data sources, reference materials (both methodological and content-related works), and discussion with the teachers portrayed and with outside consultants.

Before the conclusion of the seminar sessions (February 1982), brief portraits of each teacher were written. Each portrait is constructed in a similar manner using the same basic areas (background, family, education, school system, community, professional development and so on). By the middle of the third portrait, procedures were established. Until that point, several methods of categorization and coding were used. These methods were useful in becoming more familiar with the data though the coding has been of little use at this point in analysis.

Profiles of each teacher were written. These adhered only generally to specified areas and were rather characteristics and descriptive comments based on the individual teacher. Through discussion with an outside consultant who prodded for what I knew about each teacher,

cards were developed which outlined information on each teacher by category (based on research questions, e.g., opportunities for professional development, possible influences supporting and constraining professional development).

Flow charts, or constellations, were developed before I began the comprehensive portrait of each teacher. These were of several types and became increasingly more differentiated until I felt I had exhausted available information. I added to these as I traversed between data sources and identified further factors. One flow chart led into another and often interrelated factors became apparent.

I read and reread the diary of the teacher being portrayed. I took notes and marked passages that appeared to be important though I didn't always know why. In several instances, I noted writing that exemplified unique characteristics of the teacher, while in other places I noted factors that would become "universal" characteristics or ones shared by more than one teacher. The two kindergarten teachers, for example, wrote more about (and in a slightly different manner) their concerns and interactions with parents than did the other teachers. Two very different ways of working with parents were evident in the two classrooms and related "ways of working" were echoed in interactions with others.

After working through the diary several times, taking notes, marking passages, having constructed flow charts and outline cards, having studied slides of the teachers' classrooms and consulting seminar session tapes (until these were stolen), the portrait was developed. As can be seen in the portraits that follow, more and more of the teachers' perceptions are presented as we move from Carole, the first teacher written about, through to Judy, the last teachear presented in this report. What of the teachers' words and how many examples included depended not only on the teachers' writing and the perceived appropriateness to the research questions, but also on the researchers' ability to draw from and integrate the data. Each diary is very different in style and content and in the teacher's use of descriptive, analytical, and introspective writing. "Surface" and "deep" meaning are sometimes difficult to differentiate. Culling through the data sources and resources (readings, consultants) enable different perspectives to emerge.

As the portraits are constructed, more use is made of the multiple data sources. This again depends in part on what the teacher wrote. Jerry, for example, was found to use the seminar session as a testing ground for his ideas and increasingly he began to use it to face aspects of his teaching, aspects he seemed reluctant to face "head on" in his writing. He moved back and forth between writing and presenting his thoughts and feelings in the group. He became

more analytical in his writing and more introspective. In order to identify and to understand his efforts, I found myself returning to the seminar transcriptions more than I had for some of the other teachers. This in turn brought into sharper focus aspects of the group as a whole and aspects of individual teachers of which I had not before been aware. It is like a gigantic and intricate puzzle, and while looking for middle and connecting pieces, I discover structural or outside perimeter pieces. Each portrait worked through provides both unique elements and contributions to larger themes that run throughout the data.

As each portrait is temporarily completed, it is analyzed as it relates to others. General comments reflecting this can be seen in the brief section following the portrait of "Kate," the second teacher presented in the next chapter. Specific comments, themes, and patterns are presented in the final report.

Chapter 3

Portraits of Teachers

Teacher Profiles

Carole
Kate
Jerry
Judy

TEACHER PROFILE

	Age in 1981	Grade level	Years Tchg. Exp.	School District	Background	Education	Family	If I weren't me I'd be	Leisure Activities
Carole	29	1	8	suburban, SES mixed, mixed ethnic	inner city; middle child with 4 sisters and one brother; raised by mother who worked	B.A. 1972	husband, a chemist in large corporation	a butterfly, free to watch people. and to spread beauty	sports, dancing, church
Kate	47	K	15	rural-farm	small town, county seat; oldest of two children- a brother; two parents	B.A. 1956 M.A. 1978	husband, a commercial artist, studio at home; 3 college-age sons	a fashion designer creative	crafts. sewing
Jerry	33	2	5	Suburban, high SES	rural-farm (Tennessee & Ohio); fourth child of family of 7; two parents	B.A. 1976 (M.A. 1983)	Wife a school psychologist; daughter 14, son 5	a part-time entertainer, writer, contractor	guitar player, contractor, antique col.
Judy	31	2	10	rural-suburban, low SES	suburban; first of three children, only girl; two parents, both worked	B.A. 1971	husband in business management; daughter 3 another daughter, born 6-83	a traveler	reading, hiking. shopping

CAROLE

Carole was 29 when the project began. She was particularly interested in having a black woman like herself represented in the project. She was raised in an inner-city neighborhood and spent her first few years of teaching in a similar area. This is her ninth year of teaching. She is married, has no children, and teaches first grade in a small suburban school.

Family, Education, and Background

Carole was born in Chillton, a large city in northern Ohio, in February of 1951. She is a middle child with four sisters and one brother. Her father was an alcoholic and died when Carole was 11. She remembers how she and her older sisters babysat while their mother did domestic work to support the family. She looks back at her mother with sensitivity and admiration and comments that "we never wanted for anything; my mother always made sure we had what we needed. She rarely bought herself anything though . . . you learn to share in a big family." As far back as she can remember, Carole's mother said, "Carole will be the teacher in the family," a statement that would help this to become true.

Carole and her sisters and brother attended nearby inner-city schools where she was selected, along with several of her high school friends, for the Follow-Through program. The program helped her to develop study skills that would enable her to complete a degree in education at a small private liberal arts college in Chillton. There were few young students like Carole at Bonnard Drew College then, and her background had not prepared her for the type of education she would work toward. She said that neither she nor most of her friends would have made it without the continuing help of the Follow-Through program. She laments that the program is no longer in operation.

Carole had a special interest in math and found that she had an aptitude for it. She received her degree in 1972. Her first teaching years were spent in two nearby inner-city schools. She married and her husband's job required a move to Rothville, a small college town predominantly white and middle-class with the university as the largest employer. Carole began teaching in Rothville at Tower School which was a small neighborhood school. After two years she was transferred to a small ethnically and racially mixed school where she still teaches. She and her husband, John, bought a house on the corner of two streets three blocks from her school. Because of this proximity, Carole often chooses to walk to school. She likes living in this neighborhhod where children come to visit or to sell Girl Scout Cookies or

magazine subscriptions. She enjoys getting to know the children and participating in community matters.

Carole continues close ties with her family and frequently visits Chillton. Her youngest sister, the first of her family to leave northern Ohio, recently accepted a job in Texas. Carole was happy that her sister had such an opportunity but she was sad to see her leave.

Carole and John began to have marital difficulties several years ago, and during the first half of the project, she lived in an apartment by herself. They both became Christians and attended marriage counseling with their minister in a nearby city every week. According to Carole, neither she nor her husband wanted to be married to each other, but the minister convinced them to continue to try. During the summer of 1981, Carole moved back into their home. She continued, as she had each summer, to teach summer school and to "fix things up" in the house she vacated a year and a half before. It was a time of strain and hard work as much as of promise. The following fall was a difficult one for Carole and John. One fall day she told me that the bruise over her right eye was a result of problems at home. She emphasized that his behavior "wasn't really him," that their reconciliation was very hard on him as well. Gradually, their relationship improved.

John grew up in a more prosperous environment than did Carole. He works as a research chemist in a large, well known company where he experiments with materials for product development. Carole visited the plant so that she had an idea of his work but admitted that it wasn't exactly "intriguing" to her. She has frequently invited John to visit her classroom in the hopes that he could understand what she does. He has not accepted her invitation nor does Carole think that he will. The time and resources she put into her teaching responsibilities put a severe strain on their marriage. Carole feels that if he could see what she does, he would better understand her personal commitment and why she contributes so much of ther time and resources to her work.

Carole and John enjoy spending time in physical exercise. She likes to dance; to play volleyball; "I like it probably because I'm good at it!"; and to exercise. She used to exercise with a friend who "was even more unreliable than I am at keeping it up!" so she now spends time regularly each week exercising at home by herself. John has tried to convince her to join him in his 6 a.m. swim schedule at the local high school, but she remains unconvinced that it would be worth the effort. Together they enjoy fishing, an activity John taught her several years ago.

Carole and John spend a significant amount of their discretionary time each week in church activity. Carole

finds that this is a good opportunity for her to spend time with black people which is very important to her. Carole is the only black teacher in her building, and although she is an active member on the staff and she is invited to social occasions, she often feels lonely and desirous of companionship with culturally similar friends.

Professional Life

Community, District, and School. Rothville is a college town with a population of 30,000 and an additional 17,500 permanent, full-time students. There is a large college of education which has a close working relationship with area schools for field experiences of teacher education students. Rothville schools enjoy the community's confidence and have yet to have a bond or millage levy fail. Teachers are paid above the state average. Art, music, and physical education, as well as special provisions for "gifted" students, are integral parts of the elementary program. Teachers are selected on the basis of several interviews by the administration. Support for professional development of staff members is offered through financial incentives for graduate study at the university, through sponsorship of an "inservice day" each year, and until recently, financial support for teachears to attend professional conferences. A director of the elementary schools overseas school programs in the district's five elementary schools.

The school serves about 350 children from first through sixth grade. It was built in 1964. Children come from the immediate neighborhood which is racially mixed and composed mainly of rental property and small homes next to an industrial area of Rothville, and of children whose families live in university married housing. A significant number of children from the latrer are from foreign countries. Although there are few black families in Rothville, most of them live in this area. The school also serves a number of children from an older university community a few blocks away. Most of these children come from university professional and administrative families.

Principal, Colleagues, and Parents. Dave, the principal, has been in his job for several years after serving as a teacher in another district building. He is highly visible and accessible in school and spends a significant amount of time at recess and lunch time in the teacher's lounge chatting informally with the staff. His office is near the front door, and he frequently greets incoming people. He is present early to greet children and buses and after school when they leave.

When Carole was first assigned to the school, Dave cautioned her that a previous black teacher had "not worked out." She thought to herself, "Who does he think he is?" The teachears tried to make her feel comfortable, but

distance and loneliness marked her first years. Some teachers warned her that she might have difficulty with some of the parents though she did not. She became the person to solve black children's problems. When a black child was in trouble, people looked to her as if she had the answer, "them both being black." Carole has worked to dispell many myths about blacks held by some children, teachers, and parents.

The general feeling of teachers in Carole's lower elementary wing is that the principal is weak, and that he gives special treatment treatment to a teacher in the upper elementary. They read signs of favoritism in his vocal support for her and in the amount of time he spends with her in school. For example, on one occasion, when parents were at school to visit classrooms at night, Dave introduced the staff and pointed out this teacher as being special, "and we are lucky to have her." No comments about other teachers were made. Carole and her closest colleagues mentioned the incident as another example of favoritism.

According to Carole, the only times that the principal spends in her classroom is when he has a message to deliver, when she is cooking something, or she requests his help (usually for a technical or mechanical problem such as the film projector). Carole has reservations about the principal's proficiency in evaluation of teaching and in leadership of instructional matters. In her diary she frequently made references to the need for informed comments and suggestions and wished that the principal or another professional would observe in the classroom. Carole says that "He will back teachers in front of parents" and that "He is quite willing to provide assistance in non-instructional areas," but she feels that it would be helpful if he exercised more of a leadership role in commenting upon her planning and teaching. His checkmark or "ok" placed on lesson plans that take her hours to prepare each week are a constant source of irritation to Carole. Once, after a two-week lapse of turning in plans to the office, Carole found a note on her desk asking where they were. "What does it matter? They are for me, not him! He doesn't do anything with them anyhow!"

Another source of frustration for Carole is when Dave hands down policies without a chance for discussion. For example, children are not permitted to wear Halloween costumes for the school party. According to Carole, parents and teachers regularly object, yet the decision remains. Another example is, Dave recently announced that on the day when children have gym class they are not permitted to have recess. Carole objects that little in the way of justification is offered.

Carole and her cohorts in the lower elementary wing sometimes try to make changes. They wanted, for example, to put their allocated yearly room money of $10 each together to

purchase a digitizer. Another time the teachers defined rules for new playground equipment use and went to the principal requesting that he call an assembly to tell the children.

Communication is sometimes strained between Carole, a few of her colleagues, and Dave. At one time he accused them of having a clique and "keeping the other teachers out." Carole feels that this is partly because this group eat lunch in the lounge together and the "excluded" teachers rarely come into the lounge. Outside of school there is no interaction among them.

Though there are these problems, Carole feels that the general atmosphere of the school is collegial and friendly. The custodian, a cheerful woman, and the cooks, teachers, substitute teachers, "special" teachers, and support staff chat together amicably as they might with friends outside of school.

Most parents are supportive of school and helpful when asked. Carole often initiates communication with parents, through notes and by inviting them to school to attend plays and other activities. For example, the children reenact stories from their reading books--most recently the Princess and the Pea. Several mothers volunteer their services for field trips and many mothers bring in and oversee birthday treats throughout the year. Carole enjoys going to her students' homes for lunch. Two such lunches took place over the summer of 1981.

Carole has a warm and professional relationship with three teachers of similar ages in the lower elementary wing--two women who teach first and second grades, and a male, third grade teacher. She "team" teaches with one of the women, a neighboring first grade teacher for math. The children are ability grouped, and each teacher works with two groups. The four teachers often discuss school in one of their classrooms before and/or after school. Jeff, the third grade teacher, frequently stops by Carole's room to share a humorous event or interaction with his children or another adult. "I was so angry at that child . . ." or "The silliest thing happened just now. . . ."

Staff interaction is amicable and usually takes place in the teacher's lounge at recess and lunch times and when teachers have "free periods" during art, music, or physical education. Lunch and recess times are staggered so that the same people are in the lounge at specified times. There are "regulars," teachers, principal, substitute teachers, the speech therapist, school nurse, school psychologist, university students (although there are a dwindling number of students) who frequent the lounge. Often there is food on one of the tables such as a coffee cake or rolls that someone brought in or had left over from a classroom event. Coffee

and cigarettes are the usual relaxers along with joking, discussing politics, school problems and individual gripes, the children, and outside school activities such as favorite restaurants. There is a relaxed feeling in the lounge and much teasing and humor. There is a feeling of comradery and relief. The lounge has "sayings" and posters of encouragement--"Bear with it." There are two distinct wings of the school that are separated by grade level, physical space, time schedules, to a certain degree age, and perhaps most importantly, philosophy. For faculty meetings, assemblies, and parents nights they meet as a total group.

Inside Carole's Classroom

Carole's first grade classroom is bright; the walls are speckled with the children's drawings and crafts and in the two windows at the room's corners are a variety of healthy plants. Near the front window is a comfortably padded bathtub where children are frequently found reading. Next to the bathtub in the middle of the front of the room is a soft rag rug that refuses that refuses to wear out. The children gently reminded Carole to sew it back together when it began to come unstitched. They watched with glee as the rug became whole. Signs from outside, like leaves and pine cones, are kept on the ledge under the windows, along with art projects, books and equipment (record player, word machine) and an air popcorn popper Carole frequently uses in the classroom.

There is a light spirit of purpose and seriousness without burden in the room. Children "live" as they are children and as they are people. They enter the room with a quickness and eagerness, an excitement in their bodies as if they are where they want to be and ready to "begin" the day of work and social movement. Conversations take place as children almost casually prepare for the day. They go to wherever they need to, to "take care of business," their desk, the teacher's desk, the sink. Carole talks with the children individually as they share their thoughts, feelings or treasured objects. After the schoolday slowly begins, Carole calls the children to the rug where she includes each child in discussion of a story, weekend or family happenings, or other topic and then gradually introduces and explains some of the day's events. When worktime comes she takes a reading group to the back of the room and the other children begin work at their desks (which are usually arranged in groups of four or more). A low buzz of conversation can be heard in the room although no one but a visitor would notice; the children talk and work quite naturally almost as if they were at home and involved in work there. They move around the room with purpose.

Carole's manner with the children is gentle, serious, casual, warm, firm, honest, and teasing. There is a marked lack of pressure yet an air of seriousness in the room. I asked her one day about her casual and flexible attitude

toward "finishing" curricular activities and the use of time. Although she never seems to push the children, they seem to accomplish a great dea. (This is in sharp contrast to many classrooms I visit where the teacher constantly reminds the children of the amount of time left and coaxes them to "hurry.") Carole's reply was "If I hurried them, they wouldn't do the kind of work I want them to." Running out of time, unshown films and spontaneous divergencies from her written plans are regular occurrences.

The children's noise and movement are not a problem for Carole. During worktime and at the beginning of the mornings' and afternoons' conversations, sharing and problem solving are evident. When the children are left for a few minutes or when Carole doesn't return to the classroom when the children arrive, they go about their business as they would if she were there. Very little overt control is evident. When she speaks, the children listen. And, when a child speaks, the other children listen--often intently.

Sources of Joy and Satisfaction

Carole derives satisfaction from feeling competent as a professional; from seeing her planning and effort bring results. She frequently enriches the curriculum with experiences that actively involve the children. For example, the children were given the assignment to invent a product and to design a television commercial in which they wouls "sell" their product. The children worked with their parents at home and the next day presented the commercial to the class using a puppet theatre as the TV they acted on. The audience was appreciative, and, including Carole, delighted to see the results. For the children who selected not to "appear on television," they shared their products informally.

She feels joy when she sees individual children whom she is concerned about doing well. It might be a child who is shy beginning to work with another child or a child who has struggled with a concept finally breaking through to understanding. Because Carole has several children from minority and foreign families and because she works so hard at understanding and teaching each child, she is constantly working to improve communication. Amrita, a small, timid child from India, for example, could speak not a word of English. Carole and the children carefully helped her with her work and at learning English. It was often unobtrusive help, the type that is evident throughout the room. Each "landmark" in Amrita's communication and learning was a source of joy for Carole.

Carole is heartened by favorable comments from parents about her teaching. Being able to talk over her experiences with trusted and respected colleagues is an important aspect of her professional life. The little treasures that children

give Carole, such as special notes and pictures, are cherished, and she once wrote a note to a child who drew her an "I love you, Mrs. Carey" picture. "Karen, you helped me through the day." Given Carole's marital difficulties, the children often were a source of warmth and caring. During weeks when Monday morning wasn't her favorite time, "the children always pull me out of it." According to Carole, her moods and those of the children are interactive; "We rub off on each other."

Sources of Frustration and Dilemmas of Teaching

Although Carole more than once noted in her diary that prayer and the Bible were helpful to her in sustaining patience to deal with young children, she rarely pointed out occasions when the children themselves were the cause of frustration. She spoke of and wrote about three children in particular--Christy, an abused child; Eleanor, whose mother Carole felt was crippling the child's development by keeping her dependent and isolated; and Francine, whose mother was practicing voodoo and starving Francine and herself. Carole's frustration came from feelings of helplessness, of wanting to help the child yet being unable to.

Christy, a neatly dressed, quiet and timid child, was often bruised and at one time suffered from a broken arm and "blackouts." Her parents had emotional problems and were severely limited intellectually. Carole was informed of brutal treatment of Christy by the grandmother who appeared helpless to change the circumstances. On those instances when the mother came to school to talk with Carole and Christy was present, Christy shied away, not speaking to Carole. It wasn't until late in the year that slash marks and bruises on her back were found by the school nurse that child abuse was confirmed. Even then, Carole found, "There's little we can do."

Eleanor, a child who was repeating first grade, took little initiative in school and continued to do poorly socially and academically. Try as Carole did to work with the mother, she continued to protect the child from "outside influences." At home Eleanor was not permitted outside to play with other children, nor was she allowed any responsibility. Though they lived near the school, her mother walked her to and from school each day; and when she had a message for Carole, she, rather than Eleanor, carried it. Carole watched in dismay as Eleanor's problems compounded and she fell further behind socially and academically.

Francine, a shy but friendly child, was a special concern to Carole for several months. She began to miss school quite regularly. Carole spoke with a student teacher who lived in married housing near Francine and her mother and found that Francine was not permitted to play with other

children and that the blinds and door were rarely open. She talked with Dave and a social worker and upon the child's return to school after several weeks absence and a severe weight loss, found out that her mother had "thrown the food away." Carole and the school nurse finally succeeded in convincing the child to eat at school and she began to appear healthier. Carole continued to try to communicate with Francine, to find out what was happening at home but the child offered little information. Carole also continued to prod the school and service authorities to action but found that there was little she could do. The social worker continued to try to talk with Francine's mother. After another long absence from school and no signs of life in their apartment, authorities broke into the apartment and found mother and daughter starving. As Carole visited Francine in the hospital, she questionned herself, "What could I have done?"; "What might this child and other children be going through?"

Carole was discouraged when special help for children who spoke foreign languages was cut from the school's services. She had six students who spoke foreign languages in her classroom. With only 19 students she was able to give these students special help though not to the extent, nor with the expertise, that the special services offered.

Usually, Carole's frustrations as a teacher were related to adults--administrators who she felt didn't do their job, parents who either didn't respond to her attempt at communication or were not able to provide the care and education Carole felt was necessary for their children, colleagues who let their personal lives negatively affect their teaching, and special teachers such as the reading consultant who didn't know individual children, yet offered criticism and prescriptions for them. The principal was a frequent and recurring problem for Carole. She viewed him as weak, arbitrary and incompetent for leadership responsibilities. The fact that he appeared in her classroom only for brief and non-evaluative matters was evidence to her that he had little to offer in the way of criticism. Carole occasionally generalized her displeasure at lack of leadership to other administrators who she felt were incapable of understanding and promoting improvement because "they are so removed from the classroom."

Carole carefully used her time and spent a considerable amount of it on planning. When a music, art, or physical education teacher was absent, Carole lost her planning period. This meant that her after-school schedule was thrown because now she had to complete work she would have done during her planning period. On the frequent days that Carole was absent from school (either because of illness or "mental health") she thought about what was happening in the classroom. Would Lydia remember her medicine? Would the substitute and the children get along? And finally, would

the substitute follow her lesson plans? What would Carole have to do to straighten things out upon her return?

A major source of frustration, in fact, one which much of the previously mentioned is related to, concerns "professionalism." Carole spent a surprising amount of time and effort in performing professional tasks and education-related activity. Her work for the local and state teachers professional organizations are illustrative. Lack of decision-making power in professional matters (i.e., placement of children in special activities and programs), lack of support services and supplies for teaching ($10 yearly allocation for classroom materials; no help for children with language differences), lack of evaluation and feedback on teaching (she was observed only in her first year of teaching at Tower School), being forced to conform to arbitrary and imposed requirements (i.e., all chidlren who have not gone beyong page 110 in the new reading series will be given an "unsatisfactory" on their report card--this decreed one week before grades were marked), few mechanisms for professional discussion (i.e., faculty meetings are "the principal's agenda"), and the image of teachers and schooling portrayed by the media all interact to promote the idea that teachers are not treated as professionals.

Carole often feels lonely as a black teacher in a "white" building. Though there are black children, she is the only black teacher, and she looks longingly at her years where the staffs were integrated. A few years ago, she convinced a friend who taught in an inner-city school district to come to Rothville. Sadly, from Carole's point of view, her friend was placed in a school across town and has felt much the same loneliness as Carole as the only black teacher. Unlike Carole, she is moving back to a more integrated setting. A related frustration Carole feels is a perceived lack of interest in social and political concerns which affect children and the teaching profession. The setting is "an enclave where the picture is rosy and they don't see or care to find out anything else."

Opportunities for Professional Development

Staff meetings are few and called by the principal for specific reasons. They are usually held in the school library after school. There is a mimeographed agenda which the principal talks through. He stands before them and covers each topic. To Carole he seems nervous as he alternates his weight from side to side. Carole wishes that they might have an occasional staff meeting to discuss teacher concerns. Most of these concerns are discussed in small groups informally. Carole was for a time the Rothville Education Association representative from her school, so she had opportunities for additional communication with other teachers.

During the school system inservice education day, all of the teachers in the district meet as a group. Typically, the day has been spent at the high school with a short welcome and overview of the day from an administrator, a guest lecture session, and the teachers' choice of mini sessions afterward. Carole feels that these "inservices" have limited value and the time could be better spent, at least a portion of the day, in the teacher's room working on their own. Last year Carole was on the "inservice" committee. She was determined to help plan a day that would be relevant. They teamed with a nearby (affluent) district and according to Carole, this was the first such joining, and a success.

Carole is an unusual teacher in her school and district because of the professional roles she maintains outside her immediate environment. She is active in the Teacher's Association locally; she plays volleyball weekly after school with teachers throughout the district; she attends state meetings of the State Education Association and the minority caucus in the state capital, regularly and has over the years attended several National Education Association conferences (with some support from the district). State meetings usually take place at the end of the week and include meetings on weekends so that a considerable investment of her time is made. She finds the professional perspectives gained worth the time and effort. She is concerned about the social and political factors that affect education and she works in active support of her views at both the state and local levels (i.e., she is among a group of teachers who interview candidates for the Board of Education).

Project Participation

Carole began writing by following the brief suggestions that she jot down notes during the day and expand upon them later. At first her writing was regular each week. She found herself often writing about frustrations related to her principal, parents, and perceived injustice. Later, writing dealt with her frustrations and coming to terms with specific children's problems. During the second half of the project, when she had rejoined her husband, her participation in the project, particularly writing, was limited. As she looked back at her writing in the end of the project, she found many frustrations, and she was somewhat surprised to note the consuming role that teaching played in her life.

In looking back over her diary and the last few years of her teaching, Carole wrote, "The thing that affected my teaching most in the last two years was my personal problems in my marriage. Because things were lacking in my marriage, I devoted much time to my teaching and became very attached to my students."

During the last few weeks of the project, Carole wrote

of her thoughts and feelings about the sessions, diary writing, and researcher visitations. "When I look back on some of the things I had written earlier I see a change in my attitude about teaching. That change being a positive change that has allowed me to grow in many areas of the teaching profession. I attribute this growth to three things: one being my becoming a Christian within the last year; second, my having documented those things that have been important to me as a teacher of small children; and thirdly, having the opportunity to share the concerns of other teachers through this project. "When I first began writing, I cited mostly those things about teaching that were not to my satisfaction. When I look back on some of those writings I feel safe in saying that I was very much disenchanted about where I was as a teacher and my enthusiasm about teaching. I had thought many times about leaving this profession, not to pursue another profession but just to get a break from the many demands that teachers receive from students, administrators, parents and the community. My thoughts about leaving the teaching profession were also influenced by the public attitude towards schools, media treatment of education, salary and job security.

"As I continued to write I began to dwell more on the positive experiences of my teaching career and started to feel good about what I was doing for students that were fortunate enough to be in my class. I did not feel that I was doing a better job than any other teacher but I began to appreciate myself and my contribution to education. I began to realize that it's not what others think of me as a teacher but how I view myself as an educator. Several times I wrote about the need for praise from administrators and I'm sure this was a personal need that I have and many other teachers also share. I found that praise I was looking for by writing about things that were happening in my classroom. I found that praise in little things that my students did or said to me. I found that praise in being able to share with a group of teachers some of the same concerns."

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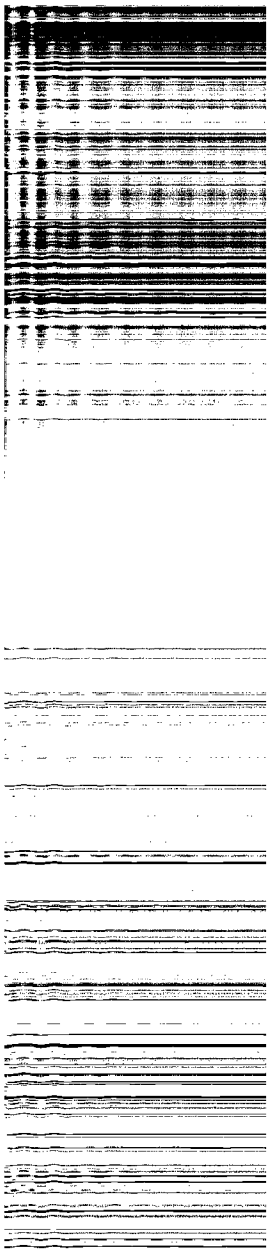
"The seminars were a support system for me. Many of the problems I was encountering in my teaching day were common to others in the seminars. They were supportive of my problems and provided suggestions for dealing with the problems. The seminars were inspiring because the lack of praise that is given to teachers by parents and administrators was given during the seminars. In sharing experiences, teaching methods, stations, projects, and problems I was motivated through the seminar to try new things to keep pushing and to do my best job . . .

"The writing itself was difficult for me because of personal problems that I was trying to deal with and because of time. The writing was very [illegible]



because it made me look at my teaching philosophy and how I was dealing with students, parents, and administrators. I was forced through writing to take a look at myself. When I look at myself some things are hurting while others were pleasing. The writing was also beneficial to my students.

"The visitations were great. Maybe I thought they were so great because they took the least amount of effort on my part, but were so beneficial to me and my students. The visitations were different from any of the visitations I've had before in that these visitations were informative, relaxed, a learning experience, supportive, and a sharing experience.

"The visitations provided a chance for me to observe my students working with another adult. The visitations provided suggestions as well as ideas for new and different teaching methods. The visitations provided praise for me as a teacher as well as praise that children constantly need. Many times the visitations took some of the demands that my students make of me away and placed them on the visitor. The visitations made teaching first graders an easier job because it's always easier when you have two people working together.

"What did I learn from this experience?

"More than anything else this seminar opened my eyes to what teaching is really all about. It showed me how important my job is to me and how important each child is that I have contact with. It has affected me in that things that were bothersome to me before participating in the seminar I am not as easily bothered by. It has made me more sensitive to the needs of the children.

"I also learned that teaching is so much a part of my life in and outside of school. This seminar has encouraged me to give all that I have in order that each child might be successful. It has made me more appreciative of my job as well as more able to cope with the pressures that go along with the job.

"It has made me more interested in the school system that I work in. It has been the first opportunity to express my gut feelings to other teachers about this profession.

"I learned that I have faults that I was not aware of. I learned that my attachment to my students affects my life outside of school and perhaps affects my relationship with my spouse.

"I have learned that ther were certain things I will never be able to change.

"I learned that the same problems I've had difficulty dealing with are common to other teachers too.

"This seminar has boosted my self-esteem. I've learned to appreciate "ME."

KATE

Kate teaches in a small rural town six miles from where she grew up. She is married and has three sons in their twenties who live in neighboring towns. Kate and her husband, an artist, live in the country a feew miles from school where she has taught for 16 years.

Family, Education, and Background

Kate was born in the mid 1930s in Midland, a small northeastern town and the county seat of a largely rural county. She grew up in a comfortable home on one of the main streets that she still passes every now and then. Her mother came from the South at the age of six "and began school in a highly prejudiced town. She was sensitive and suffered many hurts. She graduated third in her class from high school, yet received little recognition." Her "father grew up in Midland in the house my grandfather built in a 'good' neighborhood. His maternal uncles were the first black doctor and lawyer in Kenniston (a city of then 100,000, 15 miles from Midland)." Kate describes her father's attitude as "aristocratic in comparison to my mother's. I heard from my mother if I wanted to join a group in my early years, 'They don't want you.' She tried to protect me from being hurt. I observed that on my father's side of the family you just assumed you were somebody of value. Somewhere in my high school years I decided to develop myself without concern about what people thought of me. But that need for approval that I sensed from my mother stayed with me too. There's enough of my mother in me that is hurt by criticism, that wants to be liked. But there's enough of my father that says, 'Don't be overly impressed by anyone. You make it on who you are. Don't apologize for who you are!" Kate hesitates and adds, "That sentence is as much of an armor as a proclamation of self confidence . . ."

Kate and her brother, 12 years younger than she, attended a nearby elementary school and high school where Kate was an exceptionally good student. ". . . as a child, I was known as being . . . smart." She enjoyed school but when she looked ahead to college, she was not certain of a major. She leaned toward clothing and fashion because she enjoyed working with fabrics, their textures and combining them in pleasing ways. Her parents invited a neighbor, who was an elementary school principal, over to advise Kate on career possibilities and a major for her formal education. As Kate looks back, she muses that the decision to go into education was pretty much made for her. She attended a nearby university and continued to be an outstanding student. Early in her studies she was given and accepted the opportunity to study in England for several weeks. When she graduated from college, she surprised everyone by getting

married and starting a family. Within several years, she and her husband, then an art instructor at a nearby university, were the proud parents of three sons. They lived in the country in a small home which they would artistically create over the next few decades.

Early in her years as a mother, Kate's parents were killed in an automobile accident caused by a drunken driver. Robert, her brother, then 18 years old and a senior in high school, came to live with the young family. Kate recalls how her sons looked up to their big Uncle Robert.

Robert and Kate became very close, although they had understandable difficulties related to their developmental characteristics and the circumstances--Robert at a time when he was forming his identity as an independent youth, stunned by the tragedy of his parents' death, older than a child yet not prepared for the abruptness of adulthood thrust upon him, and Kate, a young woman challenged by the responsibilities of wife and mother of three young children.

Kate reflects back upon her first years as a kindergarten teacher and the integration of herself as a mother and a teacher. "Sometimes I think Eric has a better understanding of the demands on me as an adult-teacher-mother than I have had of him as a child (young man, now)-student-son. He has always been so helpful to me. Maybe that's because he and I started kindergarten together--he spent the morning in the other kindergarten while I taught--then we both went home at noon to naps. It was my first year of teaching and I learned as much from him as I did from my own students.

"When I contemplated that half-time teaching job, I was aware our home lives would change. My biggest concerns were times when the boys would be sick (they hardly ever were) and mornings when we'd all be leaving the house at once. They seemed proud that I'd be a teacher. It <u>was</u> good to be nearby if one of the boys became ill. And I always knew what was going on at school.

"I think the whole family shared an unusual closeness during those school years. The boys and I were part of the same environment during the day and they worked with their father (by that time he'd begun the business at home) after school and during the summers. I miss the boys not being at school now. I don't know as many of the teachers in the other buildings and I'm less in touch. It was a special perspective of school that we all had."

Two of Kate's sons live in neighboring communities and frequently visit while Eric, the youngest, lives at home while he is studying at a nearby university.

Kate and Don, her husband of 25 years, enjoy a close

working and leisure relationship. He is very supportive of her teaching career and is a frequent sounding board and reactor to daily events, and as another teacher described it, "those thoughts and feelings of teaching that must be absorbed." They enjoy creating their home and have spent most of their years together building and reconstructing aspects of the structure. A large fireplace with a shelf of stone "they said couldn't be built" provide heat for the main living area on the second story. Adjoining this large open space is a large area where Kate sews and works with needlepoint. Don's design studio is on the first floor. Several of Don's abstract and realistic landscape paintings, done while he was a college teacher of art, adorn walls throughout their home.

As Kate looks back over her "25-year-long struggle with my husband to understand and be understood," she senses a growing and changing, a differentiating, and a gaining of confidence in her own ideas. Referring to her husband, Kate writes, "I mention my husband a lot--not to quote him as an authority (that happened in the early years when I was less sure of myself). Now I'm likely to differ from Don's ideas rather than agree, but he is still the most intellectually stimulating person I know . . ."

On weekends and vacations Kate enjoys visiting her brother's farm, attending flea markets in search of treasures and bargains, and traveling to visit friends. Favorite pastimes are working crossword puzzles and playing word games, which may in part explain her abundant vocabulary and skillful use of language. She is also an avid reader who enjoys literature and watching specials and drama on public television.

Kate has gained confidence in being a mother, teacher, wife, colleague, and friend over the years. She says that people need time, that being a friend means having the confidence to trust the other person's unique developmental clock, that people accept <u>what</u> they can <u>when</u> they can. She tells of a friend who lost a loved one and of the family's need to press the woman into "grief." Kate recalled facing the tragedy of her own parents' death and the denial and healing that took place within her according to her internal clock.

As she gained confidence in teaching, she began to implement her ideas. She recalls that when she was less experienced it was a job just to keep her head above water. Now she can look ahead and prepare for classes. She focuses a good deal of attention on structuring the classroom environment--something that didn't concern her as a younger teacher. Kate is more philosophical now. She enjoys returning to "theoretical" readings from graduate school and looks forward to discussion of ideas as well as everyday happenings at school. At the end of a challenging or tiring

day Kate relaxes and reflects in a hot bathtub, sometimes with a crossword puzzle. "That's where I get some of my best ideas!"

Professional Life

Kate began her teaching career as a Head Start teacher and soon became a kindergarten teacher at Midland Elementary not far from her home and from where she grew up.

Community, District, and School

Midland is a small, white, rural community which, like surrounding communities, is undergoing a population change. In general, the population is aging, smaller families and couples are moving into the community, and a smaller percentage now have children in school. Many people own or work on farms; many other residents worked in factories in a neighboring town until a few years ago, but the factories have cut back and employ far fewer workers now.

Midland Elementary School is part of a campus plan and stands between the high school and the middle school and behind the administrative offices for teh district. Possibly in part because of the close proximity of the administrative offices to the elementary school (all three schools share the same parking lot), it is not unusual for the superintendent to visit the school. Likewise, the superintendent is quite accessible to Kate and other teachers who find him "very approachable."

Midland Elementary School houses 583 children, just over half the number of students in 1970. Students range from kindergarten age through fifth grade in a U-shaped building built in wings between 1940 and 1966. Of the 33 staff members, 28 are women and five, including the principal, are men.

Although most small, rural school districts like Midland have consolidated with neighboring districts, Midland has remained independent. There has been a tradition of strong support for the schools until recently when, like surrounding districts, levies began to fail. Financial problems necessitated school closing for one month in 1978. Cuts were made and the schools remained open but troubled financial conditions continue to exist. Two years ago Kate and her kindergarten colleague, Carolyn, were asked to study and to visit "all-day, alternate-day" kindergartens and to submit a report to the administration for consideration. Even though the financial picture was gloomy and several otehr districts were saving money with the alternate-day plan, the teachers were asked for their professional perspectives and they were listened to. Midland kindergartens continue as half-day, every-day programs, much to Kate's and Carolyn's satisfaction and credit.

