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LEARNING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE DILEMMAS OF TEACHING PRACTICE:

AN EXPLORATION OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS'
DEVELOPMENT OF REFLECTIVE JUDGMENT

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LEARNING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE DILEMMAS OF TEACHING PRACTICE: AN EXPLORATION OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE JUDGMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore the ways in which preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels influenced their perceptions of and decisions about complex and ill-defined dilemmas they encountered in their field placement classrooms. Participants were ten traditional-aged juniors in a college teacher preparation program who were completing a pre-student teaching field experience. Data was gathered from online dialogue journals, post-observation interviews, group dilemma discussions, and reflective essays. Participants' statements in these data sources were examined for insights into the nature of the types of dilemmas they encountered in practice, the reflective judgment levels at which they were functioning, the ways their reflective judgment levels influenced the way the approached complex dilemmas of practice, and the ways in which engagement in the reflective processes utilized in the study influenced their development of reflective judgment. Results showed that reflective judgment was a significant influence on the ways in which the participants perceived and took action about classroom dilemmas. The results of the study emphasized the need for teacher educators to take preservice teachers' epistemological development into account when providing guided reflection on field experiences and to implement strategies of guided reflection designed specifically to help preservice teachers understand and explore the epistemological assumptions informing their beliefs and actions.

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Purpose of the Study

One very subtle – but very powerful – aspect of teaching about which prospective

teachers are unfortunately not always told is that it is an extraordinarily messy and

uncertain business. Despite their earnest desire and commitment to do what is "right" in

their profession, teachers are bombarded on virtually a minute-by-minute basis by

situations and issues that challenge their customary strategies for meeting students' needs,

their assumptions about teaching and learning, and their beliefs about their own roles and

identities as teachers. On any given day in any given classroom, questions abound for

which answers are transient, incomplete, or totally elusive: Are my students really

learning what I am teaching? Am I perceiving my students' needs accurately and

addressing them constructively? Am I following my required curriculum appropriately?

How is my behavior affecting them, as well as their families, my colleagues, and the

community? What will be the consequences of my actions in the future? What if I had

tried things a different way? In short, how in the world do I do this, and how can I tell

whether I'm doing it well? Teachers perpetually face complicated dilemmas for which

they must construct resolutions to the best of their abilities.

The mere fact that the dilemmas teachers face are complex and ill-defined in

structure makes learning to teach extremely challenging. However, the need for teachers

to learn how to deal with the uncertain and changeable nature of classroom dilemmas is

even further complicated by the fact that the dilemmas they face are serious in nature, and

the decisions teachers must make about them can have significant consequences for their

students and for society. Dealing with the everyday classroom issues of discerning and

putting into place the most effective pedagogical methods and management strategies with a specific student or group of students is certainly challenging enough in itself, but in addition to making decisions about the "nuts and bolts" of classroom life, modern teachers must also be accountable for the consequences of those decisions in terms of deep and significant educational and societal issues in a broader context.

For example, a teacher might be able to employ methods in the classroom which ultimately elicit high achievement and successful performance by students as measured by traditional means such as grades or standardized tests (an evaluative form currently being strongly advocated and utilized on a widespread basis). This teacher might appear to have resolved the dilemma of how to teach academic content effectively to her students (note: in this document, the pronouns "she" and "her" will be used rather than "he or she" and "his or her"; however, this is solely for the purpose of ease of writing and not to imply any gender-specificity associated with the profession of teaching). However, how can that teacher deal with the question of whether her students have had truly educative experiences in the classroom, constructed knowledge to which they attach personal meaning, gained genuine understanding of the material, or developed their ability to "learn how to learn" on their own rather than simply receiving and memorizing facts and ideas transmitted by the teacher?

If that teacher chooses not to focus on preparing students to be successful based solely on those types of measures, but to allow the students to explore different types of concepts from those in mandated curricula and to present their understanding in non-traditional ways, how can she reconcile the consequences this might have for those students who do not perform well enough on standardized tests to eventually gain

admission into higher education institutions, or for her school or district, which might

suffer repercussions if her class "pulls down" their average test scores or GPA's? If some

students in the classroom perform well on classroom grades or tests and others do not, how

can the teacher understand what the social and academic consequences will be for

individual students or the class or school as a whole, both on an immediate basis and later

on, when they leave school and take their educational experiences with them as part of the

way they function in society?

      A teacher might be able to maintain a classroom that appears quiet, smoothly run,

and efficient, but how can she know whether the students in that classroom are developing

their abilities to interact appropriately with each other and to resolve conflicts successfully,

learning to be accountable for their own choices and actions, or having sufficient

opportunities to express themselves and participate actively in their learning? How can the

teacher know what kind of messages about power and authority her methods for

controlling and managing the classroom are sending to the students? How can the teacher

know whether those methods are fostering a sense of community within the classroom that

will help students learn to respect one another's strengths, weaknesses and personal

differences, both in that classroom and in the future? How can the teacher know if she is

truly addressing the causes of inappropriate behavior in a student who might be acting out,

for example, because of difficult family issues, an undiagnosed learning disability, or a

physical need such as hunger that is going unmet, and not simply keeping the group of

students under strict control so that behavior issues and disruptions are minimized?

      If a student with limited fluency in English enters a classroom, the teacher might be

able to design an effective strategy for helping that student learn to decode and

comprehend passages in English, but how will the teacher know whether his or her actions have provided appropriate respect and support to that student's sense of cultural identity as an individual with a different native language? For that matter, how can the teacher ever be sure that her actions in the classroom are having positive effects on students whose backgrounds are vastly different from the teacher's in other ways, such as racially, religiously, or socioeconomically? How can the teacher know whether her practices are setting an example which will nurture students' understanding of the many types of diversity and facilitate their development of tolerant and respectful behavior towards other individuals and groups?

As one becomes a teacher and develops professionally thereafter, one becomes increasingly aware of the uncertainty inherent in working with groups of children, all of whom have individual backgrounds and needs, within unique school contexts influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors, and the vital necessity for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions in terms of broader issues. Within this perspective, teaching becomes redefined not as the repeated and unchanging application of discrete strategies assumed to be universally applicable to any student or context, but as a continuous, dynamic, and often unpredictable cycle of making and evaluating decisions in the most reasoned manner possible given the circumstances of a specific situation and the highly significant and far-reaching potential consequences of those decisions.

A teacher's journey toward acceptance of this uncertainty and the development of a personal approach to justifiable decision-making in the face of unclear or conflicting information and demands is a complex and highly personal one, involving many layers of belief and experience. Teachers' previous schooling experiences as students, their

educational philosophies and ideologies, their epistemological standpoints, and their reflections on experiences in teacher preparation programs and in their own classrooms all interact to inform and shape choices about which actions are most appropriate in the context of a problematic situation.

Having had firsthand experience dealing with the uncertainties of teaching in several different contexts, I have developed a strong conviction that learning to deal with uncertainty is an essential part of a teacher's career-long professional development and is particularly vital in initial teacher preparation programs, where individuals are, usually for the first time, working formally at constructing an educational philosophy. First of all, as a preservice teacher, particularly in field experiences and student teaching, I experienced the usual anxiety associated with the desire to "survive" my placement and figure out exactly what the right steps were for planning and delivering instruction and managing a classroom, often wishing someone would just let me in on the secret of what the "correct" methods were.

When I began teaching in my own classroom, I faced the challenges of understanding the diverse needs of the children in my class, trying to find ways to meet all their needs at once, negotiating relationships with colleagues and parents, and wondering what would happen to my students once they left my classroom and how my teaching would affect them later – none of which were problems that could be definitively and finally resolved. Like many teachers, I began to realize that my knowledge about my work was far from absolute, but internalized the fear that my admission of uncertainty about how to handle a teaching situation would be interpreted as incompetence, and I struggled to

refine my ideas about teaching and learning and maintain my professional self-esteem when I realized that I had made an inappropriate decision when dealing with a student.

In addition to this, as I grew as a professional, I became increasingly aware that the decisions I made about the complex dilemmas integral to the practice of teaching were significant not only in terms of the immediate needs of my students or my own professional development, but also in the context of larger issues concerning the role of school in society, my potential in my role as a teacher for making a positive contribution to my students' learning and personal success in the long term, and the deeper meaning that informed what I taught and how I taught it. Suddenly I was not only concerned with basic issues such as how to help my students pass tests, get good grades, behave in a manageable way in the classroom and basically get along with each other, for example, but also with my awareness that the habits of learning and conduct I fostered in them could have a lasting impact on the way they approached challenges and problems and related to other individuals and society later in their lives.

When I was teaching kindergarten in 1992, for example, and my school planned a festival in honor of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America, I found myself becoming more and more distraught at being required to celebrate a "holiday" which represented a historical period of cultural and racial violence and subjugation to many Americans. I was deeply emotionally torn by the challenge of dealing honestly and forthrightly about this event with my young students, especially while being pressured by the school to come up with something "cute" for the kindergartners to do at the festival. In the face of the competing forces of my own conscience and professional philosophy and the school's policy, there was absolutely no simple way to resolve the dilemma and I could

come up with no strategies or answers for this type of problem from what I had been taught in my college teacher preparation program or in-service development seminars.

Similarly, during the period preceding Thanksgiving that year and years following, a time when kindergartners traditionally learn about "Pilgrims and Indians," I found myself at a loss as to how to explain the historical relationship between those two groups in an accurate way without either overwhelming my young students with knowledge of the centuries of atrocities visited upon Native Americans by European settlers or having to avoid the issue altogether so they could enjoy making their construction-paper "Indian headdresses" like the other kindergarten classes were doing. I knew I could either follow the example of the veteran teachers and copy their practices or come up with my own way to deal with the issue, but again, it became obvious to me that this was not a situation for which my training had prepared me at all.

Another example of my increasing awareness of the deeper significance of my choices in the classroom, and my lack of preparation for making those choices, occurred during the Christmas season shortly thereafter, when I found myself in the losing end of an argument with my fellow (Catholic school) kindergarten teachers. We planned to use some extra funds to buy small treats for our students, and it took a great deal of courage for me to speak out against the plan to buy small baseballs for the boys in each class and rings for the girls. I did not wish to cause strife within our group of colleagues, nor did I wish to make my class "different" in the eyes of their peers or other teachers, but I felt such a division along gender lines was unconscionable and would merely contribute to the myriad forces which I felt perpetuated damaging stereotypes about what boys and girls could do or be in our society.

Again, no books, lectures or professors I recalled from college had ever given me any idea of what the best course of action in this case might be, let alone any guidance in how to resolve the dilemma on my own. In addition to this, I noticed that many of my colleagues, from those who were struggling through their first year in the classroom to those who had decades of experience teaching, also seemed to have enormous difficulty recognizing when a dilemma called on them to seriously reevaluate their practices and beliefs, or even knowing how to go about meeting this challenge. While I knew that in this case, as well as those involving Thanksgiving and Columbus Day and other situations, that I had probably taken actions in the past that were not the result of reflective and sophisticated examination of my beliefs, I also found myself hit with the profound realization that it was time for that to change.

Finally, when I began working as a supervisor of preservice teachers in early field experiences, I found myself operating through yet another perspective on the uncertainties facing teachers and the importance of preparing them to negotiate these complex dilemmas in a reflective and reasoned manner. I was deeply troubled by the frustration that grew in these preservice teachers as they searched for solid methods to improve their students' learning in problematic situations, only to find that every piece of information they uncovered about a student or school community often led to even more questions. I endeavored desperately to reassure them when they came to the unsettling realizations that the choices they made in the classroom always had consequences of some kind, and that ultimately their teaching choices would be founded just as deeply within their personal frameworks and philosophies, as well as the unspoken norms of practice within specific teaching contexts, as in any official curriculum or set of instructional methods. I fought

feelings of helplessness when my students looked to me for concrete answers to alleviate their confusion about issues arising in the classroom and so many times the answer to their questions was, "Well, it depends…" – an answer they did not always find satisfying.

My student teachers' descriptions of what they had observed in their placement classrooms or the decisions they had made about certain practical and philosophical questions about teaching, and the startling lack of reflectivity which was often demonstrated in their statements, had a profound impact on me, suggesting the disturbing notion that their professional preparation at this point was not necessarily leading them toward decision-making practices that would ultimately benefit all their students. I repeatedly found myself challenged by the momentous task of helping them become more reflective and consider the consequences of their choices regarding these dilemmas whose complexity apparently escaped them. It was unnerving, for example, to hear the lack of consideration for diversity and multiple perspectives expressed by a student teacher whose reaction to a student who told her he could not participate in the class' Halloween celebration because his religion prohibited the observance of this holiday was to remark that perhaps the solution was for the child to attend a different school.

Other student teachers showed such total acceptance of their cooperating teachers' practices, even when those practices were of questionable purpose and possibly highly inappropriate, that they clearly had not developed the habit of considering the beliefs and practices of authority figures or professionals in their field with a critical eye. In one case a student teacher remarked that she used to hold the belief that it was wrong for a teacher to yell at students in the classroom, but after observing her cooperating teacher raise her voice frequently and apparently get results with the students through this method, she had

concluded that the end justified the means and that the cooperating teacher was taking appropriate action in disciplining her class this way because these urban students were probably already used to being spoken to that way at home. This also revealed that this student teacher could have been operating under some extremely harmful and unexamined assumptions about their lives of her students, assumptions which were also common threads in other student teachers' words and writing about their field placements.

Further illustrating the need to promote reflection in preservice teachers about complex dilemmas were statements made by some who demonstrated intense resistance to consideration of the possibility that the knowledge they were expected to teach and assess in their students was more than simply a certain, discrete body of information that was easily agreed upon, transmitted, and measured by professionals, especially when they themselves had been successful in school when their teachers employed methods reflecting such a philosophy. One student teacher maintained that having a student-centered classroom might seem like a great idea, but that there was some content that simply had to be taught by a teacher-directed method because it consisted of facts students definitely had to know, and that there was no reason for a teacher not to be able to elicit high levels of performance from students on standardized tests, which were constructed by experts who knew what students needed to learn in each grade. In such statements, her lack of regard to the notion of constructivism in student learning and her failure to recognize the complex factors influencing students' performance on standardized tests and the consequences of placing high stakes on those tests was evident and alarming.

Over and over, I was struck by the futility of placing student teachers in situations where they would face complex and serious dilemmas of practice when clearly, even

according to the student teachers themselves, they were not being provided with sufficient purposeful guidance to help them learn to consider multidimensional and ill-structured dilemmas in a reflective manner. In their coursework, they were being taught about theories of the psychology of learning and various instructional strategies, being exposed to ideas about transformative teaching and the role of the teacher and the school in modern society, and being offered practical "tips" and suggestions for making their practice of teaching successful on a daily basis. They also participated in extensive field experiences requiring them to participate in K-12 classrooms as observers and participants, develop collegial relationships with cooperating teachers and fellow student teachers, record their observations and discuss their teaching experiences and professional development with a supervisor from their college campus.

However, even within this demanding and extensive professional preparation program, there was a noticeable lack of structured opportunities for these prospective teachers to take time to reflect about the deeper meaning behind the actions they took and what they observed in their field placements. Despite the best efforts of those teacher educators who designed the program to ensure that these preservice teachers were receiving the best possible preparation to enter the field of teaching as qualified professionals, they were also apparently not receiving a great amount of guidance and support (from either their peers or the teacher educators with whom they worked) designed specifically to help them learn how to achieve a better understanding of the factors influencing their teaching decisions and how they might approach the complex dilemmas of teaching in a reflective and justifiable way in the future.

It should also be noted that I, as a supervisor of student teachers, had received minimal guidance about my role in terms of fostering genuine reflection in the prospective teachers with whom I worked, and this further complicated the problem. If the teacher education program itself was not considering the need to help preservice teachers increase the sophistication with which they reasoned about the ill-defined dilemmas so common in the practice of teaching, or providing any formal means for guiding teacher educators in doing so, how could the preservice teachers be expected to improve in this capacity? How could they be expected to know that learning to reason through uncertain dilemmas was even important?

In order to address the anxiety and confusion about how they should deal with their responsibilities which my student teachers often expressed, often without even being aware that I was doing so, I developed the habit of focusing a great deal of my guidance not on providing them with suggestions for widely applicable instruction and management strategies, but on helping them to ascertain what *questions* they needed to ask about themselves and their students in order to address the problematic situations they encountered in the best way they could. I tried to help them become comfortable with and apply the idea that though ultimately they might never identify one "right" answer to a dilemma, there were methods by which they could learn to explore dilemmas in a way that would lead them to a course of action they considered justifiable.

While this type of advice might not necessarily have been the type of direct transmission of successful methods they had initially sought, for it did not provide them with a quick answer for their difficulties, I found that their reflections about their teaching ultimately grew increasingly complex and personal when they were offered this type of

support. In addition, the preservice teachers with whom I worked often expressed to me that they deeply appreciated being given an opportunity to reflect about their beliefs about resolving dilemmas of practice, what experiences in their lives had influenced the development of their beliefs, and the ways their decisions in the classroom would affect their students. In many cases, they had recognized that they felt "in over their heads" in having to deal with complex educational dilemmas; they were relieved to have the chance to share their experiences and feelings about those issues, and to be reassured that they were neither alone in feeling confused nor incapable of increasing the sophistication and confidence with which they addressed difficult dilemmas of practice.

These experiences all contributed to the deepening of my belief that teacher education programs must take considered and active steps toward preparing teachers to deal with the inevitable uncertainties and dilemmas of the teaching profession. It would be reasonable to assume that preservice teacher education programs would be the ideal place to begin structured guidance in this area; however, despite the enormous impact the uncertainties of teaching have on teachers, learning to deal with them is often not a priority within preservice teacher education (or in-service professional development) contexts for a variety of reasons (Clark, 1988; Ichimura, 1993; Labaree, 2000; Wasserman, 1999).   The need to impart a great deal of knowledge and information to prospective teachers about educational foundations, learning theory, and instructional methods in a brief amount of time is so strong that sometimes this type of time-intensive reflection is unintentionally neglected; teacher educators may also wish not to discourage prospective teachers from entering the profession by making it seem frustrating and unappealing. Reluctance to focus on helping novice teachers explore the experiences and beliefs that inform their

decisions about complex dilemmas to which there may not be one "right" answer may also be the result of the fear that doing so might lead to novice teachers' development of an attitude of extreme relativism, in which they consider any alternative course of action to be equally as valid as any other, rather than internalizing the belief that the alternatives need to be weighed in terms of the available evidence. This lack of emphasis within teacher education programs on developing strategies for addressing ill-structured problems encountered in practice suggests that teacher educators may be mistakenly assuming that preservice teachers are capable of reasoning through and making justifiable decisions in these cases (Floden & Buchmann, 1993; Floden & Clark, 1988).

Not only do teacher education programs often neglect to take action to meet this need to prepare teachers to address uncertain and problematic dilemmas of practice, there is also evidence that we as teacher educators have only an incomplete understanding at best of how prospective teachers at this stage even approach and experience those dilemmas. Research has shown it that can be highly difficult for teacher educators to facilitate preservice teachers' comprehension, articulation and reexamination of their own beliefs with regard to teaching and learning and to help them realize how those beliefs affect their actions (McDiarmid, 1990), and the nature of the epistemological beliefs and assumptions which might influence their reasoning in the face or professional dilemmas is also not well understood. Research also indicates that preservice teachers display a wide range of epistemological beliefs, often loosely interconnected in web-like fashion and dependent on their interpretations of many different previous experiences and contexts (O'Laughlin, 1991; White, 2000), and that they draw on multiple lenses to frame their beliefs rather than relying consistently on one particular epistemological perspective (Many, Howard &

Hoge, 2002). This suggests that prospective teachers receive minimal guidance, if any at all, concerning how they might refine their approaches to dilemmas requiring thoughtful and reasoned examination of their beliefs and that we would do well as teacher educators to better understand their views about knowledge and justification of their decisions. The need for future research in this area is pointed out in a recent review of scholarship on knowledge, learning, and assessment by Moore (2002), who calls for "ongoing, open-ended explorations" (p.31) of several key questions, including: "In what ways do epistemological beliefs influence the nature and development of expertise in various learning contexts?" (p.31) and "How do teachers view the process of learning for their students, in what ways do those perspectives reflect the conceptual framework of socialization described in the literature, and how does that relate to/interact with the meaning-making of individual students?" (p.32)

The conclusions of such research as described above, as well as my experiences as a preservice teacher, classroom teacher, and supervisor of student teachers, have convinced me that there is a serious need for teacher educators to learn about the ways in which preservice teachers perceive, make sense of, and learn to deal with dilemmas and problematic situations encountered in practice. In addition, before this can truly occur, we must understand more about the factors which influence preservice teachers' decision-making and reflective skills in the face of complex dilemmas.

In order to explore and understand this need, I conducted a qualitative research study with a professor in my doctoral program who had an extensive background facilitating field-based inquiry with student teachers and a great deal of experiencing researching the Reflective Judgment Model (RJM), a model of adult cognitive

development related to epistemological beliefs which seemed highly appropriate to the purpose of the study. The results of this study confirmed many of my concerns about the difficulty with which preservice teachers address complex and ill-defined dilemmas of practice, strongly suggested a need for further study in this area, and ultimately served as a pilot study for the research study described in the remainder of this document.

The purpose of the pilot study was to explore the ways in which pre-service teachers participating in an early field experience reasoned, justified knowledge, recognized and thought about complex dilemmas encountered in their teaching practice, and to illuminate the factors that might have influenced changes or development in their reflective judgment over time. Since the value of field experiences as a means for promoting reflection has already been established by the research literature (Calderhead, 1989; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Gipe & Richards, 1992; O'Donoghue & Brooker, 1996; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), an early field experience was identified as an appropriate setting for this inquiry into preservice teacher development. Using a participatory action/multiple case study methodology and applying the Reflective Judgment Model (RJM) developed by King and Kitchener (1994) as a framework for understanding the participants' approaches to the problematic situations that arose in their classroom practice, the study followed the development of a small sample of pre-service teachers as they completed a semester-long early field experience.

The RJM consists of a continuum of qualitatively different stages, each associated with specific epistemological assumptions and standpoints, through which individuals progress (though not necessarily in a linear fashion) as they learn to face complex, ill-structured problems – dilemmas to which there is no one clear answer – in an increasingly

sophisticated manner, so it seemed a particularly promising lens through which to view the

development of the participants' approaches to the types of uncertain dilemmas already

identified as inherent in the profession of teaching. The specifics of the development of

this model and the different stages associated with it will be discussed in greater detail, but

following is a basic summary of the epistemological assumptions generally associated with

each stage:

Table 1:
Assumptions about Knowledge as Outlined
by the Reflective Judgment Model

Level	How Certain is Knowledge?	How is Knowledge Gained?	How Are Beliefs Justified?
1	Absolutely certain.	Via direct observation.	Beliefs are a direct reflection of reality. No need to justify them.
2	Absolutely certain but not immediately available.	Via direct observation and via what authorities say is true.	Direct observation or via authorities.
3	Absolutely certain about some things; temporarily uncertain about others.	Via authorities in some areas; through our own biases when knowledge is uncertain.	Via authorities in some areas; via what feels right in the moment where knowledge is uncertain.
4	No certainty because of situational variables (data lost over time).	Via our own and others' biases, data, and logic.	Via idiosyncratic evaluations of evidence and unevaluated beliefs.
5	No certainty except via personal perspectives within a specific context.	Via evidence and rules of inquiry appropriate for the context.	By rules of inquiry for a particular context.
6	Some personal certainty about beliefs based on evaluations of evidence on different sides of the question.	Via personal assessment of arguments and data, via evaluated opinions of experts.	Via generalized rules of inquiry, personal evaluations that apply across contexts, evaluated views of experts.
7	Certainty that some knowledge claims are better and more complete than others although they are open to evaluation.	Via a process of critical inquiry or synthesis.	As more or less reasonable conjectures about reality or the world based on an integration and evaluation of data, evidence, and/or opinion.

The RJM was chosen as a promising guiding framework for exploring preservice teacher development within both the pilot study and this research study for several reasons. First, most studies of the RJM thus far have found it to be a reasonable and consistent conceptual model (King & Kitchener, 1994), but these studies have focused mainly on college students in general. The model's applicability to preservice teachers specifically has not yet been extensively explored, so the use of the RJM in this capacity has the potential to enhance the research literature on the RJM as a whole. Additionally, since the RJM is based on the idea of gradual growth in the ways one approaches ill-structured dilemmas, and since teaching itself is fraught with "endemic uncertainties" and constantly changing demands and circumstances (Jackson, 1986; Lortie, 1975), the RJM promised to provide an enlightening perspective to employ when studying the process by which preservice teachers make decisions, articulate and challenge their assumptions and beliefs, and look reflectively at their practice.

Research data on the RJM indicates the average mean reflective judgment levels of traditional-aged college students falls at about 3.8, between stage 3, the end of the Pre-Reflective level and stage 4, the earlier stage of the Quasi-Reflective level (King & Kitchener, 2002). Mean scores on the Reflective Judgment Interview (the official instrument for measuring an individual's placement on the RJM) average 3.63 for college freshmen, 3.57 for sophomores, 3.74 for juniors, and 3.99 for seniors (King & Kitchener, 1994). This indicates that many college students are on the verge of making the important transition between Pre-Reflective thinking to Quasi-Reflective thinking, which marks the use of a qualitatively different set of epistemic assumptions, including acceptance of uncertainty as an inherent part of the process of knowing and the acknowledgement that

evidence plays a part in decision-making. The fact that college students are at such a pivotal point on the RJM underscores the importance of studying this aspect of their development. Furthermore, other research indicating that college seniors and graduate students who had majored in education scored significantly lower on the RJI than those majoring in the humanities (Friedman, 1995) suggests that examination of reflective judgment in preservice teachers is particularly called for.

The participants in the pilot study, which took place from January through May of 2002, were six student teachers whom I had supervised during their second of three required pre-practicum field experiences and who were invited to continue with me as their supervisor (rather than being randomly assigned to a new supervisor each semester, as was the general practice) to participate in the study. Each participant was a Caucasian female approximately 20 years old at the time of the study, and each was placed in the same urban elementary school in a large metropolitan area. The study was grounded in the methodologies of participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) and collective, intrinstic/instrumental case study (Stake, 2000).

In order to study how the participants reasoned, justified knowledge and developed their reflective judgment with regard to ill-defined dilemmas, several data collection methods were utilized. First, individuals in the study participated in weekly online dialogue journaling, often including multiple iterations, in which they responded to prompts adapted from the standard Reflective Judgment Interview and designed to help the participants understand and articulate the beliefs they held which influenced the way they made decisions about ill-defined dilemmas they encountered firsthand in their placement classrooms. Second, they participated in eight biweekly seminars structured around

discussion of a complex dilemma, the topic of which was suggested by recurring themes and questions participants identified in their journals as problematic. Third, each participant was interviewed following observed teaching episodes in order to explore the decisions they had made about their teaching. Finally, participants completed self-reflective essays at the end of the semester discussing how they each felt their ability to reason about ill-defined dilemmas had developed during the study.

This pilot study suggested several important conclusions which directed and gave support to the need for the present study. One of the most striking aspects of analysis of the study's results was the relationship that strongly appeared to exist between the specific stages of reflective judgment at which the participants were functioning and their statements about classroom dilemmas, which suggested that their stage of epistemological development was indeed having an impact on the way they regarded and made choices about complex issues. Before conducting the pilot study, I, presumably like at least some other teacher educators, had been completely unaware of the influence this factor might be having on the way my student teachers experienced and made sense of the teaching dilemmas they had found in their practice, and the need for further study of this area became evident.

The researchers found that certain contextual factors, such as the provision of sufficient time for reflection, the often evaluatory or high-pressure atmosphere of the student teaching setting, and the effects of interaction and dialogue with both peers and teacher educators/mentors, influenced the participants' demonstration of reflective judgment. Finally, there were certain dilemmas which appeared frequently in the participants' journals and discussions, for example, such as issues involving discipline and

classroom management, the impact of socioeconomic status on student learning, and the relative value of and need for teacher-directed or student-centered instruction in the classroom.

One of the most significant aspects of the pilot study's results was its suggestion that continuous participation in active dialogue and guided reflection about ill-defined dilemmas contributed to an increase in the sophistication of the reflective judgment demonstrated by several of the participants and in their confidence about their ability to become more successful at reasoning through complex dilemmas. While at the beginning of the study most participants appeared to be relying primarily on direct observation, personal experience, and especially the example of "experts" such as their cooperating teachers to know what decisions to make about dilemmas of practice, by the end of the study several of the participants were beginning to incorporate the exploration of evidence and theoretical ideas into their decision-making process; this represents an important step in their progression toward higher levels of reflective judgment. This indicates that reflective judgment can indeed be nurtured by certain processes such as guided reflection and that it would behoove teacher educators to become more informed about these processes and more adept at putting them into practice.

Several important implications for teacher educators were included in the pilot study's conclusions. The results suggested that it would be beneficial for teacher educators to recognize prospective teachers' reflective judgment levels, reassure them that the ill-defined dilemmas they find in classroom practice can be confusing but that they can learn to make the most justifiable decisions possible in those cases, and provide support appropriate to those individuals' reasoning styles and tailored to helping them reflect about

their experiences in ways that would help them move forward to more sophisticated thinking. Since preservice teachers can be highly dependent on direct observation, personal experience, and copying their cooperating teachers as a means for making decisions about dilemmas, teacher educators must help them learn to collect and evaluate evidence and understand research in order to make more informed and justifiable decisions; they must also strive to ensure that cooperating teachers with whom student teachers are placed can act as mentors to encourage reflective reasoning about teaching issues rather than simply role models whose behavior is to be observed and strictly copied. The pilot study further implied that teacher educators should provide regular, structured opportunities for dialogue with peers and mentors to explore ill-structured educational problems which they find practically and theoretically relevant in a candid, non-threatening setting.

The results of the pilot study, especially when considered in light of previous research on the uncertainty of teaching, epistemological development in preservice teachers, and the fostering of reflective practice in teacher education, definitely indicate that understanding the way reflective judgment influences preservice teachers' actions and professional development, and conducting further research this area, would be beneficial to prospective teachers and those who attempt to prepare them for the profession of teaching. Before we can help young people become good teachers, we must first understand them, and help them to understand themselves, as learners. This need, which the present study proposes to address, is expressed powerfully in the words of William Perry, whose scheme of intellectual and ethical development (1970) provided the foundation for the Reflective

Judgment Model and much other research exploring learners' understandings and approaches to learning:

> …[For] providing students with opportunities to discover and refine their own powers…the first prerequisite is the student's experience of being *met*…If a model of development helps portray the successive shapes of students' worlds, we can state a primary issue this way: what assessments, applications and contexts contribute toward such moments of meeting, and what distinguishes them from others that may detract from this potential? What greater community of care could we need? (1985, p. 5)

If teacher educators were better able to comprehend the impact that student teachers' epistemological frameworks and decision making processes have on their understanding of complex dilemmas of practice, field experiences and teacher preparation in general could potentially be made vastly more educative and meaningful. However, the significance of addressing preservice teachers' reflective judgment extends far beyond the opportunity to increase the potential for preservice teachers to experience successful field placements or even to bring about discrete improvements in their aptitude for professional reflection in general. When one considers the dire consequences of sending new teachers into the field unprepared to make reasoned, justifiable decisions through the many confusing and complicated dilemmas they will inevitably face, it becomes clear that pursuing this endeavor is vital to the future of teaching and teacher preparation as a whole.

Goal Statement / Significance of the Study

I believe that the "ill-defined problems" identified by the Reflective Judgment Model as a means to understand individuals' epistemological development are very similar

in structure and complexity to the many serious educational dilemmas teachers face on a daily basis. Therefore, by studying preservice teachers' development of reflective judgment, I hope to enhance both my own understanding, and that of the study participants, of the experiences and patterns of thought which guide preservice teachers' decision-making in the classroom. In addition to the benefit this could have for the study's participants – prospective teachers who would receive specific guidance in facing ill-structured problems and therefore may be more prepared to deal with them in practice – this study may have important implications for teacher educators whose goal is fostering reflective, critical thinking and considered decision-making in preservice teachers, issues which affect not only the preservice teachers' experience in their preparation programs but the consequences of their professional decisions in the future.

It is my hope that this research will assist me, and other teacher educators, in gaining understanding of the way reflective judgment and experiences in the field influence each other within preservice teachers' development. Ultimately, this understanding could help us learn to structure experiences that will help preservice teachers develop their ability to critically examine their beliefs about what constitutes knowledge, and to become more sophisticated in the way they justify their decisions in resolving problematic dilemmas of practice.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

<div align="center">*Primary Research Question*</div>

- How do preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels influence the ways in which they inquire into and make decisions about complex dilemmas of practice encountered during an early field experience?

Sub-Questions

- How is the preservice teacher's reflective judgment level demonstrated through activities related to early field experiences such as dialogue journaling, collaborative reflection sessions, and post-observation interviews?

- What changes or developments occur in the preservice teacher's approach to making decisions about complex problems encountered in practice through the field experience, if any? How do they perceive these changes, if at all?

- With what specific events, processes, or experiences might changes in RJ during the field placement be associated?

- What implications do the results of the study have for teacher educators attempting to foster preservice teachers' ability to deal with ill-defined dilemmas encountered in practice?

Summary

The practice of teaching clearly entails a continuous, complex decision-making process about ill-defined dilemmas, and the decisions teachers make about these dilemmas can have serious and far-reaching consequences. However, it is clear that teachers are frequently unprepared to face this challenging aspect of teaching. Research has shown that preservice teacher education programs do not emphasize the importance of learning to make justifiable decisions in the face of uncertainty and do not equip preservice teachers with strategies for reflecting about dilemmas and making decisions about issues to which there is no one clear and correct course of action. This is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that teacher educators may not have a clear understanding of factors such as epistemological development which influence preservice teachers' ability to reason

through ill-structured dilemmas. Based on the suggestions of research in this area and the implications of a pilot study conducted with preservice teachers participating in an early field experience, the present study will attempt to address this gap in research and understanding by providing rich, holistic descriptions of the ways in epistemological development, as defined by Kitchener and King's Reflective Judgment Model, influenced the decisions which a small group of preservice teachers made about problematic dilemmas of teaching and learning they encountered throughout a semester-long early field experience.

The remainder of this document will focus on the details of a multiple case study designed to illuminate the influence of reflective judgment on preservice teachers' decisions about ill-defined dilemmas of practice. In Chapter II, relevant research literature in the general areas of uncertainty in teaching, models of epistemological development, and nurturing reflective practice in preservice teachers will be reviewed. Chapter III will provide a detailed description of the methods employed in planning and conducting this multiple case study. Chapter IV will provide narrative descriptions of each individual case and analyses of the ways in which each participant's reflective judgment level impacted her decisions about classroom dilemmas. Finally, in Chapter V, themes across cases will be examined, and the study's implications for teacher educators will be discussed.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The following review of the literature outlines some of the most prominent research literature dealing with several areas that are pertinent to this study. Three general areas of research will be reviewed. First, research that addresses the uncertainties inherent in the teaching profession in general and the challenge of preparing prospective teachers to deal with uncertainties and problematic situations in practice will be discussed. Second, I will present a review of research that addresses conceptualizations of individual epistemological development. This will consist of an overview of research on epistemological development in general, a detailed look at one model of development, the Reflective Judgment Model, which provides the basis for this study's data collection and analysis, and an examination of research pertaining specifically to epistemological beliefs of preservice teachers. The third and final section will briefly explore research that addresses the process of helping preservice teachers become more reflective in their practice, particularly through guided inquiry and situated learning experiences.

Review of Related Literature

Uncertainty in Teaching

Uncertainty as an Inherent Part of Teaching

As one of the ultimate goals of this study is to increase teacher educators' abilities to help preservice teachers learn to deal with dilemmas of practice, it is essential to examine the ways in which uncertainty manifests itself as an inherent part of the act of teaching and the ways that both practicing and preservice teachers address uncertainty.

The practice of teaching has been described as involving a wide array of uncertainties, complex and ambiguous situations, and dilemmas through which teachers must somehow find their way (Clark, 1988, Dudley-Marling, 1995, 1997; McDonald, 1992). The process of facing and negotiating these uncertain, unpredictable situations is constant, dynamic, and ongoing for teachers. Furthermore, it requires teachers to utilize contextually appropriate and justifiable decision-making strategies even under the pressure of competing agendas and institutional norms (Buchmann, 1987). Dilemmas faced by teachers as described in the research literature involve many different contexts and issues, such as the need to take on an authoritative role in an environment over which they have little control (Nyberg & Farber, 1986), the development of productive personal relationships with individual students, each of which is unique (Ichimura, 1993), and the social structure of teachers' professional role (Winograd, 2000). Research evidence also shows that teachers struggle with uncertainties concerning their transition from student to teacher, curriculum planning, ethical issues, and gaps between their educational ideologies and the realities of schools and classrooms in society (Ben-Peretz & Kremer-Hayon, 1990).

Teachers address the uncertainty of their profession in various ways – not all of which are equally productive, due in large part to the lack of attention, both in preservice teacher education and inservice professional development, given to helping teachers

acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with uncertainty (Bucci, 2000).

Learning to resolve dilemmas in situations that are vague or unclear is particularly difficult

for preservice and novice teachers, who often experience emotional discomfort and

profound cognitive dissonance when confronted by seemingly unresolvable dilemmas and

who tend to gravitate toward concrete or simple behavioral strategies for solving problems

encountered in practice that represent a copy view of knowledge. In many cases, these

unclear dilemmas in teaching are ignored altogether, which can unfortunately propagate an

inaccurate image of teaching as a practice that is much simpler and easily mastered than it

actually is (McDonald, 1992).

In one of the most widely cited works on the uncertainty of teaching, Lortie (1975)

discusses many of the factors that cause teaching to be a profession full of uncertainties

and ambiguities. Teachers, Lortie writes, are required to implement goals which have

intangible products – student achievement and personal development – and to use multiple

criteria simultaneously – academic, aesthetic, moral, and scientific – in order to assess their

success in their practice. This, along with the fact that teaching deals with humans, who

are innately changeable and unpredictable, makes teaching an extremely uncertain practice.

Lortie cites the low degree of voluntarism in the teacher-student relationship, the

problem of extracting work from immature workers (students), and the grouped context of

teaching as major complicating factors of the teaching situation. He further notes that

teachers receive higher psychic rewards for their work if they can find signs of

understanding in their students, so they may be looking for personal reassurance of their

teaching effectiveness as well as student achievement when they attempt to assess

students' understanding. (This is a significant finding because it suggests that if teachers

are unprepared to address the uncertainties of teaching in a productive manner, they may be likely to become frustrated with their professional success and choose not to remain in the profession, a serious problem given the high attrition rate of beginning teachers.) Lortie describes the anxiety teachers experience when attempting to ascertain which curricular objectives they should emphasize, whether students are actually learning, and whether their efforts have any lasting influence on students, especially when they do not receive authoritative reassurance from administrators or principals. In addition to this, Lortie asserts that the uncertainty of teaching is compounded by the fragile nature of the teacher-student relationship, in which teachers must balance the roles of authority figure and emotional caretaker, and the structure of the teaching profession itself, whose training is not viewed as significantly difficult by the general population and which often leaves the teacher in relative isolation to perform and evaluate his or her duties.

Jackson (1986) elaborates on Lortie's ideas about the uncertainty of teaching, focusing on how teachers face the daunting task of finding out what is really going on in their students' minds. Since teachers constantly wonder whether students are achieving meaningful learning, and since evaluation of their own performance is often linked to what students learn, they face continuous anxiety and insecurity about this question. When working within a "knowledge transmission model," Jackson notes, teachers attempt to remove the uncertainty about what students know by employing various formal and informal questioning and testing techniques, and further details the limitations of these practices, including the peculiarities of the questioning that goes on between teacher and student in comparison to questions that occur in everyday interactions. Assessing student knowledge and understanding becomes even more complex in a "knowledge

transformation model," in which teachers attempt to guide students into forming meaningful connections between the knowledge they learn and their lives. Finally, teachers face further uncertainty when they take on the tasks of helping students develop character and values, progress which is extraordinarily difficult to measure.

Although uncertainty appears to be unavoidable if teachers practice reflectively and consider the multifaceted contexts in which they work, the changeable nature of their students, and the elusive nature of knowledge itself, some researchers have suggested that this is not necessarily always a negative factor in the teacher's work. Dudley-Marling (1995, 1997), for example, claims that the uncertainty inherent in teaching is what drives teachers to inquire into, reflect upon, and ultimately improve their practice. Additionally, Lampert (1985) uses case studies to discuss how dilemmas encountered in practice can actually be a useful tool for improving one's teaching. Lampert claims that teachers should not be advised to find quick and easy solutions for dilemmas that arise in the classroom, but rather to learn from them and to improve their practice by exploring these dilemmas in depth, seeking out new alternatives to their ways of teaching, and refining their images of themselves as teachers and their definitions of their roles.

Similarly, in a discussion of how a group of teachers began working collaboratively to further their pedagogical knowledge and support each other as they worked through the problematic aspects of their teaching and a book elaborating on the nature of the teaching profession, McDonald (1986, 1992) posits that the practical dilemmas which teachers encounter represent an excellent opportunity to integrate theory and practice and are one of the richest sources of meaningful understanding for teachers who are willing to embrace and explore them. McDonald's conclusion is supported by the work of Lange and

Burroughs-Lange (1994), who concluded after interviewing experienced elementary

teachers that many of them considered their most valuable professional growth to be that

resulting from a transformational conception of teaching, one which incorporates the

possibility of change through reflection on professional challenges and dilemmas.

Furthermore, Villaume (2000) has cited teachers' acceptance and exploration of the

uncertainty inherent in the challenges of meeting the needs of diverse groups of students as

a vital driving factor behind successful educational reform.

This concept of knowledgeable yet continually evolving professional identity and

practice as valuable perspectives through which to view teachers' work in many ways

reflects the ideas of scholars whose ideas have contributed greatly to the research on

reflective teaching. For example, in developing the concept of "Reflection-In-Action,"

Schőn (1983) defines the professional practitioner as one who can think while acting and is

able to respond to the uncertainty, conflict and uniqueness of a given situation.

Additionally, acknowledgment of the necessity of working through problematic situations

as a means for improving practice is also a central theme in the educational philosophy of

Dewey (1933), who asserted that true reflective thinking is only called for within, and

occurs as a result of, an individual's involvement in situations of conflict and uncertainty.

Helping Preservice Teachers Learn to Approach Dilemmas and Uncertainty

Some educational researchers have expanded the literature on the uncertainty of

teaching by exploring how this aspect of teaching should influence the process of initial

teacher preparation. If uncertainty and complexity are to be recognized as inherent

elements of teaching, this means that preservice teachers must be prepared in some way to

implement strategies for resolving uncertain dilemmas in practice. Researchers have

asserted that the development of constructive approaches to uncertain situations must be incorporated into teacher preparation programs so that preservice teachers develop the capacity for morally and ethically responsible decision-making, and not simply the ability to execute technically effective practice (Coombe & Newman, 1997; Harrington & Quinn-Leering, 1996). However, this goal is complicated and difficult to achieve, and it is often neglected in the structure and content of teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Ichimura, 1993).

Labaree (2000), for example, describes how the uncertainties of teaching lead to serious obstacles for teacher educators. Many prospective teachers, for instance, have little sense of the uncertainties of teaching, and therefore may have an unrealistic view of the job that awaits them; having spent years in school observing their own teachers, many already feel they have a solid grasp of what teaching is all about, although they generally have not taken into consideration the ambiguities and dilemmas which their teachers faced. This form of reflection again suggests a copy view of knowledge where knowledge is always certain and beliefs are justified via only personal experience rather than exploration of knowledge across multiple contexts and perspectives. Thus, novice teachers may expect that there is always a right answer to a dilemma and work to find right answers rather than consider and accept that dilemmas pose complexities, ambiguities, and uncertainties. Considering this, as well as all the factors elaborated by Lortie (1975) and Jackson (1986) as compounding the uncertainty of the teaching profession and the public perceptions that teacher knowledge is just "common knowledge" and teacher development is not a selective or rigorous process, Labaree asserts that it is no wonder that teacher educators have a

difficult time preparing prospective teachers for the demanding and contradictory tasks that await them.

Floden and Buchmann (1993) and Floden and Clark (1988) also point out that relatively little has been done to address the discomfort and cognitive dissonance that novice teachers often experience when confronted by uncertainties about subject matter knowledge, the effectiveness of testing and measurement strategies, the teacher's role of authority, and their own progress in learning to teach. Floden and Buchmann (1993) recommend that teacher educators prepare novice teachers to face uncertainty by exposing them to some of the dilemmas and ambiguities they will face as teachers in a way that will help them avoid either extreme relativism or idiosyncratic reasoning (believing that any interpretation or course of action is equally as good as any other) or single-minded efforts to reduce uncertainty at all costs (which can lead to an overly technical and limited approach to teaching and learning). They advocate helping novice teachers learn to embrace dilemmas in their practice as a driving force behind the improvement of their teaching, to identify the situations in which uncertainty can and should be reduced and some possible methods for doing so, and to internalize strategies for coping with residual uncertainty.

These ideas are echoed in a review of research on teacher thinking by Clark (1988), who states that the empirical research shows teaching to be an extremely cognitive activity in which teachers are presented with continual interactive decision-making situations and spend a great deal of their time anticipating potential problems and solutions, as well as planning to reduce discrepancies and uncertainty in their lessons. Clark advocates that rather than attempt to instill prospective teachers with an attitude that they should be able

to find a quick technical "fix" to complex dilemmas that arise in teaching, teacher educators should expose prospective teachers to the frustrating but promising practice of wrestling with dilemmas in order to improve their practice without being concerned with finding the one "right" solution.

Wasserman (1999) proposes a similar goal for teacher education, noting how wide the disparity can be between the uncertainties and ambiguities of real classroom practice and the structured experiences of formal teacher education programs. She notes that teaching involves making constant, multifaceted, sometimes risky decisions and that this is complicated by the fact that teachers as well as students are continually engaged in a process of meaning-making that is influenced by personal history, backgrounds, values and beliefs. Therefore, she asserts that teacher educators must prepare preservice teachers to treat dilemmas with thoughtful and sensitive consideration and to realize that while it is often the case that no single resolution of a dilemma can be considered universally "best," this does not mean that all interpretations are equally valid. In order for this to occur, Wasserman states, teacher education programs should focus on helping teachers refine various skills for dealing with uncertainties, such as data gathering, data analysis, and informed action.

Helping preservice teachers learn to make reasoned decisions about complex and perhaps ultimately irresolvable dilemmas in practice is a difficult endeavor, and there is little definitive guidance for teacher educators concerning precisely how they should go about putting this goal into practice. It has been suggested that providing authentic opportunities for student teachers to construct and analyze their own metaphors and images of their teaching practice is a useful strategy for helping them become more aware of the

assumptions and implications embedded in their decisions and practices (Dooley, 1998). In addition to this, one particular method for preparing preservice teachers to make decisions about ill-structured problems which has received considerable attention from researchers recently is the focused study of specific practice-based dilemmas with preservice teachers.

The practice of engaging preservice teachers in writing, analyzing and discussing dilemma cases, either those encountered by student teachers in practice or those specifically designed by teacher educators, has been cited by teacher education researchers as a valuable strategy for increasing prospective teachers' awareness of the complexity of individual dilemmas and their understanding of the ways in which multiple (and frequently intangible) factors influence a classroom situation, the development of a particular student, and the role that schooling plays in society. Although group discussions of dilemma cases with preservice teachers may be limited somewhat by the group's collective previous experience (Powell, 2000), writing and participating in collaborative discourse about dilemma cases has been identified as a promising method for helping preservice teachers clarify and articulate their beliefs about knowledge and teaching, consider multiple perspectives for problematic situations, challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions that guide their practice, and understand more fully the possible consequences of their actions (Boyce, 1995; Coombe & Newman, 1997; Harrington, 1995; Harrington, Quinn-Leering, & Hodson, 1996; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Mastrilli & Brown, 1999). Although bringing uncertainty to the forefront of discussion does tend to make novice teachers uncomfortable (Floden & Clark, 1988), proponents of dilemma case studies propose that this experience will give prospective teachers higher acuity in recognizing the complexity

of their work, as well as greater confidence in recognizing and dealing with uncertain situations in which they must actively make decisions about their practice. Through the use of dialogue journals, interviews, and group discussions, the present study utilizes this perspective about the importance of engaging preservice teachers in interaction and dialogue about dilemmas encountered in practice.

Theories and Conceptualizations of Personal Epistemological Development

General Overview

To provide an initial overview of research intended to conceptualize and explore various aspects of personal epistemological development, it will be useful to first consider the framework proposed by Schommer-Aikins (2002) in a review of the purposes, themes, and directions for future study in research in this area over the past several decades. According to the Schommer-Aikins framework, research on epistemological development from the late 1960's through the mid 1980's was largely conducted by researchers who each had a unique investigative focus, and there were few attempts to connect various pieces of research to one another. By 1990, research on epistemological development had attempted to hypothesize epistemological beliefs in five areas: beliefs about the stability, structure, and sources of knowledge, and beliefs about the speed and control of knowledge acquisition; beliefs were derived from these studies about the structure and stability of knowledge and the speed and control of individual learning. During this period, researchers also explored possible links between epistemological beliefs and specific aspects of learning such as an individual's GPA, strategies for comprehending complex text, and problem-solving processes for well-structured and ill-structured content.

By 1994, a loose-knit framework for an epistemological belief system had been developed. Basic ideas underlying this framework included a) that epistemological beliefs were more or less independent; b) that the nature of epistemological beliefs was characterized by frequency distribution rather than dichotomies or continuums; c) that epistemological beliefs had direct and indirect effects on individuals; d) that the domain and scope of individual beliefs varied over time; and e) that experience influenced the development and change of epistemological beliefs over time.

By 2000, Schommer-Aikins had discovered several more common themes and patterns in the study of epistemological development and provided directions for future research. Research on the development of epistemological beliefs was focused on consistent development of earlier patterns of belief, and epistemological beliefs were seen to vary in multiplicity, generality, and independence over time. Balance and avoidance of unbridled relativism were seen as keys to understanding epistemological development, which was determined to be a complex, lifelong process. Research showed that the number and domain scope of epistemological beliefs varied over time, that development was key to other aspects of theories of epistemological belief systems, and that multiple approaches to assessment and measurement of epistemological beliefs which took into account an individual's developmental level should be designed and employed.

In presenting this framework, Schommer-Aikins' frequently emphasizes the significance of the goal of research on epistemological development, which is to understand the learner's perspective in the process of learning. Epistemological beliefs, she states, "as difficult as they maybe to conceive and measure, are too important to ignore" (Schommer, 1994, p. 38). Understanding learners'/students' beliefs, she contends,

may provide educators with a means of identifying sources of problems in learning or making instruction more amenable to students' ways of thinking.

In examining research on epistemological development, one must also consider the seminal work of William Perry, whose scheme of intellectual and ethical development in the college years (1970) has been the basis for much of the research conducted on the subject during the past several decades. Perry's scheme was derived from extensive qualitative analysis of the ways college students (mostly Harvard undergraduates in the 1950's and 1960's) described in open-ended interviews their experiences and transformations over the college years. In analyzing this data, Perry discovered that students were progressing in a consistent way which reflected development of both cognitive and affective perspectives. Perry identified nine distinct "positions" from which the students viewed the world, each representing a qualitatively different approach to learning. Throughout the process of development, two main dynamics are at work: confrontation and coping with uncertainty and diversity in new learning, and the evolution of meaning-making about learning and self. These shifts in meaning-making evolve in predictable ways as knowledge is seem as increasingly uncertain and requiring interpretation.

Positions 1 and 2 represent what Perry termed Dualism, an approach to knowledge and learning signified by dichotomies and little trouble resolving right and wrong in the face of a dilemma. Individuals functioning in Position 1 demonstrate an unquestioning view of Absolute Truth, a view of knowledge as certain, and a lack of tolerance for alternative points of view. Individuals functioning at Position 2 are more able to acknowledge beliefs different from their own, but usually consider those beliefs wrong

without examining or attempting to understand them. Positions 3 and 4 represented the approach Perry called Multiplicity, in which the individual begins to learn to cope with diversity or "multiples" in the world. In Position 3, individuals acknowledge that knowledge can be legitimately, though temporarily, uncertain and that knowledge is divided not just into categories of Right and Wrong, but also into Right, Wrong, and "Not Yet Known," in which case the right answer can be found through various processes and methods. In Position 4, "Not Yet Known" evolves into a view of "We'll never know for sure," and every individual's point of view is regarded as equally correct or appropriate for that individual.