Most of the children ride to school on the bus. Some children live on farms while many others live in nearby trailer parks. Children from the trailer parks are often transient and a cause for concern and difficulty for teachers like Kate who try to provide the child with a stable and secure first year of school. Kate wrote in her diary of more than one child she worked with and secured special services for whose family moved out of the district without notice. "Some of these children face three teachers a year!" Half of the children who attend Midland Elementary are from divorced families. This often presents Kate with challenges related to the child's special emotional needs.

There is no "downtown" in Midland. It is, rather, a state route with a shopping center at one end where another state road crosses overhead and a four-way traffic light at the other end past the school. A grocery store, a drive-in bank, a few stores, and fruit and vegetable stands in the summer mark the "center" of town.

Kate lives about six country miles from Midland Elementary School. "As I drive to school, I wave to kids waiting for the bus all along the way--I know who lives in so many of the houses! With our school a campus plan, I see the kids grow up, come back to help in the office, work in the local stores, etc. The superintendent drops in every once in a while--I know all the board members. (Not to say that we don't have some differences, but we feel comfortable talking face-to-face.) Our lunch bunch often comment that people in our school who have always taught there don't know what it can be like other places--or in other jobs--or they'd keep some pretty petty grips to themselves.

"So right now Midland seems to me to be a good place to teach. I have this imaginary balance scale in my head, and as long as the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in anything I'm doing, I'll stay with it. When the scales tip the other way, it's time to think about alternatives."

Colleagues and Parents

Though Mr. Vasko, Kate's principal over the past several years, calls very few full faculty meetings "because then they aren't meaningless," there are regular Teacher Advisory Council meetings where one grade level teacher from each grade meet to discuss program and curricular concerns. The architecture of the school as well as the time schedule limit with whom and when Kate can converse during school hours. Her classroom is joined to the other kindergarten by a closet which enables the two teachers to pop in and out of each other's classroom during "specials" and other times to show a prized project or to observe various activities. There are also numerous adults in and out of the school and Kate's classroom during the day. Most adult interaction

takes place in brief encounters with "special" teachers (basic movement, special education, and music) and "support" persons (principal, library aide, school psychologist, parent volunteers). Occasionally, Kate spends a half hour or more with one of these people, usually in a casual manner and often beginning with discussion of an individual child and extending to others and to other teaching-related topics. Since the first and second grade classrooms are in another wing of the building, Kate's contact with them is very limited.

Kate feels that as a kindergarten teacher, she is in a unique position. Contact with parents begins the year before the child enters school with "readiness" testing and screening. For most of the children this is their first school experience. It is also the first time many parents gain feedback on their child in relation to others in an "academic" environment. Thus, Kate probably has more contact with parents and explores more of the social, emotional, physical and cognitive aspects of development than teachers at higher grade levels do. The transition from home to school and from single or small group play to organized and structured activity for several or total group participation is a difficult one for many children. Concomitantly, each child is going through many developmental changes during this period of life.

At Midland Elementary there is a very active Preschool Mothers Group who meet several times a year and who provide financial support for the two kindergarten classrooms. Record players and other requested equipment have been purchased through funds donated by the Preschool Mothers. They also volunteer for telephone calling and other tasks related to their children's first schooling experiences.

Communication with parents runs throughout the year in the form of notes Kate sends home describing ongoing activities and occasionally asking for materials. Parent-teacher conferences take place in the fall and spring and are well attended, often including fathers. And, Kate frequently receives notes from home either offering information or conveying satisfaction at their child's attitude toward school or progress made. Although she has frequent communication with some parents, it is often the ones she most wishes to see who do not respond to her frequent requests for discussion.

Inside Kate's Classroom

"I've been told I'm 'business-like' in my classroom, and I think of myself that way. I'm not too free with positive reinforcements, but when I give it, it's genuine, and I think the kids know it. I'll smile and say nice things, but I have a definite aversion to . . . behavior modifiers, much as I've been shown that they work." Kate's

classroom and her teaching are business-like in several ways. She has well thought-out goals in mind for the children and she works hard to organize the curriculum, time and space to promote these goals. They physical arrangement of the classroom, her use of curricular materials, and the temporal arrangement of activities are each carefully planned and integrated and, perhaps, "business-like."

Her high school love of crafts and fashion design, of "putting things together" are evident in her classroom. "I have to acknowledge that my greatest fun is organizing things . . . The ideal job for me would be to put it all together just once . . . I think that's why I love kindergarten. I can keep putting things together in a new year."

Kate's classroom is larger than most and even when all the children (24) are present there is plenty of room to navigate. The classroom is divided into five centers (listening, activity, science, snack, writing) where the children spend at least an hour during their half-day of school each day. The children begin the day in a common area where they share news that is important to them, sing songs, continue themes and language arts activities, and then Kate discusses assignments and possible activities for their selection.

A major part of the curriculum is language arts. In November Kate writes of her plans to help the children learn the alphabet. Each day (running through to May) activities are planned to introduce and reinforce alphabet letters and sounds. Kate lists auditory, visual, motor, tactile and gustatory activities she will use. "Each child has his own spiral notebook. Each week he chooses a word--<u>his own personal word</u>--for the letter we're working on. I print it in the notebook and he illustrates it. By the end of the year, he'll have his own unique alphabet book and hopefully be able to read some words that carry over to other situations." She adds, "I'm excited about the plan. Each year I approach the alphabet a little bit differently to keep me motivated too!"

Kate's love of literature and make-believe find their way into her classroom. "Since we had some extra time this morning, I resurrected Edith, the Lonely Doll, and her bear friends . . . I <u>know</u> that the children know that toys and animals can't really talk, but sometimes I feel a little guilty that I'm so convincing that they can (<u>part of me really does believe</u>)."

<u>Sources of Satisfaction and Joy</u>

To Kate, careful planning and organization are keys to success in teaching. "When I'm doing my best teaching I'm aware of the importance of pacing and timing, but the children and I are one, caught up in discovery together. I

am more of a child; the children are more adult. We have found our shared context. There's an intensity in the air, but it's a happy one. Smiles come easily. I'm often going beyond or outside of my plans--but it's important that the plans were there to spring from. They built the shared context that was so essential to the next, more creative step happening." Conversely, some of Kate's most consistent sources of frustration seem to be beyond her control, circumstances that lie outside of, or even in spite of, her preparation and organization.

An important and frequent source of satisfaction for Kate is communication from others that her efforts and accomplishments are appreciated. A short note of commendation from her principal, notes from parents who are pleased with their child's work or the child's attitude toward school, and a compliment from a colleague or support person, each brings a sense of satisfaction to Kate. These, often casual comments, are evidence to her that her goals are shared and they are plans that work. A recurring note of satisfaction throughout Kate's diary (and shared during observation visits) might be described as the children's growth toward adult standards of interest and behavior. For example, Kate feels satisfaction when the "kids are independent"; when a child or Mr. Vasko comments about their maturity, "Your children seem more like first or second graders. They know what to do and they do it.

When Kate wrote of her "best teaching" above, she was summarizing many of the sources of satisfaction she feels in teaching. The children's smiling, their communicating, their sympathy for each other, their excitement about life and learning, eagerness, curiosity, and spontaneity--all characteristics of children yet characteristics Kate might value for herself. When Kate is "relaxing with the kids," another source of satisfaction she lists, she is able to see, hear, and appreciate these qualities. Key elements, then, appear to be (1) the circumstances and (2) Kate's attitude. Careful planning and organization "frees" her to unselfconsciously blend into the circumstances and to appreciate what is occurring when it occurs. At these times, she allows herself to be caught up in the "spontaneity" she admires in the children. "I guess the best days are when I don't have a complex activity or new special project going so I can just sit back and enjoy the kids and let the day flow." On a "good day" Kate wrote, "I did something today I don't do often enough--just dropped in at centers and had casual conversations with the children about things other than what they were doing at the center."

Most often Kate's "good days" are on Mondays. "I enjoy Mondays with the kids--we don't have any specials; the kids are glad to be back in a routine after the weekend, and the pressures of thinking about next week's plans and materials haven't begun for me yet."

Spontaneous lessons and events, Kate's exploration with the group or an individual child, the unfolding of ideas, the developing and differentiation of topics growing out of discussion, and the "aha!" of an individual child or of Kate and the child are sources of joy for her. One day in November, for example, Kate took the children down to a room where a turkey was living for the week. Her incisive notes convey her delight. "Observing the turkey--true emotional involvement. Intensity of observation. He gobbled when we sang, gobble, gobble, gobble! He gobbled when we said good-bye. No question about any child's being able to draw a turkey! They were all very large--didn't have to be told to fill the page. Lots of conversation at the table. So excited on the way back down the hall! My sharing genuine excitement, joy, and surprise with the children--not manufactured motivation. My learning something new with them. No problem with the children knowing what they wanted to say."

While lessons like this provide much of the impetus to remain in teaching, Kate feels worn down by many sources of frustration.

Sources of Frustration and Dilemmas of Teaching

Just as "good days" seem to carry their own steam, so do "bad days." Once the day begins with frustrations, it is difficult to turn it around. Little things have a way of building up and carrying other events. "An awful day! I tried to do too much. The kids came in high this morning. The gym teacher let them out before I got around the corner to pick them up and they ran down the hall. Marcie and Danny collided and she hit her head on the wall. Had to have ice and I had to call her mother. Big dramatic reaction to that. Then someone wet in the bathroom. Lights out again. The last straw was when two wooden puzzle pieces were broken in a brand new jigsaw puzzle. Another brand new puzzle also has a piece missing. No respect for common materials--even their own. I hate it when I lecture because I know a few kids are so conscientious! I suppose the day started wrong for me when I got a nearby administrator's reply back--'Sandra (seems) to like school.' That didn't seem to outweigh the note from another parent telling me I'm sensitive and perceptive! Now why should I care? Obviously, Mrs. Smith is more perceptive than our local educator!"

This excerpt, taken from Kate's diary of a Tuesday in October, provides examples of four sources of frustration for her: time, routine, children, and communication. Each of these sources is influenced by a combination of the nature of teaching, her building, the classroom and Kate's goals and personal characteristics.

Time. "There's never enough!" Pressures related to

time include "trying to teach too much," and trying to teach within a time schedule which is in part determined by state guidelines, building level curricular and scheduling constraints and Kate's own preferences. Since kindergarten students attend school for only half the day, the time that children spend in "specials" outside the room cuts into an already limited amount of time. There are also unique problems faced by the kindergarten teacher related to helping children to use time as a group. For many children, kindergarten is their first school experience. This puts responsibility on the teacher who must help the child to adjust to structured and group work. In Kate's case, where her classroom is organized into learning centers, this poses the added difficulty of teaching the children to work independently and in small groups. Referring to the stress related to the beginning of the school year, Kate wrote "These last three days have been unbelievably tense--I always forget how the stresses of the first days translate into physical symptoms. I don't feel terribly behind, and I try to take one thing at a time, but the sequential deadlines of the school year have started, not to end till June 10."

The end of the school year brings different time-related pressures. Kate again turns to organizational and planning matters to retain a sense of stability. "The spring pressure is on--I felt as if I would self-destruct this morning! I was thinking of so many things that had to be attended to today in some way--just to keep one step ahead of the avalanche. Under the title 'craziness,' I listed some of the big concerns--1. preschool registration . . . I end up being the unofficial coordinator. The newspapers have to be notified, signs made, stations set up, etc., etc. . . 2. the animal alphabet . . . book has to be organized . . . and assembled. 3. The children need to complete their word cards . . . 4. post-testing and recording . . . 10-12 skill areas to check. 5. readiness testing . . . 6. contacting mothers to go along on our walking field trip to the greenhouse and to help plant the next day . . . 7. conference with superintendent . . . 9. I'm thinking more and more about <u>next</u> year--materials, grouping, parent helpers, etc. I'm in two time zones! 10. The kids are full of spring and ready to be out of school. Thinking about <u>next</u> year is the only thing that helps me to keep my perspective about <u>this</u> year. It's almost an escape from the immediate pressures. I jot them down and put them in my fall '81 file . . . I try to keep two weeks to a month ahead all year long. But in the spring, everything seems to come to a grand conclusion at once, and there's no way to avoid the overload."

<u>Routine</u>. Establishing a routine is a high priority to Kate so it comes as no surprise that factors that disrupt routine are a source of frustration to her. She finds it difficult to plan and to set priorities when the children and the circumstances are always shifting and changing. Children who are entered into her classroom at different points

throughout the year are a source of disruption to the routine. Although Kate finds this a source of frustration, she also takes consolation in "how far the rest of us have come!," something she might not otherwise recognize. In addition to children joining the classroom after the group has been formed, Kate also finds children who leave school during the year to be disruptive and disappointing. "The week started off with a shock--Karen, the kindergarten child with the most problems this year, was withdrawn . . . the classroom is quieter--Karen was quite disruptive--but I feel a sense of unfinished business." Referring to another child, Kate wrote, ". . . This happens so often--the very children that require the most time and efforts in referrals are the transient ones . . . it's not a reason to stop referring. Just discouraging."

The constant interruptions in routine caused by "specials," the telephone, children entering and leaving the classroom, and notes brought in are a continuing nuisance to Kate although she seldom looks irritated. Similarly, children who are active and/or loud and nonconforming to group and center activities are a recurring source of frustration. These are most frequently boys and often "bright and creative" children, but "loud." Kate has ambivalent feelings about noisy and physical activity. She writes about "things I see that I <u>don't</u> like in my room": ". . . <u>Loud</u> voices. Activities that are designed for minimal disruption, but that may not be physical enough. (I do not handle noise well.)" A related concern of Kate's was a recurring them in her writing--"I would still like to find ways to allow more individual needs to be met . . ."

A final source of frustration related to breaking routine is when Kate is absent and has a substitute teacher. This poses at least two problems. First, she thinks about school while she is out and is concerned with how "things are going." Second, work from the day doesn't disappear. "It's overwhelming to arrive back at school after being out a day and see the details that have piled up on your desk. I must manage to keep my desk pretty clear during the day (I just realized that)."

<u>Children</u>. Spending 180 days a year with the responsibility of providing educational experiences for 48 young children is a tall order. Working in groups with other children and in an "academic" environment take time to learn. Kate's years of experience in introducing young children to these experiences lead her to carefully help the children to explore important aspects of the school from the child's point of view beginning with their initial visit to school in groups of six with their mothers. "How will I know (in this big hallway) which room is mine?" "What if I get lost?" "What does my room look like with the door closed?" And inside the room, "What do I do when I have to go to the bathrroom?" Kate gently parades the children into the small

bathroom, flushes the toilet so that they can hear what it sounds like in the safety of friendly faces, and then closes the door. The half-day ends at the snack table and the unobtrusive slipping away of Kate to the parents' table to discuss and answer questions of "kindergarten." This is an important and symbolic turning point for the children, their mothers and for Kate. Slowly, by ones and twos, the children drift back to their mothers, "Gee, Mom, I think I'm gonna like school," and "Can I come back tomorrow?"

As tomorrows unfold and the number of children and the complexity of classroom life unfolds, problems and frustrations related to the responsibilities for eduation and social development of young children become apparent. Growing, exploring, and less-than-stable friendships, experimentation and play with language are the sources of delight for the teacher during relaxed moments and the source of frustration when objectives must be met or when the noise and movement exceed Kate's sense of balance. Quiet, neatness, responsibility for one's body and behavior, independence, social regard, careful use of materials and determination often run counter to the six-year-old's burgeoning sense of autonomy, initiative, and industry (Erikson, 1958), all so carefully fostered in the climate of trust that Kate works so hart to establish. Kate struggles with noise and physical activities which push her levels of tolerance to the maximum and her desire for the children to engage in these kinds of activities.

<u>communication</u>. Kate finds herself interacting with people who come from different perspectives but who hold the common interest of the children's schooling. These include parents, her principal and other administrators, and her colleagues who teach at higher grade levels; each role promotes a different point of view. Kate derives satisfaction from her contact with each of these people, but trying to communicate from her perspective also poses problems and is frequently a source of frustration. Problems related to parents often include evaluation of the children and responding to questions such as "Why isn't my child reading? Kate feels helpless when she tries to communicate her professional advice to parents who reject it. "Mr. Vasko brought a Mrs. Beckly and her four-year-old daughter in who had been tested for early entrance. The psychologist didn't advise it, but the mother is pushing. I told her my feelings about maturity levels and how a child can be barely keeping up with the class, or a confident, productive member, by virtue of a year's growth. I hear so many specious arguments from these mothers . . . Each parent thinks because their second child is more advanced than their first . . . they they're some sort of wunderkind. Teaching school after 15 years is perpetual deja-vu, with a <u>few</u> surprises thrwon in!"

Communication problems with her colleagues are often related to telling only part of the story in the limited

exchanges they have in the hallways, and in the following example, with what Kate feels is insensitivity and ignorance in her colleague's words, "I'm trying to put out of my mind that awful exchange with Marilyn M.":

M: "Who's that boy in the blue plaid shirt?"

Me: "Jacob Johns."

M: "Is he alright? He looks retarded!"

Me: "He's one of the brightest boys in my class."

M: "Boy, can you get fooled!"

When Kate is put in the position of defending her children to what she perceives as negative questions or comments, further communication is made more difficult.

Kate sometimes feels discouraged when she is forced to argue in support of kindergarten program elements again each year. Protecting a few conference days for meeting with parents is one example. Another is the marshaling of evidence in support of continuation of the half-day kindergarten against the trend toward what she considers to be the cost-cutting practice of an all-day, alternate-day kindergarten schedule.

Opportunities for Professional Development

Kate meets with colleagues during grade level meetings and on special interest committees such as one on "gifted children," but time, space, and interest limit deep collegial relatinships. She spends most of her available free school time with her two close friends and colleagues, Carolyn and Kent. When one of them has a problem, three heads and hearts contemplate it. It might be an ill relative, preparing for an unexpected houseful, or a child who is undergoing personal or learning difficulties. The three teachers eat lunch each day in Kate's room at an "adult-size" table she acquired two years ago. "That lunchtime break is really important to us. Deciding to bring up that adult-sized table was one of the best things I've done for my well-being during the day. I used to have backaches all the time!" The teachers commiserate with each other, lend support, and offer suggestions and criticisms freely. Often one teacher will relay a classroom experience and ask, "What could I do differently? Why didn't it work?" or repeat a success, "I couldn't believe how this just spontaneously evolved!"

Kate highly values her close collegial relationships and appreciates how difficult but important it is to convey to others, and concomitantly herself, her thoughts and feelings as a teacher. "It's a difficult to relate all the feelings, intentions one has--only one's words are heard.

For example, I said to Mary Lou that 'Karen may just not have it,' or words to that effect. What I didn't convey is all the feelings I have about Karen--that I don't dislike her; that I haven't 'written her off' though I may have sounded as if I had; that I often overstate kids' foibles just to let off pressure, that I really want every child to flower. But I didn't say all that. As teachers, we have to guard against being flip around parents, other teachers, anyone who doesn't really know our true motivations. I suppose that in our school, only Ken and Carolyn could really interpret statements I'd make about kids."

Kate's ineraction with the principal, parents, support persons, especially her colleagues, Carolyn and Ken, and discussion with her husband provide her with several sources for her own professional growth. In her first years of teaching her own children were very helpful toward understanding young children.

Kate seizes many informal opportunities to discuss the shcool, chidlren, and teaching with the other adults who frequent her wing of the building. She also makes use of the more formal avenues for professional development offered by the system and available in the area. She takes advantage, for example, of the county office reading consultant. On occasion, the consultant stops in, observes, and talks professionally with Kate who welcomes ideas, comments, and suggestions and mentions that it is at times a booster for self esteem.

She frequently discusses teaching and curriculum with colleagues outside her school through university and county courses and workshops and through the Tabatha Scholar Lectures sponsored by the Tabatha Foundation and Gamma Delta Kappa, an honorary association to which she belongs. Although Kate completed a Master's degree in 1978, she frequently attends university courses or workshops that interest her. Last summer she took a workshop on computers. The influence of coursework (especially in "learning theories") can be seen in Kate's teaching and classroom organization. As she looked back at how her teaching was changed over the years, she wrote the following. "I do more papers than I ever thought I would. (My kindergarten was more social-play oriented.) I don't encourage block play, noisy activities (I used to have a higher noise tolerance). I understand my principal better after having gone back to school--particularly through supervision courses. I have a far better understanding of the learning process after having taken the foundation courses. I'm better able to diagnose learning problems."

Some of the changes Kate writes of are attitudinal; some are difficult to see; and some came about as a result of self scrutiny. ". . . perhaps this 'looking at myself' is not novel to me, because every time I've taken a graduate

course at the university, I've undergone that process. The classes had not just a surface effect--I inevitably internalized the material, questioned how it affected me, interpreted the findings, and integrated them into my teaching. I often found those courses a painful experience. I've also been told I take things too seriously."

The Tabatha Foundation enables one teacher from a school to attend a lecture by a known educational scholar once a month for a school year. Kate was selected for participation by her principal and feels that she gained substantially through her attendance. She felt that the program might be improved if smaller seminar groups were formed to discuss topics presented. Dinners were sometimes included in sessions and Kate felt that it would have been beneficial if smaller groups (rather than one group of 45) had the opportunity to talk with the speaker. In addition to meeting teachers from neighboring districts, meeting prominent educators and gaining information from the content of the lectures, two other benefits seem particularly important. One is the image of professionalism of participating teachers; the other is the process of personal reflection and self dialogue that take place as a result of this professional attitude and the timeliness of the topic.

Gamma Delta Kappa meets once a month too. Kate became a member last year and she feels it was just the time to join. Several years ago, when she had more family responsibilities she turned down an invitation to join. "I'm enjoying Gamma Delta Kappa more each time I go--some of those little old grey-haired retirees really have it together--they've seen it all! Had two interesting views of the Sandbury (teacher's) strike from two totally different types of teachers--one who spent all her years in the classroom (political science and history) and one who was a supervisor and principal. It's too bad these people aren't on school advisory boards as an adjunct to the school board . . . I feel so humble when I talk with teachers who've been in the field for so long--like I'm reinventing the wheel!"

Once or twice a year, Kate attends a school- or county-sponsored "inservice day." These, she feels, are useful to varying degrees. One session that took place during the latter part of the project, for example, was sponsored by the County Office and included a slide presentation and discussion period on "assertive discipline," a program sweeping through many districts in the region. Kate attended but was skeptical about the use of a packaged discipline plan for her kindergarten children since her rarely used "quiet chair" seemed to work just fine. On another occasion, Kate's principal provided the teachers with one-half day of "inservice" for which they were able to work in our rooms. Unheard of? Mr. Vasko insisted on it for us. He <u>understands</u> . . . this half-day has allowed me to do framework planning through Christmas and to prepare many materials."

Kate's opportunities for professional development are several. She takes advantage of those encouraged by the administration (at least one inservice day each year), both district and county, and she creates and makes use of other opportunities, formal such as university courses and workshops, and informal such as conversation with parents, especially her two colleagues, Carolyn and Ken, the principal with whom she shares academic and literary intearests, and importantly, her husband. She has support to look at what she does, and, she takes advantage of multiple perspectives inside and outside the school offered by a variety of experiences such as the Tabatha Lectures and Gamma Delta Kappa. When asked how she gains ideas and insights into her work, Kate responded this way--". . . Oh, the Tabatha Lectures are a favorite. Talking with friends around the lunch table. Our seminars this year. Just reading the newspaper. A lot falls out from these things and sparks ideas. Rumination, lying in bed at night and letting the day's events go by. Little notes about the day made in the bedroom. Writing and talking about the day. Saying it out loud and putting it down. When you hear yourself say it or see yourself write it, it's a reality that's in a different form than the one that's in your head. When I talk to my husband, by hearing myself say something, I get a different view... (Gamma Delta Kappa) I enjoy it because of the levels--retired to new, administrators and teachers, and university people. It's interesting how you begin a network--you know people through different means . .. My old principal is in Gamma Delta Kappa too. Also, one of my old high school teachers and a university professor. It's nice. In a way I'm from age 15 to the present because I've known these people all along the way."

Project

Kate often reflected upon seminar sessions and wrote of her thoughts related to disscussion. Near the end of the project she looked back through her diary and wrote the following. "As I look through my diary I sense a myriad of moods, changing as I turn the pages. There are periods of calm and reflection, times of frantic activity, dissatisfaction and questioning. My handwriting offers an interesting clue--I wrote about most of the classroom happenings from notes I took during the day, and this writing is smooth and even. I thought things out in a relaxed manner in the evening before I wrote.

"On the other hand, comments I've made about the group are often hastily written, with errors and words crossed out. The tension and discomfort caused by the ideas being expressed shows up! At first glance, I'd interpret this in this way: Teaching is my job. I've been at it for 15 years, and though I <u>often</u> question what I'm doing and why, I feel fairly comfortable in that role. Relating to my peers (not

just peers, outstnading teachers) and revealing myself to people whose opinions I respect, people who are capable of seeing through my rationalizations--this is operating at another level of self-awareness.

"At my school I seldom feel that need to guard against defensiveness--my role is established there and is generally compartmentalized. Our group opens up whole new relationships--new possibilities for interaction, questioning, and personal growth.

"I chide myself sometimes for wanting others to at least understand, if not agree with me. I'm annoyed when I long for positive feedback (that's something we do very little of in this group--directed to a particular person. Are we trying to be sophisticated? Beyond the need for it? So used to getting it that we don't give it?) We act so grown up. Maybe trying to live up to our new image. There's a self-consciousness that I'm aware of--a reluctance to discuss things that might be too mundane.

"This last paragraph, I realize, is totally my interpretation, and probably reflects my inner feelings rather than those of the group at large. And, as Tom said, 'It's not as important what others think about you, as what you think about your own thinking.'

"As I review the events recorded in my diary, things that didn't seem so important a few days after I wrote them seem important again. I'm seeing them fit into the scheme of things. Yet I can be more detached about the problem situations I described--those are gone--to be replaced by new ones. Now that the school year is over, I feel a distance between myself and those events--like I'm reading about somebody else. Perhaps that distance will allow more objectivity.

"But I also feel a little sadness--and restlessness--when I read the diary. I want to move on--I don't want to intensely relive the problems and I want to apply what positive things I've learned to the coming year. I've learned a lot in the reading--how feelings about people can change, how hurt can fade away, that if you establish some basic goals and beliefs, those threads are woven through the fabric of your daily actions. (For example, my basic tenet of shared experience--shared context being essential in the classroom surfaces on page after page.)

"Leafing through the diary points up how much negative situations get a response--children who do what they should be doing don't get the time or recognition of the teacher that the trouble-makers do. I need to make sure that I am reinforcing the positive kids. I've seen Mr. Vasko's attitude toward and understanding of the kindergarten program change dramatically this year, and I feel that this group has

been the catalyst. I've shared ideas and feelings with him; Mary Lou has been an outer endorsement; he's been physically present in the classroom; he's been positively reinforced and in return is reinforcing me. It's been an opening up that this group has generated--a good feeling that gets extended beyond oneself."

Carole, Kate, and Support for Professional Development

The two women described in this paper have a lot in common. They are both experienced early childhood teachers who are deeply committed to helping children grow and learn. They are both black teachers in "white" schools. They are both growing and learning in professionally significant ways; Carole through her professional association activities and Kate through her work with program development for kindergarten children and parental involvement. Though there are many ways in which they are alike, there are numerous ways in which they are different.

Carole was a middle child born in the inner-city into poverty and a large family supported by her mother; Kate was the eldest child in a family of four who lived comfortably in a small town. School was difficult for Carole whose home and school life were intertwined in poverty. Kate worked hard in school but found it easy to excel. For her, school life was actively encouraged and supported by a comfortable family life. Carole is strongly motivated in her teaching to promote understanding and social justice; to help her children to feel competent, confident and to have pride in themselves. Kate works very hard to help her children to develop responsibility and self-discipline and to acquire reading skills and attitudes that will give them the greatest chance for success in the more academically oriented first grade. Carole was strongly influenced by her mother to become a teacher; she remembers always wanting to be one. Kate loved school but did not seriously entertain the idea of becoming a teacher, least of all a teacher of young children, until she had agreed to major in education at college. College for Carole was very difficult, while for Kate, it was a chance to further excel. Carole has taken an occasional workshop at a university since she began teaching; Kate has many hours of coursework in addition to a Master's degree. Carole is heavily involved in the professional teaching organization while Kate is not a member.

Family life for the two teachers is very different. While Kate brings her excitement and frustrations home to discuss with her husband who helps her reflect and "absorb" daily events, Carole keeps school at school because her husband does not understand, nor wish to, her life at school.

Both teachers actively support their development in teaching in very different ways. They both seize opportunities and they create them. While Kate's principal

actively supports her development through conversation, visitations, giving her special opportunities for growth (Tabatha Lectures); Carole's principal is supportive in a more distant way through casual conversation or providing materials she requests.

Both teachers have colleagues with whom they discuss school matters. In both cases, colleagues who are closest geographically in the school are those who are teaching "friends." In Kate's case, her friends are also close friends outside of school; for Carole they are not.

Both Kate and Carole had little communication with other teachers (other than the small group of close colleagues) in their buildings. During the time of the project, there occurred several instances of both teachers initiating involvement with other colleagues, incuding their principals. Kate's principal dropped into her classroom to "check on events" during my first visit to her classroom. He found the time he spent visiting with the children enjoyable and Kate commented favorably on his presence. He began stopping in more frequently, and, even substitute taught for Kate one time. Their relationship, already a good one, has improved and he now understands better what Kate does and feels comfortable with young children. Carole invited her principal in to assist the chidlren in a lesson that she asked me to teach. It was the first time he had been in her room for "academic" reasons since evaluating her teaching once during her initial year in the school. She now feels more confident in asking for assistance.

Kate initiated a teacher exchange with the first grade teachers in her building which turned out to be an eye-opening event which led to further communication and program development. Carole initiated a slide presentation to parents and children on an annual parent-teacher night. Slides were taken of the children in three classrooms throughout the day's activities. They combined their parents and presented "Your Child's Day at School."

Concluding Comments and Questions

When looking at how teachers support their own professional development, it becomes apparent that each teacher does so in a unique way that reflects their background, experience, the school setting, their children and their personal goals for the children they teach as well as themselves. Several common elements did emerge from the project, however. For each teacher, the following were consequences of their experience in the year of study.

Removal of Isolation--Kate, Carole and the five other teachers were pleasantly surprised to find that "I'm not alone!" in many of their problems, thoughts, and feelings related to teaching. "Just finding out how someone else's

day goes" was illuminating and dispelled many myths and fears that "it's probably only me, but..."

Promotion of Professionalism--Teachers gained an image of themselves as professionals, an attitude that helped them to develop trust in themselves and in each other and further, their colleagues at school.

Complexity of Teaching--Closely related to the two topics above, the teachers gained a greater understanding on the complexity of teaching, of what they do, and of the context in which they teach.

Listening--Most of the teachers developed the ability to listen with a quiet heart. They emphasize the importance of understanding other perspectives--a problem one can only overcome through listening openly.

The ways in which these things and others came about is difficult to sort out. The three vehicles (which are inextricably related) provide major elements which probably helped them to come about.

Writing--The diaries provided a tool to examine what the teachers did and why. They were able to capture the days' events and their thoughts and feelings in such a way that they could come back and examine them later. They often found the "emotions" at the moment colored their actions. Later, from a different perspective and in a calmer moment, they came to better understand themselves.

Observation--Being observed allowed several things to happen. The teachers found themselves looking at what they said and did from a diffearent perspective--their own. They found "just having another adult in the room" was reassuring, if even only to listen or share experiences as they happened.

Discussion--Discussion with teachers whom they viewed as "professionals" seemed to open up new avenues of thought about teaching. In an accepting environment they began to share ideas and feelings only vaguely thought about before. They found themselves intellectually challenged.

Two major themes emerged from the data and appear to be significant concerns if we are to think about support for teacher professional development.

1. How can we help to enable teachaers to look more deeply and more thoroughly at their own behavior and why they do what they do? to make teaching more thoughtful behavior? As one project teacher said, "How can I write about teaching? I've never thought about it before. It's like breathing. You just do it." For Carole (as well as the otehrs) this was disturbing but it also promoted a sense of

professional worth. "I appreciate Me."

and

2. How do we help to provide the context in which teachers can look at concerns outside their classrooms? to the profession and to the world at large? to the social, political, and economic contexts within which they teach? to gain perspectives that permit them to see their teaching within a broader context? or as Kate put it, "extends beyond one's self"?

Jerry

Jerry was in his fifth and sixth years of teaching in a K-2 school in an affluent suburban community during the project. Each day he commutes from the rural home 30 miles away which he and his wife built during his first year of teaching. His wife, Sue, is a school psychologist in another school system. They have two children, ages 6 and 15.

Family, Education, Background

In 1951 when Jerry was three years old his family moved from rural north central Tennessee to a farming area in northeastern Ohio. He was the fourth child in a family of seven. As a young boy, he remembers a carefree existence and has especially fond memories of music, "Music has always been a part of my life. I enjoyed music as a child--my father and uncle played guitars and sang up a storm--also it was my favorite part of church. I began learning the guitar when I was 12 or 13 . . . I quit the first time because it was a lot like work--but I regained my interest and still play a lot." Jerry recalls of his childhood, "When I was a child time had little meaning. It meant seasons. Winter, spring, summer, fall. Sled riding and Mom's snow cream. Counting the days until the buds came out and we planned our garden out, planted and watched it grow. Then school is out, we play outside from daylight til dark, we work in the garden and have fun. Harvest begins, school begins and the time is just days between holidays and winter comes ag . . . High school was one big social event. I was an average student gradewise. The main goal of high school was to graduate! I had worked full time since my sophomore year as a service station attendant and was satisfied with myself, my lot in life. I wasn't expected to do anything differently except perhaps to finally get a good job in a union shop. I worked for one year after graduation and was drafted. As an alternative to the Army, I joined the Air Force (one brother was an ex-Marine, and another was in the Army in Viet Nam at that time).

"I was stationed in New Mexico for about 2 1/2 years after my initial training as an Air Craft Maintenance Specialist . . . I traveled a lot, over the states and Canada a few times. I met a lot of interesting people and learned a lot about myself.

"One particular person I met was a young lady who taught second grade. She saw more in me than anyone ever had. She eventually obtained a promise from me to begin college after I left the Air Force.

"I spent my last year of Air Force service in Thailand. I had not traveled to any extent in my first 19 years of life. Those four years in the Air Force were a very rewarding and enriching experience (after the initial shock and mostly in retrospect).

"I returned home a changed person and I didn't really fit in. I had a tough transition from military to civilian life. I returned in August 1970 and I was headed for Houston in December 1970 carrying all I owned in my Chevelle. I lived with my brother (married, two kids)--though they were gone most of the time I was there (from April on).

"I took a job as a construction plumber, a night cashier at a Stop-N-Go and worked part time in a butcher shop. In June of 1971 I began a summer semester at Sam Houston State University. It was almost a disaster. How ill prepared for university life could one person be? Plenty! . . . However, I was determined as was my English professor so I managed. I could not, however, manage out-of-state tuition fees, so by August 1971 I was back in Seville [hometown] and in September 1971 a full time student at M.S.U., Fulton branch. Time and time again I would sign up for a course, drop the course, take a remedial in the same subject and enroll the next quarter in that course and see how I could manage. I managed. I took an interest in sociology and psychology and took quite a few courses in those areas. I spent five years in undergraduate school, accumulating about 230 or so quarter hours. I chose a major after three years and graduated after winter quarter, 1976, in Childhood Education.

"Sue and I were married in August 1973, both in undergraduate school and Susie with a six-year-old daughter from a previous marriage. We lived on the G.I. bill and what money I could make working at various jobs. Sue's folks gave us meat when Sue's dad would accept payment from farmers for whom he had repaired some equipment. They were good years. Jonathan was born in October of 1975 and after I got a job in school year 1976-77 Sue went back to school and got a master's in education and an Ed.S. in School Psychology. It's great to have a spouse in a related field. She understands my job and I hers. It's helpful when you've had those days which make you wish you were a sales clerk at May Company."

At the beginning of the project Jerry was attending classes at M.S.U. as an undeclared major but "leaning toward counseling." He has since completed a master's degree in Counseling. As he indicated, college was not easy and since his marriage and the birth of Jonathan, Jerry has had difficulty balancing his family life, work at school, construction on weekends and vacation periods, and his own further education. One evening in April Jerry wrote in his diary of "Time," of feeling the weight of an imbalance of

responsibility which he viewed in sharp contrast to when he was a child and "time had little meaning." "Now, I am consumed. My teacher day begins at 6:00 when I get up. I drive to work at 7:30, the kids come at nine. They leave at 3:30, I leave at 4:00. I have class at 6:20 on Monday evenings and on Thursday evenings. I am the vice president of our teacher association and am involved in other work-related activities. I have a wife and two children who deserve some of my time which I give gladly, yet often not enough, I feel.

"A new house which we built as partners and which we care for as partners. A construction business on the side which takes many Saturdays and Sundays and all summer. Then, there is time I need for me. Where does it go?"

Jerry spends some of his discretionary time out of doors, planting trees, tending to work at home and attending flea markets looking for antiques. Their home is near where he grew up and where his mother still lives. It is also near Sue's parents. He takes pride in construction and building items for their home. He once wrote in his diary of a delightful experience with his children of putting together an old bed and noted with pleasure that his mood carried over to school the next day, "I can't separate my home life from my school life." Jerry and Sue socialize with three of Jerry's colleagues and their husbands which tends to further blur the distinction of home and school for him.

Jerry enjoys camping with his family and plans well in advance for trips. This year Jerry bought a large and well appointed van which the family plans to use next summer for a trip to the East and the following summer for a trip to the West.

Birthdays are a cause for special celebration and Jerry looks forward to August when he and his daughter combine their birthday in celebration.

Jerry enjoys writing poems and songs under the name 'Jeremiah Bradley.' He writes for himself and usually doesn't share his work with others. His poems "just happen" and often have a 'first run' feel to them. One day in March he gave me a poem with the message "I thought I'd share a bit of my alter ego with you. If it doesn't make sense to you--that's ok--I suppose it doesn't have to make sense or have merit; it was just there."