The most important transition in Perry's scheme is from Position 4 to Position 5, Conceptual Relativism. This transition signifies a change in the individual from a dualistic view of knowledge and right and wrong to a view of the world which is relativistic and context-bound, with only a few exceptions where right and wrong can be definitively determined. This transition involves the individual's development of consciousness of himself or herself as an active maker of meaning and recognition of one's task in life as both intellectual and ethical. Finally, Positions 6 through 9 make up what Perry called Commitment Within Relativism, wherein the developmental emphasis shifts from intellectual to ethical and the individual learns to make "considered choices" in the face of legitimate alternatives and those choices contribute to the definition of the individual's identity.

Though Perry's work has been refined and explored by many researchers since its initial publication, Moore (2002) identifies three research efforts which represent "the most explicit extensions of the Perry model" (Moore, 2002, p. 23). These are the work of

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986/1997) on women's ways of knowing; the

work of Baxter Magolda (1992); and Kitchener and King's Reflective Judgment Model

(1994). (The first two will be discussed here and the Reflective Judgment Model will be

examined in detail in a later section of this review.)

Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986/1997) represents an attempt to

describe the perspectives from which women view the world of truth, knowledge, and

authority. The perspectives which they identify are grounded in Perry's scheme in that

they represent various approaches to the certainty of knowledge, the relationship of the

learner with the learned, and increasingly sophisticated and self-conscious ways of making

meaning, though they do not necessarily represent a developmental progression. Belenky

et al. identified the perspective of Received Knowing, roughly analogous to Perry's

Dualism; Subjective Knowing, corresponding roughly to Perry's Multiplicity, and

Procedural and Constructed Knowing, which reflect aspects of Perry's Relativism and

Commitment Within Relativism.

Building on the understandings articulated by both Perry and Belenky et al. is the

work of Baxter Magolda (1992), whose longitudinal study of individuals from the college

years through their early twenties and thirties addressed the goal of describing a gender-

inclusive model of epistemological development and yielded the Epistemological

Reflection Model. Working under the guiding assumptions that epistemological

assumptions and the structures they constitute are socially constructed and that

participants' stories are context-bound, Baxter Magolda conducted interviews with the

participants to reveal their assumptions about such concepts as the nature of knowledge,

their role as learners, the role of instruction and peers in learning, evaluation of their work, and educational decision-making.

Interpretation of those interviews through grounded theory methodology revealed several types of knowing such as Absolute Knowing, Transitional Knowing, Independent Knowing, and Contextual Knowing, each of which reflected aspects of the positions in Perry's scheme and the types of knowing described by Belenky et al. (and represented a trajectory of development similar to that proposed by the Reflective Judgment Model). Within the Epistemological Reflection Model, Baxter Magolda did find certain patterns which appeared to be more common for women and some more common for men, and she called for further longitudinal research, especially that which might include participants of other populations, to create a holistic picture of the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and epistemological dimensions of development (Baxter Magolda, 2002).

There exists other pertinent research on personal epistemological development which acknowledges the significance of Perry's work but takes new perspectives on the development of epistemological beliefs and calls for further research about the ways individuals' epistemological standpoints develop and influence their behavior and perspectives. For example, Kuhn and Weinstock (2002) point out that the lack of broad interest in the topic of epistemological thinking might be due to its complexity, conceptual ambiguity, and limited accessibility, and claim that the stage models which have made up many of the theoretical efforts to describe epistemological development provide a fairly consistent picture, they often fail to "anchor" epistemological development in a cohesive picture of the multiple dimensions of development taking place within an individual at any given time. Kuhn and Weinstock state that a beneficial way to approach research on

epistemological development would be to focus on the question of what developmental

task or goal directs changes in epistemological understanding, and their proposed answer is

that the developmental task driving these changes is the coordination of subjective and

objective dimensions of knowing. They describe a progression reflected in levels termed

Realist, Absolutist, Multiplist, and Evalualist driven by changes in the way an individual

views how knowable reality is, the sources and certainty of knowledge, and the presence,

processes and value of critical thinking in the individual's epistemological standpoint.

This progression is marked by changes in the way the individual makes judgments about

personal taste and preference, aesthetics, values, and facts.

　　　　According to Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), the variability in individuals' levels of

epistemological understanding implies that further research is needed to understand the

real-world cognitive activities in which epistemological thinking figures heavily the

mechanisms other than maturity which help advance epistemological thinking. (Both

statements provide further support for studying epistemological perspectives of future

teachers as is the focus of this study.) They further assert that for individuals to achieve

more advanced levels of epistemological understanding, they must have opportunities for

exercising this type of judgment within a society where such reasoning and thinking are

valued.

　　　　Another perspective which provides insight into the present study is outlined by

Hammer and Elby (2002), who contend that current perspectives of epistemological

development are problematic in their ontology, or form. Hammer and Elby regard many

current descriptions of epistemological development as founded in a faulty assumption of

unitarity – the assumption that individuals hold epistemological knowledge either in the

form of theories or traits which are relatively constant and can be probed by direct questions or consistently manifested in an individual's behavior or preferences. Instead, they propose the view that an individual's epistemological knowledge is grounded in the way he or she activates epistemological resources in different contexts. These resources, which do not exist in any hierarchical order, provide the individual with means for understanding the nature and sources of knowledge (knowledge as "propagated stuff" or "fabricated stuff," for example), understanding epistemological activities (answering the question "how do you know what you know?"), understanding epistemological forms (ways to understand how to engage in epistemological activities), and understanding epistemological stances (for example, doubting, puzzlement, and acceptance).

Hammer and Elby contend that if epistemological beliefs characterized by unitarity do exist, they correspond with certain patterns of epistemological resource activation across contexts. Their research suggests that those who hope to help students learn, rather than simply focusing on replacing students' "misbeliefs" or "misconceptions" with beliefs or conceptions considered more appropriate, should emphasize the process of helping students access and utilize their epistemological resources more productively. The present study might offer additional insight into how preservice teachers might develop in their successful application of epistemological resources as a means to address problematic dilemmas of practice.

A final interesting perspective on research on epistemological development is offered by Chandler, Hallett and Sokol (2002), who point out that various models of epistemological development have found individuals engaged in what seem to be the same type of transitions in epistemic assumptions at many different ages, and that this is often

ignored by researchers. Rather than attributing this to faulty research design or analysis of previous researchers, they suggest that claims of the same type of development occurring at different ages indicate that the process of epistemological development involves recursion, a pattern of spiral rather than linear development in which individuals must re-confront the same epistemological questions at different times (they claim this happens two times).

Chandler et al. also claim that this might suggest what they call suppression, the disheartening possibility that young children may be ready to acquire more sophisticated and constructivist epistemological perspectives at an early age but this development is discouraged by their classroom experiences. They even cite a study by Walton (2000) which found that though elementary students were using epistemological terms to express concepts about certainty of knowledge and evaluation of different knowledge claims, teachers were using verbs of knowing such as "I think" almost exclusively as tools for classroom management. Walton's work suggested that teachers might actually be discouraging students' development of constructivist epistemological standpoints by "perpetuating beliefs in the objectivity of knowledge as delivered by true authorities" (Chandler et al., 2002, p. 160).

Ultimately Chandler et al. call for further research to illuminate the ways in which changes in personal epistemological standpoints impact individuals' choices and behavior which, especially in light of the study they cite by Walton, underscores the need to develop understanding of the way teachers – including preservice teachers – view and articulate their concepts of knowledge and the way their epistemic assumptions are manifested in their behavior in the classroom.

The third research effort pointed out by Moore (2002) as an explicit extension of

Perry's work is the Reflective Judgment Model developed by Kitchener and King (1994).

As this model provides the basis for this study's data collection and analysis, a detailed

description and overview of research of the RJM is presented.

The Reflective Judgment Model

The Reflective Judgment Model (RJM) has been selected as a theoretical

framework for this study because of its relevance to the task of helping preservice teachers

resolve dilemmas of practice. The RJM, first described in 1981, was developed by Patricia

King and Karen Kitchener as a framework for understanding the epistemic assumptions

affecting how people make decisions about "ill-structured" problems or dilemmas which

cannot be defined or described with certainty and about which there exist no clearly

defined solutions and to assess individuals' progression through increasingly complex

stages of decision-making ability (1994). The model is based on examination of the

individual's assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge, how it can be acquired, and

the way decisions in complex and ill-structured situations can be justified. Based on the

work of Dewey (1933) – which posited not only that individuals employ a specific type of

logic in resolving ill-defined problems, but that true reflective thinking occurs only in

situations involving real uncertainty – and the developmental cognitive theories of Piaget,

Fischer, and Perry (King & Kitchener, 1994), the RJM consists of seven stages which exist

within three levels of reflective judgment (Pre-Reflective, Quasi-Reflective, and

Reflective).

At one end of the continuum is the Pre-Reflective level (stages 1, 2, and 3).

Individuals operating within stages 1 and 2 regard knowledge as existing absolutely and

concretely, and rely primarily and unquestioningly on authority figures and direct observation to acquire knowledge. They view knowledge as accessible and certain, and often do not recognize the ill-structured nature of problems and assume differences between views can be resolved simply. At stage 3, individuals begin to recognize that knowledge, although still assumed to be absolute and fairly concrete, can be temporarily inaccessible. They still have difficulty distinguishing between well-structured and ill-structured problems, and in the absence of absolute evidence supporting any particular knowledge claim or course of action, they accept their own beliefs as knowledge.

Stages 4 and 5 compose the Quasi-Reflective level, wherein individuals begin to regard knowledge as uncertain (or temporarily uncertain) and contextually influenced, and justifications for decisions are often based on highly personalized, idiosyncratic logic. At stage 4, individuals begin to integrate the concept of knowledge as abstract and not always concrete, incorporate the use of evidence into construction of knowledge claims, and accept that this evidence cannot always be accepted at face value as certain and correct. However, they are still unable to use evidence consistently, distinguish between a theory and evidence supporting the theory, or to deal effectively with the ambiguity of ill-structured problems. Therefore, faced with many possible answers to a problem, each supported by evidence that cannot definitively be regarded as certain or uncertain, they ultimately consider knowledge claims to be idiosyncratic to the individual, and may regard any perspective or course of action as equally valid or equally biased. Stage 5 thinking is characterized by the belief that knowledge is highly contextual; individuals at this stage understand the importance of evidence and reasoning in justifying knowledge claims, but are generally not able to construct a well-structured argument for one position or another.

Therefore they have difficulty comparing and evaluating different possible explanations or courses of action.

At the opposite end of the continuum from the Pre-Reflective level is the Reflective level, consisting of stages 6 and 7. When individuals reach stage 6, they approach knowing as a process in which the knower must take an active part by systematically evaluating evidence and examining the context from which a knowledge claim has arisen. Their thinking integrates abstractions and intangible systems, and they no longer use idiosyncratic reasoning to justify their decisions and beliefs. Stage 7 represents the most complex set of assumptions and thinking processes in the RJM. Individuals operating at stage 7 actively take part in constructing knowledge, understand that what is considered knowledge may change through time as others actively construct their own knowledge, and are able to synthesize evidence and opinion into epistemologically justifiable decisions about the resolutions to ill-structured problems. The systems and issues used to evaluate evidence in stage 6 can now be integrated into larger frameworks that provide clarity for the individual concerning his or her beliefs about knowledge.

The Reflective Judgment Model is considered a stage theory of epistemological development. The model is organized into a consistent, logical progression of qualitatively different stages of thinking about knowledge and justifying beliefs. It is grounded in several guiding principles of the cognitive developmental perspective, as described by Piaget (1974): that individuals actively attempt to organize, interpret, and make meaning of what they experience; that people's ways of doing this develop over time; and that an individual's development is influenced by interaction with factors in his or her environment. The RJM also incorporates the assumption that individuals do not function

exclusively within one stage at any given time, but instead may exhibit a range of responses across stages, between his or her functional level and optimal level. King and Kitchener (1994) point out that educators must take into consideration the fact that a student's performance within his or her developmental range is often impacted by his or her environment, and that unfortunately most environments do not provide the cues and support necessary for an individual to operate at his or her optimal level. This concept of the developmental range also supports King and Kitchener's belief that although each stage in the RJM provides groundwork for subsequent stages and individuals generally move through the stages sequentially, the stages do not represent an invariant sequence marked by radical discontinuity and abrupt changes between stages, as is the case in some simple stage theories (1994).

King and Kitchener (1994) point out several parallels between the RJM and other cognitive developmental models. Fischer's Skill Level theory, for example, outlines seven levels through which individuals progress between the ages or two and thirty. As an individual progresses through these stages, experiencing fast growth spurts, plateaus, and micro-developmental steps between levels, she develops qualitatively different and increasingly sophisticated ways of controlling skill structures, making moral judgments, and evolving complex concepts of self and relationships (Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Pipp, 1984). King and Kitchener believe that the seven stages of Fischer's Skill Level theory correspond to the seven stages of development in the RJM, although the RJM differs from Fischer's model in that it does not articulate the micro-developmental steps through which an individual gradually moves from one stage to another.

The RJM also shows similarities to other models of epistemological development, particularly those described by William Perry (1970, 1981) and John Broughton (1975, 1978). As mentioned previously, Perry's theory described nine positions of intellectual and ethical development. These positions range from dualistic (in which knowledge is considered discrete, absolute, unconflicted, and highly linked to authority), to multiplicity (in which individuals begin to acknowledge that complex questions may have more than one possible answer), to relativism (in which individuals view knowledge as contextual and believe that theories are dependent on the individual's interpretation), to commitment within relativism (in which an individual operating within a relativist position makes choices based on an act of personal faith, belief or commitment). Clearly, these stages roughly mirror the gradual increase in epistemological sophistication outlined by the continuum of stages in the RJM.

However, King and Kitchener do emphasize that the RJM differs in some ways from Perry's model. First, they agree with the ideas put forward in the work of Broughton (1975), who proposed that an individual constructs his or her view of self, reality and knowledge as he or she progresses through certain stages of epistemological development very similar to the perspectives represented by Perry's nine positions, but Broughton also suggested that the earlier stages in Perry's model probably apply more to children and young adolescents than to college-aged young adults, and that there likely exists a stage of epistemological development beyond that of relativism (Kitchener & King, 1994, p. 38). Furthermore, King and Kitchener also propose that the RJM differs from other earlier theories of epistemological development – as well as contemporary ones, such as those which elaborated on early theories by exploring ideas such as gender differences in moral

and epistemological development (Belenky et al., 1986; Baxter-Magolda & Porterfield, 1988) – in important ways which make the RJM unique in this theoretical area. This uniqueness is due to three factors: the RJM's presentation of seven distinct steps of epistemological development; King and Kitchener's particular focus on the way in which epistemological assumptions affect the way individuals resolve ill-structured dilemmas; and the amount of empirical evidence supporting the model.

An individual's placement at a reflective judgment level on the RJM occurs through administration of the Reflective Judgment Interview (RJI), in which the individual is presented with four ill-structured dilemmas and questioned about each dilemma, one by one, through a protocol designed to identify the epistemological standpoints influencing the individual's decision about that dilemma. The individuals' responses are considered with regard to three main areas: general dimensions (consisting of cognitive complexity, reasoning style, and openness); views on the nature of knowledge (consisting of general view of knowledge, beliefs about right vs. wrong knowledge, and legitimacy of different viewpoints); and views on the concept of justification (consisting of views on the general concept of justification, the use of evidence, and the role of authority in justifying knowledge). Questions and guiding points derived from the RJI Scoring Manual (Kitchener & King, 1977/1985), discussed in further detail in Chapter III: Methodology, were used as probes within the present study to elicit and interpret statements from the participants which would illuminate their reflective judgment level and the epistemological beliefs possibly influencing their decisions on ill-structured dilemmas of practice.

There has been a substantial amount of empirical research concerning the RJM, and its application continues to be explored and refined. The research in general finds that the RJM is a consistent, robust model (King & Kitchener, 1994). King's (1983) longitudinal study of the reflective judgment of 55 adolescents and young adults supports the hypothesized shifts in reasoning represented by the different stages within the RJM. This study showed that as the subjects progressed through the stages, they integrated more complex information and more sophisticated views of knowledge into their decision-making processes.

Research by King and Kitchener (1994) also strongly suggests that individuals' ability to engage in reflective judgment increases with age and education, with college being an especially pivotal time in reflective judgment development. This finding has been corroborated by Ross (1988), whose research on the RJM concluded that college students pass through increasingly complex stages of development and undergo substantial evolution in terms of their views about knowledge, evidence, and decision-making. Similarly, Wood's (1997) cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of college students' scores on the Reflective Judgment Interview (RJI) found a distinct upward trend in RJI scores as a function of educational level. In a study conducted by King and Kitchener (1994), adults who had earned college degrees were found to have higher RJI scores than adults with comparable scholastic aptitude but no college degree. Friedman (1995, 2004) found positive and significant correlations between the RJI scores of college women and their Intellectual Disposition scores on the Omnibus Personality Inventory, suggesting that a disposition toward engaging in intellectual activities and processes might be a factor in individuals' development of more sophisticated epistemological standpoints. King and

Kitchener (1994) have called for further research on the role of the RJM in college

contexts, and there are indications that the RJI is a suitable measure for assessing the

development of reflective judgment in students in non-traditional as well as traditional

college environments, as demonstrated by Dale's (1995) study of the RJI scores of students

in a conservative Christian college.

Much of the RJM research thus far has suggested that reflective judgment

development correlates with an individual's year in college but has not been conclusive

concerning how reflective judgment correlates with particular academic majors (Welfel,

1982), which possibly explains the relative scarcity of studies pertaining to the reflective

judgment development of students majoring in any specific subject area. However, there

have been a small number of studies investigating reflective judgment as it relates to

college students majoring in education in particular, and these are obviously relevant here.

In a study of reflective judgment and intellectual disposition in undergraduate and graduate

college women, Friedman (1995, 2004) not only noted significant differences between the

RJI scores of undergraduate seniors and advanced graduate students, but also found

significantly higher RJI scores for individuals with undergraduate majors in the humanities

than for those with majors in education, as noted in Chapter I. Other researchers who have

studied preservice teacher development in terms of the RJM have concluded that it is a

useful model for guiding the encouragement of critical and reflective thinking in preservice

teachers (Pape & Kelly, 1990), and that teacher educators should provide appropriate and

consistent support for preservice teachers as they examine their assumptions and beliefs

about knowledge and the way these beliefs influences their decisions and actions in the

classroom (Smith & Pape, 1990). A high level of consistency has been identified between

preservice teachers' statements during Reflective Judgment Interviews and their teaching behaviors within the classroom, though no statistically significant relationship has been found between preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels and methods course grades or GPA's (Smith & Pape, 1991).

It is unclear whether there exist differences in reflective judgment development between the genders or between groups of individuals from differing racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds, as the research in this are is scant and inconclusive. Studies by King and Kitchener (1994) and Scott (1994) indicate no discernible gender effects in reflective judgment levels. There is also little evidence either to support or refute the claim that individuals of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds will perform differently on the RJI, as few studies have been performed to explore this question, and those that have done so have not isolated any strong patterns concerning this issue. (Kitchener & Wood, 1987; King &Taylor, 1992; Kitchener et al., 1998). Further study on the effects of gender, race, ethnicity and culture on the RJI might therefore be useful.

In addition to the positive relationship between educational attainment and reflective judgment, there is also evidence that the *type* of educational experiences in which a college student is involved has an impact on reflective judgment. Research by Kitchener et al. (1998) suggests that support, practice and feedback in reflective judgment, as well as certain types of educational experiences (such as participation in discussions, active learning, and writing activities) contribute to gains in reflective judgment. These findings are supported by the work of Thompson (1995), who found that when professors at the University of Denver employed teaching methods specifically designed to enhance reflective judgment, students' RJI scores improved. Kronholm (1994) has concluded that

RJM-based interventions within the context of college courses can result in epistemological development in students (although most research on the RJM cautions against expecting interventions implemented in brief periods of time such as a college semester to cause significant increases in RJI scores). Similarly, Cicala (1997) and Kitchener, Jensen and Wood (1998) found a statistically significant relationship between students' reflective judgment levels and the frequency with which they participated in discussions and asked questions in their classes. Many of these studies reaffirm the idea that providing college students with opportunities to practice critical thinking, especially in terms of open-ended problem solving, is an important but often neglected goal within higher education institutions (Halpern, 1999).

This last dimension of reflective judgment development, the influence of particular educational experiences, is of particular significance to the proposed study. By engaging preservice teachers in discussions, writing, reflection and inquiry about their early field experience placements, I hoped to illuminate their understanding of the ways in which they make decisions to resolve ill-structured problems, which I believe are similar to the dilemmas and challenges teachers face on a daily basis. These experiences of inquiry and reflection were designed to guide and support these preservice teachers as they examined their beliefs and epistemological standpoints and moved toward a more complex and sophisticated process of resolving the ill-defined dilemmas they encountered in their teaching practice.

Development of Epistemological Beliefs in Preservice Teachers

An individual's approach to resolving a dilemma is strongly related to his or her explicit or implicit beliefs about questions of epistemology – what knowledge truly is,

what sources exist for knowledge, how knowledge can be acquired and used, and how one can employ knowledge to evaluate different courses of action in a given situation. Therefore, in order to understand how preservice teachers approach dilemmas in the classroom, it is important to examine the research literature concerning how preservice teachers' epistemological beliefs and standpoints can be observed, how these beliefs influence decisions their decisions about teaching, and in what ways their epistemological perspectives might be transformed or grow in sophistication through various components of teacher education programs. The research literature in this area covers four main, interconnected themes: the range of epistemological beliefs displayed by preservice teachers; the impact of epistemological beliefs on classroom practice; the possibility of helping preservice teachers develop in terms of the sophistication of their epistemological standpoints through teacher education experiences; and the importance of teacher educators giving serious attention to prospective teachers' epistemological frameworks and development.

The research literature indicates that preservice teachers display a wide range of epistemological beliefs, often loosely interconnected in web-like fashion and dependent on their interpretations of many different previous experiences with respect to a variety of contexts (O'Laughlin, 1991; White, 2000), and that they draw on multiple lenses to frame their beliefs rather than relying on one particular epistemological perspective (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002). Researchers have found that groups of prospective teachers generally function on a certain point of a continuum; individuals at one extreme of the continuum view knowledge as absolute and received from an external source and learning as reproductive, while individuals at the other end of the continuum consider knowledge to

be constructed and reasoned and learning to be transformative (Brownlee, 2001). The fact

that some studies have characterized preservice teachers' thinking as largely procedural

and mechanistic, heavily influenced by objectivist epistemological beliefs and didactic

teaching approaches founded in what Lortie (1975) describes as the "apprenticeship of

observation" (Slekar, 1998; Sutton et al., 1996), while others have described student

teachers' planning and decision-making as highly cognizant of the complexity of teaching

and the importance of students constructing their own meaningful learning (Burn, Hagger,

& Mutton, 2000), indicates that preservice teachers as a whole are working within widely

varied epistemological standpoints.

The relationship between epistemological beliefs and classroom practice in

preservice teachers has been examined in a few studies which underscore the importance

of teacher educators' awareness of their students' epistemological development.

Researchers such as Lyons (1990) and Stuart and Thurlow (2000) strongly suggest that the

ways teachers (both practicing and preservice) present subject matter and interact with

their students, and assess their students as learners are closely related to their beliefs about

subject matter, knowledge, learning, and themselves as learners, and that both teachers and

teacher educators should be made more aware of this. Similarly, Pajares (1992) proposes

that epistemological beliefs are an important aspect of the beliefs guiding teachers'

instructional choices, and Winne (1995) claims that epistemological beliefs play an

important role in the ways teachers set standards for students' self-regulated learning.

Windschitl (2000) found that student teachers in the area of secondary science who

developed inquiry projects for their placement classrooms and then presented their work to

their peers had vastly different epistemological approaches to the process of inquiry, and

that these epistemological standpoints influenced the ways in which they implemented and later described their inquiry projects. Those student teachers who saw inquiry as a simple, linear process involving acquiring knowledge from an external source utilized a high degree of direct instruction in their classrooms and mentioned few dilemmas or problematic situations, while those who regarded inquiry as a complex process of constructing knowledge utilized more dialogue and other methods for helping their students make sense of the inquiry process, and described many more problematic situations that had occurred during their lessons. Similarly, Many, Howard, & Hoge (2002) concluded that preservice teachers participating in a literacy block varied in terms of viewing knowledge in constructivist or dualistic terms, and that their epistemological orientations were manifested in the types of teaching experiences they designed. Those students teachers with a dualistic orientation, for example, were more inclined to view the source of knowledge as outside the self and therefore taught in a manner highly consistent with the model of transmission of a body of knowledge, while those with more constructivist orientations tended to continually restructure their ideas about teaching strategies according to new information, evidence and contexts.

Some research has attempted to address the question of whether teacher education programs can foster or facilitate the development of more sophisticated epistemological thinking and how they might go about doing so. It has been suggested that teacher education courses and/or field experiences specifically designed to help prospective teachers challenge their assumptions and beliefs about knowledge, teaching and learning can indeed foster epistemological development; however, there is little definitive evidence as to how this occurs and how much changes in preservice teachers' thinking during a

given period of time can be attributed to specific experiences rather than simply to the passage of time or natural development. Stuart and Thurlow (2000) concluded that a methods course designed according to the goal of helping preservice teachers challenge their own beliefs and assumptions about knowledge and learning was successful in facilitating their understanding of the importance of critically examining and refining one's beliefs. Brownlee, Purdie, and Boulton-Lewis (2001) also found that graduate-level preservice teachers participating in an educational psychology unit specifically geared toward the development of reflective, sophisticated epistemological thinking showed more growth in epistemological beliefs in comparison to students in their control groups. This finding is supported by the work of Roberts, Busk, and Comerford (2001), who concluded that participation in a semester of training in reflective thinking and practice resulted in the development of more sophisticated epistemological thinking as measured by pre/post administrations of Schommer's Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire; the researchers attributed the preservice teachers' epistemological growth to increased reflection on teaching and learning fostered within the program. (It should be noted again that while these studies are encouraging to teacher educators who wish to nurture reflective thinking and help their students achieve the highest levels of reflective judgment, it is still difficult to ascertain exactly what type of experiences or processes might be the cause of such changes in thinking, due to the developmental nature of individual epistemological growth in general.)