Thought
Given freedom
pursues an endless journey
upon a timeless sea
It slips into quiet coves
to assimilate discoveries

as well as none at all
sometimes, in thoughts most awesome gail,
It lumbers to a Stall
But the winds of time
Casts it off again
Another world to see
And thus we learn
each wave and crest
from sea to shining sea

Thought
without freedom
sinks.

Jeremiah Bradley
March 22, 1981

Professional Life

Community, District, and School

Summerville, the community where Jerry teaches, is an upper, middle-class bedroom community bordering a middle-sized midwest industrial city. Its population including the township and village is approximately 14,000. The school system enjoys a good reputation, and in fact, many families move to Summerville in large part because of the schools. Until the last few years the population was growing with few people moving out. More recently, many families move in and out at two-and three-year intervals. Now 1/4 of the households have lived in the area for two years or less while 1/2 have lived in the area for five years or less. For every 16 people who move into the community 13 move out. Most heads of households are sales people, professionals, or executives in large corporations located in one of two nearby cities.

The school district carefully selects its teachers. Many are from Summerville but an increasing number, like Jerry, live outside the district. Salaries and working conditions are reflective of a large tax base (from both high property taxes and a major corporation within the district) and education as a high priority. There is, for example, a "gifted" program for fourth through sixth grades with a full-time teacher. Staff turnover is very low.

Jennings, where Jerry teaches, is a K-2 building located within a spatious campus along with a third grade building, a fourth and fifth grade building, and junior and senior high school buildings. It is comprised of four wings and a cottage surrounded on one side by an attractive neighborhood of upper, middle-class homes. The school is landscaped with flowering trees and sculptured bushes. Many classrooms, including Jerry's boarder a landscaped courtyard.

In addition to 600 children, the building houses 22 classroom teachers, a learning disabilities teacher and tutor, and art, music, gym and speech teachers. The art and speech teachers divide their time between Jennings and another building. There is a reading consultant and a half-time school psychologist at Jennings and another psychologist from the county who also works in a second school.

Jerry describes the school and teacher responsibilities in this way. "Jennings is a friendly building with good morale at this time. The school day is from 8:45 to 3:45 . . . We have Art (45 min.) and Library (35 min.) once a week. Music (25 min.) and gym (30 min.) twice a week. A 40-minute lunch break on a good day. The kids eat in their room with a lunch mother volunteer . . . I have two junior high helpers in my room for one period a day, four days a week. They are in a program called S.H.O.P., Students Helping Other People. They are a delight. We have a wonderful parent support system. They are involved and interested at this age (children) and are very helpful.

"We have eight or nine teachers between the ages of 25 and 35. Both men are in this category. We have 10 or so between 40 and 55. Then, there are four or five who seem to have come over on the Mayflower. I get along with almost all of the teachers professionally and four or five personally. Our principal is a woman--middle-aged with a heck of a job to do. She gets a little uptight easily, but doesn't seem to hold a grudge or drag it out. I haven't had an unpleasant experience with her in the five years I've been at Jennings. Generally speaking, she backs teachers in their endeavors. She plays it strictly by the book though. Each teacher serves on one or two little committees. This year, I'm second grade chairman and something else. Each teacher also has a rotating morning hall duty, noon duty to gather the children from outside and bus duty in the afternoon. I am serving as our Association Vice President and have been Building Representative two different times.

"Our staff gets along fairly well at all our social functions. There are some, a precious few, who do not attend these functions for some reason or another. They are not missed (or so it seems)."

Parents

Extensive parent involvement in school is viewed as an asset but with attendent problems. According to Karen, a close colleague and friend of Jerry, parents "do a lot of volunteer work. They have more of a say in education, so there are many non-educators making educational decisions. A lot of them are non-working parents and they need something to do and they want to be in school. The parents really care and will take time to work with the school." Teachers like Karen and Jerry were ebullient [illegible]

the lunch period but are pleased and encouraged by its success.

In addition to a larger-than-average number of mothers who work as volunteers, all parents are invited to school at least three times a year to visit. Two meetings are scheduled in the evening, one in the fall and another in the spring when the children are also invited. In between these times, parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom on a specified day. Activities in the classroom proceed as usual with the exception of a row of chairs for the parents. Jerry feels that most of the children really enjoy having the parents around, "even the ones whose parents can't come enjoy the other parents being there. It's a yearly affair that gives the parents a chance to see what their child does for 6 1/2 hours a day . . . The children are always excited . . . They are usually well behaved and enjoy the change of pace. I don't get too excited when I have company in my room. I try to have a very open attitude toward visitors of any kind. It sets a good tone for the kids. I don't do anything special or out of the ordinary. When we keep a regular schedule and pace everything goes smoothly. I enjoy the excitement."

Principal, Staff Development and Colleagues

Mrs. Wilma Jackly, the principal, does what she can to promote professional and staff development. She plans once-a-month staff meetings which often include inservice segments during which guest speakers report briefly on current topics Jerry usually feels that only a small portion of the 45-60 minutes is worthwhile. He feels that "the few minutes spent conveying pertinent and important information and disseminating ideas" is time well spent. "Twenty minutes on why the noon aides didn't take the kids out" isn't. He laments that five minutes allocated for open forum isn't enough. Recalling recent meaningful segments of the staff meetings, Jerry says, "The superintendent talked for 10-15 minutes on finance. He took the initiative to come out. It was very worthwhile. Another time teachers talked about workshops they had attended. That was worthwhile." Jerry says that the faculty meetings are being turned into "mini-inservices." A colleague, he says, is upset at the time being used in this way and Jerry agrees, "I see it as a time for Willy [the principal] to share with us what she can't on paper--things that we can react to. A lot of times I think she could handle it better." Jerry adds that as grade level chairperson, he puts out memos in lieu of most meetings. "As a general statement, I've rarely attended an organized meeting that was time efficient or that warranted my presence for the duration."

For years when money was available for professional development Mrs. Jackly sponsored teachers who attended conferences and workshops outside the district. Now she is

able only to provide substitute teachers. She recalls years not long ago when she drove to a day-long conference with several teachers, enjoyed lunch and had productive discussion throughout the day.

In addition to monthly morning staff meetings, Wilma meets monthly with grade level chairpersons. During the time between, the chairpersons meet formally and/or informally (depending upon their preference) with teachers at their grade level to work on curricular, instructional and other personal, professional concerns that arise. Mrs. Jackly thinks that this arrangement works well, "They meet, and share and resolve problems without me. It opens up communication. They can be open and deal frankly with issues. They can lay it out. I think it is good for the chairperson. He learns to listen, to open up a bit, to become open to ideas." On occasions when minor problems arise, Mrs. Jackly tells the teacher to "go to him [the teacher in question] Don't put me in the middle"; and "I think it's helped . . ."

Two formal days are set aside each year for inservice education activity for the district, one just before school begins and one in January. Teachers have their choice as to which of the two days they will spend at the formal district session and which they will spend in their room in organization and preparation for teaching. Usually an outside specialist makes a presentation on a topic of interest (teachers are often poled for their suggestions) to the total group in the morning; then, after lunch small groups (most often divided by grade level), meet to discuss the topic and implications for teaching. Jerry feels that "Some [sessions] are more meaningful and productive than others, but that is a reflection of every day living, isn't it?"

Staff meetings, social events (Christmas party), and inservice education sessions are the only times that the entire staff meets as a group. Because the school is divided spatially into wings, teachers only see some of their colleagues when they pass in the hallway on their way to art, gym, music or the library. During a staggered lunchtime, teachers have a chance to converse with those teachers who have the same lunch shift including ("special" teachers, parent volunteers and on occasion student teachers). Because the staff is comprised of both smokers and nonsmokers, every other day is designated a nonsmoking day in the lounge. Since Jerry and his closest colleagues are nonsmokers, they eat as a small group in an empty classroom next to the lounge every other day.

Jerry enjoys a close relationship with four teachers at Jennings. "When a part of the professionals are also friends it makes my job even more pleasant. We help one another professionally by sharing ideas and concepts. Through

discussion and application we find many new avenues that lead to our common end. Since we are friends, we also provide the emotional support and understanding that each of us needs. Down days seem worthless--but with understanding and empathy--they can be altered to be functional, worthwhile days. I cherish my friendships. "Two teachers, Karen and Loretta, both second grade teachers, have classrooms near Jerry's. Diane works in the library and often shares a ride to and from school with Jerry. Connie is an energetic first year, first grade teacher whose classroom faces Jerry's from across the courtyard. Karen, Loretta and Jerry frequently converse before, after and during school. They share special events (movies, guitar sessions) and often pop in to each other's classroom to tell of a circumstance that "won't keep," to inquire about a problem for which they would like immediate advice, or to drop off a "misbehaving" child for a "time out" in the other's room.

The first year of teaching for Jerry was a difficult one. "My first year in teaching, I almost left that school. Socially I didn't fit." When asked why he felt this way, what evidence he had that he "didn't fit," Jerry looked off into space in front of him and after a moment said, "Material things mean a log [at Jennings]--cars, clothes, vacations . . . I drove an old Rambler; my clothes were threadbare; I was just out of school; Sue had just had Jonathan; and I hadn't had a vaction for three years! And, I was a young man. Most of them were older women and they didn't know how to relate to me." He found himself teaching in a community where even had he wanted to, he could not afford to live. Being new, Jerry had to learn about many things: staff members, children; do's and don'ts, conventions, expectations, roles and responsibilities. He had to learn many things himself and he sometimes didn't know which questions to ask. One incidence stands out and seems to continue to color his feelings about "Halloween" and further, his teaching at Jennings. "At Halloween when the children dress up, so do the teachers, but no one told me that, so there I was, the only teacher in the building [without a costume on]. A few teachers even had the nerve to say, 'Oh, didn't you know?' The next year I didn't dress. I wouldn't no matter what!" Two examples several years later serve to illustrate the impact and influence that his first year and the Halloween incident have had on Jerry's moods and concomitantly on his teaching. Jerry talks about junior high school administrator whom he mistrusts, "He uses people. Oh, he's amiable and nice and all, but I don't like him. At Halloween he was trying to embarrass me in front of all the children. He said, 'Oh, that's a nice costume, Mr. Brownlee, who are you?' All I could think of was, 'An administrator!' Boy, did that shut him up!" In October of his sixth year, Jerry wrote in his diary, "Tomorrow we 'celebrate' Halloween, a thoroughly disgusting event for me. This week has been, for the most part, wasted. I haven't felt like writing, it's a depressing time, and I'll be joyous when tomorrow is finished."

Jerry became friends with Nancy, the teacher next door, who left the following year to teach in Texas. The friendship remains as their classes continue to correspond by mail. Nancy was the "leader" of a small group of teachers including Jerry who enjoyed a high degree of camaraderie often meeting for breakfast in Summerville before school. Jerry describes the group (that now includes Karen, Loretta, Diane and Connie) in this way. "The Summerville Health Society is not an organization. There are no dues, scheduled meetings or officers. It's a group of friends who go out for breakfast when we feel like it to give us a break from the ordinary and to generally have a good time. There is never a dull moment and it's a wonderful way to begin a day. The name is a convenient reference. Someone will say, 'I need an SHS,' and it's on. It's selective. We are all good friends with total trust and respect for one another. So, it's not an exception to be oneself; it's the rule. It's another way to feel good."

According to Jerry, his friends are an important influence on his life at school. He wrote the following about Diane. "Diane and I ride together. Sometimes only one day a week, sometimes as often as four days a week. She's a neat lady and we've become good friends. The 45-minute ride seems short when we ride together. Sometimes the conversation is light and comical, sometimes serious and comical. We talk about school, life, situations, politics--you name it. Diane was a fourth grade teacher, then a fifth and is now our media services specialist. She still teaches the 'Great Books Series' and other things, so she is in touch with the classroom. She is another friend that makes up our unofficial 'mutual aid society.' She's a good listener and I try to be too. It's important to have people to share your life with, those who understand and yet try not to judge. It's more of a good counseling session than anything. She's also a member of the SHS."

Jerry's Teaching

"At the elementary level I find the essence of education and the essence of life essentially the same." For Jerry education and life seem to roll along; they have their ups and downs, but for the most part the direction is forward "or so it seems." Forward is predictable. Teaching is like construction, a slow process of moving toward an end product. "I try to make learning a comfortable and enjoyable experience. It's a safe, structured environment with few surprises. I've learned that they can put a lot into what they are doing when they aren't worried about their environment . . . I try to provide structure and guidance and present alternative routes to a prescribed goal . . . I am happy about getting up and going to work in the morning. The children provide a fresh challenge daily. Some with their eagerness to learn, others with their eagerness not to. I

view my job as a section on a continuum. My responsibility being to guide my children from ending first graders to beginning third graders. In a sense I am a custom contractor. I have the architect's design (the curriculum). I have the building materials (the educational materials in abundance). I simply coordinate the construction, using the design and the materials to produce a sound product--the education of a child. I can't do this alone. I must have people to support me. I do, in my administrator and the professionals with whom I work.

Providing this "safe, structured environment" with "no surprises" takes time. The art teacher conveys similar thoughts to Jerry as he dropped his children off in the art room for the first time in September, "How does it feel to begin all over again? Just when you had a class working near perfection, now you begin at the bottom again?" Jerry thought about her questions and later wrote, "I have to wonder about the energy expanded by the teachers and students alike near the beginning of each year that is devoted wholly to becoming." He explains that "children can become self-actualized. They can work through those levels on a surface basis, up to a point of being their own person in this classroom."

Starting out for Jerry is starting over for "Many [children] are starting over. They are not at the same level. They lose it over the summer if they don't do it. . . if it hasn't reached an institutional stage."

Beginning the school year, Jerry finds different demands than he experienced during the middle and end of the previous year. The excitement of beginning again is tinged with the desire to return to more carefree times. Not only must Jerry "start over" at school, he must begin a new school year at home and at the University where he takes classes. His schedule routines, and responsibilities all shift. In a fall entry of Jerry's diary (that will be presented later) he recalls a simpler time of life when he was in the service and relatively free of responsibility. He writes poetically of longing to return to that setting.

By the last month of school, Jerry's feelings are very different. Now, rather than escaping to another time, Jerry relishes the aura of life in his classroom as he feels the school year rapidly concluding. The "work" or "construction" is largely accomplished. What isn't appears of little consequence. "The joys are now personal and mostly have to do with the kind of concerned and caring attitudes I've promoted throughout the year.

"I find myself observing their behavior constantly and usually with deep satisfaction. They really like one another. The timid ones have learned to stand their ground (and still be liked!), and the controllers have learned to

give in once in a while and have found that compromise is an alright thing. The same thing brings sadness--they have come so far as a group and as individuals and I'm soon to lose them and begin to see their smiling faces and have them grab my hand and squeeze with all their might!

"We've talked a great deal about third grade--we even visited it the other morning. It's another step in breaking the tie. We have finished our basal series and are now in different groupings reading novels--discussing each chapter in personal and interpretive terms. We are growing closer each day--nearing the day we must part altogether. All of this has drastically altered my teaching habits and their classroom/school habits.

"The classroom shifts into high gear each morning by 9:10. They are all trying desparately to have as much of one another as they can--and all of me that they can get. They are constantly looking and talking and have an excessive amount of energy. There is rarely a solid block of quiet time. This would never have happened a month ago--it's the end-of-the-year syndrome. An annual event.

"Everything is more intense. There is more awareness, more spontaneity and more creativity. That changes the way I go about my daily task of teaching.

". . . The excitement, the amount of work to do, both in the classroom and teacher paperwork, the extra things we do in May/June and spring itself combines into an accelerated day, daily. Everyone's high--I've not caught up in days."

Inside Jerry's Classroom

Jerry's classroom reflects his attempts to provide the secure environment he describes. Desks are usually in three or four double rows with the children facing each other. Artwork when displayed is neatly tacked on the long wall bulletin board at the back of the room. On the board are also elements of "assertive discipline," a technique of controlling the children's behavior which lists the room rules and consequences of disruptive behavior. Jerry's desk is at the back of the room and immaculate. The few bookcases around the room are neatly filled. Two moveable storage boxes contain the children's coats and boots. Beside the chalkboard that stretches most of the way across the front of the classroom and perched on a ledge under a narrow window sits a large, bright-eyed, stuffed pink panther who smiles out on the hallway. Beside the panther is a long, narrow table with small chairs where Jerry holds reading groups.

Each morning Jerry writes neatly the day's assignments on the board. Along the left side of the room are windows that face into the courtyard. A few red geraniums sit on the ledge looking as if they are hungry and thirsty but not

totally unhappy.

The room is neat and ordered--almost starkly so. Occasionally, craft project bunnies or Christmas trees or other objects hang from the lengths of flourescent lights that hang over the children's desks.

At the beginning of the project Jerry had a large set of tools along the wall. When asked where they disappeared to, Jerry said that he took them home because the school couldn't afford wood for the children to use for building. On the same wall a large one-door cabinet stands. Jerry keeps his coat, guitar and coffee cup and other materials neatly stowed inside.

A "Regulation" Day and the Children

Although Jerry occasionally wrote and spoke about "down days" ("Down days seem worthless--but with understanding and empathy [other teachers]--they can be altered to be functional, worthwhile days."), he more frequently made note of good days. When asked to describe what he meant by "good" Jerry wrote the following. "Good is regulation. By that I mean regular as opposed to irregular or out of the ordinary. Good is then, specific to each person, group, unit, event. . .

"Regular, then, deals with how one is. If I've observed my class as I should, then I should know most of the behaviors to expect from any given child. If that child remains in the realm of expected behaviors during any given day, then I can say he/she has been 'good.' A regulation day for that child. (Even though some of those individual behaviors may be somewhat distractive and leaning toward undesirable--as long as they aren't surprises.)

"Good for a class is when they have remained inside that circle of behaviors which may be expected of them as a unit. There will be fussing, arguing, misunderstandings, disagreements, joys, laughter, sharing, discovery, warmth, tenderness and even moments of quiet--all of which (and more) are expected in a regular day--and if there aren't any surprises, then the unit (class) has been good today . . . the condition more than the moral character of the child, class, etc. . . (I) attempt to capture an essence, a condition. Good is a regulation day, no more, no less . . ."

Jerry describes in writing the events and interactions that make up the beginning of a "regulation day" under the topic "Essence of Teaching." "8:45, the entry bell rings and here they come. Sandy is usually first in the room since he is a walker. Sandy is a little loud and usually in a grand mood in the morning--probably because he is going to be away from home for 6 or so hours. He's a smart little boy--not exceptional--but smart. This morning he wanted me to give him a 'divide' problem. (More of the walkers and some early

riders were filing in.) 'OK, what is 24 divided by 6?' They hem-hawed a while and came up with 4. Not bad. (Sandy) 'I know addition, subtract, multiply and divide, but I don't know ABLEGER yet. My brother is taking ABLEGER in the eighth grade and he's not supposed to until the ninth and boy is my mom mad. She's yellin about why's he takin it so early.' It seems Sandy's mother is always yelling about something. We, as a school, issue report cards on a non-graded system. Her first question to me in the November parent conference was "What do these checks translate into grades?' (How many ways can you say THEY DON'T!) You see, Sandy's older brother is in the STRETCH PROGRAM, the gifted class. I warned her about comparing siblings--since each is an individual--but she and dad insist and it has really produced an ambivalent second grader. When I have to talk to Sandy about an infraction or some concept clarification he cowers, mumbles and dreads a confrontation of any sort. At his own admission in his autobiography, Sandy likes absolutely nothing about second grade, school or just about anything else.

"8:50. Timothy--look at my new sneakers (I'm important!) I got a new pair of dress shoes too--they're at home--for my birthday, remember, it was last Friday . . . 24 divided by 6, oh yeah, that's 4, because 4 times 6 is 24--right? Yes, Timothy, that's right--very good--would you like to take lunch count this morning?

"The room is half full by now--'LUNCH COUNT!!?? I thought you (meaning me) were going to take lunch count to be able to say hello to all of us'--A CHORUS FROM THE CLASS. Well, yes, but I think Timothy will do a good job this morning. I'll sit here and say hello as you go by.

"9:00. Me - Hello, Deena.

D. - Hi! (leans on me, gives a hug--gets one back)

Me - Are you ok?

D. - Yeah, fine.

Me - Kirk - go next door to Mrs. Mascio's and see if she has change for that quarter so I can give you change for your milk money.

K - Who is Mrs. Mascio?

Me - (I'm sitting, Deena leaning on me, head on my shoulder). Kirk, she's right next door.

Enter--a girl from Mrs. M's room wanting change for a quarter (common practice). OK, Kirk, try Mrs. Silva (Kirk hesitates, heads for the door).

Marie - Can I do buses?

Me - yes.

David - me after Marie?

Marie - I'm brownies!

David - darn!

Kirk comes back - I'll just take two milks.

Me - Kirk, I still don't have a nickel to give you. Do you want someone to go with you?

Kirk - Well, yes really. I'd like that.

Me - Deena (still absorbing me) will you go with Kirk?

Deena - Sure. Kirk, c'mon, let's go.

Kirk has a 145 IQ and is afraid of his shadow. Deena doesn't have a dad and I have been her male image and source since September. Sometimes she hugs me and laughs hysterically.

It's finally 9:05 and the class bell rings - time to begin our day--right?

Sandy - stroke for division

Timothy - stroke for responsibility

Deena - God only knows - Mom spent last three weeks in Las Vegas - came home for a long weekend. She, Deena and brother at home went to Indiana to visit two older brothers in military school and Monday morning Deena was off to school and mom to the Bahamas. . .

Kirk - I don't know. A simple task that almost any of my children would volunteer to do . . . Kirk tried to avoid . . . something I almost caught too late.

9:10. I search for Diantha - she missed Thursday and Friday to visit her dad since he's in town - visitation rights. She is a quiet one - I know she cares deeply for me and we have a good relationship. She looks tired. Her cords are dirty and she is more quiet than usual. I have a conference with her mom on Friday. I tell her it's good to have her back. She smiles and nods. (It's good to be

back!)

9:10 - 9:40. Monday morning. GYM - Good! Why do I feel as though I need a break already? Somewhere between 8:45 and 9:05 I had contact with about 23 individuals with 23 different sets of needs and expectations."

Jerry proceeds to write a descriptive paragraph about each child in his room. He presents perceived characteristics (often with evaluative comments) of each child and usually includes affective comments related to himself. Several examples follow.

Brenda - loves me and makes no bones about it. She also "hates" school and makes no bones about that. We are working toward a medium.

Tony - likes to please, but is an individual. He likes to roam free, trying to stay in the acceptable boundaries. I wish I had a roomful of Tonys.

Nancy - wants attention and affection but it's hard. She screws around - doesn't listen and doesn't try - perhaps she doesn't know how to do as she should - she has a rough home life, though both parents are teachers - nothing in life is sure. She's a strange one.

Laurie - one of my criers, in the beginning I worked closely with mom and we overcame the crying. Sometimes I would just hold her and let her cry. The kids seemed to understand, I sure as hell wish I could.

Bobbie - my other crier. Not at all like Laurie. 'I'll fight this, Mr. Brownlee. It's just that I'd like to be home with Jane (little sis, 5 years old) - we had so much fun this summer.' She fought it and beat it. Oh, I held Bobbie too. Equal treatment, you know. I love them both - actually - I love them all.

Brian - the biggest boy in my room - and the most tender in feelings boy or girl. He is beginning to mature and he is more able to deal with his tender feelings. Tread LIGHTLY!

Susan - probably the most mature emotionally - yet when combined with her superior academic ability it's sometimes more than she can handle. She, like Brian, has a great deal of empathy. That's often difficult for an eight-year-old. Her heart cries for her little brother who has been sick most of his life. She's proud that he is now in our regular kindergarten.

Terri - she's really pretty. A little rich girl whose siblings are a high school senior and a college sopho[illegible]

She's spoiled and talks baby talk sometimes. She is cognizant of her talking ability (often a liability). She is sweet and congenial. I like her loads. She has it made. She's a champion of the underdog. It would be interesting to follow her life for the next 15 or 20 years.

Christina - on the other hand is quiet and shy. She has to put her head in my ear. The other day she gave me a drawing . A HOT AIR BALLOON. The message read: I LOVE YOU. She laid it on my desk and walked a few feet away - turned and waited for my expression. When I smiled with obvious joy she barely grinned and walked away - end of message.

Susy - she believes that there isn't anyone at all like me. She has her two younger sisters convinced that second grade will be all for naught if they have anyone but me for a teacher. She was redesigning her father's hair to look like mine. I chatted with her mother today - she said Susan lives and breathes Mr. Brownlee. That's sometimes hard to live up to - especially when you are the last to know. I could have blown it somewhere in the first half year of school and never been the wiser had someone not told me.

Robert - a quiet, handsome young man. His mother has nothing but praise for me. Says she blesses the day that Robert began his second grade career. He cares, he tries, he enjoys going to school - a turn around from first grade. Again, I was the last to know. He seemed like one of the few regulation lads you meet. Happy go lucky. Blessed with good looks and some smarts. I never knew he had a change of anything until after the fact. Apparently my automatic pilot works well - I only wish I understood.

After describing each child, Jerry summarizes, "Now, back to the essence of teaching--I have to deal with these 26 individuals on a daily basis. They work together, play together, grow together and share me. Teaching is much more complicated, intricate, emotionally demanding (draining) and often more frustrating than the nice, neat theoretical design."

Along with Jerry's desire for structure, routine, and neatness, he wants the children to be responsible and independent. He feels that order and the ability and choice to follow directions must be established as soon in the year as possible. For example, on one occasion early in the school year Jerry confiscated a child's work, crumpled it and threw it away because the child was completing his assignments out of order which Jerry pointed out was clearly written on the board.

Jerry goes to great lengths to explain rules, regulations and protocols. While leading his children to the art classroom in September, he stopped them and explained why they were to walk in lines on the side of the hall; "We share

it," and he told them specifically what they could and could not touch on the way.

Related to the child's responsibility for following Jerry's rules and directions, he feels a strong responsibility to exercise fair treatment of the children. "Fair treatment" is defined as equal treatment illustrated in his use of "assertive discipline" which applies equally to each child. "It is based on the premise that I have a right to teach without being interrupted by misbehavior and each student has a right to learn without being interrupted by misbehavior which not only interferes with their thought patterns and concentration--it steals me from them since I must deal with the problems." Jerry feels that "we all have to learn the 'expected' behaviors of our social situation." Jerry frequently wrote and talked about his responsibility to the children. "I can't allow one child to take me away from the others." Another example of Jerry's wish to provide equal treatment is in his use of "Hug Days." These are specified days where the children come through a line and give and receive a hug from Jerry. Children do not have to participate, but according to Jerry, 95% of them do. "It's a gratifying experience for me . . . I feel each child should have had, at least, the opportunity to experience this. On the very next Wednesday, the children designated it as "hug day" and have designated each subsequent Wednesday as such. . . . they have made Wednesdays special for themselves and me."

Sources of Joy and Satisfaction

Jerry sums up a day in February. "All in all, a good day--not a lot heppening." A few days later he writes of a "nice even keel day. . . Nothing much happening." He frequently wrote of enjoying days "with no surprises." With this as a context, Jerry derived satisfaction, even joy, from several sources. These can be from broad conditions and the general flow of the days' events or from specific, and what might seem to an outside observer, rather trivial incidents.

First off, the setting was usually one of order. This enabled Jerry to attend to happenings that might on a less "stable" day have gone unappreciated. But, often the actual events that brought pleasure were spontaneous and unpredictable. Three categories of satisfying experiences include those with Jerry and the children, Jerry and colleagues, and recognition from the children and others (usually from a child or parent).

Jerry and the Children. Many of Jerry's joys with the children occur when the setting is relaxed and personal, and when they are behaving in ways that are uniquely themselves. These are less "directed" activities or, as Eisner (1979) might term them, "structure seeking" activities. Behavior, by design isn't predictable, but, Perhaps not surprisingly,

many of these documented experiences take place in the second half of the school year after routines and responsibilities are for the most part mastered. The class functioned well as a social unit and "shared themselves." Often pleasant experiences are related to the same few children and in some cases, the experiences are directly related to Jerry's special interests such as poetry or writing.

Birthday celebrations often took place on "good days." Jerry writes about David's party. "He brought in doughnuts and a drink. The kids loved it! They also enjoyed it when I gave David his birthday 'spanking.' What a dramatic event! He was all smiles!"

Within a week Jerry wrote of two satisfying experiences related to Martha. "I found a stack of 3 x 5 cards on my desk this morning. Some of Martha's poetry. This is my favorite:

> Red leaves, green leaves
> The red leaves and green leaves
> Are playing hid and go seek
> The red leaves are trying not to peak."

A few days later, Jerry wrote about "Martha's Books--Her Christmas gifts to me. They are called Choose Your Own Adventure. And, literally that's what you must do as you read through the book. I've begun reading them to the class and they are working as a unit to choose their paths. It started as pure fun and it's turned into a fantastic learning situation . . ." Jerry found that after the children collectively decided upon a path that "led nowhere," they enjoyed thinking about why that happened and what other possible routes they might return to select. The adventure continued until school was out in June. Although all holidays, and especially Halloween, are not a cause for jubilation to Jerry, he eagerly describes "Valentine's Party Day! You can feel the excitement build all week long. It's often more exciting than Christmas or Halloween (the three biggies in Elementary Education). This morning they were as high as kites, eagerly awaiting the party and card exchange. All, or most all, of the girls dressed up. What a lovely sight! The boys as well! All in some kind of red and anticipating the events of the day. It is a wonderful time--it's their day! Needless to say, we fall out of routine and do a few different things because today routine is the last on the list. It is nothing more than good, wholesome fun. I could never plan anything better--so I try to take advantage of the situation as best I can. It's a challenge and always rewarding. What a del[illegible] to see them share one another."

Jerry takes ple[illegible] in playing the guitar and singing with the children. [illegible]omething special and we all need that." Jerry wrote about another activity that he takes considerable plesure in with the children and with parent

volunteers, "Outdoor Day." Once or twice a year Jerry and two other second grade classes combine outside for a day of activities at several "stations" headed by volunteers (mothers). Jerry wrote of the "huge success" and his pleasure at the six stations: (1) olympic math, (2) scavenger hunt, (3) tall grass zoo, (4) art in the rough, (5) awareness--come to our senses, and (6) leaf/tree identification. Including a song fest and lunch activities, this took the day. "We arrived back at school about 2:15/2:30. Tired, dirty, and pleased!"

Jerry and Colleagues. Jerry frequently wrote and spoke about the importance of his closest colleagues and how they have "been and continue to be an unending reserve of professional and moral support." Riding to and from school, chatting informally before and after lunch, as well as lunch time, and in snatches throughout the day are a constant buoy to Jerry. He feels that their "friendship and warmth beyond the professional level" helps to make teaching rewarding.

Recognition from Children and Others. The importance of recognition and affection of the children toward Jerry is a theme throughout his writing which has already been alluded to in previously quoted passages from his journal (i.e., in his descriptions of each child). He is uplifted each time a former student or even a student from the same school stops in to see him or sends him a note. At times he describes what he values about the children, and in this example, characteristics he admires, which are similar to characteristics he points out in favored colleagues ("so open and free . . ."). "L.B. came by to see me after school today. She's a fifth grader now, so it has been three years since she was one of my students. She visits on rare occasions. Each time is a mutual delight it seems. It's a real emotional uplift to see her--she's grown so and she's so free and open with her thoughts--what a delight! I found some of her 'books' just a couple of nights ago . . . A lot of good writing ability."

When recognition is unexpected or comes when Jerry senses it least, it seems to be an even greater source of satisfaction. "I found a note in my mailbox this morning--'Call Mrs. Cassidy when you have a chance.' . . . Since report cards went home yesterday, I was just a bit anxious as I dialed the phone. The essence of the conversation was Mrs. Cassidy complimenting me on the 'terrific job' I was doing with her son. Some comments: 'I never have to say, come on Davey, time to get up for school.' 'I'm so impressed with his handwriting skills--I didn't think little boys made the effort in penmanship. . . I'm so happy he has the opportunity to do creative writing in school.' 'I feel that you have made a tremendous difference in his attitudes toward school and education. He's so happy to come to school and proud to be in your classroom.' I accepted all these compliments as graciously as possible. I was elated. I tried to conver . .

. [they] were doing a great job as parents . . . Davey is a good student and completes work on time . . . What more could I ask for in a student? He's well liked, well mannered, stands up for his rights and plays fair. What a wonderful hold on himself and the world at age 8." Jerry often receives notes and pictures of affection from children which he finds "make my day."

Jerry enjoys seeing aspects of his teaching reenacted through the children's behavior "I saw myself today [when a child read the story I usually read to the children] . . . I get dramatic at the end, 'And now the decision.' Drew got to the bottom and said, 'and now "the decision"--just like a little parrot and everyone in the group was like him.'"

A particularly meaningful experience to Jerry is being invited and addressing a teacher education class at the university. "I talked to Henrietta Wilko's class. . . . It makes me feel good--recognized. I know Henrietta likes me . . . She wouldn't have me come if she didn't think I was good. It makes me feel recognized--even if not among my peers, because few of them are aware of it."

Two other sources of satisfaction for Jerry as a teacher warrant mentioning. First, and more frequently, Jerry is pleased when the children work as a group and when an individual child succeeds. Success is often related to social and emotional concerns and often to the child outside school. He feels satisfaction when he perceives that he has comforted a child such as Jenny who has a young friend who is dying. Being able to share some of the child's grief by being sensitive to her feelings, by taking the lead from the child. "Sometimes she feels like talking, sometimes not . . . ," Jerry feels that he is doing what he can. The second and very different source of satisfaction (but one which is quite possibly related to concerns such as Jenny's) is "only two days till spring vacation!"

Problems and Sources of Frustration

Although some of the most enjoyable times in school for Jerry are those when he and the children are behaving in ways that are expressing themselves, this takes place within a structure that Jerry sets up and controls. Conversely, many of the frustrations that Jerry feels seem to be related to circumstances beyond Jerry's control, and in spite of the structure he imposes. Problems and frustrating experiences occur when Jerry's values and others are conflicting. Jerry writes (and vocalizes that he has "strong beliefs." "It is my intention to not only guide my chidlren academically but socially as well. We all have to live with our society accordingly. Very little problems develop into monsters if they aren't taken care of. I try to set a mood of friendship, trust, loving and caring . . . Each child knows that I care about them personally. Some more than others,

that seems inevitable. Yet, for the same reasons that is particularly difficult for me to honestly care for certain children--they find it hard to give a hoot for me or my classroom and all I stand for. Sometimes it's a tall order." It is difficult for Jerry to set an environment of love, trust and caring when he finds it particularly difficult to honestly care for certain children, when they do not care for him and from his perspective, "all I stand for."

Jerry's image of himself and his values have been alluded to throughout this portrait (in his descriptions of the children, and in his purposes in teaching). Important elements include a strong sense of social and societal conformity, order, routine and predictability academic and social competence, and personal responsibility for behavior. When looking for a rationale for his "strong beliefs," Jerry writes, "I usually find myself looking at Maslow and Erikson." He continues to explain that physiological, safety, love and esteem needs must be met so that self actualization can take place. Trying to set an environment where these can be met, one of trust, is a tall order. According to Nias (1981), trust in an educational environment can be characterized by predictability, shared values and understandings, and formal interaction. In a second grade classroom "shared values and understandings" are inevitably a point of contention. The values that must be shared are for the most part the teacher's and the understandings that must be reached are those in concert with the teacher's. Jerry tries to establish formal interactions and routines, but behavior is always predictable nor are values controllable.

Jerry finds it frustrating when a child or the children do not follow directions. Often he places the responsibility on the child as in this instance where Jason has repeated second grade and is still having difficulty. "It's their [children's] problem." When asked about Jason's physical difficulties and possible links between these and academic and social progress, Jerry responded, "Even if it's physical. . . He still has to accomplish certain things in school." Jerry tells of his "very structured curriculum sequence, one where the children know exactly what's expected of them. I give the assignments; they are written on the board." He sends home notes that parents must sign and return stating that their child has not finished their work and that it must be completed at home. He has "a pile [of notes] on Jason." When Jerry perceives that a child is able but not functioning to the child's level (which is a recurrent theme in his writing), he is frustrated. For example, Jerry wrote about "Tim's Motivation. On a timed math facts test Tim completed 67 problems correctly in three minutes. However, when assigned a sheet with 25 or 30 problems on it, he often doesn't finish in a half hour. That discrepancy points to a lack of motivation to complete what he is capable of completing."

Sometimes Jerry is frustrated by parents whom he perceives do not set a good example for their children (some because of home circumstances of poverty, unemployment, divorce, or parents who are socially and travel oriented which places restrictions on time spent with their children). At other times, Jerry relates his frustration to the child's previous teachers. Commenting on Anthony, a child who isn't "attending," Jerry writes ". . . I'm asking for one thing now. Attending behaviors. It is my contention that, regardless of one's ABILITY, CAPABILITY comes through application . . . There is no age or station in life that allows for a complete absence of non-attending behaviors, is there? . . . I expect them to be able to read and interpret on a comprehensive level. So often they are 'spoon fed' in first grade. As soon as they scream, 'I don't get it!,' the teacher goes overboard in re, re, re, explaining instead of asking the child to read the directions, one at a time, attempt them, and then focus on the exact direction . . . They must gain independence from me. If not, they suffer in later grades."

Just as time and the way it must be divided among several responsibilities (family, school, university coursework, construction work) present problems for Jerry, time is often related to frustration. Breaks in the routine, children who need special help "because he didn't listen" or "follow directions," and meetings where the agenda is, in part, a surprise and "a waste of time" are minor sources of frustration. For example, "I can't let him take too much of my attention--I have 28 other students.' When Jerry was asked, "What frustrations do you face as a teacher?" he responded, "Those are very subjective. In the classroom one thing frustrates me--lazy children who won't put forth an honest effort. They come to school with the idea that they are not going to do anything. It frustrates me when a class isn't a cohesive unit by the second half of the year. . . In the school system itself some of the petty little ways that people are, always looking for things to gossip about . . . frustrates the hell out of me. For example, in a staff meeting during open forum we had a 20-minute discussion of playground rules. Big deal! . . . lack of leadership . . ."

Two other sources of frustration for Jerry are of different orders but seem to permeate many of his concerns as a teacher: the children's home lives and public support of teaching. For example, Jerry writes about a child who is about to enter the hospital. His feelings appear to be mixed as he points out the child's pain but ultimately discusses "salvaging" the child's progress for third grade. "Jack is going into the hospital tomorrow. He has infected tonsils, which, give him a lot of upset and pain. School has been difficult for Jack the past few weeks. I'm in hopes that his hospital stay will give him the chance to get back on track. This is one more complication that Jack didn't need. His

attitude toward school has been fair, at best, in the past. Understandably, so I suppose. He is from a broken home,* his parents are poor, and intellectually limited. (*Jerry often makes note of children from divorced or reconstituted families as being in some way "worse off" than other children.) These limitations are exaggerated by the fact that most of his classmates are on the other end of the spectrum.** (**Jerry often refers to most of the children being "above average" children in Jennings.) It's taken a long time for him to trust me and feel safe in school. He had just begun a good, solid academic effort when his physical problems began interfering. I feel that there will be enough time left to salvage what progress we have made and hopefully lay the groundwork for a good third grade year."*** (***Consistent with Jerry's purpose of taking the children from first grade to third grade an a recurrent theme of "getting the children ready for future years in school.")

Jerry occasionally has problems in his dealings with colleagues. When a problem persists he often works it through with the help of his closest friends. "I had a real problem--professional one--with one teacher in our building. Finally, I forced myself to say 'Good morning' to that person. I would say it until she got so damned sick of hearing it she finally said 'Good morning' to me. Now we carry on civil conversation. . . One of my friends said, 'You're not making an effort--don't bitch to me . . . I wanted to be able to look at her without feeling . . . more for a professional level than anything else. Meetings tend to exacerbate small irritations when Jerry feels that his time is being used unnecessarily. Curriculum committees are often a source of disappointment, as Jerry points out during a project seminar discussion. "Well, I'll tell you how it works in our school and I'm not sure who makes the decision or from whence it came but there will be a committee and you'll review these materials and they'll adopt the one that you knew they were going to adopt to begin with."

Jerry, faces the uncertaintly of mileage votes and dwindling governmental funds to support his school financially. Writing about governmental support during particularly trying times, Jerry wrote the following, " . . . my own feeling is that if they ever straight forwardly admit that we are professionals and we have more coming to us--better financing for schools and salaries, for example--then the legislators on the federal and state levels would have to consider upgrading this outdated, overworked and failing system of school financing. They would need to rearrange priorities and make their support, ideally and really equal their rhetoric on professional certification and standards. That would be an awesome responsibility and a beginning at catching us up to the present and preparing our profession for the future."

Interactions and Opportunities for Professional Development

Over the past six years, from what was a very difficult first year of teaching, Jerry has taken advantage of and created several avenues for his own professional development. He has in part created his own growth environment. Jerry feels that his active participation in school, district, and teacher association sponsored activities like "inservice" days monthly staff meetings, serving as vice president of the local teachers' association, association representative (on two different yearly periods), and grade level chairperson have each contributed to his growth as a teacher. On his own volition, and of significant personal value and intellectual stimulation are coursework leading to a master's degree, and perhaps of the most sustaining value are his informal collegial interactions and homelife (school psychologist wife and two school-age children). When asked to comment on experiences which contribute to his professional development, Jerry said that being association representative was valuable because he was able to see other people's perspectives, including the principal's. "Even when we disagreed I could see her side and I could better understand." Another source for perspective came from being grade level chairperson. In both of these roles he was allowed to be the "arbitrator and negotiator. I brought forth faculty concerns and learned a lot about 'the politics of things.'"

"I get a lot out of graduate school. I spend time gaining what I can from other teachers. Also, here in the classroom--from the breakfasts (that's for my personal development). These things together help. I learn mostly at school. If I could afford it, I'd go to more seminars. You may get one iota of learning. I'd like to attend more. I would like to but can't afford it. I'll probably go to school [university] off and on."

Jerry's rides to and from school when with colleagues, his frequent brief comments with the two second grade teachers and lunches are each opportunities for Jerry to interact in a personal and professional way; to discuss problems and ideas in a climate of acceptance. Trust appears to be a very important element to Jerry. "My friends are helpful. I can say to them, 'I did this and it didn't work,' and they can make suggestions that might." Jerry explains that although he is contented at Jennings and that he respects all of his colleagues professionally, his relationship with his friends is different. He talked of not being significantly touched by what many of the other teachers say. He said that there needs to be a relationship, an emotional one, before someone can affect him. "Oh, sure, it might make me feel a little good [if a teacher complimented me about my teaching] but not like if I had ties to them. It boils down to trust. I don't trust them."

Jerry values the volunteer help he receives in the

classroom, especially the junior high students. "I have lots of company in my classroom. I have a volunteer mom on Mondays from 1:30 - 3:00. Another on Tuesday in the morning for an hour an afternoon for about an hour and a half. Also, I have two junior high students who come in daily . . ." Jerry chats with them when he has the opportunity. He also talks amicably with the school's support staff and "specialized teachers (art, music, physical education, library, reading, school psychologist, secretary and custodian) regularly, if briefly. Each contributes, most often in positively perceived ways, to the milieu Jerry feels "teacher" in.

Project Participation

In Jerry's writing and in his participation in seminar sessions movement toward greater introspection can be seen. It is less visible in classroom visitations but that might be a product of the stage of data analysis rather than the presence or absence of change. Another difficulty is that the latter half of the project took place during the first half of the school year--a time when routines and direction are being established and more teacher time is devoted to control issues.

Writing. Jerry wrote for his own pleasure before the project began "Writing for me is a release. It comes so quickly. I do it when it happens." Occasionally during the project, and especially during the latter phases, Jerry shared "extra" writing with me, most notably a short story for children that he said he was working on to publish. He feels now that he would like to write to share with others.

Jerry wrote steadily throughout the project although he wrote slightly less during the second half, at times not writing for a few weeks. Though he wrote less often, the content of his writing was significantly more introspective and more indicative of deeper thoughts and feelings about his teaching. Jerry probably felt a greater responsibility to write feeling that it was an important aspect of the project course of which he had agreed to become a part. Jerry frequently referred to the seminar as a course and appears to have addressed writing as a significant aspect of the "course."

Most of his diary is written in a journalistic style. Especially at the beginning he wrote under "topics" (Essense of Teaching, Valentine's Day, Parent Visitation, On Responsibility, Kareen't Books). The first half of Jerry's writing was filled with topics that portray what he feels are the important elements surrounding his teaching, his goals, his close colleagues, life and self, and descriptions of each child and some events and interactions that Jerry feels are important to him. (See previously cited descriptions under p.). It was as if Jerry was

filling the reader in on background and describing "what goes on." It was difficult to begin writing for Jerry (although he wrote consistently even from the beginning) because as he said, "how can I write about something I've never really thought about? Teaching is like breathing. You just do it?" By the second half of the project, Jerry was not only writing about it, he found that he was noticing and thinking more about his behavior, or as he referred to it, "inspecting" himself.

During a two-day summer project workshop (Jerry was able to attend only the second day, a "writing" day), Jerry wrote the following in response to a request to reread his writing and to write his reflections and analysis of it. "As I review my writings, I can't help but wish myself back into last year's class for but a moment and try to recapture the love and caring which we shared. The memories do my heart godd. Those children as a unit were an exceptional class. Also, as I review, I see so many mistakes caused by writing too quickly. Mistakes which could be corrected by a second or third recopy. Yet, I feel it, they, the mistakes, render a certain "human error" quality to my writing.

"The journal is for the most part, descriptive. Written in first person and usually present tense, it is a personal account of my teacher life a[illegible]isly subjective. I've been thinking about what Roy sa[illegible]ems so long ago) about dividing my paper in half. You [illegible] mentioned it again this morning, asking that the journa[illegible]tion be descriptive in the sense of describing events, facts. Then, reactionary in the sense of our behavior prior to, during and beyond the event. Perhaps I'll give that format a try beginning in September. Although the factual description will be, at best, my interpretation of the events which take place. Perhaps when you visit we can set aside a certain time block, say a 1/2 hour . . . and you can jot down your perceptions and I mine and then we can compare notes. That should be most interesting.

"One of your reactions to one of my statements ('The kids were good today' . . . what is 'good?') caught my eye as I went through my writings. As I begin to conceptualize responding I can't help but smile. Good is probably as illusive as 'wow.' Consider these statements:

> You look good.
> You feel good.
> You are good.
> Does that look good to you?
> That looks yummy!
> Was I good today, daddy?"

He then proceeded to write three pages of analyses of "good." A final page wrapped up his reflections. Jerry notes the desire for organization in his diary. The

acceptance of "being human," a recurrent theme in Jerry's writing and discussion is again alluded to. "When I began the diary I had sections which served as guidelines. I had a notes section which were thoughts and occurrences. I had a writings section which attempted to capture daily events. A visual aids section which were things which the children gave me and a final writings section that was and continues to be a rambling prose that sometimes elaborates on points in the first three sections and often serves no other purpose than a dumping grounds. However, the style seems to suit me and in the end the fourth section for prose seems most valuable.

"The ideas and thoughts seem to be mine. My anger shows. My love shows. My biases shine. It comes as no surprise to me that I'm human--I discovered that a very long time ago.

"I feel that more 'change' will be reflected in our second set of writings because we will be starting with a new class of kids. We may see first impressions change or be solidified. We may see a change of heart toward some and a change of heart by or toward others. It will be interesting in any case."

During the first half of the project, Jerry wrote very little about his behavior. He described events and other people, his interactions, but he rarely questioned himself or his actions, or related his behavior to the children's or others'.

As Jerry began writing before the new school year began, he writes freely of his thoughts and feelings and concurrently of the two groups of children most on his mind--the class he fondly remembers and the class he is preparing to meet. His feelings of "trust in our system" and the anxiety of leaving "comfort and safety" are written regarding the children, but as he realizes a few weeks later, are quite appropriate for him too. Note also the recurrent theme of Jerry's felt responsibility at being a teacher.

"As I head for school for the first time since summer vacation began in June, it's hard to believe that nine weeks of our 10-week summer have slipped by. The 45-minute drive gives me time to think and reflect on last year's class. I wonder what happened to my children. My 26 little souls. Has their summer excaped them as has mine? And what of their feelings in anticipation of this year's beginnings? Do they feel as anxious as I? They are about to embark upon yet another year of public education and I've given them up to the unknown. I don't fear for them, for I have faith and trust in our system. As they prepare for their third grade year, I know they are excited and some are filled with doubts and reserve. They have left the comfort and safety of the known and are headed for a new building and new teachers . . . and if they only knew . . . they are in good and capable

hands. Yet, it is exactly those feelings of hesitancy and doubt that will render them successful for each will conquer those feelings which will be replaced readily by growing accustomed to their surroundings and being capable in their tasks.

"That leaves me alone, then, with my feelings--much the same as theirs. As I walk into my room I become consumed. It looks bare and empty. The floors and windows sparkle, gleaning the efforts of the janitors who were left behind in June. Like ghosts from a dream I hear the echo of their laughter and singing. I hear the dead quiet of concentrated effort and I feel a sense of loss.

"Then, as I attack the physical appearance and the colors begin to brighten the room as do the flowers of spring to any given meadow, my senses flow again as water rushes from the river into the locks to raise a boat or ship to navigational level. Thus I begin my journey toward another year. I get high with anticipation and anxious to fill the room with the select 25 who await their grand entrance. They cry out: Do you see me? Do you want me here? Am I ok with you? Can you turn me into a third grader in just a few short months? You bet I can! I'll be ready and waiting come Sept. 1st and I'll bet your butterflies go away long before mine.

I am a child,
and I stand before you.
Do you see me
for what and who I am?
Do you want me here?
Can you take away my fears,
sooth my wounds
and help me understand?

I hear your thoughts
as I meet your eyes,
and I'll do my best to
rest your anxious heart."

Jerry's writing is filled with optimism as school begins on September 3. "They have arrived! Twenty-five little anxious faces all eagerly awaiting, wondering and wanting to know just what this is all going to be about." He describes, as a journalist might, the children, the number of girls, boys, "criers," placement card information, his good feelings because "I've received some reports from moms already that their children are excited and feel great about being in my room, and the new teacher in second grade (who is to become a close colleague and friend) and his optimism about the coming year, "These first few days have been hectic and the time has flown. Everything feels good and right and there is a grand positive attitude in the building. It promises to be another good year. Time will tell. Go

official motto: EXPECT THE BEST." He finishes with "a side note," the art teacher's questions, "How does it feel to begin all over again? . . . The "side note" might be described as "last but not least" for it surfaces with strength a week later when Jerry again writes in his diary. "Last night I longed, even yearned for New Mexico. I spent about 2 1/2 years of my life on an Air Force base near Alamagordo. Alamagordo is a little semi arid town nestled in the foothills of a mountain range which runs vertically through eastern New Mexico about 90 miles north of El Paso, Texas. That I know it bears no significant claim to fame, yet it is where I was when I found myself and gained some sense of peace with me. I arrived at 19, barely six months into a four-year hitch in the Air Force. I was young, dumb and scared. . . . my love for a little dusty town with its mid town park and those expansive mountains is something that remains quite alive in my memory.

"Entertainment for my enlisted friends and me was often limited by our meager wages. So, one must make due. Many days were spent hiking through the foothills and doing target practice at the local dump. I killed more tin cans in those years than one could imagine. My best memories and the catalyst for growth were the times which we would talk to the sky and greet the stars as old friends.

"There's nothing quite as beautiful as a southwestern sky. At night when the air is clear and the sky is cloudless one cannot help but feel small, even humble. . . "While ascending the mountain, we were transformed as was our surroundings. Not by the mix [blackberry cider and gin or vodka], that was saved for our arrival. Transformation came through going from that semi arid little burg to a mountainous forest which was lush green and filled your lungs with cool, crisp air and scents which I've yet to find in Ohio.

"We had many favorite places which were all chosen to afford a maximum view of the heavens. There we would recline on nature's own carpet to take in our sky and stars and then we would pass around the mix and talk of whatever we wished, and we covered damn near every subject imaginable. We talked of fears, loves, hates, favorites, work, play, pleasure, the past, the present and our future.

"Hours passed unnoticed and rarely missed. Often silence was the order of the day while we communed with what was.

"I felt or knew no fear in telling my friends and that vast space of sky every detail of my life, my being. And in the quiet wee hours of the morning when we would head back to reality I never felt less than grand. Fulfilled. No worry or fear was too great after having spent those hours on our mountain. It made my life clear and simple. I loved my

friends and I loved myself. Last night I was desparate for New Mexico."

Although signs of the weight of teaching have been evident in Jerry's writing, nowhere did he capture the weight of it more than here. For Jerry, it was a view of the mountain--a brief but unobstructed view. Starting over. During a seminar session two weeks later, Jerry seemed to draw several things together in his mind. Here we can see how writing over time and the opportunity to discuss the meaning of teaching interacts to help Jerry reach another level of reflection. The session had only been underway for a few minutes. We had started to define where we were as a group and as individuals in preparation for a session with an outside expert (on professional development and writing) a few weeks ahead.

Craig: We have a chance to find out where we're at so we don't get too side tracked . . . We laid some groundwork.

Carole: We can try to stick to the agenda.

Craig: Definitely, and that is my attempt here. . . I do think we accomplish an awful lot even traveling all over. But I think to give a sense of structure . . .

Susan: . . . when you start to think about it, here we are and we started out informally, by the time we're done we ought to be much more orderly apart from where we started in March.

Jerry: And that's very reflective in my writings. That just hit me. They started out, and that just hit me they started out informal, very descriptive, very fluid, and flowing. Then now, the beginning of this year they are almost, um, they have come from almost a descriptive approach to a philosophical type view of what the heck's going on. I do see that difference, although I'm writing about the same things. The style seems to be different.

Susan: Now you're stopping to look at it.

Jerry: And myself.

Susan: Sometimes I don't like that so much; how much should we be made to look at ourselves in depth and question who we are and what we're about? How good is that?

MLH: I don't know, I think it is not a part of our general culture to do that.

Jerry: You bet it's not.

MLH: When I look back at the proposal, that's really what we said we would do. But how difficult that is. . . And I think we're just really tapping into that . . .

Jerry: The night it hit me I wrote about New Mexico. That explains it; see I couldn't even explain, I see that now.

MLH: Tell them about it, what you are writing about.

Jerry: [Tells of New Mexico and being "enveloped by the sky"] . . . I'm not a conservative type but I just like the vastness. But down there it made you feel microscopic; it put you in perspective to what you actually were and it's where I really came to know myself and like myself. . . talk . . . in complete trust. And it was like an exorcism. This was the first group therapy that I've ever been in and didn't know it at the time. And I felt better about myself and I liked myself more then than I think I ever had in my life because of that expulsion of getting everything out of me that I didn't like. But at least I don't know how to explain it but at any rate, this whole thing about writing and my writing changing from this colorful prose that I started out with into this very philosophical, very nitpicky about me, and I stop at the middle step in school and think "now what am I doing?" I never did that before and to what point is that good and where does it become detrimental? And I start seeing all the nitpicky things about myself that I don't like. Everyone has little things. You do this and this and this, you do this well. And all of a sudden I'm changing myself a lot, or thinking. And I think I don't want to do that because I kinda liked me the way I was and other people too including every class that I've had from the start until now. And I start, it's this process that's why I couldn't write this year. I refused to go any deeper into myself, I see that now, I couldn't even explain it before. And then I wrote about the first cynicism if I could find it I'd read to you: I wanted it bad. To get back and be able to free myself from whatever was going on inside about this, this, this inspection. To free myself from all of that, and talk to my friends once again and be ok when I came down off the mountain. I can only even give just an inkling of the feeling of the way the Indians must have felt because they loved their mountains. It

loved their gods, and they loved to go up there and be free, with the spirits. They must have lived a wonderful life and I just, it was really, I had to get that out to come back to writing, to look at myself again but I've come back away from looking at myself because I think I went way too far. It was beginning to become detrimental to me. I think in writing what we're doing is we are questioning ourselves . . . and I think there is very little precedent set for us to do that. Yet, I think when we look at the whole concept of professional growth, that's a piece of it. Yes you have to do it. But there has to be some point at which you stop.

Marcy: Cause you could just go on and on. Cause if you felt good about yourself you could just take a turn.

Jerry: There's lots of ways I have changed my eight years in the classroom. Through my writing there's lots of ways that I have changed my behaviors in the classroom being able to see through my writing the kind of person I am. And I think I have changed a lot. I've tried to become much more, and I hate to use the word, human, but perhaps human, ok? And understanding, more caring, and I always thought I was to begin with. But here we are. But, you get to the point where you say you can't sacrifice what you know must be and become to the extreme. My thoughts have always been (I'm wasting a lot of time here) that I'm not there to be their friend or their pal or their buddy but I'm their teacher. And in that process if I become their friend that's fine. But if I don't that has to be ok too. And I even question that and I thought "Boy you've gone too deep now," because I found that to the [illegible] roots of my own philosophical base of teaching [illegible] I believe not just the surface stuff.

Craig: It must be something else.

Jerry: It has to be a stage.

Craig: Yeah. It certainly is something else. I can't remain in the turmoil that I'm in, and boy I'm in it.

Susan: I know. But how many, if they don't write, never get to the stage. They never had the chance to experience it, at least we know that we've questioned things that probably many people . . . be terrified. How could you go to school and talk

comprehend. They can't imagine that we can sit around and talk about the things that we did. First of all, I don't think that they can understand the level that we get to.

Jerry: I don't even discuss with the . . .

Susan: No, because I don't think they would understand.

Jerry: I tried to in the beginning, and those who were receptive, it's gone way beyond what you can sit there and talk about in a conversation. The only people you can talk to about it are these people. As far as where I want to go from here, I told you the day you interviewed me that I'd never told anyone, promised anyone, even myself what I'd be doing 10 years from now; that's one of the questions you asked me, if I'd still be in education. And, no . . . I never thought that I'd be saying this again right here in this context, 10 minutes from now, I may not want to be in education, no. Where I want to go from here is use what I've done. If I want to get down here and get dirty I want to use it to get back up there and be better at something.

Craig: You may not have known how low you were, you have to consider that possibility.

MLH: I didn't mean that.

Jerry: I know. I know that, but see you're making me think.

At the end of the session, Jerry harked back to his initial entry of the new school year in his diary.

Jerry: I just thought of something, it was when I was going to school. [Looks through diary.] Ah, here it is. I think I was thinking about myself but I was writing about the children and I said they are about to embark on another year of public education. I've given them up to the unknown. I don't fear for them for I have faith and trust in our system as they prepare for their third grade year I know they are excited in some are filled with doubts and reserve (laughter). They have left the comfort and safety (Marcy: That's right you are writing about yourself.) of the known and have headed for a new building and new teachers. And if they only knew they are in good and capable hands, yet it is exactly thos feelings of hesitancy and doubt that will render them successful for each will conquer those feelings

be replaced readily by growing accustomed to their surroundings and being capable in their tasks.

Marcy: See you're going to find yourself.

Jerry: Now we'll pass around the plate and everyone will put in a little bit of money for Jerry. I just thought of that while I was walking to the bathroom. Some of my best thoughts occur there.

Jerry's writing becomes more focused and he uses it more to work out ideas and sometimes problems. For the first time, during the second half of the project, he begins to review his writing for himself, to help him look at himself and to work through perplexing situations and feelings. In both his writing and seminar sessions he begins to connect experiences he (and the project teachers) is having to the children he teaches. For example, during a seminar discussion fo writing, Jerry says, "We've never been asked to write . . . It's new to us . . . [Jerry hesitates and slowly shakes his head.] We have a room full of 30 students who probably feel the same way but don't have the capability to say it." Jerry, for the first time becomes openly self critical in his writing during the second half of the project. Commenting upon a child who "disregards directions" and thus disrupts routine and the flow of his teaching Jerry writes, "I know that this affects me personally sometimes and I have to REALLY control myself then."

Seminar Sessions. Jerry attended sessions regularly only missing sessions when he had school or family conflicts. He was often the first to arrive, and on occasion, he brought a bottle of wine to share. Usually, when the sessions were at my home, he picked up the guitar and softly played, to himself mainly, until the other people arrived. Jerry was never at a loss for words. In fact, he warned the group during one of the first few sessions that they would have to try to harness him because he liked to talk. He often initiated topics and shared his writing out loud. He was more often than not the most vocal group member. This included his helping others to define their problems and to pose possible solutions. He more frequently gave examples of frustrations and his own behavior during the sessions than he did in his writing. Introspection appeared easier in the group setting than in writing while alone. He seemed to draw from his writing but often expanded upon it during discussion. After reviewing his writing and during a seminar session with an outside consultant, Jerry becomes aware (in writing) of an important personal-professional element, not unrelated to his previous insights, that he feels he needs to work on. This is also another example of the integration and interactive influences of home and school in Jerry's development.

"As I review my writings and inspect myself I see more

and more the need for patience. Furthermore, I am seeing patience as more than a virtue, patience is a practiced art.

"Last evening I took my daughter, April, to the 'home game" at our local high school. Actually, I dropped her off, I didn't take her. Since my mother lives within a block of the school, I arranged to meet April there to bring her home. April is 14 and this is a big social event for her. She's quite pretty and enjoys the attention the boys pay to her and seems to be able to cope with it, so far. Her plans were to meet her friend, Sandy, at the game and there they would be a team. Then they were going to walk to Grandma's and Sandy was to spend the night with April to change her mind.

"When April arrived (at Grandma's) she was alone. She said that Sandy had gotten into trouble and was not allowed to stay the night now. Since they had only made the plans hours earlier, I decided to ask as to what possible mischief Sandy could have gotten into at the game to make her mother change her mind. April said, 'Her mom's so wierd sometimes. She said that Sandy should wear a hat and that if she didn't that she couldn't go anywhere after the game.'

Me: 'So, did Sandy wear a hat?'

April: 'No.'

Me: 'And you think her mother strange because she spelled out what she wanted and Sandy balked and faced the consequences?'

April: 'No, I think she's wierd cause she doesn't like me and she was just looking for an excuse to change her mind about Sandy coming to spend the night.'

"Now, all this time I've been thinking to myself, 'Sandy should have worn a hat--it rained all evening and the temperature in the 40s.' For that matter, I was wrestling with the idea of should I or should I not get on April's case for not wearing a hat. There she sat, jacket and hair soaked through. But as I reflect back on my own childhood, I can't help but remember how I resented being told all those things by my parents and how they never influenced my actions except maybe by doing the opposite of what they desired.

Me: 'Well, maybe Sandy's mom felt that she needed a hat--after all, it did rain most of the evening.' And I bit my tongue to not say 'You needed a hat, dummy, look at you!'

April: 'She's just wierd.'

Me: 'Well, she did know what her mom wanted and the consequences.'

April: 'I know.' [pause] 'I'll tell you, I'm wearing my jacket with my hood next time.'

"How often do I respond in the classroom when I should be biting my tongue and practicing patience? I have to wonder about my role (as teacher) as teller. Oh, I don't plan to go Montessori--just to use a bit of caution and thought perhaps. Patience isn't very expedient though, is it?

"I lost my patience tonight with my family--a senseless but very human thing to do. My five-year-old son, in his infinite (or infant) wisdom, came up to me and said, 'Dad, are you "fustrated?"' Maybe he does have letter reversal problems, but he sure has a way with words!"

Jerry is the first to point out his discomfort at looking "microscopically at who I am and what I do," which less then two weeks later comes out full force in the seminar discussion (see 9/24/81 segment previously quoted). "I'm not sure how deep I want to go--I've become dissatisfied with myself over things; I feel guilty about things that can't be changed--like the police action in teaching." This is the first suggestion that discipline is perhaps more difficult than talk and writing about "assertive discipline" might lead one to believe. Jerry is beginning to look at those "down days" and at events and behavior that "are a waste."

Jerry became a better listener, to himself and to others and more frequently alluded to thinking about things that were said during discussions in his writing and during visitations.

Jerry seemed to increasingly develop the ability to listen and aid others through his questioning. He seemed to develop a genuine, accepting, active kind of listening that allowed others to express themselves. Jerry, early in his writing referred to a colleague who was a good listener. He added that "I try to be too." Evidence of his increasing ability to do this can be seen in his increasing referral back to things either he or others had written or mentioned before. He more often reread what he had written--sometimes with the planned vantage point of a week or so. During the first half of the project there is no evidence of "reflecting back" on previous writing although Jerry did refer to comments made during sessions weeks later, especially comments made by Craig that he wanted to think further on.

Jerry and Judy seemed to feel a special affinity for each other in part possibly because they both teach second grade and could commiserate on common problems.

<u>Observations</u>. Classroom and school visits appeared to be "taken in stride" and from the beginning Jerry said, "We don't do anything special when you come." On most visits I

observed and helped children with their work. On one occasion when the children showed interest in the quick sketches I was making, Jerry asked if they wanted to each have their picture sketched. He broke from routine and had the children take turns doing arithmetic problems on the board while they waited their turn to be sketched. When this was completed (about an hour later) Jerry had me sit in a chair on a table and the children drew me. There was a decided difference between the first part of the project (spring) and the second (fall).

Spring. Both Jerry and the children appeared more relaxed and informal in their behavior during spring term. Disciplinary actions were rarely exerted by Jerry. During the spring, there was a relaxed tone to the classroom. In the morning children arrived with grins greeting Jerry and their classmates. They visited, put materials away and shared conversation while getting ready for the day. I observed Jerry playing the guitar and the children sitting on desks and casually moving to the music and singing. I observed a play for which the children made props and costumes and worked in groups. It was evident during my observations that "classness" and "groupness" was very important to Jerry and that he worked consciously to foster social cohesiveness.

Most of the questions I directed to Jerry dealt with routines, getting to know him and the children and school. Much of the caring and journalistic descriptions Jerry conveyed in his writing was evident in the classroom. His amicable chats with individual children, his concern and child directed comforting of the child whose friend was dying were as he portrayed them in his writing. Before the school year ended, I showed the class slides I had taken. The children laughed with each other and commented with apparent sincerity on each other and the circumstances surrounding each slide. Their comments were spontaneous and Jerry's were in concert with them.

My observations during the second part of the project were of a classroom with a decidedly different tone. The children were visibly smaller, less mature. In my field notes I wrote "The children seem so docile compared to those in June." The relaxed atmosphere, the responsibility of the children for themselves, the camaraderie were not visible. Jerry seemed to have to work harder. There was an accepted formality akin to a training period, as Jerry faced new "challenges." A week after Jerry wrote in his diary of longing for New Mexico, he wrote about several children and described why they were going to be real challenges for him. Each child he described as such presented a problem fitting into the classroom routine: a repeater, a child who doesn't show signs that "summer is over," a bright child who is not willing to learn, a child who "fails to complete the basic assignments and constantly pushes the 'letter of the law'

where rules are concerned," a child whose problems are "immaturity" and "little initiative," a "talker," a "player," and a child Jerry describes as having "few good social skills." It appeared that Jerry had his hands full in trying to establish routine and build social cohesion. During an observation that same day, Jerry did something that seemed out of character for him. A child approached him with a paper he wanted help completing. Jerry took the paper, crumpled it, and threw it away, "What should you be doing first?" Jerry told me that he was working on following oral and written directions. "I told them to follow my oral and written directions. This is essential for third grade." Later, near lunchtime Jerry reads the names of children "who have work to do . .. which you will do at lunchtime." Preparing for lunch the children are "too noisy" and Jerry tells them, "It certainly is up to you." Kenneth is the first to find out "No talking after I leave." Jerry turns to a child and pats him on the shoulder, "Kevin, I appreciate your being quiet. I wish the others had been."

The following week Jerry sums up his goals and the struggles that occupy his mind and the classroom I visited. "A large portion of this class seems to belong to the Not Ready for Prime Time Players in regard to the second grade--many are just not emotionally ready. Some, though their records say differently, are not academically ready. Of the seven children in my below-grade-level reading group (1/2 below) only one knows long and short vowel sounds. Yet, to have progressed this far that is one of the basic skills. When they cannot distinguish kit from kite and have no idea of the difference between vowel sounds--well, I have to wonder . . . Of the things which have occupied my mind most of late I must list adaptation at the near top. I've had to adapt myself and my classroom to the particular bunch of kids. Not that you don't normally adapt. You just have certain expectations of children if they've progressed X far in certain areas. Well, I've certainly lowered my expectations, though hopefully merely temporarily. It's a wait-and-see situation."

One month later, on another visitation, Jerry involved me in some grading of the children's work. "Legible, punctuated, and completed" were the criteria. He then casually pointed to a group of seven children and commented "so much for grouping" as if to say "the top reading group doesn't mean they get their work done first--and the work is similar." He was rolling with the children's quiet conversations as they worked. A little while later, Jerry said, "We're going to do math now. We haven't done it for (days)." He gave the assignment. Children came to him with questions. He listened and helped as he could, more often directing them to their own answers than not. I wrote in my field notes, "Jerry seems more relaxed. . . He seems more flexible in his teaching--as to the schedule. He seems as if he is more at peace with the children, a very big difference

from a few weeks ago and the iron hand."

During the last observation involving the project (in November), Jerry continued to look and act like the more relaxed and satisfied teacher I had observed the previous spring. The children needed little direction from Jerry to get ready to chang classes. Jerry said, "We're going to get ready to go to music." A child automatically went to the front of the room while the others put their heads down ready to be called to line based on "quiet rows first." An incident with Paul frustrated Jerry. I watched him appear to struggle with himself. He slowly walked over to the "misbehaving" Paul and said softly, even affectionately, "Oh, Paul, Paul, Paul," and hugged him. Paul: "I hate hugs." Jerry: "Oh, I'm glad you told me. Now I'll hug you every day. [smiling] Do you know why I give you hugs? Would you rather have a hug or have me hit you?" He kindly heads Paul toward the line and says, "We need to go quietly on the right please."

During a post project observation and interview with Jerry in April, he talked of the year and class, "This is a strange year. This class is very different than any other, genetic, composition, makeup--they seem to be all separate entities, they can't seem to get it together as a unit. I tried in the beginning and it didn't work and I gave up . . . It doesn't come as a big surprise to me. I'll try this later. They mature fast and change quickly. They have started. Usually the class is pretty well together by this time of the year. This one isn't. We will probably have a different spring. We play ball games and I teach them. It will be different."

Summary of Project Participation

During the second half of the project and the more deeply Jerry "inspected" his teaching the more uncomfortable he became and the more questions he posed. His writing became less of a story that he was telling and more of an enquiry, albeit with one or seven extra pairs of eyes. Jerry ends by actively using the group to explore issues that have become important to him. Whereas he usually read segments of his writing that presented in Lortie's (1975) terms psychic rewards, he moves increasingly toward exploration of his environment, teaching and self questioning. He becomes aware of the complexity of teaching and gains skill in describing behaviors that "just happened" before. At times a defensiveness was seen when I posed questions, questions I would not have posed earlier. After one of the last visitations, Jerry wrote this in his diary along with responses to several questions I posed. "What you see in the classroom is certainly real, for we do nothing 'extra,' 'special,' or 'different' for ML when she comes in. I suppose what I base my statement on is what you don't see, in that you are much like a parent with visitation rights and

rarely get to see the whole, as opposed to aribtrarily selected parts . . ." He later said to me, "See! You're making me think!" This was not comfortable but it was "growth producing."

Just before the last observation visit, Jerry wrote the following in his diary. "Our group effort for Mary Lou will soon be over. I think of us and wonder what will become of us. I think of us and wonder what will become of us. For me, there will be an emptiness which will be difficult to fill. I want to continue writing and wonder if I will since the element of "have to" will disappear. I hope to. Also, since I enjoy a close relationship with some of my colleagues, I wonder if the other members of our "class" will even be more empty than I. What a remarkable and capable group we have. What will Mary Lou have gained? Worth her investment? Emotionally and timewise? What of your (Mary Lou's) feelings and bonds? Theoretically, we are supposed to be able to sever these ties. I wonder.

Jerry summarizes his thoughts in writing about the project writing, seminars, and observations during the last session. He first lists adjectives, then describes his feelings.

"Seminar	Visitation	Journal
friendly	friendly	challenging
trying	helpful	unstructured
insightful	interest producing	revealing
comraderie	thought provoking	helpful
warmth	fun	insightful
understanding	insightful	therapeutic
challenge	fast	thoughtful
questioning	incomplete	scary
open ended	open ended	gratifying
Experience	answers which produce more questions	questioning
TRUST		

The seminar gave me the feeling that I was never alone. That sense of comraderie has often saved my day when I've been overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness. I'm glad to know I do not stand alone. Also, we were presented numerous challenges, the least of which was not the close inspection and explanation of our own beliefs, values, judgments, etc. Defending one's position often calls for reflection and close inspection. Even while wrestling with my own feelings and motives verbally, I was always received with compassion and understanding. No better feeling than to trust one's peers enough to strip the verneer which masks your motives; inspect yourself and redress, to face tomorrow a bit more prepared.

"The visitations were a friendly, comfortable time, which often offered my children a small diversion in an

otherwise predictable day. Mary Lou, your observations and insights often helped me explain (accept, understand) my own teacher behaviors and motives. However, upon clarification came questioning: Is this it? Are we fluid or stationary? Do we accept this as final? That was my judgment (assessment). Was it my best? Is there an alternative? Time always passed too quickly. Isn't that life for you?!

"The journal was a close inspection. A chance, a delightful chance for me to speak my subjective mind and have someone actually read it. It makes all the difference in the world. It was often a chore. I realize, now, because I didn't necessarily want to confront myself.

"The journal offered insights and revealed a lot of my inner self to me. It admits that I care and commits me to my observations. Scary in a way. How often do we question ourselves?

Changes due to the project.

"I often over inspect my moves and motives. Usually feeling the need to justify my being teacher. I rarely did that before, compared to now.

"I try so very hard to control my anger, emotion. Anger is human. I sometimes feel I am stifling a human emotion which should be expressed. I do not wish to become too artificial. Too clinical. That scares me.

"I strive to be more empathetic and forgiving then ever before, though, certainly, other life factors are involved here.

"I've become reflective. I've doubted my effectiveness and usefulness.

"There is a side of me which spawns creativity. It has been more fruitful and powerful since being involved with this group. My poems have grown serious, at least more than before. I delight in myself when I write something witty or frivolous. I just wonder about the serious stuff.

"My philosophical nature rears its head more often. I'm not given to argument (taking a stand and defending it) as before. I let others babble on. I know myself and my own beliefs. My shortcomings and my downfalls. I know I do not have to defend myself anymore. I know believing is enough. I know I can change when I recognize the need. I keep my receptors open.

"Teaching, although very much a part of my life, is not the sum total of my life. I'm better able to separate the two, now. Again, I do not know to what extent this project has played in these changes, as my life has been full of many

exciting events beyond the project.

"I can say I've grown reflective. I move a bit slower--to savor instead of merely taste. I enjoy. I yield. I trust myself more--it opens many doors.

Judy

Judy was in her tenth and eleventh years of teaching second grade in a large K-6 elementary school during the project period. She and her husband, Kurt, had one young daughter and have since had another. During this period of time, they moved from a town bordering the school community to another town eight miles further from the district.

Being the first of three children and the only girl wasn't always easy for Judy, but she looks on her childhood as a happy one. Her family was and still is "close." "My mother always worked. I'm sure there was a time when she didn't, but I can't remember it." Her father "works as an accountant and as a custodian at the church. He was never a good businessman. He was always too kind. He should work for somebody else, not himself. He was a great father though." Judy grew up about 50 miles from where she teaches and 30 miles from where she and her family now live. She describes the community as a small "country setting." The elementary school was about one-third of the size of the one where she now teaches. "We had only one classroom of each grade level. The principal was very strong and very influential on me. He is now the top administrator at M.S.U.'s Evening School. He established ties with the parents; he encouraged parents to talk with him and my parents became friends with him . . . He was very strict. If you did something wrong, you could count life over! It was good. I don't see that in our school."

Judy rarely talks about herself, her family, or her education, not because she doesn't care but because it doesn't occur to her to do so. I asked her to write on why she became a teacher. "I've always wanted to be a teacher . . . When I was young, I would play school and use the wall as my 'pretend blackboard.' I can remember studying for tests by being the teacher and lecturing 'my students!' My mother's a school nurse and I can remember going to school functions and hearing people say, 'Are you going to be a nurse like your mother?' How I hated that question. I hated hospitals and anything to do with them. My mother's reply was 'No, she's going to be a teacher!' I honestly don't remember if she said that because that's what I wanted to be or because that's what she wanted me to be.