The importance of addressing preservice teachers' epistemological development has been made clear by the work of several researchers. Harrington (1994), for example, states that all teachers must face the ethical obligation of understanding how their beliefs

influence their decisions in the classroom because of the possible consequences of their actions on individual students' lives, a task that is especially difficult for preservice teachers who have not had opportunities to explore their epistemological standpoints and to practice reflecting on the possible consequences of their decisions. Lyons (1990) concurs with this assertion, underscoring the importance of teacher educators' endeavors to help prospective teachers understand how their epistemological beliefs influence their resolutions to ethical dilemmas that arise in their practice. Harrington (1994) also makes the point that those in the field of education must continually re-explore the questions of what it means to know, what knowledge is valuable, and what knowledge teachers must have, regarding all individuals as both teachers and learners – a position that is echoed by Putnam and Borko (2000), who call for teacher educators to redefine their conceptions of learning and knowing and their perspectives on the relationship between knowing and knowledge, both in classrooms and teacher education programs.   Finally, Many, Howard, and Hoge (2002) encourage teacher educators to explore actively their students' epistemological beliefs as a means to resolve the tensions between epistemological perspectives that may trouble preservice teachers, to help novice teachers understand the impact of their beliefs on their teaching practices, and to provide more effective and meaningful scaffolding to preservice teachers' development.

Fostering Reflective Practice within Teacher Education / Field Experiences

Because of this study's emphasis on guiding preservice teachers to reflect on their practice within the context of the field experience, it is important to briefly discuss some of the most prominent themes in the research literature concerning the importance of this task, the strategies through which teacher educators attempt to accomplish it, and the ways in

which preservice teachers experience activities within field experiences designed to foster reflective thinking and practice. Recently, there has been an increasing emphasis in teacher education programs on the importance of preparing preservice teachers to engage in reflective practice (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Griffiths, 2000; Pultorak, 1993, 1996; Valli, 1993). Though several different definitions and models of the concept of *reflection* exist, teacher education programs seeking to facilitate teacher candidates' development of reflection on their practice are generally oriented toward helping prospective teachers learn how to think about their assumptions, experiences, beliefs, and the knowledge and practices with which they come into contact in a critical, inquiry-oriented, and sophisticated manner (Adler, 1991; Calderhead, 1989; Jay & Johnson, 2002). Proponents of teacher education curricula cite that the deliberate cultivation of reflective thinking in preservice teachers can enable them to take responsibility for their own professional development, refine their own theories about teaching and learning, and consciously contribute to the improvement of educational practices in the contexts where they work (Zeichner, 1996).

The field experience is an especially vital component of teacher education programs in many ways, including in terms of helping preservice teachers develop reflective thinking (Britzman, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). In early field experiences and student teaching semesters, preservice teachers are called on to access the knowledge they have accrued through formal coursework, tackle the wide range of instructional and leadership issues associated with a real classroom, and explore in complex detail the dilemmas that they encounter involving teaching and learning. Meaningful reflection has been cited as one of the means by which preservice teachers can bridge the gap between

theory and practice which so often hinders student teachers' understanding by separating the worlds of university preparation and pragmatic classroom action (Newman, 1996). Reflection is also a powerful tool through which preservice teachers can develop coherent philosophies of teaching and examine the multidimensional consequences of the decisions they make in their practice (Boyd, Boll, Brawner, & Villaume, 1998).

Some researchers have suggested that teacher educators can help preservice teachers to become more reflective by engaging them in certain types of experiences, such as collaborative inquiry (Meyer & Achinstein, 1998), action research (Gore & Zeichner, 1991), reflective journals (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993), and the construction of professional portfolios (Borko, Michalec, Timmons, & Siddle, 1997). Nonetheless, the research on reflective practice in teacher education has yielded inconclusive results concerning precisely what type of reflection goes on when preservice teachers are engaged in field experience placements, how various components of field experiences influence their development of reflective practice, or the processes by which reflection is stimulated and sustained in preservice teachers (Zeichner, 1996). The research on reflective practice in early field experiences is especially thin when compared to that conducted on preservice teachers in full student teaching placements, although these early field experiences can often be the first context in which preservice teachers are called on to actively attempt to bridge theory and practice in a rigorous way. One of the goals of the present study is to attempt to address this gap in the research literature – that concerning the evolution of reflective practice through early field experiences –through an examination of the way preservice teachers' reflective thinking develops during the course of an early field

experience as viewed through the perspective of one particular model of adult cognitive development, the Reflective Judgment Model (RJM) developed by King and Kitchener.

Finally, with regard to the importance of promoting reflective practice in the preservice teacher through the field experience, Reiman's (1999) work on social role-taking and guided reflection in teacher education is particularly relevant to the present study. In this conceptual piece, Reiman first points out that reflective practice is considered a vital goal of many current preservice teacher preparation programs, and that reflection on significant new experiences prompts development of an individual's ability to solve problems, reconstruct meaning, and make subsequent reflective judgments. However, Reiman claims, the lack of relevant theory and testing of educational interventions designed to promote the type of reflection that will lead to more effective and responsible teaching is an obstacle to the realization of the goal of helping teachers develop more reflective practice.

Reiman distills several of the theoretical tenets of Vygotsky (the importance of culture and especially language in mediating thought, the Zone of Proximal Development, and an emphasis on social interaction as a stimulus for development) and Piaget (internal mechanisms driving an individual's cognitive growth, the individual's desire for equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation in making meaning of new experiences, co-construction of reality between the learner and more capable other, and the developmental level of the learner) into what he identifies as five critical conditions for adult development. These conditions are a the process of becoming engaged in a new, complex helping role, guided reflection, balance, support and challenge, and continuity, and they form the basis of the guided reflection framework he proposes. This framework

calls on the teacher to ascertain an individual learner's developmental level, and then provide a system balancing support ("matched" responses) and challenge ("mismatched" responses) during the process of written interaction about significant new experiences in order to promote deeper reflection and cognitive development in the learner.

Using this framework, the teacher (or in the case of this study, teacher educator) would provide indirect responses such as accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, clarifying ideas and prompting inquiry when the learner was developing his or her capabilities for abstract and ethical reasoning and perspective taking. When the learner was relying extensively on concrete reasoning and limited perspective taking, the teacher would provide more direct responses such as providing information, giving direction, and addressing problems. In a synthesis of quantitative studies evaluating interventions designed to promote cognitive-structural growth, Reiman concluded that "employing the systematic framework for guided reflection while the novice or experienced educators were involved in significant new professional roles yields greater gains in cognitive-structural growth across the conceptual, moral, and ego domains." (Reiman, 1999, p. 609)

The results of Reiman's synthesis of these studies and application of Vygotskian and Piagetian theories about learning to a framework for guiding reflection clearly has several strong implications for teacher educators. Reiman asserts that the implementation of systematic guided reflection as the learner undergoes significant new experiences has tremendous potential for helping preservice teachers develop their capabilities for abstract reasoning, ethical judgment, problem solving, and ethical and responsible practice. He particularly stresses that substantive written interactions between student and peers or student and teacher plays a crucial role in learning and development. He asserts that

teacher educators must pay close attention to preservice teachers' developmental levels in order to provide the correct balance of indirect and direct responses which will both support and challenge their ways of meaning-making within new experiences, problem solving, perspective taking and abstract reasoning.

Reiman's work has substantial bearing on the present study. As the participants took on a helping social role in their field placement classrooms, constructed meaning about the significant new experiences which occurred in that context, and shared this process of meaning-making with the researcher, continuous written interaction through electronic dialogue journals, and opportunities for discourse with peers and the supervisor were two primary means for stimulating reflection. During these interactions, the supervisor/researcher attempted to emulate the type of balance between support and challenge based on the participants' developmental level and unique needs advocated by Reiman his conceptualization of guided reflection.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter has outlined several areas of research literature which have significance to the study about reflective judgment in preservice teachers described in this document. First, research clearly indicates that uncertainty is an inherent element of many aspects of teaching and that preservice teachers are generally unprepared for this when they enter the profession. This can result in emotional anxiety, cognitive dissonance, and the implementation of overly technical and unreflective teaching methods when those teachers enter the profession; however, there are strategies which teacher educators might further explore in order to attempt to correct this situation. Second, the research on conceptualizations and models of personal epistemological development suggests that

preservice teachers are often at an age wherein significant evolution of epistemic assumptions is likely to be occurring and that those assumptions are likely to be a strong influence upon their choices and behavior.

Third, research on the Reflective Judgment Model has demonstrated that it is a consistent and reliable model for understanding individuals' epistemological development, particularly in the area of how those individuals address ill-defined dilemmas (which, as discussed in the previous section about uncertainty in teaching, are commonly encountered in the practice of teaching). Finally, research on the Reflective Judgment model, on epistemological development in preservice teachers, and on facilitating the reflective abilities of preservice teachers suggests that reflection on teaching practice and development toward more sophisticated ways of resolving dilemmas of practice can quite possibly be nurtured and facilitated by teacher educators through the implementation of specific educational strategies such as guided reflection and interactive dialogue journals. These findings have great bearing on the methodological processes chosen for the present study, which will be outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY / PROCEDURES

Introduction / Conceptual Framework

In order to choose a methodological framework for any study, the researcher must first determine, with as much precision as possible and yet enough flexibility to accommodate later adjustments to the study's design, exactly what type of understanding is sought by the research question. Then the researcher must make informed decisions about which methodologies are reasonable means for achieving this understanding, by judging the strengths and weaknesses of various methodological approaches and actively examining one's own standpoint and personal paradigmatic views. Considering the complex nature of the development of reflective judgment in individuals and the scarcity of research focusing specifically on how reflective judgment development influences, and is influenced by, teacher education and teaching practice, a qualitative multiple case study methodology (Stake, 1995) was chosen as the most appropriate strategy.

Addressing this study's research questions requires a detailed, probing look into the participants' assumptions, the experiences and beliefs informing those assumptions, their thinking patterns over time, their reactions to "real-world" ill-structured dilemmas encountered in their placement classrooms, and the changes that might occur in their reflective judgment development and its manifestation(s) within the context of their classroom practice. The ways in which the participants perceive the world, situate

themselves in it, make sense of what they perceive, and integrate their experiences into their world views will be important factors in gaining an understanding of their reflective judgment development. A qualitative framework allows for the type of in-depth exploration and extended personal interaction between the researcher and the participants that would be necessary to examine adequately the research questions, as well as provide the opportunity for triangulation through multiple data sources. The choice to gather and interpret primarily qualitative data was also influenced by the researcher's own personal worldview, which includes the belief that in order to understand an individual's experience, one must observe and interact with that individual in a variety of ways, always allowing that individual time and opportunities to explore and articulate his/her thoughts and ideas and acknowledging the impact of the researcher's life experience and biases on the process of co-constructing knowledge with the participants.

<div align="center">Case Study Methodology</div>

Merriam (1988) defines a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 27); another widely cited definition of a case study comes from Yin (1994), who defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Within this study, the phenomenon studied was reflective judgment development in preservice teachers, with cases represented as each individual preservice teacher's reflective judgment development; the individual preservice teacher was the unit of analysis. Merriam also characterizes case study research as especially useful when studying processes, for case studies are highly descriptive and holistic and give attention to

the complexity of factors and people influencing a given phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Case studies are particularistic in that specific cases are studied in an in-depth manner, which means that they can not only be utilized to represent the uniqueness of a situation, process or individual, but also have the potential to help researchers understand more generalized phenomena. These characteristics of qualitative case study methodology made it an extremely promising approach for studying the phenomenon of reflective judgment development in preservice teachers, as the many complex factors that may influence this type of development over time have not been extensively examined and/or categorized as yet. In addition, reflective judgment development consists of a series of fundamental changes in an individual's thinking processes, and it stands to reason that any examination of such a significant internal shift in perspective would be well served by an intensive and holistic exploration of the individual's experience.

Case studies have also been described as producing knowledge that is highly illustrative of contextual factors that influence the phenomenon being studied (Stake, 1981). Research has suggested that teacher beliefs and learning are embedded in contexts and cultures that inevitably shape them (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Richardson, 1997); reflective judgment development was likely to be no exception, and it was probable that the reflective judgment development of the participants would be subtly impacted by a wide variety of contextual factors. Therefore, the phenomenon of reflective judgment development would be accurately and insightfully represented by the construction of detailed, rich, thick description (Geertz, 1983) of each participant's development through the collection of data from a wide variety of sources. Case study methodology lends itself naturally to this type of representation and analysis, and has proven useful in building the

knowledge base about teacher beliefs and learning (Calderhead, 1996). Furthermore, Yin (1994) has described case study methodology as ideally suited to "how" and "why" types of research questions and situations in which the researcher does not need or intend to manipulate the variables embedded within the research design. A definitive aspect of this study of reflective judgment development examines "how" preservice teachers' reflective judgment develops and "why" that development follows the course it does with the individual participants, and rather than controlling the variables that might subtly impact the participants' experiences and development, it was my intent to allow any possible relationships between contextual variables and reflective judgment development simply emerge from the data, if they did indeed exist.

<div align="center">Participatory Action Research</div>

This research also assumed aspects of self-reflective, participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The process was collaborative involving participants' reflection about their development and evolution in their teaching, more specifically their ability to reflect about and resolve ill-defined dilemmas that emerge in practice. Furthermore, their participation was "directed toward studying, reframing, and reconstructing practices that are social" (p. 595); resolution of and reflection about daily dilemmas that emerge in practice not only influence teacher epistemology, but also mitigate for or against appropriate student behavior and academic achievement. Participants socially constructed understandings about practice-related issues but these issues directly impacted instruction as well as relations with students, peers, and cooperating teachers.

Furthermore, participatory action research needs to be considered a part of this study's design because it was possible that the interventions employed in the data collection process might themselves be influencing the participants' reflective judgment. Although the study design did not include the large sample and experimental controls which might be necessary to provide definitive and generalizable conclusions demonstrating that utilizing certain interventions with preservice teachers would cause specific changes and growth in their in reflection and reasoning, research about the Reflective Judgment Model (cited in Chapter II) has suggested that certain educational experiences, particularly those involving extensive reflection and discussion about one's own beliefs and development, have the potential for influencing growth in an individual's capacity to reason through ill-defined dilemmas. It is therefore reasonable to consider that the process of explicitly guiding participants' reflection on their experiences, the dilemmas of practice they encountered in the classroom, and on the way they attempted to resolve those dilemmas could have had the result of increasing their awareness of the beliefs that informed their practices and of new perspectives for approaching dilemmas.

Design of Study

In order to create a rich and multi-dimensional understanding of how preservice teachers function and develop in terms of reflective judgment, a descriptive multiple case study methodology was employed (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995), using a sample of ten preservice teachers participating in an early field experience. The study was designed to include a great deal of description of the phenomenon of RJ development and the contexts in which it develops within the sample. However, ultimately the intent of the study was

interpretive, as I hoped to use the data for analysis and interpretation of conceptual categories that emerge within and across cases, and to search for data that illustrates, supports, or challenges the theoretical assumptions of the Reflective Judgment Model as it applies to preservice teachers (Merriam, 1998). No specific evaluatory/policy goals or critical goals were included in the study's design, although it was quite possible that the research might yield information that leads to further study on those levels. For example, it was possible that the participants could find themselves faced with a dilemma in classroom practice for which they did not feel their teacher education program had prepared them; such information could be offered to those in charge of designing the preservice teachers' required curriculum in order to improve this aspect of their preparation.

The study was also fundamentally designed to be intrinsic in nature (Stake, 1995), as my primary goal was learning specifically about the reflective judgment development of the participants in order to achieve an understanding of this phenomenon; however, it was also possible that some instrumental uses might emerge for the study as it evolved, as my analysis and interpretation might suggest means by which teacher education programs could be modified in order to more fully assist preservice teachers in developing sophisticated levels of reflective judgment.

The decision to expand the study's framework from a single to a multiple case study was made in order to increase the robustness and trustworthiness of the study (Yin, 1994) and to enhance the possibility of finding and understanding any common patterns in reflective judgment development that might exist across the sample. (Although generalizability to other populations is not the priority of this study, I believed that it

would be enlightening to have an opportunity to compare the participants' development

over the course of the study and identifying common threads in their experiences.)

Conversely, another possible benefit to the use of multiple participants rather than only one

was that this might provide illuminating contrasts between individual preservice teachers'

development and the contexts in which the participants were teaching, which might

prevent the researcher and readers from making premature conclusions about aspects of RJ

development that might appear to be shared by most or all the participants.

Participants / Sampling

Participants

The sample was composed of ten white, female preservice teachers, enrolled in an

elementary education certification program, at a private Jesuit university in the Northeast

which offers an NCATE-accredited teacher education program. All of the individuals in

the study were college juniors who were participating in the third of three early field

experiences which they were required to complete before their full practicum semester. I

acted as the university supervisor for the participants, all of whom I had supervised in a

previous early field experience. I invited each of them to participate in this study; the only

criteria for selection in the study were willingness to participate, official enrollment in the

teacher education program at the university, and enrollment in an early field experience

under my supervision.   (Additional individual biographical information, provided by each

of the participants, will be included Chapter Four: Results, which will present a narrative

description and interpretive analysis of each case.)

The choice to work with students under my supervision for the field experience,

rather than a random sample of education majors at the university, was based on the fact

that many of the data collection techniques I planned to utilize such as dialogue journal exchanges, observations, and interviews were already a required part of the structure of the supervisory model and combining my supervision with my research would streamline the process. (Participants would not have to double their work by participating in the study.) This decision was also founded in my supposition that the participants' willingness to express and explore their ideas as data were collected for the study would be enhanced by the purposeful building of a trusting, open and constructive relationship, something for which I regularly strove as an essential part of my supervisory responsibilities. (Note: the importance of the "insider" relationship with the participants will be discussed further in a later section, "The Role of the Researcher".)

Sampling

The sample was created through a purposeful, non-probability sampling procedure. First, in order to facilitate the student teachers' transition between standard field experience placement and participation in the study, I chose to work with student teachers whom I had supervised during the previous semester. Initially when I supervised them, the student teachers were all assigned to me at random by the university's Office of Professional Practicum Experiences, so there was an element of random sampling within the "larger picture" of the study. However, I decided to extend the invitation of participating in this study in conjunction with being in a field placement under my supervision to this entire group of student teachers, rather than work with a new randomly assigned group. I believe that this sample was a fairly "typical" representation of the individuals in the teacher preparation program, but the sampling procedure followed more of a replication logic than sampling logic (Yin, 1994). Finally, the deciding factor in

selecting a sample of students with whom I had worked previously was my belief that having already established a respectful rapport with these student teachers would make it easier for them as study participants to share comfortably their feelings and experiences – some of which they might find surprising or unpleasant – with me and their peers, as the participants in this study would be called on to do.

The demographic makeup of the sample was fairly homogeneous. All participants were white females between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one; all were either monolingual or spoke English as their primary language and came from middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds. The participants were not intentionally chosen to create a demographically homogeneous sample, but given the demographic makeup of the university's teacher preparation program, it was likely from the beginning that the sample would be rather homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic background, and/or gender. There are both possible benefits and possible drawbacks to the homogeneity of the sample. It may be an advantage in that observed variations found between the participants' reflective judgment levels might be more attributable to actual differences in their stages of reflective judgment thinking than to differences in gender, race or background. However, this could also preclude the possibility of using this study to identify differences in reflective judgment development that might exist between individuals as a result of differences in gender, race, or socioeconomic background.

Setting / Access

Data collection took place: (1) via electronic email in the case of interactive dialogue journals and final reflective essays, (2) in a conference room on the university campus in the case of group discussions, and (3) on the school grounds of the participants'

pre-practicum placement classrooms in the case of observed teaching episodes and post-observation interviews. Participants were placed at random in three different placement schools, information about which was obtained from the schools' web pages on their respective school districts' official websites.

Five participants were placed in School A, a suburban public elementary/middle school in a neighborhood outside a large northeastern city. For the school year during which data for this study were collected, 502 students in grades K-8 attended this school. The demographic breakdown of the student population was: 63.6% white, 10% African American, 7.6% Hispanic, 18.5 % Asian, and 0.4% Native American; 51.2% male and 48.8 % female. 13.2% of students were classified as having Limited English Proficiency, 18.9 % as low-income, and 13.4% as special education. At School A, 99% of teachers held at least one state teaching license (information on the number of teachers employed at the school was not available). The Core Values presented in School A's mission statement are high academic achievement for all students, excellence in teaching, respect for human differences, and collaborative relationships. The school reported having achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, for all students in English Language Arts and Mathematics as measured by the state-mandated standardized test.

Three participants were placed in School B, an urban public elementary school. For the school year during which data for this study were collected, 277 students in grades K-5 attended School B. The demographic breakdown of the student population for that school year was: 11.2% Asian, 41.9% African American, 29.2% Hispanic, and 17.3 white. 81.2% of students were classified as regular education students, 18.7% as special education

students, and 0% as bilingual education students. The school had received Title II and III

grants and had a partnership with a local university, before- and after-school programs, and

a full-time social worker; inquiry and collaboration are cited as two important themes of its

educational programs. Of the 19 teachers employed at School B, 89.5% held at least one

state teaching license, and the school reported having achieved AYP for all students in

English Language Arts but not in Mathematics.

Two participants were placed in School C, an urban public elementary school. For

the school year during which data for this study were collected, 626 students in grades K-5

attended School B. The demographic breakdown of the student population for that school

year was: 11.3% Asian, 46% African American, 24.6% Hispanic, and 18.1% white. 62.3%

of students were classified as regular education students, 26.6% as special education

students, and 11% as bilingual education students. Of the 53 teachers employed at School

C, 71.7% had at least one state teaching license. The school employs full-time math and

literacy coaches, has partnerships with two local hospitals and two local universities,

provides extensive after-school offerings and is attached to a community center. The

school reported achieving AYP in English Language Arts and Mathematics for this school

year.

As a supervisor for the university, I was automatically allowed access into the

schools to work with the pre-practicum students, and my activities on school grounds were

limited to those I normally undertook as a supervisor so no additional permission/consent

was required of anyone at the school site. However, the project was discussed informally

with each participant's cooperating teacher and the principal, so that they understood the

background and purposes of the study; they were also informed that they would have

continual access to me by phone or email if they have questions or concerns about the

integration of the study with the pre-practicum students' classroom experience.

Data Collection

Data collection took place over the period from January through May of 2003 (one

academic semester). In order to obtain rich data and increase the possibility of

triangulation of results, a variety of methods (affording participants opportunities for

individual written reflection, one-on-one conversation, and collaborative group inquiry)

were employed.

Data collection methods included the following:

Reflective Dialogue Journals

First, I communicated with the student teachers through weekly (at least) entries in

reflective dialogue journals adapted to include prompts designed to explore their beliefs

about knowledge, justification of beliefs, particularly as this relates to classroom practice.

The use of these journals was a required part of the Boston College pre-practicum syllabus,

and it provided a means for the preservice teachers to relate events that occurred in the

classroom, reflect on them, ask questions, and receive feedback from the university

supervisor. I adapted the required method for completing these journals by (1)

encouraging the preservice teachers to go beyond the prompts provided by the pre-

practicum syllabus and candidly discuss their feelings about events in the classroom which

they found significant and problematic; (2) responding to their journal entries not only with

my own thoughts and supportive comments, but also with questions based on the RJM

designed to help the students recognize the assumptions informing their beliefs and

decisions; and (3) having the students respond back to me after thinking about my

responses and questions. The use of these journals was an invaluable source of interaction

for learning about the students' philosophies, experiences and beliefs, as well as for

building a reciprocal and trusting relationship between each student and myself. I kept

copies of each journal entry and the responses for analysis.

Prompts intended to facilitate understanding participants' reflective judgment

levels and the way their reflective judgment affected their decisions about dilemmas of

practice were based on the official protocol of the Reflective Judgment Interview. The

following prompts, the primary means for illuminating the participants' reflective

judgment for this type of data, were incorporated into the dialogue journal process

frequently and coordinated as smoothly as was possible with other questions and remarks

intended to help the participants articulate, clarify, and reflect about their specific and

unique observations, beliefs, and questions:

- What do you think about these events/issues/statements?

- How did you come to hold that point of view?

- Could you ever say which was the better position? How/Why not?

- On what do you base your point of view?

- How would you go about making a decision about this issue?

- Can you ever know for sure that your position on this is correct? How/Why not?

- When two people differ about matters such as this, is it the case that one opinion is right and the other one is wrong? If yes, what do you mean by "right"? If no, can you say that one opinion is in some way better than the other? What do you mean by "better"?

- How is it possible that people have such different points of view about this subject?

- How is it possible that experts in the field could disagree about this subject?

The procedure for interactive dialogue journaling was as follows: After each participant submitted a weekly journal entry to me via email, I saved the entry as a word document and then embedded my comments and questions directly into the text of the entry and returned it to the participant within two days, marking my questions either in a different color or bold or italic font so they would stand out easily. The participants were asked to respond, within three days if possible, by embedding their responses/new iterations into the text following my questions (again in a different color or font so that during analysis I could easily distinguish their first and second iterations).

Observations of Teaching Episodes

Second, I conducted observations of each student teacher conducting two formal lessons in their placement classrooms. Observing these lessons and providing support and feedback was a required part of my supervisory duties with the pre-practicum students. However, I also anticipated that this experience would be useful to the study, for as I made note of particular actions and decisions made by the preservice teachers, I expected that issues would emerge about which I could question them later and interpret the data through the perspective of the RJM. This type of observation was essential to the study because it will allow me to see how the participants made decisions within the "immediacy" of classroom practice. These notes from the lesson observations were not formally analyzed as were other pieces of data such as interviews and journal entries, but I believed that they would provide relevant questions to ask each student regarding his or her decision-making

processes in the interviews that follow. The observations were documented through my write-ups of field notes taken during the lessons.