". . . when I began to teach and people would say, 'Oh, you get the summers off. What a good reason to teach.' I was shocked because I had never thought about the summer . . .

"My grandmother was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. We used to compare notes and when she'd come for a visit we'd go to school. I'd show her my room and we'd discuss how things had changed . . .

"When we were young we always attended school functions.

Not only hers [mother's] but ours. So the education system has always been an important part of our home life. A definite influence. Plus both my parents had higher degrees than high school--something that was unusual . . .

". . . teaching has always been a part of my life. I was even picked when I was in sixth grade to go to lower grades and teach when teachers had to leave for one reason or another and I received the FTA (Future Teachers of America) scholarship . . ."

Judy received her teaching degree in elementary education at a nearby university in January of 1971 and substitute taught locally for the remainder of the school year and assumed a position as second grade teacher the following fall. The summer after her fourth year of teaching she and her youngest brother went backpacking in England. "When I got there I cried. What am I doing here? I wondered. I wasn't his support; he was mine!"

Judy and her husband, Kurt, still enjoy camping but rarely find time for it now. Kurt works in a management position in business and finds it difficult to understand the draw of teaching for Judy. "He thinks we just play all day. I have invited him in to visit my room, but he won't come." It's difficult for Judy to talk about school at home, but she finds as Kurt attends school and progresses in his career, he seems more tolerant of her interest in teaching.

Though her teaching and family responsibilities do not leave much time for leisure activity, Judy loves to read. Preferably historical romances and books like Centennial. She likes camping, hiking, water skiing and "spending money!" Once when asked what she does for fun, she replied, "I clean. Friday night I got out my bottle of wine, turned on the stereo and cleaned, and it was fun. That's therapeutic. I enjoy it [husband was gone]. I used to get up at 4:00 to clean before school. It's my thought time. I remodel my house. I like to read. Oh, and wallpaper too--that's relaxing."

Professional Life

Other than the portion of a year that Judy took off to have Sherry, her daughter, she has been in a second grade classroom at Brown Elementary for the past 11 years.

Community, District, and School

Crockerton, like its neighboring town, Summerville, was settled by pioneers from New England. Unlike Summerville, it did not turn into a prosperous community. Without a well defined central business district and with farmland stretching in every direction, business development also spread in several directions. Stores and services cropped up haphazardly along the axis of two main east-west and north-south roads. During the 1940s and 1950s, large areas of land off the main roads were

the sites of low-cost, single-family homes built with government funding. The area remains a major thoroughfare for travelers and summer tourists with more fast-food restaurants and gas stations than its neighboring communities combined.

Mr. Wilkinson, a former art teacher and the principal at Brown Elementary, describes the school and neighborhood. "This school is very blue-collar. The parents do take an interest in the kids. They want and they appreciate good discipline. They have trouble at home, so they appreciate discipline here. They have a lot of neighborhood police squabbles. Often the parents argue over their unemployment lots. And there's the poorly run community too. People don't know which way they want to grow. The outskirts (of the community) are old-time, and then there's new commerce. It's diametrically different than Summerville. It's a closed shop. Very poor "aesthetics." I ran a private survey and found a large number of homes that don't get the newspaper. They are artistically deprived too. The houses aren't selling and there is the same level of population. It hasn't lost or gained.

"Eighty percent of the administrators and teachers live outside the district; the noncertified people live inside. The school system is generally supported with millage. They have confidence in the schools. We are highly state supported. We don't know about the state cutbacks yet. We are borrowing . . . syndrome of borrowing and borrowing . . . All in all though, the schools are sound.

"We're very traditional in our approach. We tend toward the three R's education. The community doesn't like deviating--they are down-home folks, not regressive or progressive. They appreciate the special services--L.D., EMR and tutoring. People are not very knowledgeable on how to run business. I guess 40% are non-high school, or just that, graduates. The school does well with what it has."

Mustard yellow buses drop the children off at the long-fronted, grey-beige, one-story, cement, block building. Bright yellow hallways, tiled walls and light, dull linoleum squares patterned for children to follow in a straight line, are adorned with craft projects, and unit work. The kitchen sits at the juncture of the three long hallways that comprise the school. Fish sandwiches, green beans, and french fries alternate with peanut butter, pizza and occasionally popcorn to occupy the air from wing to wing. Next to the kitchen and across the hall are bulletin boards and display cases that hold pictures of each grade level's 'student of the week,' art projects and community news.

Judy describes Brown Elementary in her diary. "Brown School is the oldest and largest of three elementary schools in Crockerton. It has approximately 500 students and houses K-6. There are three classes per grade level. We have 26 full-time teachers. We have a part-time math and L.D. tutor. We have a

full-time reading specialist and also a full-time L.D. specialist. Our building also houses two Special Education classes, 1-3 and 4-6. We have two music teachers who come in for primary music and one for upper grades. We also have two Physical Education teachers who come in during the week. We also have an art teacher who is there Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There's also a gifted program. Our building also houses the Psychology Department.

"Our building is old and always seems dirty. But we do have a great day custodian. He is continually busy and has a great rapport with the kids.

"We could use more rooms, but manage with what we have. Our workroom is a small area. There is no construction paper or ditto paper there. The construction paper is housed in the principal's office. We must go in and ask for a ream whenever we need it. Any thermofax paper is in the office. It seems we spend half of our time locating everything before we can utilize our free period.

"Our lounge is referred to as 'the pit.' It's next to the boiler room. We must descend into it. It's a gloomy place, but we manage to lighten it up with our laughter.

"Our clinic is located in the old girls' locker room. It's usually cool in there and they've put in two cots. We also have our rolls of paper stored there.

"The female teachers' restroom is part of another old locker room. We have no door so they've hung curtains.

"We have no cafeteria so the kids eat in the gym except first and second grades. They eat in their rooms and are teacher-supervised.

"Our staff is very close-knit. We work well together, and enjoy each other. If there are problems, we do pretty well at settling them ourselves.

"A little about my class--I have 18 children. I really enjoy them. It's a nice class to work with. We have two half-hour periods of music, one half-hour period each of art, gym, and library. We have an afternoon recess for one hour to 12:00 p.m. The first half-hour is monitoring the kids while they eat their lunch. The last half-hour is my lunch period.

"The second grades group for reading in the morning. We also get together for special projects."

Principal and Parents

Mr. Wilkinson points out that he has 18 years of teaching and administrative experience. When asked about his problems, wishes and satisfactions as principal, he smiles resignedly, and

between interruptions (children, phone, parent, cook) spells out just what comes to mind. "One problem is parents expecting you to be Dear Abby of the school system. During a verbal battle, a raised voice, you can have coffee but you can only cajole so much. I stick by the guns. Some think I'm God, some hate me. If I worry too much about it . . . I try to back teachers and to support them. I try to involve parents with problems. I have been known to paddle a child if there's been an injury or a blatant, off-the-wall offense. . . " Mr. Wilkinson is concerned about "two sides of the continuum who need help--the gifted and the opposite. It's a real challenge. That's my job but I've been reticent to deal with it. I have sent children to another school when I thought it was in the child's best interest. Sometimes I hit a block with the child and teacher--parents. It's good for the parents to stick up for the child but there is a point beyond . . . I'm in the middle of two sides. There isn't a communityness. Everybody sticks to their own yard. Maybe it's the transciency, 'I can't be involved.' And the teachers? Do they feel the same? The buck stops here.

"I'm trying to build school spirit and yet kids vandalize. I go after people who damage the property . . . I don't have many frustrations with the kids because I have dealt with them for so long.

"A minor frustration is that I'd like teachers to take charge more. Some teachers do, but there is a lot of lounge time. Lots of misinformation and heresay; lots of problems get started here. The syndrome is easy to get into. It's especially hard with student teachers who can develop unhealthy opinions . . . hard to deal with. I can't put up a list of do's and don'ts. There's nobody I can level with--not as an administrator or as a person. . .

"I'd like to work more in classrooms. . . rather work with kids and programs. Not so much assessing the teacher's job. It's a person-to-person thing. I'd like to work with other teachers, get out into the community.

"I'd like to commisurate with other principals but I don't get the chance. I used to belong to an association but now I can't spare the time."

When asked to describe his day he quickly mentioned what he likes to do, "I like to spend a moment to visit each class each day--see what lesson plans they are doing. I want the kids to know I'm here. Also gives the opportunity for me to be there if the teacher needs something." Although "I've tried to structure my day--the book company salesman drops in, Johnny just threw up, the cook said she just ran out of this, and that parent needs to see me. My time plan is shot but I guess it is better that way. A principal has to be every man and can't be. It's easy for teachers to be 'castle oriented.' They have a problem, 'I need seven workbooks.' I borrow from other schools . . . so much to collate--phone calls . . . It takes time--too

much . . .

"I do get involved with kids with needs. I sit through meetings and follow through. My handicapped kids I know well. That's a strength for me. The bulk of things I hope are ok."

Parents are invited to school for music programs, plays, and parent teacher conferences and they are frequently seen at Brown dropping off or picking up their children or bringing forgotten books or assignments. Judy has frequent conversations with parents at school but more often she speaks with them on the telephone. Usually, but not always, Judy initiates the conversation which revolves around difficulties with the child. She has a room mother each year who assists with parties.

Inside Judy's Classroom

Entering the classroom from the front, right-hand side, one sees a fairly large bright classroom. The front of the room is lined with green bulletin boards. The far side is a series of windows covered by drawn shades (because the morning sun beats in, and then again, the view is only a small patch of grass between Judy's classroom and another classroom in a parallel wing of the building). The back wall is lined with large bulletin boards that Judy changes each month. One bulletin board is always devoted to a large calendar of the month, while the others are frequently used to display "Super Star" or "Best" work and craft projects (shamrocks, owls). The time of month when Judy must change the bulletin board seems to come too quickly and adds to the demands on Judy's time--most notably grading and lesson planning. On the hall wall there is an indented space where Judy sets up a display table with pictures, objects and books related to a unit. One time it will be nutrition and food groups, the next time, dinosaurs and prehistoric life. The rest of this wall is taken with wooden closets for the children's coats and lunches.

Not being a person to waste resources, Judy pins language arts materials, posters and other visual aids to learning to the window shades. Under the windows on bookshelves, books beckon to children who have finished their work. A small rhododendron, a vase or two with flowers brought by the children and a small candy jar are permanent items on Judy's desk, which is in the back of the room next to the windows.

A kind, but nevertheless firm discipline, not unlike the military were it designed for children, is encountered in the halls and in Judy's room. For example, when materials needed to be passed out the following was said, "Ok, I need a boy leader and a girl leader. Also, I'm going to pick three straight people to pass out paper. [Most children straighten in their seats.] I'm looking for someone quiet. [Judy calls on two children and starts calling rows. Then the 'leaders' call other children.] Shh. Do I hear voices? Am I going to have to write down names [on the board for loss of privileges]? Remember, I'm

looking for two quiet people to be paper passer outers."

Like other project teachers, Judy feels a strong obligation to move the children along so they meet grade level "standards." She is particularly concerned with children who she refers to in her writing as "the lowest readers in the second grade." According to Judy, it is difficult to move the children along at grade level when they begin the year below grade level. She uses several strategies to make school work more interesting including the frequent use of verbal proddings and light-hearted competition which seem to work well for her. Judy relies substantially on verbal praise and other reinforcements to motivate the children especially when she perceives that the content to be taught has little to interest them. During a reading group, she asks "Do you think your parents would like the girl in the story? Why not? . . . When we have finished this we will have done three days of work in one day . . . [to Chris] Chris, this is a really big assignment, like in junior high. This is more homework than Ryan's group got, so you're one up on him, don't you think? Tomorrow we'll read into the tape recorders. Tonight you have these three pages. Now, if everyone does their homework, I'll do something extra special . . ."

Knowing that many of the children have "difficult home lives," Judy is concerned that the children "have a good day" at school. She once commented, "I asked the kids if they had a good weekend--they said no--you don't think of that." Writing on self evaluation, Judy wrote, "My most common questions seem to be 'Have I utilized my time? Have the concepts for the day been absorbed? What could have been better? What was good? Any new behavior patterns in individuals or the class? Was there a child who needed a little extra love? Did I compliment the kids enough? Did I make it a positive day?'"

Early in her writing Judy writes about her weaknesses and strengths as a teacher. ". . . I need to work more at developing my centers. I have many games but I need more and I need to put my centers into use more as part of my curriculum. . . after spring break I'll lessen the seatwork and make one learning game a day as part of my seatwork time.

"Sometimes I give one chance too many. If I tell a child to do something, he should do it. I hear myself saying, 'this is your last chance.' It's not really effecting my discipline, but I do need to be more consistent.

"I have good rapport with my kids. I really enjoy working with this class. They are fun and a group of nice kids. I can understand many of their feelings and empathize with them. I believe that school shouldn't be all work and so we take time to sit back and have fun as a group. The kids enjoy this. It makes for a relaxed atmosphere.

"I think I am a pretty good disciplinarian. I demand

respect from the chidlren and I give them respect in return. There's a time for work and quietness and a time for play. The kids know the rules.

"I'm willing to try new ideas and techniques. There's always room for improvement and a new technique might brighten up the day.

"Also, I'm a pretty happy and cheerful person. I don't get really down too often. I think this helps. My co-workers can sense this and I know my kids can. Kids don't want to come to school if they have a 'sourpuss' for a teacher. School should be a happy place where learning is fun."

With these things in mind Judy brings a big doll, "Susy," to teach nutrition to the children; she cooks with the children at school including a full-blown bacon-and-eggs breakfast planned, cooked, served and eaten by the children; and she teaches units including dinosaurs for which they perform a dinosaur opera for the parents and other school children.

Demonstrating "having fun with the kids," flexibility, and benevolent discipline, Judy describes "a nice day" when the gym teacher was absent. "Had to teach my own gym class today. We had a good time. We played with the parachute. Albert didn't listen. He was sent to the sidelines to sit. He eventually rejoined the group--without permission. I didn't say anything. He behaved much better."

Judy is aware that what is "fun" one year might not be the next. After the yearly dinosaur unit and its dinosaur opera (and at the end of the day), Judy shook her head as if she was hearing herself as the words slipped honestly from her mouth, "To tell you the truth, I'm sick of dinosaurs. I don't think the kids know anymore about them now than they did two weeks ago. They got bored." Given the directed enthusiasm Judy showed during the dinosaur work, these realizations might come as a surprise. There were, however, signs in Judy's diary of the week before that make her statement a logical extension, even an applicaton of thoughts about the "goldfish bowl" nature of teaching. During the past two seminar sessions, teacher evaluation was discussed and written about. Judy's diary entry will be quoted in entirety here, because it gives us a feel for her philosophy and those things she values in teaching although it is number 3 that speaks to the conclusion of the dinosaur unit.

Teacher Evaluation

"We are evaluated twice a year--first semester [Judy is the only project teacher to be evaluated each year. The others had evaluations only in their first years] and second semester with a cumulative form after the second. It's a checklist with observers' comments and teachers' comments.

"Teacher evaluations should also include the everyday performance of a teacher--the overall 'feeling' a teacher gives.

"1. Some of the things that should be included are (1) children's attitudes as a whole--there are always kids with poor attitudes or discipline problems. You can't erase what's been instilled at home, but as a class, do the kids seem happy; are they courteous and know the school rules? The overall outward appearance of the group; of course, this will change somewhat year by year--depending on what kind of group of kids are included in the class. But if there's an underlying firmness and understanding between students and teachers, the outward appearance will be pretty much the same.

"2. Is the teacher creative? Certainly every teacher's creativity level is different. For instance, Mary Sue is extremely creative. She can take 'nothing' and make it into 'something!' But for those of us who don't have that 'gift,' there's always books, workshops and other teachers!

"3. Are there some fun and really learnable units with projects for others to see?

"I'm noticing a trend. Please don't take this as a negative point, but much of teaching is the 'showiness.' How others see it. Teachers, parents and administrators--but then again any profession has this. After all, doesn't life have this quality? It's how others see us.

"It seems that many times we prepare bulletin boards, work in the hall, to some extent even lesson plans--for others to evaluate. I'm not complaining. This is a part of life.

"4. Does the teacher have a workable discipline? Some of us need a more constructive and quiet room--a more 'constructive noise.' It depends on the person. But no matter what atmosphere of learning there is, there must be a discipline that all can function under.

"5. Does the teacher get the concepts across to the children? (The list could include more and as I think about it, I'll ad more.)

"The overall appearance (not physical) of the teacher. Her attitude, her professionalism, really determines how one is evaluated. Certainly the administrator cannot separate his one observation in the classroom with what he has observed all year long.

"Though many feel that only the immediate observation and not other things should be written on the teacher's evaluation.

"I like the idea of a cumulative form that gives the overall job of the teacher instead of just the two in-class observations."

The first several criteria deal with attitude, creativity, motivation, and management. The last numbered criteria is "instruction." The afterthoughts are more akin to the first four and summarize for Judy the "gestalt." She doesn't want to be evaluated by a rigid standard but leaves room throughout for teacher individual differences (consistent with Lortie, 1975). When asked to write on how she evaluates her work she wrote the following.

"It's interesting, but even after a good day, I think of ways to make it better. A lot of my self evaluation is unconscious. After all these years, it's become part of my daily routine. There seems to be some point during the day that I get a 'TV view' of the day's happenings. Don't let the 'TV view' be a bad connotation. It's just a picture of the day in my mind. It may come in the late morning or at lunch. It may reappear again between language and social studies. I may get a flash at recess as I watch the kids interact or even after the buses have departed for the day. Then again 'it' may not even appear at school. Kelly [teacher] and I don't have a lot of conversation on the way home. It's a transition time for both of us. I rethink my day and what I need to accomplish and she rests or enjoys the scenery. We do visit, but we have our quiet times. Dish time is my 'deep thought!' time. It sure helps to pass that unenjoyable chore! Sometimes it even appears after I go to bed, but I try not to bring school to bed. I might never get to sleep!!

"I think my first step in self evaluation is to get the 'TV view.' Then I begin to 'feel.' Such feelings as success, a feeling of accomplishment, an I'm OK feeling--the positive feelings--then of course there are the feelings of depression, the sense of things left unfinished--that is the unorganized feeling. Also I begin to think of things I should have done or a situation I should have handled differently.

"The kids also clue me into what kind of day it's been. If they have been smiling with a lot of good-byes, I know we've had a good day and enjoyed each other.

"Many times if the days begin unorganized or the kids have been hyper all day, they leave that way. Buses are being called and people don't have their coats or they aren't listening or they don't have their books, papers in order. Of course, there are always a few who seem to be the last ones organized in the morning and evening. Billy, Todd, and Dawn!

"My most common questions seem to be 'Have I utilized my time? Have the concepts for the day been absorbed? What could have been better? What was good? Any new behavior patterns in individuals or the class? Was there a child who needed a little extra love? Did I compliment the kids enough? Did I make it a positive day?'"

Frustrations and Dilemmas of Teaching

Many, perhaps most, of the frustrations and dilemmas Judy faces can be related to a clash between an image of teaching and the realities of teaching. Relatively few of them concern "instruction." What a teacher is "supposed to accomplish" is often in conflict with the children, the resources and supports available and used, and complications beyond Judy's ability to control.

Judy, like other project teachers, is highly critical of her teacher preparation, lamenting that it didn't prepare her for "real life" of the classroom. The "real life" consists of individual children who aren't "at grade level" and who bring problems from home to school; of parents who face difficult financial and emotional problems; of little opportunity for interaction with other educators; and of little support, financial or human, to deal with problems. Judy feels the weight of making important decisions that affect the children in her care each day, yet she resents the highly limited power she has to give input on educational matters that are outside her jurisdiction. She feels caught between her roles and responsibilities and the power and status to make decisions and to have adequate resources to fulfill her obligations (perceived and demanded).

To Judy, teaching second grade means to take children from second to third grade; to teach them the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to continue at the third grade level. Problems that prevent this from being a smooth transition are presented under the categories of: curriculum, children, adult support, working conditions, and time.

Curriculum. The curriculum is fairly well defined in Brown Elementary by the textbooks used. Even some of the "units" designed (dinosaurs) are taught in the other second grades too. Tests over specified content help Judy determine the readiness and progress of the children. The discrepancies between where some of the children are functioning and "grade level" (and more importantly but less frequently mentioned, where Judy feels the child is capable of functioning) are a source of frustration for her throughout the year. In the beginning of the school year, for example, Judy writes, "I have only two children who are ready to read on grade two level and those are two repeaters. All the other kids are still on grade one. I only have four out of 21 who have one more book before they begin grade two level." In January, "I still have only one group in second grade reading and I'm really pushing."

During report card preparation in March Judy echoes a dilemma that she wrestles with all year, year after year. "How I hate report cards. I worked during lunch and my free period to get them done. But I feel like I'm 'playing God.' You'd think after 10 years it's someting that I'd get used to. It's particularly disturbing because since our group [project

seminar] meeting last Thursday I feel really 'out of tune.' Our cards are really outdated. Very few systems are giving ABCs--I knew this from transfers in but it's still disturbing. How can I give a child a D when he or she is really trying? . . . I don't like it." On another day Judy wrote several pages of rationale for her frustration with grading policy. "Boy I hate our system of doing [comparison] grades . . . What about the child who does the best that he or she can and still has to be graded according to the rest of the class? Totally unfair. And if there is any way possible to do something about 'this child,' I try to. Children are individuals. They should be graded individually."* (Note the similarity to teachers being evaluated individually.) Summarizing her frustration during an interview, Judy said, "I feel like I'm teaching him to fail. I have to give him low grades to keep him back. His parents just can't see it. He's cute, a really nice kid.** That's frustrating." (**Each time Judy wrote or spoke about a child who was having difficulty achieving "grade level," she qualified her statement with "good qualities" or her affection toward the child.)

Retention of children who do not attain curricular objectives pose difficulties. "Am I making the right decision?" "How do I grade him?" "How will I convince the parents?" Judy was made acutely aware of the consequences of one such decision. "I had Tod last year. He's now in third grade with Sherry [teacher] and comes to me for reading. He fits in well with my class. Why didn't I retain him? Why did I send him on? There are no excuses, especially when we're discussing a child's life. But I wonder why I made the wrong decision. I feel terrible. I do want to talk to Mrs. Taylor and let her know how sorry I am. As if that can undo what's been done. Thinking back, I can remember Mary Lou when you were in and Tod and David 'worked' together. They were on the same level. I retained David and not Tod. I wrote much more about David and Albert. I really should have written more about Tod. I've really concluded that if I had devoted as much time (written time) to him as I did to the other two boys--he'd be with second grade . . . I just can't believe I made such a mistake with a child. They're saying (principal and other teacher) that because he was LD we were hoping for more tutoring time--that's why he went on. But that's only an excuse. Actually, I've been using it too because I feel as if I need something to fall back on, when what I really need to be is Honest . . . At least I've learned from this mistake. Not to be so centered on a few. To write about all. Perhaps I'm being a little hard on myself--But it is my fault." Ten days later Judy writes of her meeting with Tod's mom and dad, the principal, Sherry, the school psychologist, the L.D. tutor and L.D. teacher. "I had seen Mom last week and apologized. But after the meeting I talked to both and told them that I was sorry I had to have them go through this and that I should have foreseen this. That I really like Tod and perhaps some of my feelings entered into my decision . . . I hadn't been objective. Tod hasn't been to school this week. He's had a high temperature. Today he left for school but went

back home. He's having trouble coping. Not coming back to me, but what older kids will say . . . Naturally this conference was very upsetting. I cried half way home and decided what's done is done. I learned . . ."

Children. "If kids could only voice in words other than behavior some of their feelings. For that matter if adults would only do the same--then again how many teachers, peers, etc. would really listen and try to help? I'm afraid not as many as we'd like to think." Judy tries to listen and help. She finds the complexity and human qualities of her children difficult to content with. Teaching successfully, and that portion termed "instruction" is dependent on human relationships, or so Judy feels. "I got the kids started on their seatwork and was sitting at my desk doing a few things before reading, when Carla came up crying very hard. This is not like Carla at all. She told me that she didn't feel well. In the next breath she said that Grandpa was in the hospital and that Grandma was going to the doctor--I have a feeling that she's worried about everyone. Mom also hasn't been feeling well. Found out at lunch that she may have rheumatoid arthritis . . . All this must be upsetting Carla . . . it really disturbed me all day. Because even though as teachers we shouldn't have children who we like more or enjoy more than others--we do--because we are human beings and it's part of human nature. I recognize this and so I really try to be fair with everyone. And I really do like Carla!!"

Like Jerry [another project teacher], Judy voices concern for children who have physical difficulties, like two children who have hearing problems, but she also notes that the children "don't listen and tune me out" when she feels they should try to listen and apply themselves harder. She and Jerry (another project teacher) feel that children need to take responsibilities and meet grade levels of achievement and behavior. She also indicates that the child "shouldn't be made to feel special," shouldn't be "pampered," and needs to feel like "one of the group."

Judy's concern for the children on a personal level can be seen in much of her writing related to frustrations and dilemmas. "I asked the kids if they had a good weekend. They said 'No.' You don't think of that." Judy does think about that--about the children in her room who are neglected and as she calls it, "deprived." She often hears of the children's home problems from her colleagues and writes about them in her diary. Several times Judy wrote of children who were "artistically good" but academically poor. She noted in at least two places in her diary that this dichotomy of achievement seems to her colleagues and herself to be a "pattern." "Tommy is a very good artist--probably the best I've had but he can't get himself organized and that frustrates me." Often Judy qualifies problems with individual children (often "artistic" ones) by referring to the child's need to succeed in the future which is not as certain nor congenial as the present.

Commenting further on tactics to help Tommy, she said, "We went to MacDonald's for ice cream, but they won't do that next year."

Parents. Parents pose dilemmas for Judy when she perceives their personal difficulties, when the parents she most wants to see cannot attend parent-teacher conferences and when she perceives parental opinion supercedes the lay-professional boundary in decision making (retention, curriculum). In all of these instances Judy thinks that she understands different viewpoints but she feels powerless to influence change that she perceives necessary. An example of the personal problems of parents comes from Judy's diary. "Connie's mom and I had a long talk. She's going through a divorce. I think she's handling it remarkably well. She has four girls and works nights and I think it helped her to talk. It's interesting, but many times parents need to share about themselves. But after all, this affects their kids' lives too. I assured Connie's mom that Connie is well behaved and that she really tries for me. This really made mom feel better. It's something that she doesn't need to worry about. She really cares about her family."

An example of the dilemmas that recur in Judy's thoughts are recorded in her diary. She and several colleagues had discussed "retention" over lunch one day. They talked about "the system's policy to let parents have final say in a child's retention." They compared systems and teachers voiced their opinions. Judy finds herself agreeing with differing viewpoints at the same time as she often does. "Several felt that the teacher--who has worked every day, day in day out--knows what would be most beneficial for that child. This I agree with. On the other hand, several felt the parents have the right to make the final decision as they are responsible for that child (I also agree with this).

". . . this can be taken one step further . . . How much say should parents have in the school? Should they decide what report card is best for the system--as ours does? Actually, the Board of Education does, but they're made up of parents. . . Should parents have final say in retention if the teacher knows for certain (or as certain as possible since nothing is certain) that the child won't be able to function adequately--or well in the next grade level? Should parents decide on what books should be purchased for the system?

". . . I feel our system lets the parents make too many of these decisions. I feel that I am entrusted with their child but not trusted with their children's futures . . ."

Administrators. "Sometimes other teachers and administrators [are sources of frustration]. They're talking next year about a pre-first grade because the children are young. They want one teacher to take pre and then to put her into second grade. The teacher last year had to call and tell the parents. We're here to do a job but nobody lets us know when we feel we know best . . ." Not being consulted when she

feels she is in a position to be helpful and not being supported when she follows school policies are two continuing sources of frustration related to the building administrator. After the principal adopted a plan for building discipline, Judy found that he was not present to carry out his duties. "Our principal is to come around to punish the offenders [children in the hall rather than doing seatwork]. This is a new program. Naturally he's out of the building. This won't be a very effective program if he doesn't carry it through. The principal never did return. Guess I'll have to punish them myself tomorrow."

In both of these examples Judy expresses frustration at the thwarting of her professional responsibilities; first through lack of use of her professinal perspective and secondly, by failure to follow through with teacher support, and further, in this case, to a school-wide discipline policy she did not have a hand in designing.

Judy only occasionally mentioned or wrote about administrators. Communication problems seemed to her to be simply "part of the job," something she couldn't do much about but clearly something she wished would improve. ". . . I know I'm idealistic, but I still think there should be a point where administrators and teachers can sit and talk. After all, the kids are most important and there has to be a point where we can talk."

In addition to the difficulties Judy faces with a "standard" curriculum and comparative grading policy, and people who she depends upon to promote, or at least not sabotage her work on the child's behalf: children, parents, and administrators, Judy finds that working conditions are not always conducive to accomplishing her goals as she defines them.

<u>Working Conditions</u>. Though Judy infrequently complains about school and teaching conditions, she does write regularly about working conditions, almost casually mentioning that "We haven't had any heat in the building this week [in February]" and "The day we didn't have water last week . . ." On a Wednesday in March Judy wrote of three typical problems. The first is an example of unpleasantness of the kind that frequently marks her work in a classroom with second graders; the second relates an example, a "minor" event and interaction that takes on larger proportions; and the third relates to Judy's responsibility for children while in other teachers' rooms. "We were talking this morning--three or four teachers. Karen happened to mention about how Kathy's house smells (cats). One of her youngsters visited Kathy's house. So naturally at reading with Kathy sitting next to me I smelled the odor. Imagination?! No. It was an odor. Of course this is the first time I've been able to smell anything all week! What we in the teaching profession must put up with . . .

"Lost the yellow lunch charge slip of Ralph's. This was like losing a holy piece of paper . . . The head cook was really

nice to me until she thought about it. She let me know she wasn't happy about it. They make such a 'to-do' about these. So many people have misplaced them and have really been treated terribly. Too bad they don't make a big 'to-do' about some . . . more important things . . . I'm sure I'll be ranted and raved at and then I'll find it.

". . . Albert sat in Music and deliberately tore a page of his book. We talked about it and he didn't even seem remorseful. . . I'll call his mom. . ."

As spring rolls around, Judy becomes more conscious of the closed quarters of her classroom. ". . . don't parents check to see if their kids are washed up? I guess dirty kids are beginning to bother me a little. This usually isn't a big thing. It must be the clean, fresh spring weather and being in a room with little bodies and some of them very dirty." Judy commented more than once during visits and seminar sessions on the inadequate cleanliness of a few of the children and of the building.

Judy frequently wrote or told of problems of attitude and relationships affecting her colleagues and herself--an aid who commented that "These teachers should be glad they have a job! A paycheck."; a library aid who snapped at a colleague of Judy's admonishing her to be consistent in her behavior with what she asked of the children, this in front of another aid and the children; the tears of a beleaguered and ill colleague whose duties required her to continue to teach; and the mainstreaming of a physically handicapped child into the kindergarten without support for the child or the teacher.

Judy, as she writes, "is rarely really down" in spirit. An undercurrent of sadness rises to the surface every now and then, for example, as when she heard a more experienced teacher talking of her feelings of "burnout." "It's demoralizing." Similarly, Judy is influenced by newspaper articles that are derogatory toward the schools. The school system where she teaches had a teacher strike a few years ago and still bears scars. A neighboring system strike plus the attitudes of some of the parent aids continue to bother Judy. "I get the feeling that Martha, Jane, and the math tutor as well as the PTA president are watching the teachers to see all that they're doing wrong. This goes back to the strike and these four people have been very nasty at one time or another to most of us . . . these four seem to find fault and small infractions that . . . the principal doesn't mind and rules that he doesn't feel are . . . important . . ." "It sounds like this situation bothers me and I guess it does . . ."

Time. A consistent theme throughout Judy's writing is lack of time. "There is never enough!" And this is from the beginning of the year until its close in June.

In March Judy writes, "Very interesting on the way to

school I thought about things I needed to get done. There was nothing in those thoughts about the kids. It was all completing bulletin boards, grading papers and getting everything ready for averaging grades." On the next day she noted a subject she would think further about. "Well, here it is. Lesson plan day. It seems every day I have so much paperwork that must be completed. I'm seeing a pattern here. Paperwork vs. child time." Judy resolves to use more time for creative, "personal" experiences but runs into another dilemma. ". . . we wrote an experience chart about the books that each child wrote--afterwards we sat and visited--talked for a while--at the beginning of this project I told the kids that I wasn't grading them on this. After all, it was something personal, a part of themselves. Today I asked the kids, "If you had been graded, would you have done a better job?" "Yes." "Mine would have been neater." "I would have colored mine better." "I wish you would have given us a grade." Then I asked the kids if they felt that everything they did in life should be graded. They said, "yes." This all really upset me . . . where's the self satisfaction? . . . creativity? . . ."

In April she writes of feeling pressed for time at school and at home. "I've been so aware of time--the year's running out--the kids need to learn so much more; there's so much I want to instill them with. There just isn't enough time. Then of course there is the room to prepare for next year and I have cupboards to clean and end-year reports to do. I feel like the rabbit in Alice in Wonderland with his watch.

"Plus there's so much at home to do--packing, a birthday party and baby shower to give, some furniture to paint and refinish. All within two months!"

Sources of Joy and Satisfaction

In general, Judy seemed to write about, talk about, and perhaps experience more satisfactions and joys in the spring term. Why this might be so is difficult to know. It might be that the routine is established; the children have matured and adapted to their second grade roles and responsibilities. Judy might feel more relaxed, even resigned in some ways, to the rhythms of the children, knowing who to push, how hard, and having come to terms with the reasons for some of the children's progress and perceived lack of it. Then again, the end of school might be in sight and a little of the pressure present at the beginning of the year with the entire year's work yet to be done might have slowly subsided as the curricular path was trod. Both Judy and the children might have settled into each other's ways of being at school. Other possibilities exist. Perhaps the second part of the school year holds different sources of satisfaction and these are more visible, more easily identified by Judy. Then again, there might be no differences but because of Judy's continuing writing and project participation, she became more critical at the second part of the project which corresponded with the fall term of school. Though time was a

concern to Judy throughout the project, it seemed more bound to frustrations during the latter part of the project, fall term. Though Judy's writing and discussion appears to contain more satisfactions and a tone of contentment, several areas that recur throughout the year can be identified. As was noted under the previous section regarding frustrations, Judy observes in her writing that frequently home and school moods mingle for the children and for herself. This will be addressed, then: children, curriculum, colleagues, parents and a few additional sources of satisfaction.

The preoccupation with and weight of school work is magically lifted in this writing of April. "What a beautiful day! I'm sitting on the front steps. The baby and Kurt are sleeping. The sun's so warm and it's so nice to take time to hear the birds. We don't take enough time to stop and use our senses and really 'feel' our surroundings--not only with nature but with the kids too. I have 19 different people in my room and 19 different reasons as to 'what makes them tick.' It's important to sit back and think about it.

"I took a personal day today--to pack, get some phoning done and enjoy my daughter. I don't get to really see her during a 'normal' day because we run so much on the weekends. It's fun to watch her play and entertain herself. We 'blew bubbles' for the first time today. What fun to watch her facial expressions at discovering. It reminds me of Jerry's [project teacher] thoughts on how it's important to let kids talk and really be a listener because they're constantly discovering." In addition to pointing out the pleasure Judy feels at moments of quiet reflection, this passage also contains sources of satisfaction that Judy feels in other instances of teaching: watching the children's expressions at discovery, taking time away from the normal "hurry" of events to "just spend time" with the children and listening to the child rather than listening for a specific response.

Judy sometimes found that as she met deadlines and had to immerse herself in activity that she felt a sense of accomplishment as she "caught up" at home. ". . . I feel a sense of accomplishment . . . Last night was open house and I hadn't seen Kurt for a couple of days! And today I was able to get supper made for tomorrow. Laundry done and Carol (my sister-in-law) and I had to go shopping. Guess I'm patting myself on my back. The week certainly has improved. . ."

"Good days" for Judy are frequently before vacations or on Fridays, and they seem to be related to a relaxed attitude, one that allows her to step back from the academic stress and concern about time to reflect on the child's point of view. "Good day. After all, it's Friday! I've been so busy with things at home--I can feel it here. I'm very preoccupied. It's good to remember that the kids are the same--what's happening at home is brought to school. It's something I need to remember more often. Kids are growing up in an adult world with

continual adult supervision and control. Sometimes we as adults should let them alone more frequently--or even if possible get down to their level for a while and have some 'kid fun.' After all, we all have a little bit of 'kid' in us! At least we should!"

By far, most of the citations from Judy on the joys and satisfactions of teaching are related to personal, affective experiences with the children.

Children. Moments of joy occur when Judy "sees" the child's expression when a concept "clicks," "when I hear a child say 'I like school,' and when she sees evidence that the children, or more often, a given child has matured. Growth that Judy writes about and points out in the classroom is more often concerning social development, of the child "fitting in" where he did not before though she cites numerous examples of satisfaction over a child's academic achievement too. "Seeing how kids have matured [is a satisfaction]. Watching kids interact planning breakfast. Tod today had a small tantrum--seems no one wanted him in their group for weekly reader. Actually I think Tod didn't get in there [another classroom soon enough] to join a group. But the kids really tried to let him know they cared. David picked up his chair and went over to Tod and really made him feel special. Hats off to David. There's maturity here too. It wasn't here at the beginning of the year." Even academic achievement is related to the child's self concept (Judy does not use these words) and ability. A child, for example, who cannot read at grade level but progresses at a perceived good pace is a reason for cause for celebration though Judy adds quickly that if the child is expected next year to be on "grade level," the child will be back in a difficult situation. Thus, Judy's dilemma over grading. The joy she feels at a child's progress is tempered by perceived expectations and grading policies.

Curriculum. Not surprisingly, many of the occasions of satisfaction and reflection occur when deadlines (bulletin board changes, grading) are met and over. "I did get many things accomplished and enjoyed the kids"; and when Judy can set out of her role as "instructor." "[When the children cooked] Breakfast--the kids enjoyed it. [It was a] relaxing time and I got a chance to watch them interact. As I get more done, paperwork, etc., I'm able to sit back and enjoy the kids. I've really enjoyed and appreciated this class and I will miss them. I wnat some 'time for us' where schoolwork isn't of importance but where our feeling of friendship can surface . . ."

More often than not satisfactions occur as the standard curriculum documents (textbooks) are deviated from: breakfast, educational fair units and projects, creative writing, art. As earlier noted, Judy points out the "showiness" of teaching. At times throughout the year, she writes with pleasure about viewing the children's projects and performances. Pleasure appears to be derived from the children's accomplishments, from

visible products of effort and from the recognition that occurs as a result to the children and to Judy. Such "public" efforts have the added benefit of visiting with parents.

Parents. "Had the educational fair in the p.m. for the families. I really enjoyed seeing a lot of the parents. The educational fair is a good PR thing. We put up the kids' work and do projects. It's fun to walk through all the rooms. . ." and "Mrs. Carlton [parent] at the spring program complimented me on a nice job. Invited me swimming this summer. Nice feeling!!

"Just to have parents, not even from this class, come by to talk [is a joy]. . . no time during the school year." One of the reasons Judy cites for enjoying her time with the parents is "I can always see a lot of the children in their parents."

Colleagues. A sense of empathy and camaraderie with colleagues permeates Judy's diary and her offerings during project seminar discussions. She enjoys an "open," "informal" relationship with most of her colleagues in the primary wing of Brown Elementary. Perhaps because most of the teachers are about the same age (though her closest friend is several years older), "Our interests are a lot alike." Pregnancies, family problems, educational endeavors, school circumstances, even the teaching of children from the same families are common bases and appear to promote communication. Judy frequently writes of information she gains from colleagues during informal discussion that is useful in teaching. There are also several examples in Judy's writing of empathy for teachers both from perspectives of pleasure for them and commisuration with them.

Sharing ideas, problems, and experiences with colleagues is an important part of Judy's life at school. She particularly enjoys meeting with "new" teachers from outside the district.

Professional and Staff Development and Colleagues

Mr. Wilkinson said that he nominated Judy for what he calls "teacher of the year." Each year the Tabatha Foundation funds one teacher from a school to attend a series of lectures (usually with a meal included) by well known educational scholars. Judy never mentioned this. When asked about it she said that it had been important to her mother and family. "I got a lot from the lectures but I didn't think of it as a big deal."

The principal notes that he has a "young staff." He uses formal channels such as monthly inservice education sessions, and he discusses and shares guidelines of mandated professional development responsibilities such as graduate coursework with each teacher, and informal means like slipping educational articles and materials in the teachers' mailboxes as well as dropping in to each classroom as often as time permits.

Judy feels that the "inservice" sessions are sometimes

quite helpful. "We had an after-school inservice on child abuse, four of them. We learned what to look for and the different kinds of abuse. It really made me more aware of it."

During once-a-month staff meetings, Judy learns of things "I didn't think about before." For example, the superintendent presented the budget at a meeting in the beginning of the year; a child welfare worker presented information and discussed teacher questions on another occasion.

Although there are planned teacher and parent teacher events (mother-daughter night, school fair), Judy finds that some of the most useful interactions take place informally or inadvertently as part of planned events. "We had the educational fair in the PM for families. I really enjoyed seeing a lot of the parents. The fair is a good PR thing. We put up the kids' work and do projects. It's fun to walk through all the rooms. It's interesting but things have happened as a result of the fair . . . [but] this isn't a conferring time. Too many people are milling around and want to visit . . . Sharon [a first grade teacher] and I were talking this morning about Albert [a child in Judy's room]. (Sharon is a friend of the family.) Norma (Albert's mom) had a chance to talk to Sharon last night . . ." Because of Judy's conversation with Sharon, she called Norma and found some serious difficulties Albert was experiencing at school that Judy had not been aware of. Several similar examples could be cited.

Casual conversations in the hallway before school and during lunchtimes when Judy eats in the teacher's lounge often provide valuable information that affects Judy's behavior in the classroom. Frequently Judy learns of family circumstances in this way. All of the teachers in Judy's wing of the building teach lower elementary grades and are fairly familiar with most of the children and their families, which allows them to comment and expand on talk of the children.

Though Judy always valued these conversations (especially those she regularly engages in with her closest friend and senior colleague, Janet, who teaches across the hall) unconsciously, it wasn't until late in the project that she ceased feeling guilty for "wasting time" talking when she "should have been preparing materials for the day" and recognized this as a valuable use of her time "for my mental health."

It appears that professional development and "mental health" are facilitated in many different ways. Casual conversations before school with Janet help to bring a positive frame of mind for the day. Talk with other teachers, in the hall or lounge, helps Judy to learn information about the children and their families that is useful to her in her teaching. Rides home with her colleague [before Judy moved] were often valued as "quiet times" when little needed to be said but Judy could "process" the day.

In May Judy talks of her colleagues. "Friday morning we have donuts. We babysit each other's kids and find out what's going on and how people are feeling. I try to go down to lunch every few weeks to see what's happening cause you need to know that." As the year drew closer to the end, Judy spent less time in the lounge. "This time of year everyone is so busy finding out--gossiping--they treat you accordingly. February and March are the blues. That's the time of year you can't stand anyone. Then there's this time of year. I'm coming in early and not eating in the lounge. There isn't time to grade papers and prepare seatwork. These kids you have to keep on top of."

To fulfill certification and tenure requirements Judy occasionally takes a graduate course or a workshop. Usually about two a year. When asked where she has gotten ideas for her room and insights into her teaching, Judy replied, "I get a lot from the workshops I have taken. They're really the best. You get time to get rejuvenated. We sit down and share with new people. I get a lot of good ideas that way. Student teachers too. They bring in a lot of good ideas. It kind of keeps you up-to-date."

Judy frequently wrote of casual conversations with teachers and parents ("you can see so much of the children in the parents") that were beneficial to her, adding to what she knew about the children. She also wrote of miscellaneous experiences that she felt were worthwhile. One was a university-sponsored, cooperating-teacher meeting at the university for teachers who supervise student teachers. She felt pleased to contribute to teacher education, to be asked for her opinion and to participate with university faculty and teachers from other school districts. Closer to home, Judy wrote of and talked about an hour-and-a-half lunch at a "fine restaurant" a few miles from school. "The first parent teacher conferences are usually too booked for us to eat out but we had time during the second ones. We went out. We talked leisurely about school and the kids and other things. Later we said, 'Boy, wasn't that nice! We ought to be able to do this more often. It's nice not to have kids. Sometimes I just have to get out!'"

When asked during an interview after the project was over what she would do if she had plenty of time for her own professional development, Judy replied, "I'd start over. I took psychology courses but I'd take more. My training wasn't realistic. I thought I'd have time. You know, discipline, home problems and how they [chidlren] bring them to school--nobody told me about this. If I could look for my own system, I wouldn't pick a system like this or Summerville. It sounds like they look real good but everybody's trying to outdo everyone. I would pick a system with a lot of structure. Kids today don't have it at home and need it. I'd pick a system that gave teachers more time (you can't do it at home with a family); give you one-half day a week to use as you see fit--to pull a child

in to spend some private time. To develop some of your own programs [with her eyes open wide and distant yet penetrating]. Is there a system where you can say what you think? Our group [project] was so nice. You could say what you like. Not having a group gave a spark you felt up even when you were down. You could go and get ideas. You couldn't do it all in the same building. After 11 years, you need outside people . . . Writing made a difference. Now, I can't get frustrations out. . . . Maybe I'm not spending time sitting back and thinking, analyzing. I know I don't do it and I should. I really enjoyed the group--you felt motivated for yourself. I still feel that but it's not as exciting. You just felt enthused to do a better job. We ought to do it more often. I was thinking about it the other night and wondering about people. It was nice to get together with people from different systems. It's good therapy. [Pause--shaking her head slowly and with less tonal variation.] Nobody cares about us. I get frustrated. I don't like to think about it. Nobody cares. There are so few people to talk with. If they cared, they'd do it right."

Project Participation

Judy was one of two teachers added to the project after one seminar session had been held. The first session she attended was marked by a round-robin brainstorming session (suggested by one of the teachers the week before) on tentative seminar topics. Teachers, including Judy, told of anything that came to mind. A list was compiled and each teacher selected 10 topics that were of most relevance to them. Judy wrote, "This was very difficult . . . They all seem important. And after a particular school day, one may seem more important than another!!" She checked (with checkmarks) the following: How do we evaluate our work? (double checkmarks); Real experience beats talk, pictures, or stories for learning value; A lunch break away from kids is essential; Preparing for a parent conference forces you to look objectively at what you may have been experiencing subjectively; I feel confined in a classroom--what can I do?; Children and teacher need a fun day where they can get to know each other as people; I shape the future; and Who taught you to deal with the emotional climate in your classroom?

Sessions. After the first session, Judy wrote the following in her diary. "Our evening get together.

"This was a very rewarding yet frustrating evening. I feel that we can all become a close-knit group. It wasn't long before I really felt at ease. But I had a variety of feelings.

"First, I think this will really be good for me. I think it'll motivate me to become a better teacher and to try to do new things. I really like Kate's program of involving parents. There's some topnotch teachers here.

"That leads me to my own feelings of inadequacy. I feel like I'm out of my league. Yet, Mary Lou wouldn't have chosen

me if she felt that I couldn't fit in. These people seem like such a group of super teachers and they're able to express themselves so well. Yet, do good teachers think they are good? If they did, they wouldn't try to strive to do better. This is something I'm going to have to deal with. It's known as an inferiority complex.

"It is really interesting. Marcy Chapman is our ex-assistant superintendent' wife. She's also a very close friend of our present superintendent's wife. That really didn't bother me, but when we were sitting and brainstorming and she said teacher strikes . . . I immediately felt threatened. (We've been through a strike. It was a very interesting experience.)

"Why is it that as a teacher I feel threatened by the administration? I know my feelings are pretty common. It's really sad because we should be working together for the good of the children instead of having threatening feelings. There may be times that I'll just sit quietly because I won't feel comfortable sharing. But I will sit and write my feelings.

"I really enjoyed sitting and brainstorming. We have a lot of thoughts in common. Teachers' interests and concerns seem to be pretty much in common.

"Afterthought--I sure hope I'm expressing myself adequately. This is one area I can improve upon."

For Judy, sessions (and writing) continued to be "very rewarding yet frustrating." She continued to feel motivated to "become a better teacher." She continued to pose perplexing questions like, "Do good teachers think they are good?" And she continued to reflect on the administrator-teacher relationship. Her comments on "inadequacy" slowly diminished but her struggle with writing continued throughout the project.

The same open and self questioning style that marked her writing characterized her participation during seminar discussions. Though Judy had feelings of self-doubt, she contributed actively, if quietly and cautiously, to discussions from her initial meeting on. She became more vocal and didn't shy away from debate. She rarely missed sessions but arrived a few minutes late due to babysitter arrangements.

Summarizing her thoughts and feelings as a project participant, Judy wrote the following. "<u>Seminar</u>. - friendship - comradeship - chance to find that we all have some of the same joys, frustrations, etc. - chance to exchange new ideas - could bring problems and not feel threatened, but had people listen and help - trust - I've enjoyed this immensely. It's given me boosts when I've needed it. It's helped me to grow as a professional - Thursday nights have been 'my nights' and I've enjoyed that.

"<u>Visitation</u>. Chance to sit back and observe class;

there's so little time to actually do real observation - watch you and get ideas - a relaxing time for me - group activities enabled me to spend extra time with some of my kids - gave you a chance to observe kids so that you knew what I was writing about and enabled you to make constructive ideas to me. (By the way, Carla asked when you were coming back!)

"Writing. Chance to know myself. Yes, I know myself, after all I live with myself; but this was a chance to sit down and actually confront myself. Good and bad. - Self help: I made promises in a contract writing that I had to keep good - levels of writings became a way of thinking. I've begun to think in terms of how I'd write about this . . . I do it mentally. - an author--for no one else but myself, but I never knew that I could produce so much if only for me - analyze (see next page)--helped me to see solutions to problems--Tod.

"As I look back, I realize that I needed to be more objective. The writing made each child very personal and because of that I couldn't see some existing problems. Let me rephrase that. I didn't take the time or wasn't able to identify these problems - Jason. I was really close to my class. Because of writing, I'm beginning to see that again.

"As a whole, this seminar has made me a better teacher, a more conscientious one. As I look at children, I try to really 'see' them, their daily lives. What affects them. I also see things more indepth; I analyze more. This is a major result of my writing. It's helped me to do this.

"Change--I'm a better teacher. I know I am. Certainly, I still question myself. But I feel more confident.

"I'm able to handle stress better. Jason's replacement is a good example. I admitted my mistake, had a good cry. Picked up the pieces and moved on. These things too shall pass!!

"This seminar has been my biggest motivational force. I want to do things more now than before. I want to have more conferring, parent input. I welcome changes more easily. I've noticed people tend to gripe about many things. My attitude's been, 'great, let's give it a shot,' a chance to experiment. For example, my writing about team teaching during our water-pipe problem.

"This is a difficult one to write about. I really need to sit back and look more closely. I know I've changed, for the better, though at times my writing has made me frustrated and given me great feelings of inadequacy.

"It's interesting. I can tell that I haven't been writing as frequently. It's more difficult to put things into words--again. My writing isn't flowing.

"I've come to know myself better. I've been able to admit

things that I had swept to the side and in doing this, I've dealt with them and moved on.

"For example, Kurt's attitudes about my job. Seeing him grow as he's gotten more schooling. I no longer feel threatened. But I don't think his negative feelings are as strong either.

"I've realized that others feel and experience many of the things that I do. This is comforting. Many times I thought I was the only one out there feeling inadequate, ill-prepared.

"I want to be better. I want to give that extra push. It's easier for me to admit to my feelings and express them openly."

Writing. The same open and self disclosing manner that Judy exhibited during discussion is characteristic of her writing (as we have seen in numerous examples cited). From the beginning she uses writing to think on paper and express questions. She notices "patterns" (i.e., paperwork vs. child time) and questions her own behavior and motives (. . . as a teacher, I feel threatened by the administration . . .), and the more she writes and as time moves on, she listens to what she says, "corrects" herself, and poses new questions ("I'm writing about teachers but I really mean myself!"). Judy locates themes in her writing (paperwork vs. time with kids, curriculum vs. teaching children, and grading), and walks back and forth between "other teachers" and herself in these recurrent themes. Time and curriculum are recurrent themes weekly. Here are two examples. ". . . I can't believe how time conscious I'm becoming. But there's so much to do (at home and at school) and so little time to do it in. There's so much more I want to teach my crew. Will there be enough time left to get it all in? I doubt it, but I'll certainly try. I feel really "pressured" from myself--in math. There's so many concepts I want to introduce, but these kids can't be pushed in math. Oh well, we'll just keep on plugging and make every minute count." In the margin in darker writing Judy writes, "Afterthought, 'make every minute count.' Why? More on this later." Seven months later and seemingly out of the blue, Judy wrote the following on one page of paper, accompanied by a large star preceding the writing. "I've noticed throughout my writing that I'm very concerned about teachers teaching curriculum and not kids. They must get their curriculum taught even if kids aren't ready. 'We've got to get throu these readers.'"

Judy consistently wrote about the process of writing, frequently of wishing she had more time to write and frequently about why she had difficulty writing. After a month of project participation, Judy wrote, "Craig and Jerry both gave me a pep talk. I was telling them during our break how frustrated it becomes to write. Am I writing about what Mary Lou wants or does Mary Lou (you!) really want anything specific? Should it be more about my daily writings of the kids? I've decided--NO--

it's whatever I want it to be about and it's my needs at that time (correct me if I'm wrong).

"Note the rambling (of writing) this time, but this is how my mind's working today. There are a lot of generalities I need to get out of the way for me. Then I think I can get down to some real basics. It's like preparing a garden. First the earth has to be tilled--then the planting can begin. WOW! That makes no sense at all. Only I know that by getting these things out of the way I can get down to another level of thinking and hopefully writing. I wonder as I read this back how this is going to sound." A few days later, Judy wrote, "I'm finding that it is very difficult for me to put down exactly what I want to say or to find the words to do it. I wonder if writing will ever become as easy as my talking? Writing is easier this time but I'm aware that expressing myself is difficult."

Throughout the project, Judy struggles with the difficulties and rewards of writing. It never becomes easy, but Judy continues to learn from and be interested in the process. At the August workshop Judy writes about writing. Note that she expands the "level" of writing idea that she introduced earlier. "Note--going back and rereading--. . . My thoughts are moving more quickly than my pen. It sure sounds terrible. Obviously, I'm not rereading . . . Breaktime. I need to stop and withdraw a minute so I can begin refreshed. I feel myself beginning to get 'stale' and not able to think clearly. What a thought! 'See I can't even pause a moment.' I haven't been writing as I should this summer. But something I've just noted. Since I've been away from it a while, my feelings of inadequacy concerning my writing have returned. Very interesting! No, not nearly as bad. But there's a lesson to be learned here. I'm sure I wouldn't be alone in this observation. And it's something that one needs to be aware of and deal with. But the easiest thing would be not to stop writing completely.

"Writing makes me look at myself. I see two levels in this. One is sort of superficial while the other is really confronting myself. Many times this is painful, but I certainly feel better when I see areas that I know I can improve upon or admit to behavior patterns that I have.

"I've seen my writing evolve. At first it was very difficult and at times it still is. I find I have two levels of writing. A surface level--telling about the days' events, etc. On a second level--here my writing tends to get sloppy because I try to put down my inner thoughts and feelings before they escape. Yes, this is a more painful writing because I must confront myself with things that I normally would push out of my mind. Once things are down on paper they cannot be turned away from--they must be dealt with. And once I've made a promise to myself or about a child--in writing--I'm bound by myself to keep that promise. Putting things on paper--writing about them has made me see some things I don't think I would ever have . . ."

A few weeks later, Judy continues, ". . . I've realized something else about myself thru writing. Not realized it but have had to face it. I'm a great one for setting goals, but I usually come short of completing them completely. I stop somewhat between midway and the end. So this year instead of setting 10 goals I will set three that I feel I can obtain . . ."

In September Judy weighs the benefits and costs of writing and remains puzzled. "I guess what's been on my mind quite a bit has been last Thursday's seminar. We've become such a close-knit group. There's so much trust and caring. We can't wait to share and it's very good to be candid about our feelings--my feelings. There's so little chance to interact with my colleagues. Even Sharon and I have less time and I can tell I feel the need to sit and 'chat.' But then the first few weeks of school are so hectic . . . Let me get back to our Thursday night . . . if we have difficulty sitting down, how can we convince others how important and even necessary it is?

"First let me give my own feelings. I don't want to see this group end--from a selfish standpoint. I have gained so much more than I have given. I've been able to examine some of my own 'well hid' feelings and that in itself has made me grow as a person. I've been able to compare ideas and techniques and gain some very useful suggestions. I've really developed a much stronger desire to be a better teacher. Part of this is because I've been listening to such creative people, but I've also wanted to make some commitments and in some cases had to make them. After all once I've put something on paper it becomes like a contract-binding.

"Thursday we were talking about how and when we write. I'm not the creative writer that Jerry (Craig too) is. I have a need to write, but many times I sit down and write because it's Tuesday or Wednesday night. Not Saturday or Sunday. If someone were to ask me if writing and our informal sessions are a necessity, I'd have to give a definite 'yes.' But if they were to ask me if I've developed the self-discipline for my writing, I'd have to say 'no.' I don't feel comfortable reading my writing. There's nothing fancy to it and it certainly doesn't make for 'high anticipation' reading! But perhaps from all this I'll be able to develop my own style. I don't know though if I'll ever get to that point.

"Also I'm finding that I'm speaking out more to Mr. W. about things I see and feel. I'd like him to be a more 'personable' person to my kids and also to the staff. I don't feel threatened by his administrative position and I don't get upset by some of his 'ideas and edicts.' He is worried about his position. I guess what I'm saying is I see him more as a person . . . I'm finding that I'm becoming more sensitive to others.

"Diary--I'm finding it much more difficult to find time to write this year thought I enjoy writing more and find it more

gratifying. Part is a bigger house--part is that Sherry is at a sharing stage and she needs me there more. She isn't as independent as I thought she'd be. But I do need to discipline myself to find that time. It's a continual 'struggle!'

"Also, I see patterns in my writing and patterns in my thinking--philosophy. Two which I've written about tonight. It is rewarding. And as I said today, I can't believe I've written all this. I've gotten to my lower level . . ."

And, a few days later, after a particularly meaningful session (see transcription) ". . . Here is is the end of September--beginning of October and our group is finding that . . . some are having difficulty writing because they're--we're--getting to that lower level--very interesting. Where do we go or what do we do with ourselves or our writing when we get to that lower level? I don't think we can become too self-evaluative or too critical because then it gets to the point that we 'lose sight of the forest for the hedge.' We lose ourselves in all the self-evaluativeness--we begin to get very frustrated, unhappy and discontented with ourselves because we only see things that we could improve upon. A line has to be drawn somewhere before it becomes self-destructive professionally and personally.

"Perhaps I should say 'I' because I'm really talking about myself."

Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: An Empirical Base for Professional Development

Final Report Outline

i. Project Abstract

ii. Overview of Report

1. The Inquiry, and Theoretical Contexts

2. Methodology and Sources
Procedures and Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

- Diaries (purposes intended and evolved, roles and responsibilities, procedures used, limitations)
- Seminars on Professional Development (purposes intended and evolved, roles and responsibilities, procedures used, limitations)
- Observations (purposes intended and evolved, roles and responsibilities, procedures used, slides, field notes, limitations)

Coordination, Interrelationships and Integration of Data sources

3. Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life: Portraits (background, education, family, school setting, school, colleagues, joys and satisfactions, problems and frustrations, opportunities for professional development, project participation)

- Carole
- Kate
- Helen
- Jerry
- Craig
- Marcy
- Judy

4. Discussion and Findings

Writing (journal and session; discussion of the processes as they unfolded; description of what happened)

Collegial Interaction (seminar discussions, workshops, social occasions)

Participant Observation and Discussion (classroom visits, conferences, phone conversations)

Discussion (commonalities, differences, patterns)

Themes

Isolation
Communication
Self
Colleagueship

5. Possible Implications for Professional and Staff Development

Professional Development
Staff Development
Knowledge Use and School Improvement
Teacher and Continuing Teacher Education

6. Summary Comments and Questions

Postlude (comments on the methodology and process)

Appendices

References

Appendix A

"Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life:

Collaboration and Professional Development"

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This issue reports an interesting piece of case study research in which an outsider worked collaboratively with a group of teachers to monitor their reflections on teaching and life in classrooms. Out of her conclusions, the author develops some valuable suggestions about how we might assist teachers in making sense of what they do. (Ed.)

TEACHER REFLECTIONS ON CLASSROOM LIFE: COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mary Louise Holly

INTRODUCTION

The study described in this paper is an exploration into the process of professional development as it relates to teaching and learning within the culture of the school and classroom. It was begun in January 1981 and is in the final phase at this time. The present study is an outgrowth of an earlier study in which a conceptual framework for personal- professional growth was developed (Holly, 1977).

The approach taken is phenomenological. It is assumed that in order to facilitate growth, we must understand the processes of teaching and professional development from the teacher's perspective. This view holds that the person cannot be separated from the professional. The teacher acts from situational perceptions in exercising professional judgment. Further, behaviour is determined by a perceptual field, which is the "universe of naive experience in which the individual lives, the everyday situation of the self and its surroundings which each person takes to be reality" (Combs & Snygg, 1959).

How do teachers define their reality? In order to look intimately at professional life, seven classroom teachers spent a year reflecting upon their teaching, documenting it in diaries, and discussing it at weekly seminars. In addition, I made biweekly visits to each classroom in the role of participant observer. Several questions guide this inquiry. *What happens when teachers explore teaching and professional development? What are the problems and joys of being a teacher? What are the events and interaction in their daily lives which influence their development? What characteristics of the school setting appear to aid or impede their development?* And finally, *what do responses to these questions suggest for improving support systems for professional and staff development?*

PROJECT ORGANISATION

The project is comprised of three phases: (A) Identification and Selection of Teachers, (B) Data Collection, and (C) Analysis.

Selection of Teachers

Identification of teachers began with the generation of a list of possible participants. Selection was based upon a personal interview and the meeting of certain criteria of grade level (K-3), experience, accessibility, interest in personal-professional development, and commitment to the year-long collaborative project. The final seven represent a diverse group in terms of age, years of experience, type of school, education, ethnic background, and philosophical orientation.

The Author

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Data Collection

The major data sources include: personal diaries, transcriptions of taped seminar sessions, and my observation notes and slides.

The Diaries chronicle events, thoughts, and feelings, and they serve three major purposes: (1) to record experiences and events; (2) to provide an analytical tool for examining what the teacher does and why; and (3) to serve as a basis for seminar discussion. The teachers were given large loose-leaf notebooks, paper, and section dividers, but very little direction for writing. I suggested that they might wish to jot down notes during the day or they might sit down at the conclusion of the school day to reflect and make note of selected experiences which they could later expand. Content, how much time was spent, and when and how often teachers wrote were individual decisions. The result was seven diaries as different as the teachers' handwriting. The style of writing, the intensity and the degree of deliberation varied within each diary and across diaries. Most teachers wrote weekly during the first half of the project. They wrote less during the second half which coincided with the beginning semester of school. As a result, writing increasingly took place during the seminar sessions.

At the present time several stages and facets of writing can be discerned. "What should I write?" "Is this what you want?" Most teachers had difficulty deciding what to record. This was one of their first shared concerns which re-surfaced as a topic several times throughout the project. The path was charted the first evening when one of the teachers asked me, "Am I writing for you, or for me?" Another teacher quickly responded, "I'm writing for myself. I think that's what she wants too." The others agreed. For most of them writing was a difficult habit to form. Topics were generated in discussion and occasionally teachers wrote on one or more of them. I tried to be supportive of their writing by pointing out possible entries as they voiced feelings or thoughts about school experiences. I also posed questions for my own clarification of diary entries which sometimes led to further writing.

As the teachers continued to write, they found writing to be therapeutic. "Just writing makes me feel better!" More than one teacher commented that an intensity of feeling was obvious even in her handwriting (the amount of pressure exerted and the style of writing). Although writing was sometimes cathartic, at other times it produced discomfort at new realisations.

As teachers reviewed what they had written (in the beginning with reluctance), they saw patterns in their own and their children's behaviour. They began to connect events and circumstances and became increasingly aware of how their moods influence their behaviour. Writing appears to promote analysis of both specific situations and general problems. But more importantly, it promotes a consciousness of behaviour which might otherwise have been "just lived." "Teaching to me is like breathing. You just do it."

As the teachers continued to write and discuss issues of concern, they began to see more of the complexity of teaching. They looked more closely at their individual environments and at the profession at large. Communication has become increasingly more open among members and more balanced. The participants wrote and talked more of mutual and individual concerns. Mention of ideas discussed or of something another teacher said began to appear in the diaries. One teacher noted that she has become more thoughtful in her discussion with project teachers "because I really respect them. I might not agree with someone, but I know that it isn't coming off the top of their head. They have at least thought about it!" According to some teachers, as they have written and discussed the broader context of education and specific aspects of being a teacher, they have gained respect and enthusiasm for themselves as professionals.

During the latter half of the project, there was a general decline in the amount of writing. Several possible reasons have been identified, including family complications, a change in grade level and school, and the responsibilities associated with beginning the school year with a new group of young children. Perhaps the expectation that teachers could continue to write regularly for a year was overly optimistic. The teachers felt that writing itself was difficult for several reasons: they had never been asked to write before; it was not a normal occurrence; the only writing teachers had done was in college, and this was structured and directed. "No one ever asked me to write about what I thought!" And "I've never thought about what I do like this, so how can I write about it?" Some teachers lamented that they needed a quiet place to write, "I can't write at school. It's too busy," and "I can't write at home with young children around." Although many things, including the hurried pace and almost constant motion, mitigate against establishing a writing routine, it is also possible that growing discomfort which accompanied an increasing degree of introspection posed a formidable obstacle for them.

Does the content of diaries change over time? If so, in what ways? In analysing their diaries, teachers identified different levels of content concerns, as well as some changes in direction. Several teachers noted not only a shift from surface writing to a deeper level more quickly. "I don't spend nearly the time getting there." For some teachers a difference in emphasis can be detected from management, control, and curricular issues toward a concern for the social, psychological, and emotional needs of children. There has been a general movement from detachment in describing events to writing about personal concerns, the group and its members. Some teachers noticed that they shifted from writing about specific children and events to thoughts, feelings, philosophy about their teaching lives, and then back to children and events.

Several of them expressed surprise at the number of their complaints. They don't see themselves as "complainers", yet their writing contains numerous complaints. One teacher wrote that over the year her complaints became concerns which prodded her to action. Another teacher felt that her initial months of writing were spent letting out pent-up frustrations from her first several years of teaching and that this was probably the reason for so many "negative things" in her diary. Finally, there was movement in writing toward introspection and thoughtful reflection, things which sounded so easy, but which proved to be quite difficult.

They showed a willingness, even an eagerness, to share their writing in the seminar. They gave their writing to me weekly or biweekly. I read their diaries, raised questions, and occasionally offered comments. Entries were then photo-copied and returned to each teacher, usually during school visits when we could discuss them.

The Seminar Sessions provided a forum for the discussion of teaching and professional development. They were held weekly or biweekly in informal settings and lasted for approximately two hours. In addition, we

held three workshops on writing and professional development during the last half of the project.

The first few sessions were spent getting to know one another, finding common interests, sharing district information and school routines, and in general, suggesting topics for discussion. With time the teachers began to share problems, satisfactions, and frustrations. The ground was broken early through the writing. The teachers shared their trepidations and occasionally asked for direction. A "letting out" and "testing the waters" period preceded sharing their personal concerns. As they became more comfortable, they began to support individual growth within the group. One night, for example, I began questioning one of the teachers on why she felt as she did about a frustrating situation in her school. Before she could respond, other teachers jumped in to "enlighten me" as to why she might feel this way.

Initially, people seemed to listen to one another, but as the group sessions evolved, they more often listened and questioned in a way to draw others out. It was more an empathetic, nonjudgmental listening. During the first several sessions, teachers pointed out "how much we are alike! What can be learned from a group of teachers who are so much alike?" By the second half of the project, most teachers were not only aware of their differences, but also respected them.

By the end of the first part of the project (June 1981), the teachers were talking with other teachers in their schools about many of the topics discussed in seminar sessions. They voiced interest in sharing what the group was doing with colleagues. A few expressed the hope of becoming more involved in teacher education, especially regarding student teaching, where they felt team teaching and diary writing might be as beneficial for students as it was for them.

As time progressed, we began to appreciate more of the complexity of teaching and professional development, and of the myriad influences on professional life. The group became more cohesive; there was a greater awareness of and respect for individual differences and more balanced discussion. A personal level of caring and concern for each other became increasingly apparent.

In general, then, a climate of trust and sharing was established and movement toward deliberation, reflection, and introspection occurred. One teacher commented during the last session that he felt a sense of frustration that the sessions often lacked enough structure. Another teacher said that the loose structure was one of the best parts about the sessions.

The Observations occurred every other week and lasted from two to four hours. Very early in the project I decided to become a participant in the classrooms. The major purposes of the observations were to (1) to better able to understand the teacher's world, to understand what they wrote and spoke about; (2) to interpret the teacher from the classroom and school context including children, colleagues, parents; and (3) to spend time with the individual teachers, discussing events and observing what they actually do in classrooms. It also became an important time to discuss questions and to clarify aspects of their writing. Usually I returned their diary excerpts at this time. It was also a good time to suggest that teachers write about events they pointed out to me but hadn't thought about expressing in writing. Visits usually included time before school, at lunchtime, or after school. I usually jotted down notes while I was in the classroom. I attended meetings, spent time in the teachers' lounge, and talked with parents and the teacher's principal and colleagues when possible. My degree of involvement in each school varied considerably.

Toward the end of the project a teacher asked if she might have a copy of my observation notes. This opened a new source for analysis and discussion. The teacher, and subsequently others, began to think about classroom occurrences and respond in their journals to my notes. They found this helpful.

The diaries, seminar transcriptions, and observation notes each provide a unique perspective, and taken together, provide a more complex and differentiated picture of teaching and professional development than any of them alone might provide. Something that occurred during my visit might be written about in a diary and then discussed during a seminar session. Another problem might surface in writing and be discussed during the observation time. Although I am only beginning to critically analyse each element as it relates to the others, it is apparent that when an event occurs in all three, it is much more noticeable. As categories are drawn from the data, they are being checked with other data sources. Recurrent themes and patterns are slowly being identified.

Although there are unique aspects of each teacher's joys and frustrations and the settings within which they teach, there are also commonalities which begin to uncover relationships between teaching and growing and are suggestive of ways to facilitate these processes. In the next section the teachers' thoughts and feelings derived from the three vehicles for reflection are presented. Following this, in the concluding section of this paper, are components which appear to be necessary to promote reflection which might serve to clarify and promote linkages between teaching and professional development.

TEACHER REFLECTIONS

What occupies the teachers' minds often surprised them. They expressed surprise, for example, at how frequently they wrote about academic and social problems of individual children. They were surprised at both the number of complaints they registered and at the type of complaints they recorded. Perhaps an even greater revelation was the intensity of feelings they documented. Many of the problems confronting teachers and their professional development (as well as their satisfactions) can be linked to three interrelated themes: isolation, communication, and self esteem.

Isolation

Teachers were isolated in one or more of the following ways.

- Physical isolation, where for most of the day, they remained in their classrooms with the doors closed.
- Temporal isolation, where scheduling determined when and with whom they could come in contact.
- Psychological isolation, where administrators and support persons are perceived in specific roles which rarely include personal-professional development; where the image of the profession (via media) and perceived

pressure from others (parents, community, administrators) exacerbate existing problems of time and stress associated with perceived curricular priorities.

- Social isolation, where teachers have little opportunity to see educators, teachers, parents, or children in other roles.
- Isolation from self, which is probably contributed to by all of the above. Given the constant motion and number of interactions with children, teachers rarely take time to reflect on what they believe and do, and why.

The teachers felt satisfaction when they were able to share their experiences with other teachers. Inservice education where they were able to discuss their concerns, and where they were encouraged to play with ideas and share materials were valued. These occurrences were relatively rare, but there were numerous occasions when the teachers had snatches of time to talk with other adults. These took place before or after school; at recess and lunch times; in the staff rooms; in the library or office; when a teacher had a planning period (children were in art, music, or gym); and at the cafeteria. In some cases, teachers felt guilty that they spent time in conversation. Only after she gave this some thought did one teacher stop feeling guilty and begin to recognise the value of early morning exchanges with a colleague, "I never realised how that lifts my spirits."

One of the most satisfying aspects of the project for participants was the opportunity to talk with colleagues from different districts about their concerns, "to find out what someone else's day is like." Simply discovering how schools differ and how teachers' feelings and thoughts are often similar helped to remove feelings of isolation.

The teachers valued getting to know the children as persons. As they gathered clues from parents or the child, they sometimes recorded it in the diaries. A recurrent source of frustration for these teachers was when they were not able to make contact with parents.

Communication

Lack of communication is inextricably related to isolation and is the source of many frustrations for these teachers. Given the material and psychological constraints posed by the cellular organisation of time, space, and curriculum, it is not surprising that teachers find it difficult to persevere when communication lines are disrupted by other causes (for example, a parent's or administrator's schedule). Although teachers did find small segments of time when they could talk with other adults it usually centred around immediate experiences. Rarely did discussion take place within the classroom. Rarer still were other adults in the classroom when children were present. For most of the day, each classroom was an island. Doors remained closed except for routine entries and exits as messages were delivered or children went to art, music, physical education, or other support teachers.

Most classroom time was spent in directed or text-related activity. Structure-seeking activity (Eisner, 1979) where children engaged in personal expression, conferring their own structure, were few and far between. Classroom activity was predominantly rule-governed for both teachers and children. Therefore, a major source of personal communication remained untapped.

This seems somewhat incongruent with the fact that teachers often describe pleasure, even joy, at creative moments when "things worked." These successes occurred during spontaneous deviations from routine. For example, one morning several young children waltzed up to their teacher gleefully presenting ronced worksheets which had been crinkled in the press. "Look!" The teacher laughed and within two minutes 29 six-year-olds were being led down the hall to the teachers' workroom where a demonstration of running ronced sheets ensued. Armed with crisply printed papers, both teacher and children continued the day. She delighted at their interest, and they beamed with a new image of the letter sheets. As this teacher later reflected, a frequent source of joy for her is when she and the children jointly discover something.

Several mentions were made from various teachers of the delight that they experienced when children expressed themselves in creative ways. Poetic writing, painting, and joint language experiences were cited.

If we look at creative expression as a source of personal communication and satisfaction for teachers and children, it seems surprising that it so rarely occurs.

Self-Esteem

Throughout the project, teachers lamented the public image of teachers and schooling. During the course of discussions, they expressed resentment at the frequency with which adminstrators and support staff tell teachers what to do, and with university lecturers who tell teachers what theoretically works, "Advice is given without spending time in my classroom." The teachers perceive a lack of interest in the teacher's point of view, "Before they criticize, they should walk in my shoes." "No one knows what I do."

The teachers in this study often wrote about and discussed conflict with what they perceived they should be teaching and how they should be spending their time. They felt caught between dictates and conscience. One oft cited example was in reading achievement, in which, although they felt children were not ready or able to read at a specified level, they were compelled to hurry the child along. "If I don't, he won't make it next year." Although each teacher felt dissonance until it was brought up during discussion, they didn't realise it as a common concern and that the dictating "they" were at times themselves.