Post-Observation Interviews

Third, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the student teachers following their observed lessons about the decisions they made during their teaching. It was vital to interview these individuals, because it was their cognitive development and processes about which I hoped to learn, and this could not be accomplished without giving them many opportunities to articulate their beliefs and justifications for decision-making. The interviews were all done either in the context of post-observation conferences, which as their supervisor I was required to conduct with the students immediately following their formal lessons, or during a private interview at a later time (no longer than one week after the lesson observation), should that be the participant's wish. There was no highly standardized protocol for these interviews in order to provide participants with a chance to respond to open-ended questions about their teaching experiences; instead, I made careful notes about the occurrences I observe during the students' lessons and inquired about the decisions they had made – particularly concerning planning, implementing the lesson, and classroom management – and the experiences or beliefs that informed those decisions. However, whenever possible, prompts from the Reflective Judgment Interview (as listed above, see "Reflective Dialogue Journals") were incorporated into the interview process so that participants' reflective judgment as it pertained to each teaching experience could be examined. The interviews were taped and transcribed for analysis.

Group Dilemma Discussions

Fourth, I led the participants in "group dilemma discussions" in which the student teachers met and discussed a dilemma structured in the same format as those used in the official Reflective Judgment Interview and dealing with educational issues suggested by the student teachers' experiences and reflective journal entries (taped and transcribed for analysis). In these discussions, students were presented with a dilemma following the same format as those used in the official Reflective Judgment Interview. Dilemmas were derived from those used in the pilot study and from commonly recurring issues noted in participants' dialogue journals. The subject matter of the dilemmas were derived dealt with educational issues to which there was no one clearly correct solution.

During the discussions, which were informal and included dinner for the participants in order to help foster collegial, honest participation, participants were presented with a dilemma and encouraged to express their beliefs about possible resolutions for it. Participants were provided with the following questions to consider as they thought about the dilemma:

1) What has led you to believe this way?
2) On what information do you base your belief?
3) Can you ever be sure that you are right?
4) How is it that experts disagree about these statements?

These guiding questions and the posed dilemma were read aloud by the researcher, and then the participants were encouraged to participate in the discussion with minimal structured direction from the researcher. As the discussion went on, students were prompted to consider what experiences or beliefs had informed their views about the dilemma using questions from the Reflective Judgment Interview.

The dilemmas utilized in the discussion groups were:

Discussion group one, March 19, 2003:

Some practitioners believe that a classroom should be strongly managed, with clear

rules, expectations and consequences regardless of the student makeup of the class

– sort of a "spare the rod and spoil the child" attitude. Others believe that the kinds

of discipline implemented in the classroom really depends on the students – their

needs, backgrounds, cultures, as different students have different needs – sort of a

"use the rod sparingly" approach. What do you think about this decision?

Discussion group two, March 25, 2003:

Some practitioners believe that a teacher must structure instruction so that he or she

is always in control of student learning and student behavior. She must be the

authority and hold the power most of the time. This means setting the agenda for

learning, identifying the most important concepts, and delivering instruction in a

way that is teacher-centered. Other practitioners believe that instruction should be

student-centered and constructivist, allowing each student to progress along a

continuum at his/her pace and to control learning and behavior. This teacher

believes in sharing authority and power with students most of the time. What do

you think about this issue?

Discussion group three, April 8, 2003, consisted of participants viewing of a

videotape of a "Special Issues in Teaching" seminar entitled "Maintaining Professional

Boundaries." The students were required to attend a seminar or view a videotape as a

required part of their pre-practicum, so this activity was integrated into the study in order

to help streamline the research process with the participants' requirements for their field

experience. The participants viewed the tape and then held a semi-structured discussion about the dilemmas and issues that arose for them as they viewed the tape.

These discussions were taped and transcribed for analysis.

Final Reflective Essays

Fifth, a final reflective essay written by each participant at the end of the semester, dealing with a dilemma similar in structure and content to those addressed during the discussion groups, will be kept for analysis. Dilemmas were derived from those used in the pilot study and from commonly recurring issues noted in participants' dialogue journals. Participants were given liberal time to complete this task to foster careful reflection, and they were given the following instructions and dilemmas from which to choose:

"Choose only **one** of the following dilemmas. Choose the dilemma about which you feel most strongly. Respond in a thorough, carefully developed, reflective essay. Consider the following questions and integrate your responses to these questions as you develop your essay.

1) What has led you to believe this way?
2) On what information do you base your belief?
3) Can you ever be sure that you are right?
4) How is it that experts disagree about these statements?

Dilemma 1:

Some educators, administrators, and legislators believe that the achievement gap between suburban and urban students is due to a lack of high standards and that high stakes testing is the only way to assure that students will reach those

standards. Others believe that high standards is one way to help close the gap but that high stakes testing is not the best way to assure that students reach standards. What do you think about these statements?

Dilemma 2:

Some educators and researchers believe that all students should be treated equally and fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, linguistic difference, and academic ability. In other words, the same pedagogy should apply to all students. Others believe that fair and equal means giving each student what he or she deserves or needs, and that pedagogy should be culturally and academically relevant. What do you believe about these statements?

Dilemma 3:

Some people feel that American students should receive their education only in English in order to build a foundation of cultural unity among Americans and enable students to function in a country where English is the national language. Others believe that schools should allow students to speak their native language in schools, and teach them those languages, in order for the students to feel their heritage is valued and preserved. What do you believe about these statements?

Dilemma 4:

Some people feel that mandated standardized tests provide a valuable and concrete way of measuring schools' strengths and weaknesses and focusing teachers' instruction on important skills. Others feel that standardized testing limits the way in which a child is perceived and evaluated and leads to simplistic "teaching to the

test" with the effect of making instruction less engaging and challenging. What do

you think about these statements?

Dilemma 5:

Some people believe that maintaining coeducational schools is the only way to

ensure that girls and boys are treated equitably in their education. Others believe

that single-sex schools can be beneficial, especially to girls, because they remove

the pressure girls often feel in school to let their male peers assume roles of

leadership or to surpass the girls' achievement in certain subject areas. What do

you think about these statements?

Following are Figure 2, a chart outlining the general chronological framework of

the data collection, and Figures 3 and 4, charts indicating the data sources for each

individual participant and the date on which this data was collected:

Table 2: General Data Source Chart

Week / Date	Weekly Dialogue Journals (Total of 10)	Post-Observation Interview (Total of 2)	Group Dilemma Workshop (Total of 3)	Final Reflective Essay
Week 1: Feb. 3 – 7	X	*Note: Exact dates of		
Week 2: Feb. 10 – 14	X	interviews vary slightly based		
Public schools not in session- Feb. 17 – 21		on individual participants'		
Week 3: Feb. 24 – 28	X	schedules.		
Participants' Spring Break March 3 – 7				
Week 4: Mar. 10 – 14	X	Interview #1 generally took	X	
Week 5: Mar. 17 – 21	X	place at some point during		
Week 6: Mar. 24 - 28	X	weeks 4-6.	X	
Week 7: Mar. 31- Apr.4	X			
Week 8: Apr. 7 – 11	X	Interview #2 generally took	X	
Week 9: Apr. 14 – 18	X	place at some point duing		
Public schools not in session – Apr. 21 – 25		weeks 8-10.		
Week 10: Apr. 28 – May 2	X			
May – June				X

Table 3: Data Chart for Participants: School A (suburban public):

* All names are pseudonyms.

Data Source / Journal Iterations	Lisa	Sherry	Stephanie	Katie	Andrea
Journal 1	2-9-03 (2)	2-7-03 (2)	2-12-03 (1)	2-9-03 (1)	2-10-03 (1)
Journal 2	2-16-03 (2)	2-16-03 (2)	2-18-03 (2)	2-20-03 (2)	2-18-03 (2)
Journal 3	3-4-03 (2)	2-28-03 (2)	2-25-03 (2)	3-3-03 (2)	3-10-03 (1)
Journal 4	3-16-03 (2)	3-14-03 (2)	3-16-03 (2)	3-17-03 (2)	3-21-03 (2)
Journal 5	3-24-03 (2)	3-21-03 (2)	3-25-03 (1)	3-20-03 (2)	3-28-03 (1)
Journal 6	3-27-03 (2)	3-28-03 (2)	3-28-03 (1)	3-31-03 (1)	4-5-03 (2)
Journal 7	4-4-03 (2)	4-4-03 (1)	4-8-03 (1)	4-8-03 (1)	4-6-03 (2)
Journal 8	4-15-03 (2)	4-15-03 (1)	4-17-03 (1)	4-15-03 (1)	4-13-03 (2)
Journal 9	4-25-03 (1)	---	---	5-1-03 (1)	4-17-03 (2)
Journal 10	---	---	---	---	---
Total Journal Iterations	17	14	11	13	15
Interview 1	2-27-03	3-28-03	3-28-03	3-20-03	3-20-03
Interview 2	3-20-03	4-10-03	4-4-03	4-10-03	---
Gp. Disc. 1	3-19-03	3-19-03	3-19-03	3-19-03	3-19-03
Gp. Disc. 2	3-25-03	3-25-03	3-25-03	3-25-03	(absent)
Gp. Disc. 3	4-8-03	4-8-03	(absent)	4-8-03	4-8-03
Final essay	5-24-03	5-19-03	5-29-03	5-23-03	5-19-03
Total Data Sources	24	20	16	19	19
School Placement	A (suburban public)	A (suburban public)	A (suburban public)	A (suburban public)	A (suburban public)
Grade Level	2	K	1	1	1

Table 4: Data Chart for Participants: Schools B and C (urban public):

Data Source / Journal Iterations	Jill	Melissa	Leslie	Debbie	Carol
Journal 1	1-28-03 (1)	2-4-03 (1)	---	2-3-03 (2)	2-22-03 (2)
Journal 2	2-5-03 (2)	---	2-11-03 (1)	2-10-03 (2)	2-27-03 (2)
Journal 3	2-11-03 (2)	2-25-03 (1)	---	2-25-03 (2)	2-28-03 (1)
Journal 4	2-25-03 (1)	---	3-11-03 (1)	3-11-03 (2)	3-14-03 (1)
Journal 5	3-11-03 (2)	3-18-03 (1)	3-18-03 (1)	3-21-03 (2)	3-21-03 (1)
Journal 6	3-20-03 (1)	3-20-03 (1)	3-25-03 (1)	3-27-03 (2)	---
Journal 7	3-25-03 (1)	3-25-03 (1)	---	3-31-03 (2)	---
Journal 8	4-1-03 (1)	4-1-03 (1)	4-1-03 (1)	4-7-03 (2)	4-20-03 (1)
Journal 9	4-9-03 (1)	4-3-03 (1)	---	4-17-03 (1)	4-27-03 (1)
Journal 10	4-15-03 (1)				
Total Journal Iterations	13	7	5	17	9
Interview 1	3-11-03	3-25-03	3-11-03	4-7-03	4-7-03
Interview 2	4-8-03	---	4-15-03	4-14-03	4-14-03
Gp. Disc. 1	3-19-03	3-19-03	3-19-03	(absent)	(absent)
Gp. Disc. 2	3-25-03	3-25-03	(absent)	(absent)	(absent)
Gp. Disc. 3	(absent)	(absent)	4-8-03	(absent)	(absent)
Final Essay	4-27-03	4-27-03	5-27-03	---	---
Total Data Sources	18	11	10	19	11
School Placement	B (urban public)	B (urban public)	B (urban public)	C (urban public)	C (urban public)
Grade Level	3 / 4	2	1-3 SPED	K	K

The Role of the Researcher

Issues pertaining to my role as researcher in this study fall into two areas: those arising from the prior relationship I had with the participants of the study, and those arising from the highly participatory role I assumed as both researcher and the participants' university supervisor for their field experience.

The choice to base participant selection for this study on invitation to student teachers with whom I had worked during the previous semester was a deliberate, purposeful decision founded in my confidence that the relationship I had developed with these individuals would positively contribute to a bidirectional sense of trust and comfort which would facilitate their genuine and wholehearted participation in the study. In order for a rich, authentic description of the participants' reflective judgment to be possible, they would each be required to engage in a continuous, honest, thoughtful examination of their beliefs and their experiences in the classroom, a process which would necessitate willingness to be both introspective and candid concerning complex issues of teaching and learning and their own beliefs and feelings. Some of these feelings or issues with which we dealt during the study could quite possibly cause feelings of dissonance and discomfort because they were new ideas for the participants, and it was also possible that participants might experience unpleasant emotional reactions to having to deal head-on with complicated and difficult issues or unsettling events witnessed in their classrooms. Participants' feelings of trust in the researcher and comfort with the prospect of sharing highly personal experiences and points of view would therefore be vital in conducting the study successfully, and over the five months prior to the study, I had developed positive

and productive relationships with each participant which I was confident would increase their ability to trust me as a researcher.

Since I had acted as each participant's supervisor the previous semester, they each had substantial knowledge of my supervisory practices, my personal experience as a teacher and teacher educator, my research goals, and my beliefs about teaching and learning. The participants also already had an understanding of my character, both with respect to my personality in general and my reliability as a trustworthy mentor and facilitator of their continuing professional development. Each participant knew from experience, for example, that I would attempt to respond to their journals and statements in a timely manner, with both friendly support and encouragement and with a process of questioning intended to stimulate their inquiry into their own practice, and that I would question them in a manner intended to facilitate their reflection but not to pass judgment on their feelings or practices. They also knew from experience that I would show up to their scheduled observations on time, make every attempt to accommodate their already busy academic schedules when we strove to meet all their field experience requirements and coordinate those requirements with the research study, keep close track of issues that might affect them in their field experience, assist them in working collaboratively with their cooperating teachers, and keep what they shared with me private (unless an issue presented a legitimate need for me to intervene). Having already spent an entire semester sharing their observations with me, demonstrating their teaching skills and processes to me, discussing their own professional development with me, and opening up to me about issues which confused or disturbed them, the participants could now be reasonably expected to

extend our relationship of trust, comfort and striving toward mutual goals naturally into our interaction within the context of the research study.

In addition to their knowledge of me, my knowledge of the participants' experiences over the previous semester was also a benefit to the study. Having had extensive contact with them in their prior field experience provided me with insight into each participant's personality and provided informal guidance for me when I needed to decide, for instance, how much to encourage an individual who was not in the habit of speaking often but who clearly had something to contribute during a discussion, or how much emotional comfort and support to offer a particular individual after an observed lesson that she had found particularly challenging or uncomfortable for some reason. My experiences with the participants also afforded me additional opportunities to help them explore their beliefs and ideas, since I had in a sense gone through their prior field experience "with them." Instead of merely asking, for example, how a participant viewed her classroom context, classroom teaching experiences, cooperating teacher, etc. as similar to or different from those associated with her earlier field experiences, I could recall specific aspects about the last semester and use them as points to focus her reflection when this seemed appropriate.

In short, I believe that being able to build on this prior relationship increased the participants' ability and propensity to engage honestly, frankly and thoughtfully in the data collection processes of the study and my ability to stimulate and support their reflection. Had a new set of individuals been selected for the study, I would have expended considerable time attempting to establish this type of trustful and familiar relationship with them, but this could not have replaced the trust which resulted from my previous efforts in

helping the participants make their last field experience a successful one or the "insider's" perspective afforded by the understanding of each of them as a person I had developed through our shared experiences.

The researcher's role in this study was that of participant-observer. I participated a great deal in this study, as I served as the preservice teachers' university supervisor for their field experience. As I designed the study, it seemed important that I be working with the participants in this capacity, for one of the major procedures in the study was dialogue about decision-making and classroom practice dilemmas through the students' journals, which they were required by their practicum office to submit to their supervisors. It was my feeling that working with participants with whom I already had a "built-in" role would provide greater opportunities for developing a positive rapport and trust with the participants in order for them to feel comfortable reflecting on their epistemic assumptions and decision-making processes. In addition, this journaling required the use of certain prompts designed specifically to explore reflective judgment; other supervisors would not have been trained to employ these prompts.

My supervisory relationship was also a benefit as I observed the preservice teachers conducting lessons and interviewed them about how they made certain decisions. Since, as their university supervisor, I was already required to observe the preservice teachers in this context and I already knew them personally when the study took place, it was my hope that they would be able to talk to me comfortably, openly and honestly about how they approached the dilemmas they encountered during teaching. I hoped to be a "critical friend" to each participant to help them become aware of their reflective judgment and learn to reason at more sophisticated levels.

My role as participant/observer and supervisor of the participants also served to reinforce my understanding that it was important that participation in the project not substantially increase the workload of these already very busy students. In order to compensate for the extra time they would be investing in the project, I remained very flexible if students were delayed in submitting journals once in a while due to outside commitments, and scheduled meetings at times which would not conflict with their other activities. I coordinated the tasks involved in the study with experiences that were already required by the students' pre-practicum syllabus whenever possible. Finally, I kept open communication with the students to monitor their participation and make sure they were not becoming overloaded as a result of their participation.

<div align="center">Ethical Issues</div>

Despite the strong benefits I felt would result from my taking an "insider" perspective, my prior relationship with the participants, as well as my dual position as both researcher and supervisor, also meant that I had to take extensive and considered action to prevent any ethical issues that this relationship might present either for the participants or for the research process.

First, it was important that participants not feel pressured to participate in the study simply because I had asked them, whether they regarded this invitation as coming from me as a friend, a mentor, or an evaluator of their teaching performance. Therefore, I gave them many opportunities to consider whether or not they wanted to participate, and I reiterated to them that it would in no way reflect negatively on them or affect our student/supervisor relationship if they declined to participate. Furthermore (as I always did with the student teachers whom I supervised), I worked toward establishing and

maintaining an open, respectful and friendly relationship with them in general so they would see me as a mentor or guide, rather than a strict authority figure pressuring them to take on an additional project.

In order to ensure that all participants became involved with the study completely voluntarily and to prevent complications from arising for them during the course of the study, several steps were taken. First, approximately four weeks before the end of the semester wherein I was first supervising this group of preservice teachers, I mentioned individually to each of them that I was seeking participants for my dissertation study and would be holding a meeting to provide information for anyone who might be interested. This meeting was held two weeks later, and during the course of this meeting the purposes and procedures of the upcoming study were discussed. All participants attended this meeting, at which they were informed of exactly what would be required of them should they choose to become involved with the study, that they were not obligated to make a decision at that point about their participation, and that should they decide to be part of the study, they could withdraw at any time with no negative consequences. They were given opportunities to ask questions about the study and an invitation to contact me at any time if they had further questions, and an intention form was handed out to each individual.

At the conclusion of this meeting, participants were directed to take some time to think about whether they wished to participate, wait until after I had turned in their grades (supervisors turned in only Pass/Fail grades for field experiences, but it was important that they not feel that their decision about whether to continue with me the following semester and participate in the research study would have any bearing on their grades for the present semester; it should be noted that no participants questioned their grades after they

participated in the study), and simply sign the form and place it in my mailbox should they wish to volunteer as a participant for the study. If they did not turn in the form, this would be interpreted as a decision not to participate, and they would automatically be assigned new supervisors the following semester for their next pre-practicum. All attendees at the meeting turned in the form.

When the following semester began, but before the student teachers had received their field placement assignments (so that other supervisors could be easily assigned to them if they had changed their minds since first expressing intent to participate), I re-confirmed with each participant who had turned in the form their intent to participate in the study. I also scheduled another meeting with all participants to review the study's purpose and procedures, at which I reminded the participants again that they still had time to withdraw, or could withdraw from the study at any time.

At this second meeting, a procedure was also agreed upon for withdrawal from the study. If any participant should choose for any reason that they no longer wished to participate, she simply had to inform me of this decision. If she wished, we would simply continue together as supervisor and student teacher; since the study's design was specifically constructed to coordinate smoothly with the requirements for the participants' field experience, withdrawal from the study would mean only simple changes to the supervisory process. If anyone withdrew, interactive dialogue journaling, lesson observations, and post-observation interviews would still take place as required elements of the pre-practicum syllabus, but these might no longer include extensive examination of reflective judgment-related questions and issues (unless the participant showed interest in

pursuing this) or be analyzed for the study's report, and the individual would not be required to attend the group discussions or to complete the final essay.

Accommodations were also made for the possibility that a participant might wish to work with a different supervisor if she withdrew from the study. Administrators in the office of professional practicum experiences at the university were made aware of the conditions of this dissertation research within the context of field experience supervision, so that if, for any reason, the individual did not wish to approach me to discuss withdrawing from the study, she had an alternative to doing so and could be assigned another supervisor with minimal disruption to her field experience and without even having to deal with me directly if she was uncomfortable doing so. Before committing to the project, participants were strongly encouraged to consider how comfortable they would be continuing with me as their supervisor if they chose to withdraw from the study during the course of the semester, and they were asked to contact me within one more week if they still wished to participate, which they all did. (If a participant did not formally withdraw from the study but simply did not fulfill those requirements limited to the study and the researcher felt this made extensive analysis of their data impossible, the stipulation was made that the researcher could reserve the right not to include her in the final report; all participants agreed to this condition.) No participants formally withdrew from the study at any time.

At both these meetings, participants were also informed of other measures intended to protect their confidentiality and make their participation in the study productive to the goals of the research and rewarding to them. In order to achieve candid, thoughtful responses from the participants, it would be necessary to assure them that their

participation would not be harmful to them in any way. This was particularly important

for this study because the nature of the process of exploring problematic situations might

bring up sensitive personal and educational issues in journal entries, discussions, etc.

When sensitive issues emerged, the participants had to feel comfortable expressing

themselves freely, without fearing repercussions if they say something that could be

construed as negative about their placement classrooms, their cooperating teachers, or their

teacher education program. If participants were confronted with dilemmas with strong

ethical or moral implications that made them uncomfortable, they had to be offered proper

support in making their decisions about how to handle a given situation. Although I made

arrangements for contacting the participant's cooperating teacher in case a student teacher

encountered a dilemma or situation involving a possible danger to any children in their

classroom, and participants were each aware of this, their confidentiality was also a

priority and several measures were taken to ensure confidentiality.

First, a Human Subjects Review form was submitted to the appropriate department

of the university and was approved. Second, I stressed several important points with the

prospective participants at both informational meetings: that pseudonyms, not their real

names, would be used in the reports; that they were free to withdraw from the study at any

time with no repercussions whatsoever if they choose; that the information gathered

through the study would only be used for the purposes of the research project and not as an

evaluatory measure (either for them personally or for their teacher education program); that

before any formal report is submitted or published, they would have the opportunity to see

the data and provide feedback on how accurate they felt it was; and finally, that those

students participating in the study would be asked to agree that whatever was said during

the focus group discussions would remain confidential and would not be talked about outside of the designated time and place for the discussion. Third, at the second informational meeting, I handed out and reviewed informed consent forms, which I asked that the attendees sign and return to me within a week to signify their final decision to participate in the study, which was done by each attendee; these forms were kept separate from the study data. Finally, names were removed from each piece of data and replaced by numbers during the data analysis phase, and the list identifying the participant assigned each number was kept separate from all data.

Validity and Reliability Issues

In order to address the challenges which case study methodology can present for validity issues, I utilized strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) and Yin (1994) for enhancing the validity of this multiple case study. For example, Tellis (1997) notes that construct validity and the establishment of an appropriate operational measure for the concepts being studied can be problematic in case studies because of the potential for investigator subjectivity. In order to address this, Yin (1994) suggest using multiple sources of evidence during the data collection period and having key informants review the report draft, both of which were done for this study. I utilized triangulation of data via multiple sources and methods using documents, observations, interviews, group discussion and written reflection. This strengthens a case study's internal validity as well as its reliability (Merriam, 1988) and promotes what Yin (1994) describes as "converging lines of inquiry," enhancing the study's potential for offering a multi-dimensional and holistic understanding of the phenomenon. In addition this, I used the procedure of "member checks;" participants were given opportunities to examine what was written about their

experiences, in order to give the researcher their insight concerning its accuracy and possible meaning. I also worked toward the goal of strengthening the case study's internal and external validity, respectively, through the use of pattern matching during the data analysis process (Yin, 1994) and replication logic in the sampling and research design.

Since this qualitative study was designed not to produce highly generalizable results or to support or refute a testable hypothesis, but to create an understanding of the way individual preservice teachers experience their reflective judgment development and demonstrate it within their practice, I focused on consistency and dependability of data rather than traditional measures of research reliability such as generalizability of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Where appropriate, I followed Stake's (1995) concept of "naturalistic generalization," looking for patterns that might explain what was observed and encouraging the reader do the same based on his/her own experience, knowledge, and intuition. I hoped to enhance the study's potential for naturalistic generalization and "case-to-case transfer" (Firestone, 1993), as well as the authenticity and dependability of the data, by implementing some specific strategies:

- Triangulation of data via multiple sources and methods - using documents, observations, interviews, group discussion and written reflection (Denzin, 1970; Yin, 1994);

- Construction of rich, thick description (Geertz, 1983) of the participants' experiences;

- Use of more than one participant, thereby maximizing the diversity of the data, increasing the study's potential applicability to other situations while not attempting to claim universal generalizability (Yin, 1994) ;

- Presentation of methodological decisions in a way that would allow the study to be repeated with different participants if other researchers chose to do so (Yin, 1994); and

- Clear acknowledgement and explanation of my own background and standpoint, the social context of the study, and my theoretical assumptions so that the reader can make his/her own judgments about their influence on the study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). (See Chapter I, Introduction/Rationale.)

Analysis / Interpretation of Data

Data analysis and interpretation was an ongoing and iterative process which shaped data collection procedures where appropriate (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As soon as data collection began, I began keeping a log/journal describing my responses to the data and my interactions with the participants, possible new ideas and questions to explore, analytic notes, and my reflections and reasoning about the methodological choices made throughout the study. This provided me with opportunities to develop an "introspective record" (Merriam, 1988) of the conceptual and methodological evolution of the study and to monitor my own reflection and subjectivity (Glesne, 1999). I revisited all data and my memos frequently in order to cultivate a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences, and I made arrangements with the participants to return to them for further dialogue if clarification of the data seemed needed.