The content and importance of rewards from teaching vary. Money and prestige (though these tend to support a negative image) do not appear to be among the most important. Infrequent instances of administrator (and parent) support and encouragement inside the classroom produced surprising satisfaction. Possibly because of the perceived lack of feedback on what they do, the teachers rely heavily on their children to let them know how they are doing.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

When teachers reflect on their teaching they experience discomfort as they question behaviour which they ordinarily take for granted. As they reflected, they talked about day-to-day happenings in their teaching lives. They began to question not only themselves but the local and professional contexts within which they taught. Feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness alternated with waves of enthusiasm and respect. Although each teacher responded differently,

the group saw it ultimately as a challenge. One teacher, for example, became increasingly aware of the consuming role that teaching played in her life. This has led to the question of balance and a more conscious decision making about teaching and other aspects of her life.

In another case, a teacher avoided personal reflection by exploring social and political issues, while at the same time keeping school life at arms length. As this teacher became involved in serious self-questioning, it was concluded that such role scrutiny was too uncomfortable. "The thinking has made me aware of the brutalising assault teaching places on my own self-concept." The closer this person's self-examination, the less was the desire to write. The result has been a clearer image of the potential role this teacher wishes to play in the educational process, which might well be outside the classroom.

The net result of the process of reflection has been the partial removal of the sense of isolation, an awareness of common problems, an increase in self scrutiny, and more thoughtful behaviour. Teachers become less comfortable with some aspects of their teaching and professional development and more comfortable with other aspects.

Although representing seven different school districts, the teachers in this study exhibited a common set of problems which they discussed in the seminar sessions seemingly as easily as they did with selected colleagues. Teachers interact comfortably with other teachers under conditions of credibility, empathy, trust, acceptance, non-judgmental listening, shared joys, frustrations and problems, and a desire to understand other points of view. A result of working together was a sense of professional confidence and comraderie, which led to a willingness to be introspective and to discuss personal dimensions of teaching. More than one teacher agreed with the statement, "Now we are ready; it feels like we should just be beginning." "But how long it took to get here." Although teachers value what little time they spend with each other, it is unlikely that it is sufficient to promote significant reflection.

Removing some forms of isolation, promoting communication and self-esteem are each important considerations when addressing teaching and professional development. Whereas these elements often interactively pose constraints to development, they can also interactively reinforce development. An example of this happened in a project school where a principal dropped by one of the teacher's classrooms and later offered a few written words of encouragement. The principal wrote a two-line note to the teacher who included it in his diary (along with the teacher's good feelings), and then he shared the note in the seminar. The teachers discussed how important this would be to each of them. He mentioned this to the principal who has since then dropped in quite regularly. According to the teacher, the children are the biggest beneficiaries. Communication was promoted; the teacher and principal have gotten to know one another better. Each has begun to share more of the others' perspectives.

Four components appear to be necessary to promote staff development. A fifth element offers promise as a vehicle for promoting personal-professional development.

First, *climate* within which the staff operates must be facilitative of development. Even the most enthusiastic teacher cannot often transcend a negative environment. A spirit of collaboration, of shared goals, is necessary to sustain individual development. Trust is a critical element. When teachers feel inadequate or in need of sharing an experience, they need to know that they can. They need to feel accepted. In other words, in order to free themselves (Jersild, 1955), teachers need to feel secure.

Secondly, reflective time must be guarded. Time was an often recurring theme of project teachers. The teachers frequently mentioned time within the context of "not enough". While this was certainly a perceived problem with inservice education, the more salient question is "How is time used?" *Time spent in reflection* is often uncomfortable and disconcerting, but it is also essential for professional development. We might start with discovering ways to make better use of planned time for staff development such as staff meetings, conference time, planning periods, and inservice education activity time, but it is also necessary for us to recognise the many opportunities that exist within the everyday schedule of events in teachers' lives. Recognizing and extending informal channels of professional dialogue, and helping to ensure that each teacher has time away from the motion of teaching are necessary if teaching is to be thoughtful behaviour.

Third, teachers, like the rest of us, need *feedback*. The teachers rely heavily upon signs from their students to indicate their success in teaching and they do not feel that this is enough. The only other consistent source of evaluation is the media which more often that not contributes to feelings of inadequacy. In order for teachers to be able to benefit from feedback, it must be grounded in a climate of trust and time for thoughtful reflection.

The fourth component is an extention of the third. Teachers need to be able to share their experiences. Time set aside for *teacher identified concerns* is rare yet essential for meaningful staff and curriculum development. Not only do teachers need time to talk with their immediate colleagues, they need opportunities to discuss teaching and professional development with people outside their areas.

Writing, a fifth possible element, appears to be a powerful tool to professional development for several reasons.

- Writing is a way to capture events which would have gone unexamined, and therefore, aids in the analysis of classroom life.
- Writing is a vehicle for sharing.
- Writing necessitates thought and takes time. It provides a pause for reflection as a means to gain perspective.
- It is a means for clarifying a teacher's assumptions and philosophy.
- Writing takes discipline and hard work, but teachers who persevere seem able to cut through much of the superficiality of teaching so as to explore the meaning of what it is they do.
- Writing ultimately is a way to experience events, to become aware of what is happening as it happens.

Teachers need assistance in placing some distance between themselves and their classrooms. Professional dialogue helps teachers to see their concerns from many perspectives. The teachers in this study appreciated the opportunity to talk with colleagues from outside their schools. Most of them then

discussed ideas generated during sessions with outside colleagues. "Just seeing what someone else's day is like" was valuable, but of higher importance was the slowly dawning realisation that "I'm not alone!" "I never knew anyone else felt that way."

Growing professionally requires time. Throughout this project, the notion of time appeared in both writing and discussion. It was generally referred to in the context of "not enough" (for children to learn, for subjects to be covered, for deadlines to be met, and for the myriad of things teachers would like to do). Yet, time alone is not sufficient. Until teachers feel professional, facing themselves (Jersild, 1955) is unlikely. Time for reflection, as simple as it sounds, might be the most difficult, and rewarding, of all professional activity.

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Appendix B

Keeping a Personal-Professional Journal

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CONTENTS

Introduction

There are no hard and fast rules for journal keeping. Each of us must develop our procedures and organisation according to our style and purposes. This paper provides a context for writing, and some suggestions and ideas to try which were formulated from my journal keeping over the past several years and from my work with practicing teachers who have kept journals and diaries.

A journal is a personal document. The writer is usually the only one to read it. The journal excerpts in this paper come mainly from school teachers who kept diaries/journals (the differences between diaries and journals will be addressed shortly) as part of a year-long research project on teaching and professional development.[1] They shared their journals with me and excerpts with each other throughout the project. The teachers were asked to reflect on the day and to note meaningful recollections. The content, style, and organisation, as well as when and where they wrote, were matters of personal choice. Because we went about writing in a nondirected way, we learned many lessons in journal keeping, some the hard way.

This monograph is organised into three parts and five chapters. Part I presents the journals and writing processes. The first chapter is an overview of the journal concept. In it we will look at three forms of written personal documentation: the log, the diary, and the journal. This is followed by a brief history of people who have used these processes. The second chapter describes several facets of writing as a process. In Part II, Chapter 3, journal writing as a tool for professional development

is proposed. Included next are three case studies (excerpted from Holly, 1983) of teachers and their experiences as they engaged in reflective writing. Part III contains information and suggestions on several practical matters for journal keeping such as: how to begin keeping a journal, what to write about, and problems you might encounter. A list of articles and books about writing and journal keeping follows chapter five.

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Chapter 1

THE JOURNAL

I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing than to teach ten thousand stars how not to dance. (e. e. cummings)

Keeping a journal is a humbling process. You rely on your senses, your impressions, and you purposely record your experiences as vividly, as playfully, and as creatively as you can. It is a learning process in which you are both the learner and one who teaches.

A journal is not merely a flow of impressions, it is impressions plus descriptions of circumstances, others, self, motives, thoughts, and feelings. Taken further, it can be a tool for analysis and introspection. It is a chronicle of events as they happen; a dialogue with the facts (objective) and interpretations (subjective) and, perhaps most important, it is an awareness of the difference between facts and interpretations. A journal becomes a dialectic with oneself over time, reviewing entries is a return to events and their interpretation with the perspective of time. Over time, patterns and relationships emerge which previously were isolated events "just lived." Time builds perspective and momentum and enables deeper levels of insight to take place.

A Brief History of Personal Writing

Logs, diaries and journals have been written since the beginning of written language. In fact, recorded history is in many ways a journal--someone's impressions, thoughts, ideas and not as obviously someone's feelings about events. There are basically three types of personal documentation: logs, diaries, and journals. Often books, historical and literary, are reconstructed

accounts from such documents.

Logs. The ship's log is probably the most recognised type of log. The term referred originally to a bulky piece of unshaped lumber that was used to measure the ship's motion and speed through the water. Years later, knowing how fast the ship's engines were running was only part of computing the progress of the ship. Currents and winds were also important determinants. Actual speed was established via the log. Log books were the official records of the ship's voyage: speeds, distances, wind speeds and direction traveled, fuel used, weather and other navigational facts. Normal and unusual happenings were recorded for each 24-hour period. Though the log books were kept in formal, sober language, dramatic stories of casualties and emergencies are implicit in the logs. Courts of law accept log entries as evidence, and during wartime, commanders of naval vessels use log books to record their operations and progress. Events and circumstances at sea can then be reconstructed by historians.

The log is used now to refer to "a regularly kept record of performance"[2] and is used by social scientists, writers, airline pilots, teachers, and others to record certain types of information. Just as the ship's log was a description of conditions and happenings, today's log is a recording of facts pertaining to specific occurrences. Some teachers find it useful, for example, to keep a log on an individual child's behavior and progress in school. In this way, they can begin to see patterns and learning styles of the child. Only after keeping the log over a period of time do key patterns become clear. When teachers go over their lesson plan books and record what they actually do during the week, they are keeping a log of the class's curricular progress.

Diaries. While logs are concerned predominantly with factual

information (most recorders in logs would agree on what happened, i.e., the speed of the ship, the stories completed in literature class, interruptions whether a sudden wind or intercom announcement), diaries are usually a more personal and interpretive form of writing. Diaries include description, and are often less structured in the form that experiences are included and depicted. Events are often described in a way dictated by the writer's thoughts and feelings about them. When this happens, factual information is included in a way that supports the writer's perspective at the time. There is less concern for "objectivity" and more attention to the way the experiences "felt." In many diaries there is a "let it out" nature, a capturing of impressions lived, rather than careful documentation and thoughtful reconstruction of events and circumstances. Depending on the purposes and moods of the writer, diary entries can be factual, emotional, thoughtful, and/or impressionistic.

In general, diaries are open ended; anything that can be verbalised can be included in a diary. At times the writer has a specific topic in mind to write about; at other times thoughts flow unrestrictedly onto the page. The degree of structure framing the writing depends entirely on the writer, whereas in a log some structuring for details is usually planned beforehand. Diary entries can be as structured as those of a log, though log entries are rarely as free flowing as many diary entries. The reverse is usually not the case. In a log, the writer's feelings about the events s/he is describing are of little or no value to the reader, and in fact, inclusion of the writer's thoughts and feelings can call into question the objectivity of recorded events.

Because diary writing is interpretive, descriptive on multiple dimensions, unstructured, sometimes factual, and often all of these,

it is difficult to analyse. It is not easy to separate thoughts from feelings from facts and, as the writer, to extricate yourself from your writing. This is not true of the log, which is often written with other readers in mind. Like a close friend, the diary doesn't judge or offer interpretation. There is less opportunity for multiple perspectives, though, since few of us let others read our diaries. Then, too, even if others did read another person's diary, because it is personal, outside "help" may not be "helpful." Few of us have friends who are willing or perhaps even capable of pouring through our personal statements and questions over any length of time.

These seeming constraints, the open nature of entries and the personal interpretations we lend to them, are also sources of the diary's potential use and strength. Who helps us "absorb"[3] those aspects of our teaching days that we must? Who listens with a quiet heart (nonjudgmentally) to our thoughts and feelings about what we see and hear, what we do and what happens to us as teachers? What do we do to remove ourselves from the motion of, the action of, teaching? In what ways do we enable ourselves to reflect on our lives as teachers? Recording in our diaries allows us to do these things. It has the benefits of removing us from the motion of doing and transports us to the reflective act of pondering on paper, while at the same time, capturing some of the action of teaching to come back to with the perspective that time and distance brings.

Journals. Journal writing can include the structured, descriptive, and objective notes of the log and the free-flowing impressionistic meanderings of the diary. That is, it can serve the purposes of both logs and diaries. It is a more difficult and perhaps a more demanding document to keep; indeed, it is more complex. Its advantages are also

greater. It combines purposes and it extends into other uses. A journal, then, is more comprehensive in its contents than either a log or a diary. It is a reconstruction of experience and has both objective and subjective dimensions like the diary, but unlike most diaries, there is a consciousness of this differentiation.

In a journal the writer can carry on a dialogue between and among various dimensions of experience. What happened? What are the facts? What was my role? What feelings and senses surrounded events? What did I do? What did I feel about what I did? Why? What was the setting? The flow of events? And later, what were the important elements of the event? What preceded it? Followed it? What might I be aware of if the situation recurs? This dialogue dimension, traversing back and forth between objective and subjective views, allows the writer to become increasingly more accepting and perhaps less judgmental as the flow of events takes form. Independent actions take on added meaning.

Many of us find it difficult, even painful, to return to diary/writing and journal after the fact. Perhaps part of the reason is because we see our emotions and relive our experiences, but often without the benefit of the context within which those events took place. We may wonder how we could have been so distressed over seemingly trivial events, but when given the flow of circumstances, our behavior seems natural. It is the piecing together of the flow that enables acceptance and *then* analysis and change as a result of changes in perception. In my experience, once I see a more holistic or comprehensive picture, the tendency to become defensive, to ward off dissonance between my image of myself and my behavior diminishes. I interpret the world through my perceptions which are influenced by my motivations. If I see only the facts of a situation, or I reflect only

on my thoughts and feelings about it, it is easy for me to close off the very interactive aspects of the situation that might enable me to understand it. My thought closes off before I have enough evidence to explore my experiences.

The tendency to judge, to dichotomise good and bad, success and failure, seems to be strongest in times when the complexity of our circumstances outstrips our ability to understand them. We simplify our experiences until later when we can view them less defensively and more comprehensively. But, in a time of rapid technological change and an emphasis on "higher productivity," it becomes hard to differentiate what *is* from what *is not* important. And perhaps the more hurried we are, the less likely is reflection and the more likely "stress" or "burnout" and closed-off perceptions.

A time out for reflective writing and dialogue seems a surprisingly attractive alternative to running at our current speed or speeding up and "burning out." Through the journal-keeping process, we can become more sensitive observers, more penetrating in our inquiry into "what it all means"--of the tacit dimension[4] of our being, and more focused on our roles and directions in life.

According to Progoff,[5] there are two ways to record in a log, diary or journal: (1) write close to the time of experiences, or (2) reflec- back over the day or few days, as soon as possible, possibly early in the morning or at night in the quiet; or you can do both, by jotting down ideas in snatches as they occur to you and by expanding on them later. You might wish to record key words or phrases for later expansion. Writing close in time to the experience is at times preferable though it is not always possi e. For some of us there is less time to "selectively remember"

our experiences the closer we are to them. For others, and for all of us on some occasions, it is easier to recall events more comprehensively with the distance of time. Perhaps, then, we might use a combination of writing as close to the time as possible *and* with the distance of time so that multiple views could emerge.

A research journal (or section of a journal) is a tool for focusing on a specific topic. Many researchers keep detailed journals of their research. They document their ideas and collect data, or evidence, along the way. They use their journal as documentation for both formative (throughout the project) and summative (at the conclusion of the project) analysis and evaluation. Important considerations in keeping a research journal are to keep comprehensive, descriptive documentation, to record procedures and interactions (including verbal information), and to keep analytical and interpretive notes. The analytical and interpretive notes should be recognised as such; for they should lead to reconstruction of the project from objective and subjective dimensions. The research, your purposes and procedures will, of course, dictate the content and methods of writing in the research journal.

A quiet place is desirable for keeping a log or diary. The journal writer needs time for quiet reflection; for going back and reconstructing or recapturing the setting, thoughts, and feelings at the time, the flow of events. Once these flows are felt, other events, behaviors or ideas that "fit" with them will become increasingly evident. The journal holds experiences as a puzzle frame holds its integral pieces. The writer begins to recognise the pieces that fit together and, like a detective, sees the picture evolve. Clues lead to new clues, partial perspectives to holistic perspectives.

Famous Diary and Journal Writers

Many prominent philosophers, artists, writers, and statespeople have kept diaries or journals, some admittedly as a reflective process. We are afforded glimpses of history, of the tragedy, comedy, and fundamental dilemmas of life through the diaries and journals of people like Samuel Pepys,[6] Anne Frank,[7] Virginia Woolf,[8] and Dag Hammarskjold.[9] Providing the first systematically recorded insights into child development in 1601, Heroard[10] began a diary on the heir of France, the child of Henry IV. Then, Charles Darwin[11] and Jean Piaget[12] provide further insights into child growth and development while Abraham Maslow[13] and Ira Progoff[14] illustrate adult growth through journal writing. Rudyard Kipling,[15] Charles Dickens,[16] and more recently Miles Franklin[17] used their autobiographical writing to develop realistic portraits of their times. From a teacher's point of view, Sylvia Ashton-Warner[18] documents (in her diary and the book, Teacher) the challenges she faced.

Each of these people recorded aspects of their lives that were important to them at the time. For each, personal writing is or was a way of clarifying their times and thoughts and feelings. It led to growth in their ideas and to important contributions to their fields.

A surprising characteristic of most of these diary/journal writers is the seeming nonchalance in their attitude toward their own lives. They are interested in recording their ideas, but they rarely approach the content of their writing as if it were extraordinary. Yet, as writers of their experiences, they seem to be much more aware of life as it unfolds than the rest of us (a surprising thing happens to many of us though, as we keep journals--we find we become more aware of our surroundings and experiences than we did before we wrote). Miles Franklin's first book,

My Brilliant Career, based on her experiences as an outspoken adolescent living in a small Australian bush community, was published when she was 21 in 1901 is illustrative. Her second book (based on her diary), My Career Goes Bung, was written two years later, and began

> A wallaby would have done just as well as a human being to endure the nothingness of existence as it has been known to me. This, I suppose, is why I want to tell of the only two lively things that have happened in a dull, uninteresting life. You don't know me from a basket of gooseberries, or wouldn't if only I had kept myself to myself, but as I didn't, I shall endure the embarrassment of bringing myself to your attention again . . . In company with 99% of my fellows, the subject of self is full of fascination to me. There are cogent reasons for this.
>
> One of the interesting happenings is my entanglement with Henry Beauchamp. The other is my experience in writing a new style of autobiography . . . These notes are slightly and somewhat expurgatedly compiled from my diary.[19]

Two years before her death in 1954, she reconstructed her first 10 years of life. "For a long time I have been intending to write down earliest memories to discover how many I retain clear-cut before my memory is too moth-eaten. I meant to do this as a diary for myself alone, as sailors in the doldrums erect full-rigged ships in bottles just because the mind is an instrument that sanity cannot leave idle."[20]

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Chapter 2

WRITING

The joy of the ride, even more than the arrival, is the motive force behind the artist's work. (Elliot Eisner)

Writing well is an artistic process. While few of us consider ourselves artists with the written word, we can profitably and happily write to stroll, meander, backtrack, jog and dash out our experiences, as well as our dreams. Writing is a form of personal expression that is directed by a sense of aesthetic balance; a creative tension between the inner self and the outer world expressed in words, a personal story constructed by the author.

Words: Verbal and Written Expression

Whether we write or speak, we use words. Yet, these two modes of presentation differ in many ways. Verbal expression uses clues like facial and body expression, tone of voice, cadence, time, syntax and volume to convey messages. The written word depends largely on itself to seek images. Whereas the spoken word often disappears in the air waves that produce it, the written word, like a painting, remains. Both verbal and written expressions convey thoughts and feelings and usually leave us with a sense of what we think the author meant. In verbal exchange, though, we can clarify our thoughts by asking questions of those with whom we are communicating. Misunderstandings or misinterpretations can be cleared up through the process of questions answered.

When communicating with the written word, clarity must be established by the words we place on paper. As a result, it may take longer to write, but the words will likely be fewer, more to the point. Like children learning to speak using telegraphic speech (using only the most important words), the writer sifts through words that may not be necessary.

Speaking is faster. It suffers the risk of less attention to selection of words, syntax, grammar, or enunciation. Instead we may convey thoughts as they come to us with as much variation and enthusiasm as we feel, recognised and not. We hear our words as we say them; we remember selectively. The written word, in contrast, is often reflective. We "picture" what we want to say on paper and edit as, and after, we write. Writing can also flow quickly. It provides us time to ponder our experience. Then, after our words are written, we can examine them safely, less impetuously.

Partly because writing provides more time for reflection, it can be more frustrating than speaking. Translating images to verbal messages, using body language and other visual clues seems more natural than translating these same images into the written word. "It all must be there--on paper."[1] We become aware of our grammar and of writing in complete sentences at the same time we are concerned with conveying ideas and images as we see and feel them. We are more aware of our inadequacies in selecting words as purveyors of meaning. It is difficult to portray the excitement and intensity of our experiences. Our feelings are similar to those of the fifth- or sixth-year primary school child who loses enthusiasm for drawing because s/he cannot portray in drawing the "reality" s/he sees. Unlike log writing, diary and journal writing are often more spontaneous and less deliberate than writing designed to communicate to others. Frequently, it is left as a first draft; in

fact, if it becomes too deliberate, it can restrict the expression of feeling and impressions. When this happens we become preoccupied with how we say something and less concerned with saying what we feel and think.[2]

People's writing and speaking styles are sometimes very different.[3] Some of us find it difficult to speak articulately but find writing conveys our ideas quite well while those who are verbally facile sometimes find writing awkward, distant, if not distorted, from the intended messages.

Reflection, both in oral and in written communication, can lead to increased understanding and increased awareness of self and others, but it can also (and often does) lead to rationalisation and distortion of experiences. The question is, how does one 'capture' the moment and also reflect upon it later with validity?[4] In a sense, the further we are from our experiences, the more time for both distortion and increased understanding. Which one dominates is a product of the circumstances and our relationship to them. When we record some of our verbalisations and bring into awareness some of our tacit thoughts and feelings we have the benefit of returning to them to see if they hold up over time.

Writing for Meaning

Writing does more than convey our pictures of events and feelings; through it we can describe, analyse, and clarify events--those on a conscious level and those only dimly sensed.

The act of writing may lead to further reflecting, reconstructing experiences; reliving in our mind can deepen awareness, broaden perspective, and increase understanding of experience. A later look can enable perspective outside the situational context and permit examination of the context and factors that influence it. Perspective writing (writing

with the prespective of time) can enable us to confirm, explain, expand or change ideas/insights gained in a second or third reflection. These potential benefits take time and they are by no means inevitable. For these reasons, writing can be an uncomfortable process.

While each of us seeks to grow and change, we also find it difficult to give up the comfort and security of our current perceptions. Returning to descriptions of our thoughts, feelings and actions is bot. gratifying and disconcerting, depending on what we wrote and how we interpret it at a later time. Often we write with the feeling or assumption that there will be a reader (though we have no conscious intention of sharing our writing) and that though there is a willingness to "tell all," to bare our soul and feelings, there remains the ego, the self concept, and the need to demonstrate personal legitimacy.[5] Writing descriptively is for most of us an enjoyable, if challenging endeavour. Writing reflectively and introspectively takes a bit more self confidence.

Exploring Experience

There are many different types of writing. The novelist constructs scenes in a different way than the journalist, the anthropologist different than the poet (and one poet different from another), and the chemist different than the therapist. To explore our experiences through journal writing we can draw from many different types of writing. Which one is appropriate to use at a certain time will be determined by our purposes at the time we write. Comments on five types of writing will be presented: journalistic, analytical, ethnographic, creative-therapeutic, and introspective.

Journalistic Writing. A journalist describes events and circumstances surrounding the news to be reported. Factual information is presented as

the journalist describes relevant aspects of the topic. A journalist views the circumstances as an outsider observer. When facts are interpreted it is usually made obvious to the reader that these are interpretations.

Analytical Writing. When writing analytically, attention is directed to component parts or constituent elements of the topic. The writer studies the nature of the parts and the relationships of one part to another; the subject is broken down into smaller parts for analysis.

This type of writing is a form of thinking and reasoning. Each important element can be inspected and described.

Ethnographic Writing. This type of writing is grounded in the observer's observations and experience. Ethnographic writing is used by descriptive anthropologists (ethnographers) and others to describe mankind within a specific social and cultural context. It can be phenomenological comparative and analytical as the researcher seeks to capture important elements of the person within their context. When beginning an ethnographic observation, the writer often becomes emersed in the setting and tries to become a participant and an observer. Because different aspects of study are important from different perspectives, the researcher starts by keeping detailed observation (or field) notes that enable a comprehensive reconstruction of events and setting observed. In this way patterns can *emerge from the data* whereas in other types of study the researcher narrows the focus before observing.

Creative-Therapeutic Writing. Though creative-therapeutic writing can be a slow and thoughtful process, like other types of writing, its unifying and unique characteristic is its tapping of our inner selves in what can be a free-flowing, spontaneous nature; the writer lets the words flow onto the paper without attention to "how they sound." Sometimes complete sentences unfold; at other times, images and poetic phrases. Creative-therapeutic writing is sometimes done at the height of feeling; it can be expanded and edited during times of calm; it can evolve in times of both quiet and chaos. This type of writing is rarely devoid of feeling and can at times be quite uncomfortable; while at other times (or in concert with this feeling of discomfort), a great feeling of exhilaration and well being accompanies or follows it. "Just writing makes me feel

better" and "I had to stop writing; I was going too deep" are two sides of this type of writing. "I didn't know I felt this way." "I like the way these words sound." Creative-therapeutic writing can introduce us to ourselves, and make known to us concerns and interests previously unknown on a conscious level.

Introspective Writing. For many of us this is the most challenging and disconcerting type of writing. It is the examination of our own thoughts, sensory experiences, feelings and behavior. There are many reasons for our behavior but we rarely step back to ask ourselves, "Why did I do (feel, think) that?" Habit, motivation and sometimes our own biases and unrecognised needs move us to behave in ways that are uncomfortable when we question ourselves. We allow ourselves to be vulnerable when we question ourselves. Our humanness shows. We sometimes feel threatened by change and the discomfort that accompanies cognitive dissonance between our image of ourselves and behavior that we perceive to be inconsistent. To write introspectively means to march, if slowly at times, through confronting barriers to discover the motives and circumstances that influence our behavior. To write reflectively means to write thoughtfully, deliberately, considerately.

Journal writing usually includes aspects of all of these types of writing. Each will introduce us to different dimensions of, and perspectives on, our experience. We can become more appreciative and accepting of ourselves, less judgmental. We can learn from our experiences, but only if we appreciate them. The Pilgrims, for example, used lobster for fertilizer! Like the Pilgrims, we have many resources lurking throughout our days that might promote professional growth; we have only to recognise them.

Writing is an antidote to the anesthetic that slowly beclouds us as we step into routines to protect ourselves from the multitude of demands in teaching. "Persons must be aroused to self-reflectiveness; they must be moved to search,"[6] Maxine Greene points out. Walker Percy speaks of this "search" in the Moviegoer. The book's narrator "decides that everything is upside down; and he stumbles on the idea of the search."

> What is the nature of the search? you ask.
>
> Really, it is very simple, at least for a fellow like me, so simple it can be easily overlooked.
>
> The search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life. This morning, for example, I felt as if I had come to myself on a strange island. And what does such a castaway do? Why he pokes around the neighborhood and he doesn't miss a trick.
>
> To become aware of the possibility of the search is to be on to something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair.[7]

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Chapter 3

THE JOURNAL-KEEPING PROCESS FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

> . . . *my most fundamental objective is to urge a change in the perception and evaluation of familiar data.* (Thomas Kuhn)

"But how can I write about teaching? Teaching is like breathing--you just do it!" said Jerry. "Try writing about the few events or experiences, feelings, or thoughts that occur to you as you reflect on the day," I suggested. After a few months of writing, he felt a little differently about writing and about teaching. "I can't believe I never thought about some of these things before!" Jerry was documenting and thinking about the meaning of teaching and concomitantly exploring his own professional development.

Perceptual and Phenomenological Perspectives

According to Shutz, "The meaning of our experiences . . . constitutes reality."[1] Other researchers from a perceptual, or phenomenological orientation agree. "What is real?"[2] asks Earl Kelley. The answer is "It all depends on your perspective." And, that depends on your perceptions! Perceptions are interpretations of data generated through the senses. They are dependent on (1) biological functioning, (2) experience, and (3) motivation. From a perceptual view of the individual, "all behavior, without exception, is completely determined by, and pertinent to, the perceptual field of the behaving organism."[3] We act on our perceptions. Our actions depend on (1) how we view ourselves,

(2) how we view the situation, and (3) the interrelations of our view of ourselves and the situation[4]

> The perceptual field is the universe of naive experience in which each individual lives, the everyday situation of the self and its surroundings which each person takes to be reality. To each of us the perceptual field of another contains much error and illusion; it seems an interpretation of reality rather than reality itself. . .[5]

As teachers, then, we react to classroom events as we view them; we react to situational perceptions. When we step back from our actions, we can view them differently because we are no longer responding to a situation from the middle of it. We have moved beyond the immediacy of the circumstances; our perceptual fields have changed.

Unfortunately, once we move beyond perplexing events, we often dismiss them until they recur, sometimes in a slightly different form, but they often relate to the same underlying problems. Until we identify the underlying problem, we are likely to continue to cope with our circumstances on an ad hoc basis. This sometimes "solves" the immediate problems; sometimes it does not. If we could freeze our perceptions *at the time of our action*, we might be able to better identify and understand underlying problems and contributing factors that are ordinarily only vaguely "felt." And, we could prevent many problems from recurring: We could learn from our experience.

Keeping a personal, professional journal allows us to do just that--to take snapshots of our lives as teachers. Though any snapshot can enable us to view our teaching in different ways and thus contribute to improvement, it is in keeping pictures over time that we can see flows,

patterns, changes, and to connect events. According to Progoff,[6] writing over time allows us to establish a strong sense of our history and to position ourselves in current aspects of our development.

Integrating Theory and Practice

> *Doubt is uncomfortable but certainty is ridiculous.*
> (Voltaire)

Ignorance might be b[illegible]s, but it contributes little to professional development. Craig, a kindergarten teacher, said "'Why did I do that?'; that is the hardest question a teacher can ask himself," and found that writing and subsequent collegial discussion enabled him to explore that very question. Asking ourselves what we do as teachers and why *is* uncomfortable, but as we begin to define and to accept our behavior and motives, we begin to define new challenges. We become increasingly aware of the complexity of teaching and gain confidence as we view our practice.

As we write about our activity and as we return to it later, we lend two additional perspectives to it. We begin to differentiate when our actions are consistent with our aims and when they might inadvertently be working against them. For example, we sometimes get caught in the motion of events and teaching specific skills and neglect to think about larger and long-term aims. Learning phonics, for example, should promote skill in reading, but not at the expense of an interest in and enthusiasm for reading.

The more we learn about our teaching, the more comfortable we become with uncertainty. And, too, the more we document our teaching, the more visible is our progress.

Evaluation as Professional Development

"How do I evaluate what I do?" "Who sees me teach?" Few teachers view other teachers teaching.[7,8] And, few teachers are observed after their first few years of teaching,[9] and even then observations are infrequent and for limited amounts of time. Several years ago, I asked over 100 teachers, "If you wanted help in evaluating your work, just for your own professional development, to whom might you go?" It came as somewhat of a surprise to me then that not one teacher seemed even slightly wary of this prospect. Forty-three teachers (44%) said "other teachers." The next most frequently mentioned response was "students" (15%), which was followed by "myself" (14%). When asked why they offered these responses most teachers gave reasons like: "It would have to be somebody who is there long enough to actually see what I do," "it would have to be someone who really understands and is knowledgeable about teaching," and "someone who would be able to tell me about teaching in a humanistic way." Ten teachers said they would go to the principal.[10]

Too frequently, classroom observations have been conducted by evaluators who "rated" the teacher's competence. Reports have been based on physical manifestations of teaching from the observer's point of view and, incorporating biases and distortions based on this person's perceptions. The observer, then, to be a significant contributor to another person's professional development must be, as Jersild noted, endeavoring to identify and understand "his own unrecognized needs, fears, desires, anxieties, hostile impulses . . . the process of gaining knowledge of self . . . is not something an instructor *teaches* others. It is not something he does *to* or *for* them. It is something in which he himself must be involved."[11] Keeping a journal and discussing what is salient

to the teacher's work toward improving teaching shifts the responsibility and control of these efforts to the person who *can* make the most difference: the teacher. For teachers, writing can be an aid to clarification of assumptions and behavior and to promoting consistency in the translation of the teacher's implicit and explicit theories to action. Professional development can branch into staff development and educational improvement.

Educational Improvement: Developing Connoiseurship and Criticism

According to Edelfelt,[12] there has been a slowly evolving movement to orchestrate professional and staff development for educational improvement. Suggesting a historical progression, he notes first a focus on inservice education (usually planned "days" of activity, often "training"), followed by an interest in staff development (concern with the staff working as a unit), then school improvement (toward unified goals) and now incorporating each of these dimensions for educational improvement (concern beyond the school and with education at large). To ensure significant and lasting change, development along each dimension must be integrated.

A complimentary concept is put forth by Eisner[13] who emphasizes that teachers must become critics of their practise; that is, they must make public what is occurring in teaching and what needs to happen. To be an educational critic one must first become a connoiseur, an appreciator of significant aspects of teaching and learning. The question is "How do teachers become connoiseurs?" Then, "How do teachers become critics able and committed to share their professional concerns in public forums?" In the portraits that follow we will look at three teachers working on these processes. They are engaging in writing and collegial discussion

as tools to analyze their teaching and learning and to document professional development.

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Chapter 4

PORTRAITS OF TEACHERS

Judy

Writing is a chance to know myself.

At 31, Judy was in her tenth year of teaching at the primary level in a medium-sized suburban community. She and her husband, Kurt, were the parents of a two-year-old daughter. Kurt, a manager in business, had a difficult time understanding why Judy spent so much of her time on school work, grading, thinking, planning and constructing teaching aids. Further, he wasn't much interested in discussing her teaching day with her.

Though the principal of Judy's school was an affable sort of fellow, and though Judy described herself as "outgoing," she lamented the little opportunity she has to engage in meaningful professional development activity at school. "Why aren't our inservices relevant?" "Why can't our lounge talk be deeper? More collegial?" "Why aren't we teachers supported professionally commensurate with our responsibilities?"

Judy jumped at the opportunity to become part of a research project where six other teachers and the researcher were to explore teaching and professional development over a year's time. She, along with the other project participants, would keep a personal, professional diary and discuss her thoughts, feelings and experiences as a teacher at weekly seminar sessions. Judy looked forward to the chance to meet other teachers and to participate in the seminar, but she began the writing

with trepidation.

"What do I write about?" "When do I write?" Because Judy was writing to explore her own teaching and professional development, she wrote as if she were talking to herself. Unlike many teachers starting from such a broad purpose, Judy immediately began to question herself on paper. She wrote of her apprehensions of working with other teachers ("I hope I'm up to working with such talented professionals!") and of dilemmas she recognised in her teaching ("Why did I do that instead of this?"). Throughout her diary are comments about her difficulty with the process of writing and especially in forming a "writing habit," of finding time and a quiet place to reflect. She usually wrote at home at night but sometimes during her discretionary time (art, music, lunch, recess) at school.

Judy found writing to be cathartic. "Just writing makes me feel better!" She found that she could think on paper and work out some of her problems and dilemmas. Because she often wrote as she thought, her writing has an action quality and it isn't always in full sentences. The more she wrote, the more she was able to see patterns in her behavior and intentions, and in her children's behavior. She found herself writing on different levels: a surface, descriptive level and a deeper, more introspective level. She became able to differentiate when she was writing on either level. She found she was able to move to the deeper level more quickly the more she wrote. She also experienced significant discomfort when she "went in too deeply" and intentionally returned to a "surface level" until she was ready to return to "deeper" concerns or introspection.

Writing for Judy often became "a contract with myself." When she

discovered something through her writing she felt compelled to do something about it, to act on what she found out rather than to "push it aside like I would have done before."

What else did Judy find out about herself as a teacher? What were some of the actions she was moved to make? She was able to view herself as a finite being; she saw the humanness of her endeavors as a teacher, the complexity of her responsibilities, and increased in her ability to accept herself, to face and learn from her "mistakes." She saw how her feelings about (and affection toward) children influenced her teaching decisions (i.e., a child was not retained whom she later found should have been, "if only I had written about David too"). She began to see how some children received less attention than others. As she wrote about some of her frustrations, she began to identify areas of concern that she then addressed with colleagues. She found the strength and self confidence to start raising questions and disagreeing with her administrator where previously she felt anxiety and a reticence to broach her concerns with him. On the home front, but certainly related to school, she became aware of her defensiveness and anger at her husband for his lack of interest in her teaching.

Summing up some of her thoughts on reflective writing, Judy wrote: "Writing. A chance to know myself. Yes. I know myself, after all I live with myself, but this was a chance to sit down and actually confront myself. Good and bad. Self help: I made promises in . . . writing that I had to keep--levels of writing became a way of thinking. I've begun to think in terms of how I'd write about this . . . An author--for no one else but myself . . . I never knew that I could produce so much if only for me. Analyzing (writing) helped me to see solutions to problems--

David (for example).

"As I look back, I realize that I needed to be more objective . . . I couldn't see some existing problems . . . I was really close to my class. Because of writing, I'm beginning to see that again.

". . . As I look at children, I try to really 'see' them, their daily lives, what affects them. I also see things more indepth; I analyze more. This is a major result of my writing. It's helped me to do this . . . I'm a better teacher . . . I feel more confident . . . I'm able to handle stress better . . ."

Carole

The writing itself was very beneficial to me personally because it made me look at my teaching philosophy and how I was dealing with students, parents, and administrators. I was forced through writing to take a look at myself.

Carole was born in a large northern city in the midwest in the winter of 1951. The middle child of a large family, she took responsibility (like her older sisters) for her younger siblings while their mother worked domestically to support the family. "Carole will be the teacher in this family," her mother frequently reminded them. Like many of her friends, Carole was assisted in her education by the Follow-Through Program for promising children from low-income families. Her studies were difficult at the nearby small liberal arts college she attended, but with hard work and help in developing study skills from Follow-Through, she graduated and became "the teacher in this family."

Having taught at the primary level in two inner city schools in her hom own, Carole and her new husband, John, moved to a small college town

about an hour's drive away. Carole began teaching in a system that was culturally different to her. As the only black teacher, she often felt lonely though people were "friendly."

During her ninth year of teaching, she along with Judy and five other teachers, joined a project to look at teaching and professional development. Very active in the local and state teacher's organisation and in the minority caucus (an organisation to further racial ethnic and cultural understanding), Carole brought unique perspectives to the exploration of teaching and professional development. At the time, she was separated from her husband.

Carole began writing by jotting down topics as they occurred to her and then expanding on them later. Her style of writing was fairly formal. She wrote in complete thoughts and sentences and rarely, if ever, rewrote or extended her thoughts in the margins. The act of writing was not difficult, but finding time to tuck away, given full teaching and professional organisation commitments, church, and an exercise schedule wasn't easy. She, like Judy, found writing to be cathartic.

She found herself unleashing on paper "many of the frustrations that had accumulated during my first eight years of teaching." She was surprised by her complaints, not realising she said, that she kept them inside. "When I first began writing, I cited mainly those things about teaching that were not to my satisfaction. When I look back . . . I was very disenchanted about where I was as a teacher and my enthusiasm as a teacher. I had thought many times about leaving this profession . . . just to get a break from the many demands that teachers receive from students, administrators, parents and the community."

Recording her frustrations and sharing some of them with colleagues

seemed to allow Carole to focus more on her teaching. She wrote of dilemmas and began to use her diary to record research as she undertook to learn more from the children. She focused on reading and language arts for one thing. This had been a source of frustration for her for what she discovered to be several reasons. A reading consultant spent a day or two a week in the building, but worked with very few of Carole's children. Yet to Carole's disgruntlement, the consultant made decisions on what individual children "should be reading." "But how does she know? She doesn't even *know* these children!" Carole moaned. A new reading series had been adopted and Carole and her colleagues had their hands full mastering the more complex and comprehensive program. Not long before report card time, reading tests were administered followed by orders from the reading consultant that children were to be graded based on standardised scores on the test. "But I could have moved the children along faster had I known before it would determine their grades," lamented Carole.

Carole wrote of her frustrations, of her growing understanding of the series and of her research with the children regarding reading and language arts. "What is reading to the children"? she wondered. So, she conducted a survey.* From this and subsequent study, she learned more about how the children thought and felt about aspects of the curriculum. She began to recognise the differences in perception between herself and the children and among individual children.

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*(Examples: Q. Why do people read? Responses: "It wouldn't be fun if when you grew up you can't read." "So if your friends give them a letter they'll know how to read it." Q. How can you tell you're a good reader? Responses: "You can read fast." "You know your b's from your d's." "When you don't make any mistakes." "If you can read four books a day." "If you don't have no trouble with no words.")

Another area Carole selected to study was math. She found that "Lots of times they are able to do the work correctly but very seldom do they truly understand the process they are using." She was surprised at the children's candor and honesty in offering their opinions when she questioned them. (At the end of the year) "they remembered vividly the times we had popcorn in math class and the time we used lollipops for counting . . . for next school year I should work on making math more fun for *all* students" (children were grouped for math and not every group experienced the lessons the children found most enjoyable and that Carole found to be most productive).

In addition to finding out more about how her children experienced school and increasing her knowledge about their home lives, Carole learned some significant things about herself.

". . . I began to appreciate myself and my contribution to education. I began to realize that it's not what others think of me as a teacher but how I view myself. Several times I wrote about the need for praise from administrators and I'm sure that this is a need that I have and many other teachers also share . . ." Carole found the "praise" she sought in her writing and she began to appreciate the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle!) indications of growth and satisfaction from the children.

Carole feels that she is more aware and more sensitive to the needs of children and to the complexity of teaching. She learned "that I have faults that I was not aware of . . my attachment to my students affects my life outside of school and perhaps my relationship with my spouse." She learned that "there are certain things that I'll never be able to change." And, through collegial discussion, she learned that "the same problems I've had difficulty dealing with are common to other teachers too. . ."

Perhaps of greatest significance to Carole, she began to see the interactive nature of her home and school lives. According to Carole, the most influential factor in her school life was her personal problems at home. "Because things were lacking in my marriage, I devoted much time to my teaching and became very attached to my students." Having discovered the consuming role that teaching played in her life, Carole resolved to work toward a better balance.

Jerry

How often do we question ourselves?

The thought of becoming a teacher didn't occur to Jerry until he was 22 and had been in the Air Force for four years. In fact, the idea of college had until then been "something for other people." It was there he met Sue, who would become his wife. Sue is a school psychologist and according to Jerry, "It's great to have a spouse in a related field. She understands my job and I hers."

Jerry has spent six years teaching in the primary grades at a kindergarten-through-grade-two school in an upper, middle-class bedroom community (14,000 population) bordering a middle-sized industrial city. The school system has a fine reputation and Jerry feels quite comfortable working with the children.

Writing was not new to Jerry. He wrote poetry and occasionally kept diary-like notes on topics of interest to him, "just for me though, I enjoy writing." Writing about his own teaching and professional development was new. "But how can I write about teaching? Teaching is like breathing--you just do it!" Jerry began by writing about individual children--each of them. He wrote journalistically, descriptively and subjectively. As he later commented on his previous writing, "My biases shine!" He wrote

of his teaching day, of incidents he was amused or perplexed by. He also wrote about his conversations with his closest colleagues, Beverly, Jane and Karen.

Writing, like his composing of poetry, working construction, and playing the guitar and singing, is a form of creative expression for Jerry. Writing is cathartic and for the most part he enjoys the process more than the product.

He found himself taking side journeys into language and would think on words and phrases and their meanings and values. "What is 'good'?" he mused and proceeded to define the different uses of the word "good." Jerry found that the longer he wrote, the more aware he became of his teaching and of happenings around the school and in his interactions with others. Jerry felt that this increasing attention to detail and attending to events as they happened was due in large part to his growing habit of looking at his teaching life "as if I was going to write about it even when I'm not planning to." While Jerry saw many benefits to this growing awareness, it posed some real difficulties too.

"This self-inspection" Jerry found himself engaged in was often quite disconcerting. He felt the urge to return to more carefree times and places and during one particularly difficult (and growth-producing) time, he said, "I've come back away from looking at myself because I think I went too far . . . I think in writing what we're doing is we are questioning ourselves . . . and I think there is very little precedent set for us to do that. Yet, I think when we look at the whole concept of professional growth, that's a piece of it. Yes, you have to do it."

Jerry moved from purely descriptive writing to exploratory and introspective writing. His writing became less a story that he was

telling and more of an enquiry. "As I review my writings and inspect myself I see more and more the need for patience. Furthermore, I am seeing patience is a practiced art . . . How often do I respond in the classroom when I should be biting my tongue and practicing patience? I have to wonder about my role (as teacher) as teller." Commenting on his writing at the end of the project, Jerry wrote, "The journal was a close inspection. A chance, a delightful chance for me to speak my subjective mind and have someone actually read it. It makes all the difference in the world. It was often a chore. I realize, now, because I didn't necessarily want to confront myself. The journal offered insights and revealed a lot of my inner self to me. It admits that I care and commits me to my observations. Scary in a way. How often do we question ourselves?"

A very important concomitant to writing for Jerry was collegial discussion. Though he began writing "for myself only," he slowly began to share his ideas and selected parts of his writing with other teachers. Writing and discussion became interactively supportive of his professional development. Sometimes he stated his problems before he wrote about them; other times he wrote about them and then spoke with colleagues about them. "I'm glad to know I do not stand alone . . . defending one's position often calls for *reflection* and *close inspection*. Even while wrestling with my own feelings and motives verbally, I was always received with compassion and understanding. No better feeling than to trust one's peers enough to strip the veneer which masks your lives; inspect yourself and redress, to face tomorrow a bit more prepared."

Jerry discovered how much his home life influenced his school life and vice versa. He discovered the significance of professional dialogue,

and how important "TRUST" was to enable reflection with others and with himself. "I can say I've grown reflective. I move a bit slower--to savor instead of merely taste. I enjoy. I yield. I trust myself more--it opens many doors."

Chapter 5

KEEPING A JOURNAL

Into his fateful heap of days and deeds the soul of man is cast. (Edwin Markham)

Why Keep a Journal?

David Elkind, noted child psychologist, has called our attention to The Hurried Child.[1] Who hurries children? We, hurried adults, do. With resurging interest in "quality" and school effectiveness many of us who teach feel optimism that other people will share our concern that children and youth acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help them to make sense of a changing technological society and to define their places within it. Dwindling economic support, rising "standards," employment instability, changing family structures, population shifts, and concomitantly fewer new teachers joining the profession each year--*each* contributes to 'developing downward'; that is, the reverse of the growth in schools and program development of the late 1960s and 1970s. Thus, we find 'accountability,' 'burnout,' and 'teacher stress' are terms associated with teaching today.

In the time of burgeoning technology, we as educators are often caught up in teaching 'more,' 'sooner,' and 'faster.' Unfortunately, 'more' often means 'less.' Parents are concerned that their children acquire the educational experiences that will enable them to succeed; administrators must coordinate, manage, and provide leadership skills to promote curricular, professional, and staff development with fewer

people and dwindling resources (people, services, and money). As teachers, we are increasingly becoming aware that we cannot solve many of our children's, or any of society's, problems and that teaching is far more complex than our 'methods of teaching' courses lead us to believe. The kind of 'instruction' that makes a significant difference in the lives of children is more likely when the children we teach are ready, willing, and able; when our roles of decision maker, interactor, learner-scholar, colleague, and member of the profession are balanced and complimentary; and when the climate and conditions of the environment under which we teach are supportive of our efforts. As important as these conditions are, they only assist us in the process of orchestrating our ideas (theories), values, attitudes, and knowledge with the growing children and youth in our classrooms.

Today we have the opportunity to improve education. We have stability in the teaching profession. Teachers are staying where they are. The public shows signs of concern and readiness to support education; classrooms are being viewed as professionally respected places where there is the realisation of professional competence and experience. Rather than a subject for scrutiny and prescriptions, classrooms have become arenas for description. How do teachers teach? Why do teachers do what they do? How do they think and feel about teaching? How do they balance individual and group development? How do they walk back and forth between the content and processes of teaching? How do they manage the complexity of teaching 30 children six hours a day, five days a week, for 180 days a year? What are their dilemmas? Their joys and satisfactions? Frustrations? How do teachers grow and learn?

Educational researchers [illegible] under the assumption that

what they see in the classroom is the story of teaching. In the book, Beyond Surface Curriculum,[2] Bussis, Amarel, and Chittendon document teachers' "constructs," the ideas and philosophies behind their work. It has become clear through their research and other studies that educational improvement will only come about as teachers develop professionally and that telling teachers how to improve is not the answer. We've only just begun to ask, "What *do* teachers do?" "Why?" So 'answers' are a bit more complicated and situation specific than previous attempts at prescription might suggest.

These last two questions look so simple: What *do* teachers do? Why? Yet, responding to them is difficult. Have you ever posed these questions to yourself? As Craig said, "these are the most difficult questions you can pose to a teacher." He finds that he is so busy teaching and taking care of administrative tasks related to the classroom that he rarely has time to reflect on what he does and why. As he began to reflect on his teaching day in order to write about significant aspects of it, he found that he'd never *really* thought about much of his behavior in the classroom. It was easy to think about the children individually, about their behavior and progress, but it was very difficult to think about his own behavior. Craig began regularly to protect time for reflecting and writing. He looks back on his six years of teaching and wonders why these questions didn't come up before. "How can we (teachers) teach without seriously thinking about it?"

Keeping a journal is a way to ponder these questions and others. It is a way to document what you do, events that hold significance for you as a teacher, and to clarify your beliefs and assumptions and further, to test these out in your behavior. As you write about what happens in

the classroom, what you do and how you think and feel about your children's and your experiences, you will begin to see where your philosophy and 'theories' are demonstrated in your behavior and when they are in conflict with them. You will be able to work out some of your dilemmas as you think on paper about them. You will find patterns and behaviors that you were not aware of before. You will at times be pleased; other times you will find things you would like to change. Merely by calling attention to these 'hidden' facets of your teaching, you will be informing your practice. Like Craig, you might find yourself quite comfortable when asked, "Why did you do that?" And, even more importantly, you might find yourself becoming comfortable with ambiguity, complexity and the unsettling nature of continuous enquiry.

"The unexamined life is not worth living," exclaimed Plato. The push to teach 'more,' 'sooner' and 'faster' exerts pressure for movement and action. However, if our efforts are to be consistent with our aims, we must examine what we do. Keeping a journal is a way to help us do just that. We capture events to which we can return later to sift through from a different and less hurried perspective. We are in a time of 'quick fixes,' but if we want to fix to work, it must fit the circumstances. Keeping a journal is a way to help us to see the circumstances, to document experiences over time so that we can see the flow of events rather than isolated instances.

Adult Development and Teacher Growth

Psychologists since Freud have focused on child development. Relatively recently, many psychologists have taken an interest in adults and in education in the development of teachers. Much of their research is encouraging as they continue to document significant development,

learning, and growth throughout the life cycle. You might find it helpful to become familiar with some of their work as you pursue your own development. In particular, the work of Knowles,[3] Hunt,[4] and Sprinthall and Sprinthall[5,6] offer insights into teacher growth that are consistent with reflective writing.

According to Knowles, for example, as adults, our orientation to learning is life-centered. This suggests that life situations are the starting points for learning rather than subject areas or information removed from the act of teaching. He feels that "experience is the richest source for adults' learning; therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in mutual enquiry . . ." Individual differences increase with age so the potential benefits from dialogue and sharing multiple perspectives are also increased.

Hunt suggests that professional development experiences should fit conceptual levels of teachers. When we as teachers direct our enquiry, we do so on our conceptual level. Consistent with Knowles and Hunt, Sprinthall and Springhall suggest that teachers engage in guided reflection and experiences. They emphasise the need for us to look at teaching from a variety of perspectives and to ask ourselves, "What does this mean to me?" and "What does this mean to others?" Concomitantly, they propose that there be an interactive balance between experience, discussion and reflection. Further, they stress the need for continuous reflective activity with peer support and an awareness of our own developmental changes as they occur.

Journal writing and collegial discussion over time are consistent with and perhaps extend the possible developmental consequences suggested by these researchers.

For Whom am I Writing?

First and foremost, you are writing for yourself. Journal writing, as it has been described here, is a process of reflection to enable you to become more aware of your teaching and professional growth as you are experiencing and directing them. What you write, when you write, how you write, and what you share with others are up to you. You will probably, like others, find that writing for yourself is therapeutic, that you can write to describe events, thoughts and feelings which were taken for granted or forgotten before. You will find that writing is a useful tool in capturing ideas to consider which will enable you to clarify your thinking, pose new questions and pursue issues only dimly perceived before. You may want to focus on individual children and the circumstances of your teaching. You will probably find yourself writing about problems and through the process, identifying possible solutions. At the same time, you may find the burden or image of the problem reduced to a more manageable size. For example, as Craig reread his journal, he was surprised by the emotion and feelings that he found in his writing. As he relived the experiences about which he had written, he was able to understand why seemingly trivial events often loomed large in his [illegible]. Now, when he begins to feel "pressed," he steps out and re-[illegible] the situation, "I can now recognize problems before they turn into big ones. I can stop molehills from becoming mountains. Then I have the energy to see the *real* mountains."

Writing as Communication

Another important dimension of journal writing is the sharing of ideas with a colleague (or colleagues). As you focus on your teaching and your concerns become more visible to you, you will be better able to

discuss them with others. Often in teaching, we feel a nagging anxiety, even irritation, that we are unable to define. Writing about how we feel and the circumstances leading to these feelings and surrounding them enables us to better understand them, to bring them from abstract feelings to concrete problems. Writing for ourselves, defining factors leading to anxiety helps to make discussion possible. Each restatement, whether writing, reflecting, or discussing, brings us to a slightly different perspective.

Writing to communicate with others can stem from or be an expansion of journal writing. This can take many different forms. Kate, another primary teacher, for example, found herself planning on paper and deciding to share a segment of her journal with her principal. He added a few comments and questions; they discussed her ideas; and she now frequently plans on paper and sends him copies rather than the more specific short-term lesson plans she previously turned in to the office each week. David, a high school English teacher, finds that when he wants to talk with a colleague or administrator about a specific concern, he benefits from first sending the person a brief note explaining the main topics he wishes to discuss. According to David, this begins their discussion on a common note. He finds it is often difficult to communicate his concerns orally and then to take the discussion to a fruitful conclusion. Given constraints on time for collegial discussion, he finds that discussion wanders and people interpret his concerns from their own viewpoints. When he takes the time to write his ideas, he feels there is much less chance for misunderstanding. "It is easier for people to bring their own agendas, to hear what they *think* you are saying rather than what you are *actually* saying when the conversation is out of the blue. When you

convey your concerns in writing this is much less likely to occur. Then they have time to think about it and come back to it." I have found in my experience that after I have written ideas for communication to others, I am more able to speak clearly (and concisely) to the topic.

A third audience for writing might consist of parents, community, and others. Eisner[7] eloquently calls our attention to the need for teachers to be connoiseurs and critics of teaching and education. To be a critic one must first be a connoiseur--that is, an appreciator of significant aspects and elements of teaching and society; then one must be able to convey these to others, to make public important dimensions that only a connoiseur, one close to the process of education, can make clear. This is probably more necessary now than it has been in the past. Teachers and schooling have been held up to public scrutiny, critised, if not pointedly, then by implication in public analysis of test scores and the consequent call for accountability. Teachers have been singled out as "low scorers" on college aptitude/achievement tests[8] and for the first time in the United States, education and the quality of schools and teachers are a major political issue. As teachers, we now have people's attention. It is up to us to study and to articulate to parents and others what we know about teaching and learning.

How do I Begin?

The first thing you will need to do is to select materials for your writing. To some people this is not a particularly important consideration. They write on school notebooks, scrap paper, mimeograph paper or whatever paper is available at the time they wish to write. For others of us it is important to select specific materials that will make it more comfortable to write over a period of time. Simons[9] suggests

that durability, size, and flexibility be considered.

Durability. Will you want to carry your journal with you? Is it important that it be durable? Or, will it be stationary--will you leave it on your desk at home or at school?

Size. Where you intend to write will make a difference in the size journal you select. If you intend to carry it with you, you will need to find a size that is both durable and small enough to transport comfortably. Smaller journals, though easier to carry, are more difficult to write in. Stenographer pads have the benefit of wire loops which make it easier to open flat for writing. Large notebooks or journal pads are easier to write in, but they are more difficult to carry.

Flexibility. Both small and large books for journal keeping are available in stationery shops and book shops. They sometimes contain fairly high-quality paper and have attractive and durable covers like other hard-cover books. Like books, they are bound. They have the added advantage of keeping all of your writing together in one place, and, because of their "permanent" and "professional" format, they dissuade the writer from tearing out pages (which at the moment seem better thrown out, but later might be very important to understanding; just as we might not like to remember yesterday's cold rain, we are quite thankful for it when the flowers bloom). Loose-leaf notbooks, on the other hand, are not quite so professional appearing, nor is the quality of paper as good. They have the advantage of flexibility, though. Pages can be removed (don't throw them away!) and sections reorganised as ideas develop through your experience in journal keeping. Many of us find it useful to carry on a dialogue in different parts of our journal. Progoff,[10] for example, suggests that it is important to keep several sections and

to allow momentum and energy to develop as a result of interactive dialogue among the different sections. His sections include our history, a daily log, dreams, and several others. If it is, or becomes, important to you to divide your journal into sections, you might wish to select a journal format that permits you this flexibility.

I find it most convenient to keep a regular-sized, loose-leaf notebook and to either write on standard, lined paper or to punch holes in unlined paper. This way I can write on any paper and insert it. I find that this gives me the opportunity to write wherever and whenever I choose and to insert it in the journal when I can. I also find it important to select a pen or pencil that fits my mood. Usually that is a fine-point black pen that allows me freedom to write quickly and easily. Sometimes I want to write with the broader, subtler, and the natural feeling of resistance that a pencil permits. Occasionally I write with more than one color. At times, red "feels" right; at other times, it's green. Allow yourself to develop your writing according to your senses. You might even develop your own color-coding system. For example, as you re-read some of your entries, you might wish to add comments in the margins or in the body of the text in another color. This promotes an understanding of the multiple perspectives you will develop as you look at your writing at different times.

Some of us also find it useful to use unlined paper when we wish to sketch or include other materials such as journal, newspaper excerpts, or our children's work. A loose-leaf notebook permits these different kinds of entries.

Who am I?

You might wish to start your journal with a short autobiography.

This will help you to locate yourself in the context of growth--to get a sense of where you have come from. In order to do that, you might ask yourself these sorts of questions.

- Why did you become a teacher?
- When and how did you decide?
- What and who influenced you?
- In what ways?
- As you look back, possibly to your first years of schooling, what feelings and images remain?
- Which teachers do you remember, and why do you remember them?
- What do you remember about them?
- Focus on one or two teachers who you really felt were helpful to you.
- Why do you think they were helpful?
- What were the most meaningful aspects of your education (including teacher education) that contributed to your development as a teacher?
- If you could make the decision again to become a teacher, would you?
- Why or why not?
- What do you see as your greatest strengths as a teacher?
- What would you like to change or work on to improve your teaching?
- What are a few of the frustrations you face as a teacher?
- The joys and satisfactions?
- What are a few of the hopes you have for the children you teach?

You might write on some of these questions to begin your journal and leave others for later entries. How you proceed to use your journal will depend on your reasons for writing. Some teachers have found it useful to begin by sitting down at the end of the day and recalling incidents that stand out from the day: thoughts, feelings, and meaningful events with children, anything about which you wish to write. You might begin your writing by jotting down topics as they occur to you during the day. Some people find it useful to write for brief periods throughout the day or week as the opportunities arise.

It is often helpful to record your thoughts and feelings about writing and the journal-keeping process. As one teacher noted, "It helps to get me started," and another, "Just writing down my apprehensions about writing lessens them."

It might be easier to write about some of your experiences and plans if you talk them out first either with yourself or, if possible, a colleague. Some people find it helpful to talk into a tape recorder--by themselves or with a colleague. They play the tape back and stop it at times to write.

If you are writing as a tool for documentation and in a systematic way to focus on specific aspects of your teaching, you might begin by writing about the process of professional development on which you would like to concentrate. You might, for example, be preparing to engage in curriculum development, staff development with colleagues or professional development such as clinical supervision (focusing on specific teaching behavior in collaboration with a colleague) or action research (focusing on a problem or question, planning action, implementing change, documenting and reflecting on what happened). Using journal writing for description,

documentation, and analysis can be even more helpful when you include your comments on the processes of action and change *as they occur*. This includes your reservations, hopes and challenges as you engage with others in the process.

Two final suggestions on beginning to write might be useful.

Relax. Though you will not always be relaxed when you write, it is important that you often are. You will find yourself writing quickly and allowing your senses to push out the words more quickly than you "think" of them. This is how it should be. It is equally as important to allow yourself to relax and to let the motion of the day subside, to let an inner peace take over. For this, you might protect a time and a place that are yours-- where you can feel yourself unwind. Like practising yoga, this is the time to "reconcile the peace of asana with the press of life."[11] Just a few minutes of quiet time, when you allow your breathing to become deeper and slower, can set the tone for reflective writing. For Judy, this means sitting down on Friday night with a glass of wine and relaxing with her journal after a physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually demanding week of teaching. Others of us find it both releasing and renewing to weave ourselves into music, to lift ourselves from both the past and the future into a present that experiences only itself. Regardless of how you remove yourself from outward action, the important point is that you do so.

Write vividly. When you are recording your experiences, try to describe them as vividly as you can. Try to transport the reader (you will be the reader) to what you experience. This means to include as much detail as you need to convey the images, thoughts, feelings, and occurrences as they happened. As you gain practice in writing, you will

probably enjoy the challenge of translating your experiences into words and of recapturing a sense of the circumstances. When you take a snapshot, for example, you try to frame it as artistically as you can. You want to capture what you see. When you view the picture, it enables you to return to the circumstances, to remember what you said and felt. There is a caveat though. What you see in a snapshot is a likeness of reality--not reality. Reality moves. It is in a constant state of change, and it can be viewed in multiple dimensions. When you write, then, it is well to keep in mind the transitoriness and "unreal" nature of your reconstructions. Your words are a partial picture derived from experience at a specific time--a segment of a flowing process. ". . . thoughts, ideas, and words are 'coins' for real things. They are *not* those things, and though they represent them, there are many ways in which they do not correspond at all . . . ideas and words are more or less fixed, whereas real things change."[12]

According to Watts, "the power of words must have seemed magical [when they were first used] and, indeed, the miracles which verbal thinking has wrought have justified the impression." But, he cautions, "To define has come to mean almost the same thing as to understand."[13]

Keeping in mind that we are not ever able to return to our experiences that are real only when occurring, it will be helpful to describe them as vividly as we can so that the images we retain will be as close as possible to meaningful dimensions of the experiences.

When and Where do I Write?

You might find that after you write for a few weeks, you will begin to "see" and to be more aware of your professional and teaching life as

it evolves almost as if you are mentally taking details to write about.

There are basically three time periods to consider for writing in your journal. For some experiences, you will probably wish to write about plans and ideas before something occurs. Perhaps you want to try out a new lesson, organise the day in a new way, or have a colleague observe an aspect of your teaching or a given activity in your room. Use your journal to think through what and how and why you are going to do something. What are some possible consequences? Planned? Incidental?

Another time to record is as close to the timing of the experience as possible. Usually this will consist of a few key words and phrases which will be of help to you in reconstructing the events later. When you write at the time of the occurrence (or soon after), it is often worthwhile to jot down images and feelings. These make reflection easier later. The third time for writing is after the experience occurs. According to Progoff, the sooner after, the better. We tend to selectively remember experiences and the closer in time to the occurrence, the less likely we will omit or change important details to fit how we might want to remember them. In other instances the distance of time will be beneficial.

Many people find a quiet time at night to think back over events they then record in their journals. Some teachers sit down at school, after the children leave, to quietly record in their journals events that took place in school. They find it easier to visualise what happened in the classroom by writing there. Other teachers write journal entries in snatches as time is available throughout the week. One time to record, they find, is when they are making out lesson plans. A few teachers I have worked with set aside time within the school day for journal writing--theirs and their children's. Marcia, a fourth

grade teacher, finds this a good way to start the day. She leaves her journal open on her desk so that the children may read it if they wish. Both Marcia and the children select writing to share and personal writing that remains private.

Whenever you choose to write, it is important that you leave enough time to quietly reflect; this means time away from other demands. Though this is often a difficult habit to form, especially when we are so used to "hurrying" and "action," it quickly becomes a looked-forward-to time, and we wonder why we haven't protected some "thought time" for ourselves before!

For many of us, the place we choose to write is as important as the time. For example, while jotting down descriptive comments, ideas, and impressions (to expand on later) might conveniently take place in the teacher's lounge, this is rarely a place where quiet, reflective writing can take place. According to Progoff,[15] we need a quiet place where we can contemplate by ourselves, a comfortable chair or sofa where we can let the tensions of the day slowly recede. Where you write depends, then, on the type of writing you are going to do. Craig leaves his journal on his desk and writes throughout the week and as close to occurrences as he can. Then, on Sunday evenings, he sets aside time to reflect and write quietly. Judy writes a few days a week either before or after school for a short time and then relaxes when the week is over on Friday evenings with a pencil and paper to write (sometimes describing events, other times working out concerns, sometimes introspectively). You might find that for descriptive writing, a quiet place and time is not necessary, while for reflective, introspective writing, it is.

Most of us find it important, especially at first before a writing

habit is formed, to plan time for writing into our schedules. Though writing seems at first a time-consuming endeavor, most of us find that we are "saving" time by becoming aware of where in our use of time we are efficient and where we are not.

What do I Write About?

The possible topics and experiences you might record in your journal are limited only by your imagination. You might document your thoughts, feelings, questions, statements, plans, descriptions, analysis, and introspection as you explore teaching and professional development. This means that you might focus some of your writing on each of three dimensions of your professional life: (1) teaching--what you do and why; (2) students--what they do, the circumstances, a description of their behavior, thoughts, and feelings; and (3) collegial interactions and the process of professional development; your thoughts and feelings as you approach writing and collegial discussion, as you plan, reflect on, and engage in exploration of teaching and professional development.

Teaching Roles and Responsibilities. What do you do and why do you do it? What circumstances surrounded your behavior? What led to the actions you took? What do you think and feel about what you did? What might you do if a similar circumstance exists in the future? Do you see any patterns emerging in your behavior? What aspects of your teaching do you want to focus on?

Students. What do students (or a student) do? What behavior is unusual? What behavior is consistent over time? What students are you particularly concerned about? Might short descriptive comments entered over time enable you to better understand the student? Might it be helpful to concentrate on your work with a student or group over time,

documenting and discussing progress?

Collegial Interaction and Professional Development. How do you feel about writing? What thoughts crop up when you think about writing? When you write? How do you feel about sharing your writing, your thoughts and feelings, about your teaching and professional development with a colleague? Colleagues? Who might be able to lend their support and a different perspective? How might they be helpful to you? You to them?

Over time you will begin to connect writing in different dimensions of your teaching life as relationships begin to emerge. What you write about is important, but of even greater importance is your relationship to what you write. The extent to which you are able to describe your behavior and relationships to the circumstances and actions you describe in your journal will in part determine what you can learn from them. Writing, as we have seen, can be a cathartic process. It can also promote change. Though writing down your impressions, your joys and frustrations are valuable in and of themselves, there might be little change in practise unless the process is taken further. As Jackson[16] pointed out, in order to benefit from experience, we must reflect on it, cogitate over it, and try to make sense of it from a distance. Recording our thoughts and feelings in a journal enables us to return to them from a different perspective.

How do I Develop my Style of Writing?

Everyone has a personal style of writing. Because few of us are professional writers and therefore spend little time writing our thoughts to convey to others, we usually do not give much thought to the process of writing. We are probably unaware of our writing style. As we write more and think more about what we are writing and how best to convey

ideas, we will begin to define our style.

Most of us learned specific rules of grammar which we try to employ as we write. When we read over our writing, it often sounds stilted or formal. We think that writing is like talking, but what we have written does not sound like our speech. If we become overly concerned with how we write, we may abandon writing--or at least turn it into a mechanical procedure. This is not to say that there are not grammatical rules and conventions involved in writing. As a general rule, concentrate first on vividly conveying ideas, using sensory experiences, and then on clarity and succinctness. Approached in this way, rules of grammar can help us to communicate more clearly. Style is rarely a conscious development; it develops as we write and rewrite.

What Problems Might I Encounter?

Because few of us have written journals about our teaching before, there are bound to be some questions that will arise. Many of these have been addressed in previous chapters. I will summarise some of the more common concerns here under the headings of: the writing process, forming the writing habit, writing as a tool for analysis, writing to promote self understanding, and collegial discussion.

The Writing Process. "But what should I write about?" What you write about is much less important than the process of writing, of establishing on paper some of the things that you do as a teacher. Let your writing evolve from your interests, from meaningful aspects of your teaching, of dilemmas or challenges you might like to explore further. Select an experience and write about it soon after you experience it (unless you would like to write about something you remember from the past). Simply write as you think about it. Better yet, try to

take yourself back and try to capture on paper how it felt at the time--write as many details as you can remember. You might find it useful to expand on your experiences later but don't be concerned with this. You might also find it beneficial to select a few segments of your writing to extend and polish. Work on clarifying your thoughts through your writing and work to present your thoughts (and feelings) in a way that conveys the experiences at the time they occurred. Such brief, polished, vignettes help us to convey the weight and colour of small aspects of our lives as teachers and to feel competent as writers. At first many of us would rather not look back at our writing. Reasons include: not wanting to appear incompetent, not wanting to relive our teaching, and not wanting to look at behaviors after the fact. What we see, however, is: how we grow and change, how the immediate circumstances of our teaching contextualise our behaviors, and how (with polished writing) pleasantly articulate we can become.

We aren't used to writing to ourselves. Most writing has been for our teachers and professors and it has been structured for us. Here, in our journal writing we are asked to identify and write about our own concerns, our own ideas and feelings. Here is a chance to be listened to--to be seriously attended to, to clarify our thoughts to share with others--and we are guaranteed an interested colleague--ourselves!

Forming the Writing Habit. Removing ourselves from the motion in our teaching lives long enough to write reflectively about them is no small task. Whether writing is more easily done in snatches throughout the week or in longer periods once or more a week will depend on you.

When *could* you write? Look at your potential time for professional dialogue. How important is time for reflection? Worth 30 minutes a day? Two hours a week? Four? It is important to realise that you will not always write as you have planned to. When you do not write, do not worry or feel guilty about it. Resume as soon as you can and make notes of important occurrences since you last wrote. Do not try to include too much. Instead, move on to more current experiences.

Writing as a Tool for Analysis. For many of us it is difficult to write descriptively without including our interpretations. Our interpretations can be very useful, but we need to recognise that they are interpretations and as such change as our perspectives change. Some teachers find it helpful to go back over their writing and to note (by underlining or bracketing) passages of interpretation. Interpretations can add much to our understanding of experiences but it is helpful to recognise them as one perspective among several possible perspectives. Another approach that teachers have found helpful in differentiating factual information from influences is to divide journal entries into "sides," one side for description of the facts (information that several observers might agree on) and one side for interpretations (and, possibly implications).

Another important way to learn about your teaching is to allow yourself time to quietly sit in reflection, clearing your mind and returning to images that recur from the day or few days since you last wrote. This helps to highlight significant experiences that might otherwise go unnoticed. It also brings us closer to our experiences before we have a chance to judge or edit them.

Regardless of the format you decide to use for your writing, you

will probably find it useful to date and label entries. Most teachers find it useful to put the date at the top of the page and to include a heading such as "daily journal notes," "reactions to teaching," "reflections on (child, lesson, collegial interaction)." This makes it easy to locate previous entries and lends coherence to the writing.

Writing as a Tool for Self Understanding. This is perhaps the most challenging use of writing, and in fact, many of the previously mentioned problems are related to it. It is an uncomfortable process. It is hard for us to give up the comfort of some of our cherished ideas--to look at teaching in new ways, but it is also exhilarating. And, it is this ability to learn from practise that makes teaching professional. As we become aware of the complexity of teaching, it becomes easier to detach ourselves from it in order to learn from it. Our teaching becomes not "good" or "bad" but part of an ongoing process in a context of interacting elements some of which are beyond our control and some that are within it. We know more about our classrooms and our teaching than anyone else does, and through reflective writing and collegial discussion, we have many opportunities to be architects of our own improvement.

Collegial Discussion. There are several reasons for discussing some of your thoughts and feelings with your colleagues. For one thing, they will probably be curious about what you are doing. For another, they can act as a sounding board for your ideas, as professionals who are able to provide you with multiple perspectives and as friends who can listen and provide comments and suggestions empathetically. Bring to them a few of your dilemmas and concerns. Share selected pieces of your writing and ask for their reactions. Not only will you be learning from them, but you will be contributing to their professional development.

How do I Learn from my Writing?

In discovering patterns and sensing clues that fit together in your writing, and more generally, to learn more about yourself, about your teaching and professional growth,

- it might be helpful to reread what you have written just after you have written it, not judging it, but simply reading it as you might a story or newspaper article;
- you might wish to add a comment here or there for clarification, to incorporate further thoughts, feelings or information, or change due to further insights that occur as you reflect;
- return to your writing, whenever the interest occurs. Some people find it beneficial to look back over their writing in monthly or bimonthly stretches and find that they quite enjoy looking in on themselves.

Perhaps most important, do not force or judge your journal; follow your senses and appreciate the journey.

Your Story: A Continuing Personal Adventure

As you experience your story unfold and evolve, you will share the cryptic nature of growth with Sybylla as she explores the personal, life-long, and changing images of 'truth.'

This tale's as true as true can be,
For what is truth or lies?
So often much that's told by me
When seen through other eyes,
Becomes thereby unlike so much
These others tell to you,

And if things be the same as such,
  What is a scribe to do?

Why, tell his tale of course, my friend,
  Or hold his tongue for aye,
Or wait till fictive matters mend,
  Which may be by - and bye.
So here's a tale of things a - near
  That you may read and lend
Without a fear - you'll need no tear -
  It hasn't any end.[16]

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Project Abstract

Teacher Reflections on Classroom Life:
An Empirical Base for Professional Development*

The current study is designed to add to the knowledge bases of teaching and rofessional development. It is a phenomenological study of the classroom teacher d a group of seven teachers who are reflecting upon, writing about, and discus- ng their lives in classrooms over a one-year period. Teachers keep written aries which contain their thoughts on daily events, and serve as topics for scussion at weekly seminar sessions on teaching and professional development. eekly observations in each classroom are made by the researcher. Teachers were lected from seven school districts within a thirty-mile radius of Kent State iversity and include classroom levels from kindergarten through grade three in ban, rural, and suburban settings.

The research is built upon a conceptual framework which was generated in a evious study of teacher perceptions of professional growth and a perceptual proach to development (Holly, 1977).

Major questions which are addressed include the following.

1. What do teachers think about on a daily and weekly basis? What are their problems and joys?

2. What are the events, interactions, and characteristics of the setting which have a significant impact upon their teaching and learning?

3. To what extent do activities and courses which are planned to assist them in their teaching actually help them?

4. What happens when teachers consciously reflect upon their teaching?

5. How do teachers help other teachers?

6. What do responses to these questions suggest for the improvement of support systems for professional development?

Data sources include diaries, transcriptions of seminar sessions, slides of ch classroom and school, observations of participants teaching and field notes, d informal interviews in each school (principals, children, parents, and staff mbers).

The phenomenological approach taken is one designed to enable the researcher look at the classroom life of teachers from their perspectives and to describe e everyday and cumulative experiences which affect their and their students' ves in classrooms (Edelfelt, 1980).

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