I conducted three basic levels of coding and interpretation of data: (1) analysis of statements made by individual participants which indicated certain levels of reflective judgment in regard to specific dilemmas; (2) analysis of the level of reflective judgment

level suggested by the data for each participant; and (3) comparison of themes and patterns across cases.

First, each piece of data for every individual participant was coded according to a list derived from the official scoring manual for the Reflective Judgment Interview (King & Kitchener, 1977/1985). Codes were developed according to the patterns of reflection and reasoning associated with various reflective judgment levels as outlined in this manual. In order to develop the code list, I first distilled the guidelines from the manual for assigning reflective judgment levels to various statements or patterns of reasoning into a simple chart. Table 5 outlines important points of each reflective judgment level in terms of the individual's general reasoning style, views on the nature of knowledge, and views on the nature of justification.

Table 5: Characteristics of Reflective Judgment Levels 1-7

Reflective Judgment Stage	General Dimensions (Cognitive Complexity, Reasoning Style, Openness)	Nature of Knowledge (View of Knowledge, Right vs. Wrong, Legitimacy of Different Viewpoints)	Nature of Justification (Concept of Justification, Use of Evidence, Role of Authority)
Pre-Reflective Level: Stage 1	Knowledge is real, tangible, concrete Simple cognitive categories Issues explained in terms of clichés Facts/point of view not distinguished No reasoning from premise to conclusion Deny existence of alternative point of view Ignore information not agreeing with own world view May appear naïve, uninformed	Knowledge exists and can be understood concretely Reality known w/certainty through direct observation Right/wrong known absolutely Can't conceive of alternate point of view Don't acknowledge alternate points of view, or do not perceive conflict between own and others' points of view	Knowledge is absolute so no need to justify beliefs Claims appear naïve, uninformed Ignore info. not agreeing with point of view. Difference between belief/opinion and fact not distinguished, so evidence not compelling Authority and absolutes not distinguished Authority subjectively defined as one holding same beliefs as one's own
Pre-Reflective Level: Stage 2	2 category belief system: right/wrong Assume differences in views easily resolved Blurry distinction -- fact/opinion Gross contradictions Cite unrelated/contradictory evidence Acknowledge other beliefs but see them as wrong, uninformed Describe views w/ dogmatic cliches	Can know true reality/false claims through direct observation or via authorities Deny contradictions between views Can know w/certainty in science See alternative views, assume one right and one wrong but without justification Different beliefs seen as result of differences in upbringing or what was taught, easy to resolve If experts disagree, one is wrong	Beliefs unexamined or justified via authorities' views Assume "right" decision exists "Romantic" statements of belief Beliefs not based on evidence, so not confirmed by evidence Unable to analyze, interpret, evaluate evidence Some authorities enlightened, truthful, "right"; others unenlightened,"wrong" Take dogmatic clichés at face value from "good" authorities

Pre-Reflective Level: Stage 3	3-category belief system: true knowledge, false claims, uncertain claims Confused by multiple points of view Often overwhelmed by complexity Use reason/logic/refer to scientific procedures but decisions still based on what "feels right" Confused dealing w/uncertainty Not open to new info when challenged	True reality known in some cases, i.e. science or religion. Otherwise,thinking has "biases" Lack of certainty temporary, resolved by acquiring new information If nothing absolutely correct, any answer is as good as any other Decisions based on prior beliefs or what individual wants to believe All points of viewequally correct or equally biased	Can't rely solely on authority but have nothing to take its place Tentative decisions based on what "feels right" All beliefs equally biased/equally true Acknowledge existence of evidence but don't use to reason to conclusions Beginning separation of fact/opinion Opinions based on unsupported personal belief Question value of/begin mistrusting authority

Quasi-Reflective Level: Stage 4	"Uncertain" divided into types of uncertainty Unable to talk complexly even about issues seen as complex Responds holistically, does not break topic up into separate issues Sees evidence leading to hypothesis but unable to use it to reason to a conclusion Argues for supported opinions but may not be consistent about own opinion	Knowledge is idiosyncratic Contextual variables prevent certainty of knowledge Major advance from Stage 3 – understanding of knowledge as an abstract concept Claim to know what is right for them but won't make judgments about others' choices No separation of judgment of opinion and evaluation of evidence	Begins distinguishing between unconsidered belief and considered judgment but doesn't understand role of evidence in reaching a conclusion Can have strong point of view, not objective about view or take tentative, loosely reasoned position Incomplete, contradictory application of evidence May equate personal belief w/evidence May argue consistently but use evidence only in concrete way

	Sees self as willing to examine all views but reluctant to examine beliefs w/ new evidence Can be either stubborn about point of view or easily swayed, "wishy-washy"	Sees discrete differences in beliefs, no gray areas Sees different points of view but does not place in wider context of issue Differences result from differences in upbringing, misinterpretation No distinction between deliberate bias and legitimate reason	May never have enough evidence to know for certain No difference between "expert" opinion and own point of view Can be cynical, disappointed, disillusioned with authority
Quasi-Reflective Level: Stage 5	Begins to explore, not just acknowledge, complexity of issues Tries to evaluate evidence on different sides in light of own limitations of experience and understanding Logical, explicit, consistent use of reasoning Evaluates evidence on both sides of issue May have more balanced picture of issue Sees diversity of views as reflecting the human experience Can be objective about own/others' views Willing to examine beliefs taught in the past and identify process for doing so	Objective understanding of reality not possible "Reality" seen as embedded in interpretation Point of view seen as embedded in context Uncertainty implicit in understanding of world Might "never know for sure" if beliefs are true Sees terms "right"/"wrong" as inappropriate for complex problems; qualifies terms Focuses on detached understanding of problem, including others' points of view Separates fact from interpretation Differences in point of view inherent, exist because people perceive the world differently	Can be detached, objective, more balanced Establish "bigger picture," larger context May choose point of view based on simple rules of inquiry; may continue to hedge based on broad sense of balance and perspective Begins to evaluate evidence qualitatively Judges pieces of evidence within a point of view Interpretation seen as legitimate and necessary Authorities are humans who interpret and have preferences Sees authorities as experts but does not accept or reject their views without consideration

Reflective Level: Stage 6	Sees issues complexly, several sides within an issue Can make evaluations across points of view Can draw some simple, tentative conclusions Logical Willing to evaluate evidence within and across points of view Identify evaluative criteria subsuming rules of inquiry of different perspectives May see strong evidence but still base view on pragmatics Will examine many points of view but dismiss those not reasonable May endorse a conclusion but not offer own constructed viewpoint	Cannot know objective reality but acknowledges some arguments as better founded Sees inquiry as a process Judges evidence qualitatively but doesn't see how knowledge is cumulative or how to judge a "best" position Unwilling to say a position is right/wrong Qualifies terms and statements as personal view Still not constructing own world view Different points of view are potentially valid interpretations Can sometimes take larger perspectives on different points of view as part of the process of interpretation	Frequently takes a point of view, but not constructed Justifies by use of experts, pragmatics, rules, or because a point of view is "more compelling" Sometimes redefines dilemma in generalized terms subsuming different perspectives Argues logically with references to evidence Compares strengths of evidence, weighs evidence across a point of view Believes use of evidence and drawing conclusions requires interpretation Authorities are experts who have investigated issues deeply Sees qualitative differences in experts' judgments Refers to experts but doesn't accept their word blindly
Reflective Level: Stage 7	Can abstract, synthesize across points of view Sees world as intrinsically complex Constructs coherent perspective in context of complex issue Follows logic/evidence through to conclusion Endorses conclusion Acknowledges view may be falsified by future evidence	Knowing, via inquiry, can lead to better conjectures about reality Argues for coherence of own view Acknowledges fallibility of inquiry process Knowledge statements open to rational scrutiny Use qualified terms ("better"/ "worse"), but may actually state own view is right, morally or logically	States opinions firmly or probabilistically Well articulated arguments, acknowledging complexity Willing to re-examine own view but willing to stand by own judgments as most reasonable Might construct new view not offered in RJI dilemma Abstract across and within domains

Can generalize about abstractions	Willing to re-examine view in light of new evidence	Makes qualitative judgments about evidence
		Considers credibility of sources of evidence
Open to diverse points of view, but has own	Sees differences in views complexly, result of education, culture, etc.	Authorities seen as experts, one source of information
Re-examines own views w/new evidence	Experts disagree b/c of dif. interpretations of evidence	Can acknowledge authorities' expertise without accepting their point of view
Can see why others hold different views		Aware that experts are also interpreting the evidence

After doing this, I developed a basic code list incorporating types of statements or reasoning patterns associated with various reflective judgment levels and coded each participant's data according to this list using HyperRESEARCH. This code list allowed me to consider specific statements which suggested certain reflective judgment levels, types of dilemmas faced by the participants in their classroom practice, and notable factors concerning the processes by which the participants reflected about classroom dilemmas. Table 6 outlines the code list.

Table 6: Code List for Reflective Judgment Analysis

General / Stage 1	Stages 2-3	Stages 4-5

(Gen) :
Accepting expert/authority's pov
Awareness of own beliefs
Change in beliefs
Clsrm events lead to refl. on beliefs
Formulates simple plans or conclusions
Knowledge from Direct Observation
Knowledge from Previous Experience
Knowledge source - authority –
  college courses
Knowledge source - CTs – veteran tchrs
Kn. from unexpected/new sources
Openness to teaching in dif contexts
Questions or seeks new info to dev. pov
Recognizes complexity of problems
 	
School context description
Uncertainty of knowledge
Unsure of own beliefs
 	
1 - authority = absolutes
1 - belief/fact not distinguished
1 - no need to justify beliefs
1 -kn. real/tangible/concrete
1- appears uninformed/naive
1- no reasoning/evidence
1-2 - know reality thru direct observation
	2 - know reality thru direct observation
	2 - "romantic" belief statement
	2 - altern. pov's uninformed
	2 - belief not confirmed by evidence
	2 - belief system - R vs. W
	2 - can't distinguish evidence from opinion
	 2 difs in pov due to dif. upbringing
	2 - dogmatic cliches = truth
	2 - ignores altern. pov's
	2 - some auth's good/Right – some bad/Wrong
	2 - unaware of contradictory logic
	2- can know reality in science
	2- difs in views easily resolvable
	2- doesn't recog. complexity of issue
	3 - ackn. multiple pov's
	3 - auth's need more info to know
	3 - base decisions on prev. beliefs
	3 - confused by uncertainty
	3 - decide by what "feels right"
	3 - inconsistent use of evidence
	3 - kn. temporarily uncertain
	3 - mistrust of auth
	3 - not open to new info
	3 - one answer as good as all others
	3 - Overwhelmed by complexity
	3 - tentative decisions
	3- can know reality in some cases
	3- Simple use of evid/inquiry/sci. procedure
	3-4 - Kn/povs- personal / idiosyncr/upbringing
	3-4 - tchrs just have dif. "styles"
		4 - "expert" opinion no dif. than
		  own
		4 - "stubborn" about own view
		4 - ackn. own bias/interp.
		4 - can't place pov's in wider context
		4 - cynical/disappointed in auth
		4 - Equates personal belief w/evidence
		4 - feels willing to examine other POV's
		4 - goes back and forth on own pov
		4 - not objective - own or others' pov's
		4 - reluctant to exam. pov despiteclaims
		4 - sees discrete dif's in POV's
		4 - unresolved contradictions in own pov
		4 - won't judge others' beliefs R/W
		4 - no simple solutions
		5 - consistent-explicit use of logic
		5 - diverse POV's = human experience
		5 - eval. evid. in light of own limitations
		5 - exploring complexity
		5 - interp. legit and necessary
		5 - may hedge - broad balance
		5 - may never know if belief true
		5 - Placing issues in larger context
		5 - POV embedded in context
		5 - tries to balance pov's-see larger picture
		5 - uncertainty inherent in understanding
		5 - willing to re-exam. own point of view
		5- doesn't acc/rej auth. pov blindly

		5 -6 - can't know objective reality 5 - open to new ideas/exp/povs
Stages 6-7	Types of Dilemmas	Reflective Process
6 - ackn. qual. difs in auths' pov's 6 - dif pov's – valid interpretations 6 - draws simple concl. 6 - examine many pov's on issue 6 - justify pov- expert/pragm/evid. 6 - not R/W- some arguments better founded 6 - redefine dilemma in gen'l perspective 6 - refer to experts but don't accept blindly 6 - sees issues complexly 6 - use rules of inquiry across perspectives 7 - can abstract –synthesize across perspectives 7 - consider credibility of source/evid 7 - construct new view 7 - eval. process - gain/use evidence 7 - generalizes views 7 – underst. world via inquiry 7 - see why others hold dif. point of view 7 - stand behind views 7 - argue for coherence of own view	D – Classroom dilemma – uncertainty in tchg D- equity D- learning – class D- learning – indiv. student D- management – class D- management – indiv. student D- assessing student learning D- standards/ standardized test D- collaboration w/colleagues D – collaboration - students D – univ. courses vs. clsrm experience D – parent involvement D – Difs w/CT D – Preprac's role in clsrm	RP - Clsrm events lead to refl. on beliefs R – clsrm events –refl. on beliefs R – refl. on clsrm. decisions R – not refl. on clsrm decisions R – ref. technical in nature

After completing three iterations of coding for all data from all individual participants using this code list, I employed a more holistic/interpretive process for analyzing each participants' reflective judgment by progressing chronologically through each participant's data and organizing her statements according to the reflective judgment level which she appeared to be demonstrating, while paying particular attention to the participant's development across the semester as a whole and the context in which statements were made . Data analysis incorporated word analysis and whole-text analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Key-words-in-context facilitated a search for words or phrases that corresponded to the different levels of reflective judgment posed in the Reflective Judgment Model. Examples include: "There is no right answer." "authority/expert," "I'm not sure." "uncertain," "multiple perspectives," etc. Whole text was coded for reflections about behaviors that addressed kinds of dilemmas, aspects of classroom practice, relationships between preservice teachers and cooperating teacher, curriculum and instruction, theory, and theory and practice, and then recoded for more specific themes and patterns suggesting specific levels of reflective judgment. After this first level of analysis was completed, I composed a narrative description of each individual case and an analysis of that participant's patterns of reflective judgment.

During the holistic/interpretive phase of this first level of analysis, I focused on considering the data in terms of several primary guiding questions based on the main research questions of the study:

- How is the participant demonstrating her beliefs and assumptions about the relative certainty and simplicity of knowledge?

- How is the participant demonstrating her beliefs and assumptions about the most appropriate way to justify decisions in problematic situations?

- Do these beliefs appear to be influencing the participant's decisions concerning classroom practice? If so, how?

- What level of awareness does the participant appear to demonstrate of her beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and justifiable decision-making?

- At what level of reflective judgment does the participant appear to be operating? Does this vary according to any contextual conditions or with the type of activity in which she is engaged?

- What changes, if any, appear to be occurring in the way the participant approaches dilemmas and ill-structured problems encountered in practice? How does the participant understand and articulate these changes? To what experiences might the changes be attributed?

- How do the field experience activities such as dialogue journals, formal teaching experiences, and group inquiry sessions appear to be influencing the participant's reflective judgment?

- How could a teacher educator working with the participant help him/her become more aware of the experiences, assumptions and beliefs affecting his/her practice and assist him/her in becoming more confident and capable in making decisions concerning ill-structured dilemmas?

The description of this second level of data analysis included discussions of the dilemmas encountered by each participant in her practice, the ways in which the participant

spoke about or took action in approaching these dilemmas, the manner in which the participant's approach to the dilemma provided insight into her reflective judgment level, and the participant's engagement in the reflective process utilized in this research study. This was done so that I could later draw conclusions about factors or processes which might be helpful in nurturing reflective judgment growth and suggest implications for teacher educators who wished to apply those conclusions to their work with preservice teachers.

The third level of analysis involved comparing the participants' data in terms of common themes concerning dilemmas, reflective judgment levels, and the reflective process. This was done in order to determine whether there were recurring themes across cases in terms of common reflective judgment levels among participants, types of dilemmas which challenged the participants' reasoning and possibly stimulated reflective judgment development, and the manner in which the participants reflected about their experiences and the problematic situations they encountered.

As I searched for patterns, common themes and ideas, and differences across the data, also continuously worked toward proposing and revising alternative explanations for those patterns, giving attention to both frequently and infrequently occurring events and evidence that both supported and disconfirmed my analyses, conceptual categorizations, and theorizations (Erickson, 1986). As mentioned previously, qualitative data analysis program HYPER Research was utilized to assist in organization, coding, and exploration of the data; through this process, characteristics of different levels of reflective judgment in the participants were identified in the data, but the main analytical focus was holistic in nature.

In Chapter IV, I will present the results and analyses of individual case studies, including brief biographical information (provided by the participant), a narrative description of the participant's field experience semester, an analysis of the participant's reflective judgment level during that field experience based on the manner in which she approached dilemmas of practice encountered during the field experience, and a discussion of the ways in which the participant engaged in the reflective process through the course of the data collection period. In Chapter V, patterns and themes across cases will be examined and implications for teacher educators will be considered.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Case Study 1: Lisa

Part A: Description of Case

Lisa is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a junior in college at the time of this research study. Lisa's college major was Elementary Education and Human Development with a minor in Special Education. Lisa grew up in New England and has traveled extensively in that area, as well as to several other states and parts of Canada. Lisa was adopted as an infant and has no brothers or sisters. She is a sports enthusiast, plays the violin, and loves animals; she has several years of experience horseback riding and showing horses in many parts of the United States. During this study, Lisa was participating in her third of three required pre-student teaching field experiences ("pre-practica"). Prior to this experience, Lisa's first two pre-practica had taken place in two fourth grade classrooms in different neighborhoods of Boston. *(All biographical information provided by Lisa via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-24-03.)*

The record for Lisa's third pre-practicum clinical field experience began with her journal entry for week 1 (2-9-03), her first of ten weekly visits to a second-grade classroom in a suburban public school. Lisa first noted that all in all she felt extremely positive about her first day in her new classroom placement, stating that she was looking forward to the opportunity to observe the dynamics of a younger class than those in which she had previously been placed and to exploring the workings of what she described as a "heterogeneous urban placement." Lisa expressed general satisfaction with Ms. Samuel, the cooperating teacher with whom she was paired, though she was surprised at how Ms. Samuel addressed her, and therefore the students addressed her, by her first name only (as

opposed to Ms. _____, as the full practicum student also placed in the classroom was addressed). When prompted further about her feelings regarding this, Lisa stated that she was willing to go along with this practice despite her discomfort with it and that she did not feel comfortable bringing this topic up with Ms. Samuel.

Lisa made some extensive initial reflections on her perception of the culture of the school, which was located in what she described as an affluent middle-class area. She observed that her new school, with its modern, well-maintained facility and abundance of educational materials and books, appeared to have much greater financial resources than those of her previous placement, an urban public school within the city of Boston. Though she remarked that she was very impressed and pleased that the teachers in her new school were blessed with such wonderful resources for reaching the needs of their students, she also pointed out that "by no means am I trying to take anything away from [the system in which she had previously been placed]. I loved both my placements and it is definitely not their fault that they had a lack of funding."

When asked if she felt that the apparent socioeconomic status of the school had any impact on her expectations of the teaching and learning that she would see going on in the school, she responded that she believed, based at least partially on her assessment of the school's resources, that the students would be "on a higher level for the grade they were in, which did turn out to be the case," but also reflected that "the challenge is to find out how we can help students who might be just as smart, but find themselves in schools with less resources, to reach the same level of achievement."

Another aspect of the school culture about which Lisa wrote was the general atmosphere of the school, which she found to be warm and friendly, with a sense of

community among the students, faculty and parents. When asked what she thought might account for this sense of community, Lisa wrote that "in a school like this one," the teachers probably had to be very prepared to make their classrooms and curricula open to parent involvement, as the parent presence was so clearly perceptible in the school; she reflected further that although she thought it would be wonderful to teach in a school with such copious resources and support, this would probably mean that expectations for the teachers would be extremely high.

Yet another aspect of the school's culture on which Lisa remarked was its diversity, both within her classroom and within the school's student body as a whole, and this led her to explore some of her assumptions and beliefs about what accommodating diversity in a school really means. When prompted further about her reaction to being taken on a tour of the school by a student, Rachel, Lisa acknowledged that:

> To be honest, I was so impressed with Rachel's speaking and social skills, that I was surprised when I found out she was bussed in. That sounds horrible because it says that I expect these kids to be on a lower level, but I guess Rachel is a great example of how all kids can thrive if they are put in the right environment. If there only was the funding in all areas to provide this kind of education for all kids so that they could all achieve on this level!

Further prompting on this issue also led Lisa to assert that she firmly believed that "unequal distribution of resources is an injustice."

Finally, Lisa appeared particularly intrigued by the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students in her class, estimating that the class was about half Caucasian, a quarter Asian-American and a quarter African-American. She noted the significant number of

students who spoke English as a second language, a characteristic she found prevalent in the school as a whole. Though she pointed out that she knew little at this point about the specifics of the school's programs for bilingual/ESL students, she was impressed with what she had seen so far and looked forward to learning more about how the school addressed these students' needs.

Lisa's journal for week 2 (2-16-03) included a more detailed description of some of Ms. Samuel's routines in the classroom, continued observations of the linguistic diversity of her classroom, and reflections on how the needs of a particular student in her classroom might be better met. Lisa went into detail concerning how impressed she was with the efficient manner in which Ms. Samuel seemed to handle the day-to-day management of the class and noted strategies which she wanted to remember for possible use in her own future classrooms. She was particularly admiring toward Ms. Samuel's development and implementation of specific classroom rules and daily routines, her assignment of classroom jobs to students each day in order to make the classroom run smoothly and instill a sense of ownership and responsibility in the class, her regular posting of the daily schedule and her consistent adherence to a morning routine. When asked why she felt these procedures were important, Lisa wrote that she felt this type of efficiency and attention to detail demonstrated that the teacher had taken time to do the short- and long-term planning vital for a successful classroom, and that these procedures probably made the students more comfortable. "Many students, including myself, like to know exactly what is in front of them or what to expect next," she wrote. "Some students might even experience anxiety when they cannot predict the future activities in the classroom. This would help them greatly."

Lisa revisited the topic of cultural and linguistic diversity in this journal entry as well, again finding herself "amazed" at the mix of students with backgrounds such as Japanese, Russian, Chinese, and French in her classroom. She liked the way Ms. Samuel encouraged the students to become as proficient in English as possible but also allowed them to speak in their native languages when it made them more comfortable; she noted particularly how impressed she was with the way the students who shared a primary language in common utilized it in order to help each other understand their schoolwork when necessary. Lisa responded to a question about bilingual education and addressing the needs of ESL students by asserting her belief that these students should not be made to give up their languages in school. She wrote:

> I understand people's views that English should be the primary language in schools, but children's other languages need to be respected and appreciated. This is not possible if students are never allowed to use their native language in schools and are prohibited from teaching other students about their culture. In addition, a student's native language can be a great asset for use in developing his or her English skills.

Finally, Lisa reflected about special education at her school in general and a situation she had encountered in her classroom concerning a student who seemed to need some special services but was not (yet) receiving them. She discussed Ms. Samuel's frustration with the delay in testing the child for possible services and the complications involved in the process of creating an IEP for the child, and when prompted about her own reaction to the situation, acknowledged that she had initially assumed that the child was already receiving services because of "her physical appearance, her speech, her movement

around the classroom and her interaction with other students." Lisa concluded by expressing the hope that the girl's needs would be met through services in the future and stating her belief in the importance of keeping parents highly involved in the process of obtaining special services for their children (though she acknowledged that this could be difficult in many cases for a variety of reasons).

During week 3 (2-27-03), Lisa taught a lesson to her students with the objective of developing both their respect for diverse cultures and their sense of community with one another. She read them a fiction book concerning a Hawaiian girl who was participating with her grandmother in the tradition of creating a quilt together and the ways in which the pair added some new modern touches to their creation while still keeping the tradition of the quilt alive. She discussed the story with the students and had them construct together a "class quilt" – every student decorated a square of paper with representations of unique aspects of themselves and their cultures (whatever they chose), and the squares were assembled into a quilt. Lisa hoped that this activity would help the students see the value of cultural traditions and the way they are reshaped through the years, the importance of respecting differences among people, and the way unique individuals with various backgrounds can still come together to form a community (in this case, a classroom, but she hoped the students would eventually be able to apply the idea to their city, country, etc.). Her hope was that the lesson would help students to increase their understanding of cultural identity and community as related, not separate concepts.

In our interview after the lesson, Lisa touched on several issues that arose from the experience for her. She evaluated her general implementation and management of the lesson, which she felt was basically successful although she wished that she had had more

time for discussion of the story and to share the students' quilt squares (which she hoped to do later in the day). She felt based on her examination of the quilt squares and her assessment of the students' discussion of the story that the students had picked up on the lesson's main themes and was impressed that they had made comments and observations during the reading of the story that she herself had not thought of, and she was pleased that she was able to develop her relationship with the students and connect with them on a personal level by sharing her own sample quilt square with them.

Lisa struggled somewhat with some questions concerning management; due to time constraints, she had had to cut off her group discussion of the story in order to move on to the quilt square activity, and she hoped she had still given them each enough time to share and explore the ideas from the book before beginning their quilt squares. In addition to this, looking back, she realized how difficult it had been to monitor the students' participation and assess their comprehension of the story, particularly in the case of the ESL students, because many of them were quiet during the activity and she had trouble telling exactly how much they were "taking in." She faced yet another challenge when trying to motivate and inspire one student who seemed extremely frustrated with his inability to think of, or draw, something that he liked on his quilt square. Lisa spent a great deal of time trying to assist him, but she felt that:

> I didn't know what to do. And so it was hard. I didn't really know what to say to him. I tried all I could think of and it didn't seem to work. I just tried to give whatever ideas and options I could.

Another difficulty for Lisa was transitioning from the role of a friend or helper to the students, which she felt she had been largely playing up to this point since her main

activities in the classroom had been observation and providing ad hoc assistance to individual students or small groups when necessary, to the teacher "in charge" of the lesson. She said:

> I think it's a challenge for me, because one of my goals being a teacher is the relationships with the kids…but I just don't want to be friends with them. I also have clear goals for them, academically, also, and want them to be able to achieve them without having the friendship thing get in the way. So I think it's hard…I want to be the teacher, but I'd definitely want to get to know them as best I can.

Finally, Lisa reflected on how planning the lesson had led her to notice a change in her own thinking about the meaning of the term "culturally diverse." She acknowledged that previously she might, without realizing it, have been equating the term "diverse" with "non-white," and she hoped from now on to approach the idea of diversity in a more open fashion, with the understanding that every individual's cultural background is unique and important.

In her journal for week 3 (3-4-03), Lisa reported having had an opportunity to do extensive work on reading with one of her Japanese ESL students, which she appreciated since she was interested not only in this individual student's development but also in improving her understanding of how to meet ESL students' learning needs in general. She described the student, a girl, as shy and extremely quiet, which made it difficult to assess her understanding in class. In response to prompts about her experience working with this child, Lisa articulated several of her beliefs concerning teaching ESL students. For example, Lisa proposed that many ESL students in general might share the characteristic of being quiet and not asking questions because of embarrassment or fear of rejection, though

she did not explore this generalization further. Lisa approached her work with the student by trying to strike a balance between practicing specific skills to help her increase her reading comprehension level and encouraging her to be confident in and enjoy the act of reading itself. In discussing this, she related her belief that if students (any, not just ESL students) begin to regard reading as simply a chore full of endless drill, they might stop wanting to read at all, not get the continuous encouragement and practice necessary to improve their literacy, and eventually fall into to a damaging cycle of "learned helplessness" in reading. Lisa also went on to note with interest that this student, as well as other students of Asian descent in her class, did not seem to have as many problems with math as with reading, pointing out that they were very proficient in computation and many already knew their multiplication tables.

The rest of Lisa's journal for that week explored the idea of student motivation, something she was beginning to see as a key difference between her current and previous school placements, though she was reluctant to assign a probable cause to this factor too quickly:

> What I have not yet figured out is the source of this motivation. Is it prompted by extrinsic motivation from home? Can it be attributed to the teachers? I am not yet sure what the answers to these questions are, but as the semester continues I will make an effort to identify where these children find their motivations, and how we can help students in other districts to motivate themselves despite the circumstances in which they are placed.

When asked how she thought teachers might help motivate students, Lisa responded that she thought students were best motivated by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic

factors, though she acknowledged that she tended to think first of those motivators which were meaningful for her as a student – grades, her parents' influence, and the positive feeling she associated with success in school, the latter being a trait she felt teachers could and should help foster in their students.

Lisa's journal entry for week 4 (3-16-03) focused on a lesson she had taught the class based on the Dr. Seuss book *And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*. Generally she felt that the lesson had been a positive experience both for herself and for her students. Having now spent more time with the class, Lisa now felt more accepted and respected by them; she wrote about noticing the "chemistry" she shared with the students and how she was more comfortable engaging them than she previously had been. Observing the students laughing, listening to the story, and participating in the discussion, Lisa hoped that her lesson would contribute to her students' learning to regard reading as a positive experience, stating that "I think that it is so important for children to love books from a young age so that they will be motivated to be lifelong readers."

As Lisa reflected on aspects of the lesson she might have done differently, she was again confronted with a dilemma that had been a struggle for her during previous lessons: how to encourage students to complete a creative activity without being excessively concerned with their work being "perfect." As the students had been completing the activity for the lesson, which required them to draw a scene from the book or from their imagination, Lisa had noticed that many of them wanted to copy their drawings directly from the book's illustrations and seemed "obsessed" with making their pictures look right. Lisa described one student who repeatedly tried to erase and redo her picture and cried inconsolably, despite Lisa's attempts to show the girl she accepted her feelings of

frustration and still make her feel comfortable with her work. While Ms. Samuel generally did not accept students' crying as an excuse for not doing their best, Lisa wrote, she herself had been personally affected by the girl's sadness and was not sure what to do in the situation:

> At the end of the lesson, she was crying, and I felt horrible. I had had a similar experience with another boy during the quilting lesson, and I still do not quite know what to do in those types of situations. My teacher says that she does not always take crying as an excuse because often children try to use it to get out of things, and I fully understand and appreciate this, but she was not in the room for this lesson. I handled it in the only way that I knew how, with kindness that may or may not have been appropriate.

This led Lisa to consider other options she might have offered the students in order to check their comprehension of the story and still provide them with a sense of choice and ownership of their work, such as writing about their chosen scene instead of drawing. When asked about the possible causes and solutions for this problem, one she saw as prevalent in her classroom, Lisa wondered about wider systemic factors that might have contributed to the struggle she observed in many of her students:

> I'm not really sure if this perfectionism is characteristic specifically to this group of students, but I do notice that I am more likely to encounter this trait in the students I have [at this school] than at schools I have been in before. Possibly, teachers' expectations for the students could be higher, parents' expectations could be higher, or the students' expectations for themselves could be higher, or a combination of all three. In terms of what a teacher can do to avoid this kind of road block with

students, I think that we can encourage students to become creative, to stress to

them that such activities have no right or wrong answer, and that they will mostly

be graded on their ability to use their own thinking, not ideas from a book, to

produce their work.

During week 5, Lisa participated in the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03),

the topic of which was the general question of how much control teachers need to exert

over their students in order to manage their classrooms smoothly and successfully (a topic

chosen based its relevance to the many issues related to classroom management which the

participants mentioned in their early journal entries). Lisa used this opportunity to share

and examine some of her beliefs concerning classroom management, particularly in light

of the strategies which she observed Ms. Samuel implementing. Like many of her fellow

participants, Lisa found classroom management in her field experiences to be very

challenging; sometimes she felt that it was just her lack of experience and limited access to

specific strategies that made management difficult, but attempts to implement successful

management strategies were usually complicated as well by the confusion associated with

the pre-practicum student's role in the classroom. Lisa wanted to be able to manage the

class effectively and administer disciplinary measures when necessary, but being in the

classroom only one day a week (and being addressed by the students by her first name)

made her feel unsure about the degree of authority she should take and unclear about how

consistent her instincts for managing students would be with Ms' methods.

Lisa described Ms. Samuel as "firm but caring" with the students, able to attend to

students' personal needs in a sympathetic way but still communicating high expectations to

them. Lisa favorably compared Ms. Samuel to a previous cooperating teacher with whom

she had been placed, one who appeared to have no consistent system of discipline and reinforcement and who reprimanded students frequently, but with no visible positive results. When the group were asked what factors had influenced their beliefs and practices in the area of classroom management, Lisa agreed with some of her fellow participants that her college courses did not provide adequate training in this area, focusing too much on theory and failing to illustrate how the theories could be implemented realistically in the classroom. Lisa did remark that some courses were more helpful than others, especially those taught by professors who were still (or had recently been) teaching in K-12 classrooms themselves.

During week 5 (3-20-03), Lisa taught a second observed lesson to a small group of students. This science lesson, a hands-on exploration of the fact that objects of different sizes/weights will still fall to earth at the same rate, involved having students make predictions about which of two balls would slide down a ramp faster if both were dropped at the same time, perform the task, record their observations, and draw conclusions based on what they observed.

In assessing the success of the lesson, Lisa discussed how she had been somewhat flustered because, although she had prepared an extensive plan for the lesson, she had not been able to confer with Ms. Samuel or explore the materials to be used in the lesson (scales, ramps and marbles) until immediately prior to beginning the lesson. This resulted in her having to "improvise" to a certain extent as she guided the students through the activity, which made her anxious although she did say that she appreciated what she could learn from experimenting with the materials and procedure along with her students. Lisa also commented that time was still an issue for her in her teaching and that she found

herself wishing again that she had had time to try some variations of the activity with the students and allow them to explore the materials on their own more. Furthermore, as Lisa had been given space in the hallway to teach the lesson since she was working with a small group rather than the whole class, Lisa had to contend with significant noise and distractions as she tried to focus the group.

The lesson afforded Lisa another opportunity to learn about working effectively with ESL students, as each of the four students in her group spoke different primary languages – one spoke Russian, one French, one Chinese and one Japanese. Lisa wondered again whether language barriers might prevent the students from absorbing the science and math concepts involved, so she was particularly conscious of the vocabulary she used and the clarity of her explanations and directions and attempted to monitor the students' reactions and behavior closely to continuously assess their understanding. In discussing this issue, Lisa reflected that the hands-on and collaborative nature of the activity, as the students were working in pairs to weigh marbles and observe how they descended the ramps, might have increased the students' ability to internalize the science concepts without relying too much on spoken or written language to make things clear:

> It's hard for me to know. I think maybe science is even more helpful for them, where they're doing something hands-on so they can see it, you know? It's not just the words that are in front of them. They can actually see it in action. So I hope that helps them.

This led Lisa to examine her views concerning conducting experiments in science, and the use of manipulatives in an exploratory manner for other subject areas as well. She viewed this type of experience as a beneficial method of teaching, because it allowed

students to construct understandings from their actions and experiences, rather than just be expected to accumulate knowledge based on what is told to them. However, in a practical sense, she recognized that in this lesson she had found putting this theory to work difficult. She found the students eager to use the materials, but it was tricky to direct them smoothly, as they were excited to explore the scales and ramps but not necessarily to focus on their assigned task.

Lisa tried to balance allowing the students time to explore, which she felt was a vital process, with guiding them to concentrate on the procedure for their experiment:

I think they have to explore their own ideas and curiosity too…it shouldn't just be about this one thing that you want to cover for the day. If they have something that they're curious about, or they're wondering about, if you can tie it in a little bit to your lesson that's good, not just be like, 'Oh, no, I have this in my plan, we can't look at that right now.' You don't want to shut them down right away, whatever their ideas are, so I tried to…if it was somewhat on track of what we were doing, I would let them go along with their own ideas, but I think if I thought it was way off base, I'd be like, 'no..' and try to pull them back on track.

However, she found herself frequently redirecting the students and was concerned that their predictions and observations did not appear well-reasoned and accurate. The students frequently concluded erroneously that objects of different sizes would fall at different rates (until Lisa or Ms. Samuel, who came out in the hall briefly to observe and assist, gave them further information and guidance).

Finally, Lisa reflected that though the students' attention had been sporadic and working with the materials had been tricky, she was glad to note that the spiral curriculum

included in the school's science program would allow the students to revisit this concept in the future, and she was pleased with the students' level of engagement with the materials and the process of experimentation:

> It was just so much fun to see how excited the kids got about it, just like doing the demonstrations and seeing how their perceptions could change while they were doing them….And I just loved seeing that change in them, from actually doing the things themselves…it was really powerful for them, instead of reading something out of a textbook, to do it themselves and see it in action.

Lisa still professed the belief that experiments and hands-on exploration, while often complicated and tricky to manage as a teacher, were beneficial for students. (It is interesting to note, however, that Lisa could not recall being taught any elementary science at all through this process when she was a child and felt science had always been one of her weaker subjects.)

Lisa's journal for week 5 (3-24-03) centered around issues on which she had reflected after accompanying her class to their weekly library time. In general she was quite impressed with how this experience was set up for the children, noting that the school was "blessed with a beautiful and extensive library." Lisa was also impressed with the librarian, who appeared to engage the students in an enjoyable reading session, asked them questions for comprehension, got them directly involved in listening to a story and choosing books for themselves, and complemented the literature studies Ms. Samuel was doing in her classroom.

Lisa cited these activities as examples of the important communication that must go on between teachers who work with the same students, a topic about which she reflected further upon prompting:

Too often a teacher drops her students off at a specials class and picks them up again without ever having any knowledge of what happens when students are with another teacher. It can be so beneficial to the children when the work they do during special classes connects to the work they do in the regular classroom. Some special teachers will have their own agendas, which will make it difficult to work with them, but I think that it is worth the effort.

Lisa did not elaborate on where her beliefs concerning relationships between classroom and special area teachers had come from in response to probing, but she expressed determination to make collaboration a positive and consistent aspect of her work as a teacher.

When the time came for her students to pick out their own library books, Lisa wanted to help them choose books that would be both interesting and appropriate to their individual reading levels, but she was unsure how to go about doing so. She hoped that the more time she spent helping the students with their reading, the more prepared she would be to help them choose appropriate books:

As a student teacher it is very hard for me to help students pick out books because I really don't know that much about the students' reading levels. I obviously can tell if the books are extremely too easy or too hard for them, so I try to make sure they pick out books that they actually can read, but I will be able to do so much more to

help my students in this area once I spend every day with them working on their reading.

Lisa perceived this library time to be enriching and challenging for the students, as well as motivational to them in terms of their general literacy – she particularly liked that the science teacher had brought animals and fish into the library as a means of stimulating the students' interest in science, as she believed that students' literacy would improve when they were provided with motivation to read about topics that inspired their interest and curiosity. When asked how she had come to believe this, Lisa described how reading had been an extremely meaningful part of her own life, especially in her youth:

> As a kid, I was definitely attracted to anything about horses. I read every book in the 'Saddle Club' series, and loved them! I was even interested in books about how to draw horses, and nonfiction books. What I enjoyed about them most was that I could connect the material in these books to my own experiences. I knew what a saddle was, what a bit was, etc. I also enjoyed reading books that taught me about growing up, etc., because I was an only child, and did not have an older brother or sister to teach me anything, like what junior high or high school might be like.

During week 6, Lisa participated in the second group dilemma discussion (3-25-03), the topic of which was the question of whether it was more effective or beneficial to implement primarily teacher-directed or student-centered instruction, but which expanded through the discussion to touch on various other ideas as well. Lisa was quite involved in the discussion, speaking frequently, commenting on issues such as the implementation of constructivist teaching in the classroom, the impact of larger societal issues such as the

trend towards extensive standardized testing in schools, and the training to become a
teacher she was receiving in college.

Early in the discussion, Lisa expressed her belief that a balance between teacher-
centered and student-instruction was her preference (and commended Ms. Samuel for
achieving this balance in her classroom). While Lisa thought the idea of students
constructing their own understanding of material was valuable and well-founded and felt
that students needed a great deal of hands-on experience in order to build their
understanding and internalize new knowledge successfully, she also stated that it might be
unrealistic to expect students to learn every item required in the curriculum in this manner
and that the teacher, particularly when working with young children, needed to be able to
guide the students and outline new material for them. However, while the choice of what
content to teach the class might have to be based on a school system-required curriculum
or mandated standards, Lisa asserted, the teacher should provide the students with a variety
of choices and options for demonstrating their understanding, using as an example a
methods course she had taken in which her class discussed procedures such as having their
students choose from several different options for a culminating unit project. Lisa also
stated that communication between teachers who worked within the same school was vital
in order to implement constructivist teaching successfully, because the teachers would
need to make sure that concepts about which the students did not have a strong grasp were
revisited in a meaningful way that built on their previous experiences.

Lisa's opinion was that Ms. Samuel struck a good balance between student-
centered and teacher-centered methods of teaching, for example in math, wherein Ms.
Samuel used exploration with manipulatives as well as drill in addition (which Lisa was

relieved to see because she thought that it would prepare the students for the state standardized test, which would require students not only to understand addition conceptually but to perform quick and efficient computation). She also contrasted Ms. Samuel's methods with those of a previous cooperating teacher with whom she had been placed, a teacher whose main method of teaching math was the use of Xeroxed handouts provided by a commercially published program required by the school. Lisa found this method to be too teacher-centered and lacking in the benefits of discovery that a more constructivist practice could afford, and noted that she preferred the way Ms. Samuel supplemented the commercial math program with ideas and materials of her own, based on her assessment of the students' understanding and needs as she progressed through the curriculum.

As the group discussed the benefits and drawbacks of having teachers exert different degrees of control over the instruction occurring in the classroom, they also touched on management and discipline issues again, in relation to the question of how much control the teacher needed to maintain over a class in general. As she had done during the first discussion, Lisa expressed admiration for the balance she felt Ms. Samuel was able to strike between managing the daily goings-on of the classroom smoothly but still expecting the students to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions. She cited the way the students' classroom jobs increased their accountability and independence, the high expectations Ms. Samuel had for the class (not accepting crying as an "excuse" for not completing work, for example), and the practice of having students give each other "put-ups" to build their confidence and self-esteem through a means other than teacher praise as examples of Ms. Samuel's successful management of the class.

A question was posed to the group about where they thought their beliefs about teaching in this area had come from and what might have influenced the development of those beliefs. Lisa stated that she was only recently learning that her college was considered very "liberal" in its espousal of constructivist teaching philosophy in teacher education, and noticed a sharp contrast between the constructivist methods to which she had been exposed in her coursework and the teaching practices of many cooperating teachers and students teachers from other colleges, as well as significant differences between those practices and the way she remembered having been taught as an elementary student. In general, Lisa agreed with the majority of the group that there was only a limited amount of knowledge about teaching that could be gained from college coursework and that experience in the classroom was vital in order to truly learn how to teach. She stated that many of her education courses seemed to contain a lot of material that was either not useful in a practical sense or just "common sense," but that she tried to use every opportunity in her courses to learn something she did not know before and built her background and knowledge of teaching and learning. Exceptions to the rule about education courses not providing the "real deal" of how to teach usually involved courses taught by professors who were teaching in classrooms themselves or had been doing so very recently. Lisa particularly liked one class in which the professor, currently teaching middle school, strongly emphasized his students' responsibility and accountability as educators, brought the class up to date on new learning, terms and ideas in the field, and gave them specific ideas to use in the classroom.

On her college campus, Lisa did sense that pursuing teacher education was not widely regarded as a highly rigorous course by students majoring in arts and sciences, and

was in fact sometimes derided as too easy and not worth pursuing by the more intelligent and capable college students. Lisa, however, stated that she had always associated a great deal of personal responsibility with her choice to pursue a teacher education program. She took her homework, reading and assignments very seriously, feeling that anything she failed to learn might someday "cheat" her students because she might not have learned a technique that would have helped them succeed. Instead of simply doing the minimum of work required to get good grades in her courses, as she (and others in the group) mentioned their peers in other majors often did, Lisa made serious effort to remember, organize and keep the materials and concepts she had collected and learned about in case they might be useful to her as a teacher someday.

Lisa's journal for week 6 (3-27-03) described a lesson she had taught about horses, a strong personal interest of hers. It was a topic about which Lisa felt passionate, and she believed that she communicated this successfully to the class and engaged them in an enjoyable and informative lesson. As she assessed her teaching, Lisa again was struck with the dilemma of how much time to allow students for exploration, questioning on their own, and sharing stories about their personal experiences when introducing a new subject about which the students were excited. Lisa described various points in the lesson as "hectic," especially the introductory session and the period in which she shared personal artifacts such as her own horseback riding equipment. During those times, the students were enthusiastic, which Lisa felt was a positive aspect of the lesson, but she was uncomfortable in deciding when to end the students' free sharing time to go on with her planned activities, or to what extent she should correct them for calling out all at once with their questions and comments instead of raising their hands and taking turns. While Lisa

ultimately felt the lesson was somewhat rushed at the end and worried that perhaps the

students were so excited that they were not listening closely and absorbing all the points

she made as she read them a non-fiction book, she was gratified to see that they apparently

were enjoying the lesson. When prompted further about how she made her decisions about

allowing students ample time to enjoy and explore a new topic, Lisa wrote:

> I think that when you introduce a new topic, you have to give them time to react
>
> and adjust to it. It is great to see their natural curiosity, and the way they
>
> immediately tried to think of something that they already knew about the
>
> subject…it is important for children to have fun once in a while without having to
>
> live up to high expectations, and I think they were able to do that.

As she wrestled with the dilemma of how she could have proceeded with her lesson

plan without risking dampening students' enthusiasm, Lisa decided that next time she did

this type of lesson, she might try a strategy such as informing the students that there would

be a given amount of time at the beginning and end of the lesson for sharing.

Another incident that occurred during the lesson about which Lisa wrote concerned

a suggestion Ms. Samuel had made for fitting the lesson into the allotted time. Lisa had

planned to do a "K/W/L" chart with the students, recording what the students said they

knew, wished to know, and had learned about horses. Ms. Samuel suggested that in the

interest of time, Lisa include only the "K" and "L" elements of the activity, to avoid having

to look up answers to questions students asked which she might not know. Lisa felt

compelled to follow Ms. Samuel's advice, but she was not really comfortable with

eliminating the segment of her lesson that involved students proposing questions to

research and answer about the topic. When questioned about her feelings concerning this, Lisa responded:

> If this had been my own classroom I would have stuck with my original plan. I don't think that you have to answer all of the students' questions in one lesson when you do a KWL chart, and maybe Ms. Samuel was missing the point here. If it were my class I would probably have been doing a unit, not just one lesson on horses, and I would have used the questions that weren't answered in the chart the first time to guide future planning.

However, Lisa still expressed appreciation for Ms. Samuel's involvement in other parts of the lesson, such as thinking of different ways to explain and clarify new concepts for the students.

Lisa wrote an extensive journal entry for week 7 (4-4-03)in which she reflected about new developments concerning a student for whom Ms. Samuel had been attempting to secure special services for several weeks (a little girl about whom Lisa wrote in a previous journal entry). The girl had finally been tested and was receiving special services, but these were in the form of numerous pull-out sessions with specialists, and Ms. Samuel was now very concerned with keeping the girl caught up with what was going on in the regular classroom and involved in the classroom community. Lisa noted that the student's pull-out times frequently took her out of classes such as art and music, and that Ms. Samuel was upset that the student was missing music, which she considered an important alternative method for helping the girl develop her speech skills. In response to a prompt about her beliefs concerning this issue, Lisa explained that she was struggling to make

sense of the complex situation, considering both the case of the individual student and the wider systemic factors involved:

> I don't know exactly how this has worked out. I haven't decided what I think about the situation. This is a key example of the full inclusion debate in action. Before the parents gave permission [for the child to be tested for special services], the student was fully included without receiving any services, and she was still able to function in the classroom. Now she is in essence a special education student who is mainstreamed in the general education for a limited number of classes, even though this is technically not mainstreaming because most of the responsibility for the student seems to fall with the general education teacher.

While Lisa shared many of her cooperating teacher's concerns and attributed Ms. Samuel's questioning attitude toward the new arrangement of services for her student to the fact that Ms. Samuel cared about the child, Ms. Samuel's reaction also stimulated Lisa to reflect on whether the outcome of the situation had been appropriate for the child. Lisa wrote:

> Why would a teacher find so much fault in an educational system of which she and her colleagues argued so strongly in favor? Shouldn't she be grateful that the student will finally be receiving the help she needs? The answer is that solutions for students who need help are not always clear-cut or simple. When students are found to need some form of special education, different methods and formulas should be tried in an effort to find the solution that works best for each individual student.

When questioned about what had influenced her to develop these beliefs, Lisa wrote that both her college coursework and her experiences in the classroom had led her to believe that each student was unique and that it was the responsibility of the teacher to find, through any means available, the right educational structure and instructional method to help each individual child succeed.

Observing the accommodation of the new services being provided for the student afforded Lisa another opportunity to explore her ideas concerning the importance of collaboration between teachers. Lisa was glad to observe Ms. Samuel conferring with a trusted colleague, a veteran teacher, about how to best accommodate the child's new situation, as she felt this type of idea-sharing was productive and helpful and showed that Ms. Samuel's primary concern was for the child's education and well-being, rather than her "ownership" over the child's education. Lisa admitted that she could imagine herself having possessive feelings about her own students in the future in such a situation, but was determined to remember that "other teachers do have valuable wisdom and advice to share, and the students can only benefit from this."

Lisa reported observing an activity in which all the second grade classes participated and finding herself keenly aware of the wide gap in ability levels of the students, which resonated with her earlier reflections about accommodating students with varying strengths and needs. She was conscious how hard it must be to plan instruction for students at "both ends of the spectrum" and wondered how frequently students on the "lower end" of that spectrum might be incorrectly identified as learning disabled or placed in special education because the school faculty misunderstood their needs or based the decision on misleading test results.

"This leaves us with a dilemma," Lisa wrote. "If students do not have the characteristics of a learning disability, but continue to bring up the back of the class in terms of achievement, how do we help them?" She reflected that tracking was "proven to be ineffective" as a means of addressing this issue, and finally concluded that it was the teacher's role to work to benefit each individual student, having the class do the same work but providing extra help to those who needed it in the form of additional teacher attention or peer tutoring. When questioned further about her beliefs, Lisa acknowledged that having students do exactly the same work was probably not necessary but might be a means of preventing the teacher from projecting lower expectations to students who had academic difficulty, which could result in a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of continuous low achievement.

Finally, in response to a prompt about whether tracking or other strategies could be used to resolve this situation, Lisa again concluded that she did not know exactly what the right approach was for addressing the complex issue of accommodating students with a wide variety of needs:

No one has yet found the perfect solution, and teachers should not be expected to have an answer right away. What should be expected is for teachers to put in a strong effort in finding different sources of support for their students…I think teachers become really frustrated when they cannot meet the needs of all their students, and understandably so. I don't know how I will find a way to always reach my lower achieving students, but I hope that I will have the strength not to give up on them.

During week 8, Lisa attended the third and final group dilemma discussion 8 (4-8-03), the topic of which was maintaining professional boundaries between teacher and student. The group watched a video of a presentation on the topic (fulfilling a requirement for their pre-practicum course) and then discussed their reactions to the issues brought up in the presentation. Lisa spoke very little during this discussion. During the part of the discussion involving the appropriateness of physical contact between teachers and students such as hugging, Lisa did comment that Ms. Samuel was "not very huggy" with her students, and contrasted her behavior with a previous cooperating teacher who Lisa said hugged students "constantly," sometimes seemingly for no particular reason. Lisa did not say whether she felt that either teacher's behavior was more acceptable than that of the other, and made no further remarks during the discussion.

In her journal entry for week 8 (4-15-03) as the end of her classroom placement neared, Lisa considered what she had learned over the course of the semester and began looking forward to her full practicum which she was scheduled to complete in a third grade classroom at the same school the following semester. Looking back over her pre-practicum placement, Lisa also reflected that she was lucky to have been placed in this particular school where the teachers could take advantage of "an environment with such overwhelming resources," but felt sad for students who never had the chance to thrive in that type of well-funded and well-supplied educational environment. She was also touched when some of the students in her class expressed the hope that they would be in her third grade class the following fall when she returned for her full practicum.

As part of her preparation for the next semester, Lisa began planning some literature units for third-grade level based on what she had learned about her second

graders' literacy issues. In response to a question about how she planned to go about preparing units for this purpose, Lisa wrote that she was "trying not to get too obsessed" with book "leveling" (a complex practice associated with guided reading, the school's current language arts program, in which students are provided with books intended to be specifically matched to their strengths and needs); she hoped to improve her skills at choosing books for her students based on what her previous experiences working with each student showed her about his or her prior knowledge and a given book's ability to provide that student with opportunities for growth.

As Lisa looked back over her experiences in the classroom, she wrote about feeling that her confidence and self-efficacy as a teacher had improved: "Everything just seems to be finally coming together for me at the end of this semester." Lisa attributed this development to the many opportunities she had had over the semester to take responsibility for planning instruction, interact with students, and apply what she had been learning in her college courses to her practice. Lisa expressed her belief that though she could see influences on her teaching from various elements of her teacher education program such as her Educational Strategies course and reading methods courses, the most important sources of new knowledge and learning about teaching for her had been her pre-practicum experiences, "because this is where I feel I have received the greatest amount of information." Lisa had found it particularly useful to observe how her various cooperating teachers worked with large groups of students during instruction periods or class meetings, and how they approached the dilemma of knowing when and how much to correct students when working on such tasks as reading aloud, language arts and spelling.   When questioned further about the latter, Lisa reflected that her college education courses had

offered very little specific guidance on the issue of how much correction to give an individual student when reading aloud, for example, and so she had paid close attention to how different teachers approached this; however, she still found the issue complicated:

> What I have observed in my cooperating teachers has varied. I think that it is all a matter of personal style, and being able to judge how much constructive criticism a student can handle. The focus should not just be correction, either, there should also be praise.

Lisa noted that she hoped during the following semester to observe as many different teachers as possible in order to "broaden her knowledge base" and learn new ways of doing things in the classroom.

Despite her occasional questioning of some of Ms. Samuel's practices, Lisa maintained that she respected and admired her cooperating teacher. She was impressed by Ms. Samuel's statement that she always tried to have a specific goal in mind for any activity she designed for her students. When questioned about why she felt this was significant, Lisa wrote that she admired the purposefulness of Ms. Samuel's teaching and liked that she was monitoring the students' progress and planning for their success so carefully, even though this necessitated continuous reassessment, and often modification, of her plans. Lisa wrote:

> Teaching without a purpose is not teaching…if you don't achieve your original goal, the hope would be that you have redefined your goals during the course of the lesson based on student interest, prior knowledge, or simply that your original plan is not working out, and that is okay.

In her journal entry for week 9 (4-23-09), her final day in her classroom placement, Lisa wrote about having been moved by a birthday celebration she had witnessed in her classroom. In what she considered a unique celebration, Lisa watched as the students all gave the boy whose birthday it was compliments about, for example, his creativity and artistry. Lisa felt this was an invaluable method of bolstering the student's self-esteem, and she was particularly glad to see this happening for, as she had recently learned, the boy having the birthday was going through a difficult time at home due to his parents' divorce. This event was very meaningful to Lisa because it reminded her that she had made some assumptions about the student which turned out to be unfounded and this had influenced her thinking. Before she knew the situation, Lisa wrote, she had thought the boy was "so lucky" and wondered what could possibly be making him come into school "with a sad face day in and day out." When she found out the reason, she noted that this "was actually an important reminder to me that it is not just kids from disadvantaged backgrounds who have troubles," and vowed to remember that "you don't know what kids are carrying around with them every day, no matter what kind of home they are from." Lisa did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts for week 9.

The concluding piece of data in Lisa's case study was her final reflective essay (5-24-03). She chose to write about a dilemma concerning the "gap" which is often reported between the achievement of students in urban schools and that of students in suburban schools or between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, including the question of whether standardized testing could be considered a valid means of correcting this gap. Lisa's opinion was that she thought that this "achievement gap" did in fact exist, but that while standardized testing did have a certain place in the educational system, it

could not be the chief means for correcting the achievement disparity situation, for this was ultimately caused by factors which could not be influenced by testing, specifically the "gap in children's daily school lives."

Lisa first discussed the idea of educational standards in general. She went into great detail describing her belief that standards were especially important for teachers, not just students, in order to ensure that they taught "appropriate material" and to create an educational structure wherein every student could be assured of equal access to quality instruction. While stressing that standards for teachers provided an invaluable source of structure and functioned as an equalizing mechanism for students, Lisa also expressed the belief that individual teachers should be able to modify, adapt, or deviate from mandated teaching standards when he or she judged that the needs of his/her individual students required it. She went on to express her approval of testing for teacher licensure, although she regarded this primarily as a means for ensuring that teachers had high skills in communication and literacy ("I know if I were a parent, I would not want a teacher instructing my child if he or she did not know how to read and write using the conventions of standard English") and an acceptable level of general knowledge and academic aptitude ("I believe that there is certain base knowledge that teachers should have before they are given the responsibility for 25 students on a daily basis"), and not as an accurate indicator of which individuals would be the most effective teachers.

Lisa adamantly emphasized that while standards might be important in general, high-stakes standardized testing was a "simplification of the educational formula" which provided misleading results and inaccurately communicated to students that if they simply worked hard enough in school, they would succeed, both on the tests and in life. This was

a theory with which Lisa disagreed vehemently, for she had developed the belief based on her experiences student teaching in various suburban and urban public schools that in order for students to succeed in school, students needed three things which unfortunately many were denied: "quality teachers to motivate them, adequate resources in the school setting, and support from home." Lisa discussed the differences she had seen in the urban and suburban schools in which she had been placed for early field experiences in terms of parent involvement, school resources and facilities, and teacher accountability, and concluded that "the collective influence of these factors" significantly affected whether or not "students of all backgrounds and learning styles" reached a high level of academic achievement.

In order to illustrate her point, Lisa cited a radio ad in which the governor of her state promoted the use of the state's standardized testing system as a means for raising student achievement. She proposed that the ad's main argument, that students enrolled in higher-level academic courses and involved in extra-curricular activities performed highest on the state test, was unrealistic and unpersuasive, because it did not take into account the fact that students might not have been prepared adequately to take those kinds of courses or might be prevented from engaging in extra-curricular activities because they had after-school jobs on which their families depended to make ends meet financially.

Lisa concluded by writing that while she did feel an achievement gap existed, "I definitely do not believe that suburban students are inherently more intelligent than urban students." Her opinion was that educational leaders needed to analyze and act on what truly caused the achievement gap rather than simply pouring excessive financial resources and time into standardized testing. Assessment of standards, she wrote, "should be unique

to the needs of the students being evaluated and should take into account ALL variables that influence student success," and "only then would we truly have 'no child left behind'."

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Lisa during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Lisa appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Lisa's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Lisa's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Lisa's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Lisa's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Lisa encountered this dilemma during her first week in her classroom placement and revisited several aspects of this general question throughout the semester. In her journal for her first day in the classroom (2-9-03), Lisa wrote that she had had some discomfort in negotiating her new role due to the fact that her cooperating teacher Ms. Samuel, and therefore her students, was addressing her by her first name. Lisa was surprised and uncomfortable with this, wondering how she would be able to take a leadership role with the students if they called her by her first name and might therefore not regard her as an

authority figure in the classroom, but she wrote that she was willing to go along with it and did not want to bring up the issue with Ms. Samuel. In her first post-observation interview (2-27-03), Lisa wrote that she had been concerned with this issue again as she tried to make the adjustment while teaching her lesson from the friend/helper role she had been taking with the students to one where she was "in charge." Lisa struggled with the question of how to know how to balance the different types of roles she was called on to perform, saying this was a "hard" task, as she wanted to have positive social relationships with her students but also help them achieve high academic goals as well. Lisa made a similar comment in group discussion 2 (3-25-03) that she was unsure when she should step in and handle disciplinary situations in the classroom because of her own lack of experience and a repertoire of strategies for handling various situations, as well as her uncertainty in general about what her role in the classroom should be. Lisa made another mention of this general role uncertainty in her journal for week 5 (3-24-03), when she described the difficulty she had knowing how much direction she should give the students in picking out their library books. She reflected that this manifestation of the role dilemma had been particularly difficult for her because she believed so strongly in the benefit of reading, due in large part to the strong impact she felt reading had on her own life as a child and young adult.

In her journal entry for week 4 (3-16-03), Lisa began exploring another aspect of this dilemma about negotiating her role and relationship with her cooperating teacher when she wrote about what would be the first of numerous occasions on which she found herself in disagreement with her cooperating teacher's beliefs and practices. These instances led Lisa to reflect on why she found certain practices unacceptable or on what she could learn

from what she observed, whether she agreed with it or not. For example, as she described in her fourth journal entry (3-16-03), after trying desperately to calm a young girl who had become frustrated and begun to cry because she did not know what kind of picture she wished to draw, Lisa turned to Ms. Samuel for advice and was told that Ms. Samuel did not accept crying as an "excuse" for a student not completing his or her work. Lisa was not sure this was the most appropriate philosophical basis for action in such a situation, so she handled it "the only way I knew how, with kindness that may or may not have been appropriate."

Lisa's struggle with the dilemma of how to learn and develop as a teacher when she did not agree with her cooperating teacher's methods continued in her journal for week 6 (3-27-03). Lisa wrote that she had been disturbed by Ms. Samuel's advice to eliminate a segment of her "K/W/L" lesson and suggested that Ms. Samuel might have been "missing the point" of the activity by eliminating this element of the lesson for the sole reason of making the lesson fit the time available rather than considering the significance of that element for the overall learning process in which Lisa had intended to engage the class. However, despite her clear dissatisfaction with Ms. Samuel's choice and the fact that she felt compelled to follow Ms. Samuel's advice regardless of her own opinion, Lisa still stated that Ms. Samuel had been very helpful to her as she taught the lesson. Finally, in her journal for week 8 (4-15-03), as Lisa reflected about what she had learned in her placement, she stated that she had learned the most about teaching from her classroom experiences, especially through observing her cooperating teachers. She pointed out that the practices she had observed differed greatly, but she did not judge certain practices as better or worse than others, maintaining that she had learned a great deal from Ms. Samuel

and stating, "What I have observed in my cooperating teachers has varied…I think that it is all a matter of personal style."

Lisa's approach to this dilemma indicates that she was probably transitioning from Pre-Reflective thinking to Quasi-Reflective thinking during the data collection period. This is evident particularly in terms of her assumptions about the role of authority in acquiring and justifying knowledge but also in terms of other aspects of reflective judgment as well. Lisa made several statements which suggest a dependence on authority figures and experts as primary sources for knowledge, but she also reflected about experiences which led her to articulate beliefs suggesting that she was at a point in her development where she recognized that authority figures should not always be relied upon as infallible sources of unquestionably correct knowledge.

For example, Lisa's discomfort with being called by her first name, her hesitancy to bring up this topic with Ms. Samuels, and her need to feel that she could "take charge" of the students when she taught them indicate Lisa was operating under the assumption that she should defer to Ms. Samuel's judgment as an expert; it also suggests that she believed that being an authority figure was an important part of being able teach and relate knowledge to her students, and this reliance on authority figures is typical of Pre-Reflective thinkers. Lisa also exhibited the Pre-Reflective characteristic of discomfort with uncertainty when her lack of direction about her role disturbed her – making her feel, for example, that she was not fulfilling her responsibility to encourage her students to read because she was unsure how to help each individual student choose a library book at the appropriate level.

However, Lisa also made several statements typical of Quasi-Reflective thinkers or individuals transitioning from the Pre-Reflective to the Quasi-Reflective level. For instance, Lisa's recognition that it was "hard" to know how to balance the roles of friend/helper and leader or authority figure in the classroom showed that she was beginning to embrace the concept of a dilemma as a problem with no simple solutions, a development which occurs when individuals begin operating at the Quasi-Reflective level (Stage 4). Lisa also exhibited the Stage 4 characteristic of being able to acknowledge her own bias or interpretation as an influence on her beliefs when she reflected about how her own experiences with reading growing up had made her feel strongly that children needed continuous encouragement and guidance to make reading a meaningful part of their lives. In addition to this, despite those statements that indicated a reliance on authority figures as sources of knowledge, Lisa also made statements suggesting that she was becoming more sophisticated in her attitude toward authority, perhaps beginning to base her beliefs more on the assumption that an authority figure or expert was not always necessarily right. This occurred when Lisa refused to accept and act on Ms. Samuel's theory that a girl who cried about her work was simply using this crying as an excuse not to finish the task, and when she reflected that she thought Ms. Samuel's decision to eliminate the "W" section of her "K/W/L" activity was misguided.

However, Lisa was reluctant to judge Ms. Samuel's actions as explicitly wrong at any point, choosing instead to abide by her choice of calling Lisa by her first name in class, commending Ms. Samuel's achievements with the class, and expressing her appreciation for Ms. Samuel's assistance and guidance during the lessons Lisa taught. Lisa also indicated that she believed that many of the differences she had observed in her

cooperating teachers' practices were simply a matter of different personal "styles." This

reluctance to judge others' beliefs or practices as definitively right or wrong or to attribute

differences in beliefs to idiosyncratic factors is typical of individuals beginning to function

at Stage 4, who are beginning to believe that there is no one correct way to approach

certain dilemmas but are not yet able to evaluate different points of view or courses of

action in a sophisticated or objective manner.

> *Dilemma 2: How does disparity of economic resources between schools or school*
> *communities affect students' education, and what steps could be taken to remedy problems*
> *caused by this disparity?*

Lisa did not discuss this dilemma in many of her data sources, but in her first

journal entry (2-9-03) and her final essay (5-24-03), she reflected on it in great detail. In

her first journal entry, Lisa described the obviously high resources, impressive facilities,

and abundant instructional materials in School A, commenting that the students who

attended the school were "blessed," but that she was "not trying to take away" from the

urban public schools where she had been placed previously and which did not enjoy such

copious resources, as it was "not their fault." Lisa acknowledged that School A's

resources probably affected her formation of the assumption that the students there would

be at a higher academic level than at other schools, but pointed out that educators should

focus on the challenge of helping all students succeed, regardless of the types and extent of

financial and material resources available in their schools. When reflecting on what it

might be like to hold a position teaching in School A, Lisa speculated that it would be nice

to work in such a well resourced environment but that the standards for teachers were

probably quite high there, due in part to the need to make classrooms and curricula open to

the involvement of parents, whose presence in School A Lisa found much more visible than in urban public schools where she had been placed.

In the rest of journal 1, Lisa continued to examine her beliefs about the impact that the socioeconomic status of a student's family or of a school community could have on that student's education when she admitted having been surprised to find that a student who gave her a school tour had been bussed in from another neighborhood. "That sounds horrible because it says I expect [bussed] kids to be on a lower level, but I guess she is a great example of how all kids can thrive if they are put in the right environment," she wrote, adding that she wished that all schools had sufficient funding to provide the type of quality education which Lisa saw as being the norm at School A. Lisa did not mention this particular dilemma again until she wrote her journal for week 8 (4-15-03), in which she looked back over her semester's experience and made another brief mention of the conflict she felt between being glad that the students in School A had the opportunity to enjoy such tremendous financial and instructional resources and being sad for those students who never had such an opportunity. However, she revisited this dilemma in greater detail again in her final essay (5-24-03), in which she dealt with the question of whether an "achievement gap" existed between students in urban and suburban schools and whether standards and standardized testing could serve as an effective means for closing this gap.

Lisa suggested that socioeconomic status was an important factor in student achievement when she wrote in her final essay that while she believed an urban/suburban school achievement gap existed, standardized testing would not resolve this situation because the achievement gap was the result of factors which had nothing to do with testing, such as "the gap in children's daily school lives." Testing, Lisa wrote, would not

solve the problem because the students who were not achieving at high levels were those who did not receive what they needed in order to perform at those levels (quality teachers, quality resources in school, and support from home), a theory which Lisa had based primarily on her observations in her urban and suburban school placements during field experiences. When she evaluated a radio ad featuring the voice of the governor and advocating the use of the state's mandated standardized test, Lisa touched on the issue of socioeconomic status again, pointing out that the ad's assertion that students who were engaged in extracurricular activities performed better on the test than those were not did not offer much guidance or help to students who could not participate in extracurricular activities because their families relied on their after-school jobs for financial support. Lisa concluded her essay by stating that educational leaders needed to analyze closely the complicated factors which actually contributed to the achievement gap rather than simply pour money and time into implementing a standardized testing system.

Lisa's approach to this dilemma also demonstrate that she was likely in the process of transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. While Lisa still based many of her beliefs on her personal observation and previous experience, and was not yet able to inquire into her beliefs in a sophisticated manner, she was beginning to view certain problems as complex and without simple solutions, to acknowledge the assumptions that influenced her beliefs, to be open to new information that might affect her beliefs, to try to use examination of evidence rather than strict reliance on the beliefs of authority figures or experts as a means for justifying her point of view. For example, Lisa's beliefs about the probable academic achievement level of students attending School A were based on her direct observations and previous experiences at other schools, as were her assumptions

about what she might expect from students who were bussed to School A from other neighborhoods and her beliefs about what might be lacking in the lives of urban students; this is a Pre-Reflective pattern of thinking. However, upon further reflection, Lisa was at least able to acknowledge that her personal biases about bussed students and student performance in suburban schools had affected her beliefs and to resolve to open herself more to learning how to meet the challenge of providing a quality education for all students regardless of the socioeconomic status of their family or their school community, both of which demonstrate a willingness to re-examine one's point of view which is more typical of Stage 4, early Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Lisa also exhibited Quasi-Reflective reasoning when she pointed out that there were no simple and easily identifiable resolutions to the achievement gap problem and tried to consider the complexity of the issue in terms of all the factors which might contribute to such a gap (an inquiry into such complexity actually tends to occur in Stage 5, the later phase of the Quasi-Reflective level). In addition, Lisa's use of her analysis of the radio ad to support her point of view about standardized testing indicated a disillusionment with authority figures (such as the governor) as sources of knowledge and a preliminary attempt to use and qualitatively evaluate evidence to justify her beliefs. Her use of evidence, however, was not complete or sophisticated, and she also equated her personal beliefs with evidence in some instances. This occurred when she proposed that expectations on teachers in School A were probably very high due to the level of parent involvement in the school and when she claimed that the urban/suburban achievement gap was likely the result of the lack in urban students' lives of certain essential elements for a

quality education. All these patterns of thinking are typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, or the beginning of Quasi-Reflective thinking.

> *Dilemma 3: How can a teacher, particularly one who is English-speaking and monolingual, meet the needs of a group of students who are culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse, especially when many speak primary languages other than English?*

Lisa first mentioned this dilemma in her first journal entry (2-9-03) when she noted the linguistic diversity of her class and resolved to observe her cooperating teacher to learn more about how the needs of these students, particularly the ESL students. In her second journal entry (2-16-03), Lisa continued reflecting on this question by remarking again that she was "amazed" at the cultural and linguistic diversity of the class, many of whose backgrounds were Russian, Japanese, Chinese, or French. Lisa admired the way Ms. Samuel attempted to integrate the ESL students into the classroom without demanding that they give up speaking their native languages entirely, and this led her to reflect on her beliefs about bilingual education: "I understand people's views that English should be the primary language in schools, but children's other languages should be respected and appreciated…in addition, a student's native language can be a great asset for use in developing his or her English skills." It should be noted that although here Lisa advocated for allowing many languages to be spoken in the classroom, she later commented in her final essay (5-24-03) that it was vital for the teacher to have excellent communication and literacy skills in English ("I know if I were a parent, I would not want a teacher instructing my child if he or she did not know how to read and write using the conventions of standard English").

Lisa continued to touch on this dilemma in her first post-observation interview following her quilt square lesson (2-27-03), when she commented that she had been disconcerted by her inability to discern how much information the ESL students were absorbing, since they were very quiet during the activity she taught. Still, she hoped that her lesson, which focused on the importance of both embracing cultural diversity and building community, would resonate with her students because of the diversity of the class. She commented that every individual's background was unique and important, and hoped the lesson would help students understand this and make choices about interpersonal relations accordingly. In her third journal entry (3-4-03), Lisa was again distressed when working one-on-one with a young girl who spoke Japanese because the girl was so quiet that Lisa had difficulty assessing her understanding of what she read, and she speculated that ESL students might be quiet in class and that they might not bring any difficulties they were having to the teacher's attention because of embarrassment or fear of rejection if they did not understand what they read in English.

Finally, in her second post-observation interview following her science lesson with the marbles and ramps (3-20-03) – a lesson she taught with a small group of students, all of whom spoke primary languages other than English – Lisa again admitted that she had wondered whether language barriers had prevented those students from understanding the science concepts in the lesson. "It's hard for me to know" how much they understood, Lisa stated in her interview. In order to address this concern, Lisa paid special attention to her vocabulary, language and behavior, and gave the students ample opportunity for hands-on exploration with the materials in the hope that this non-verbal experience would solidify their understanding of the science concepts involved if those concepts were not being

adequately conveyed through spoken and written English; "I hope it helps them," she stated.

Lisa's approach to this dilemma illustrates reasoning that is representative of an individual transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. For example, Lisa's desire in the beginning of the semester to learn about ways to teach ESL students by observing her cooperating teacher suggest assumptions that knowledge about how to successfully engage those students in meaningful learning might be only temporarily uncertain and could be gained through direct observation and guidance from authority figures, which is typical of a Pre-Reflective pattern of thinking. Lisa's discomfort with the uncertainty of not being able to successfully discern how much of the material she taught her ESL students were really absorbing also suggested a Pre-Reflective response to the dilemma, as did her attempts to resolve that question through tentative decisions that "felt right" to her such as allowing ESL students more time to explore the science concepts in a hands-on rather than a verbal way. Finally, Lisa might have showed the Pre-Reflective tendency not to realize the inconsistencies in her views about bilingual education; though she advocated for allowing many languages to be spoken in the classroom in journal 1 (2-9-03), in her final essay (5-24-03) she stressed the vital importance of the teacher's communication and literacy skills in English, which might have implied that she did on some level consider English to be the most important language spoken in the classroom.

There was a good deal of data suggesting that Lisa was also using Quasi-Reflective reasoning to approach this dilemma as well, however. When discussing her quandary about her ESL students' comprehension, for example, her statement that it was "hard to know" suggested that Lisa might be beginning to operate under the assumption that

knowledge is not always certain. In addition, when she stated her beliefs about bilingual education, Lisa acknowledged a view in opposition to her own (that English should be the primary language spoken in schools), which suggests that she has tried at least outwardly to consider other points of view in refining her own, an approach typical of early (Stage 4) Quasi-Reflective thinkers.

Lisa's process of justifying her beliefs also showed Quasi-Reflective tendencies, as she tended to use evidence to accomplish this, but in an incomplete or inconsistent manner, sometimes equating her personal beliefs with evidence (stating her belief, for example, that ESL students were likely to be quiet out of embarrassment or fear of rejection, or justifying her beliefs about students' right to speak their native languages in school both by claiming that their cultures should be appreciated and respected and by suggesting that their native languages would help them learn English). Lisa might even have been demonstrating later Quasi-Reflective thinking (Stage 5) when she asserted that students' native languages should be respected and appreciated and contemplated how her lesson on diversity might influence their social development, as Stage 5 thinkers have typically begun to recognize that diverse points of view and backgrounds reflective the nature of the human experience.

Dilemma 4: How can a teacher meet the needs of a group of students whose academic levels are widely varied?

Lisa began exploring this dilemma in her journal entry for week 2 (2-16-03), when she wrote about a little girl in the class for whom Ms. Samuel had been trying for a long time to obtain testing for special academic services. Lisa noted that Ms. Samuel seemed frustrated with the situation, and acknowledged her own assumption, based on the girl's speech, behavior and interaction with the other children, that she was already receiving

special services. In her journal entry for week 3 (3-14-03), Lisa looked at this dilemma in a different way, wondering how she could help the weaker readers in her class feel encouraged and empowered to read so that they would not get bored, stop wanting to practice reading, and fall into a damaging cycle of "learned helplessness" about reading. Finally, in her journal entry for week 7 (4-4-03), Lisa revisited the discussion about the little girl she had mentioned in journal 2 and made several detailed and noteworthy statements about her beliefs.

In journal 7, Lisa discussed how the little girl had finally begun receiving special services, which she felt was a benefit to the girl, but since the assistance involved heavy pull-out time from the regular classroom and special area classes such as art and music, Lisa was unsure of the success of these interventions so far and their potential for success in the future. As she struggled to make sense of the situation, Lisa considered factors involving both the individual student and the wider context of the question and ultimately was not able to conclude definitively that she either agreed or disagreed with the course of action that had been taken to assist this little girl. "I haven't decided what I think of the situation…the answer is that solutions for students who need help are not always clear-cut or simple," Lisa wrote, maintaining that teachers needed to work to find solutions tailored to the needs of each individual child. Lisa considered the differences between the type of services being offered to the girl and the process of mainstreaming, and noted, "This is a key example of the full inclusion debate in action."

Lisa went on in journal 7 to note that she was glad to see Ms. Samuel collaborating with other teachers to find new ways for helping the student succeed with the new interventions in place, impressed that Ms. Samuel was able to give up her sense of

"ownership" in the little girl's education and remember that "other teachers have valuable wisdom to share and the students can only benefit from this." Lisa reflected that she could envision herself feeling "possessive" about her students if other professionals intervened to assist them and resolved to remember this situation in order to help her prevent this.

Lisa also wrote in journal 7 about observing all the second grade classes participating in an activity together, and noticing the vastly different academic levels of all these students led her to reflect more about the question of meeting these diverse academic needs. She wondered how teachers could effectively plan instruction on "both ends of the spectrum" or make sure that those on the "lower end" were not having their needs misidentified, perhaps on the basis of test results. "This leaves us with a dilemma," she wrote. "If students do not have the characteristics of a learning disability, but continue to bring up the back of the class in terms of achievement, how do we help them?" Lisa reflected that tracking had "proven to be ineffective" in resolving this problem and that teachers needed to take care not to project a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of low expectations to students who did not reach high levels of academic achievement. She concluded her examination of the issue by commenting, "No one has yet found the perfect solution, and teachers should not be expected to know the answer right away…what should be expected is for teachers to put in a strong effort in finding different sources of support for their students."

On the whole, Lisa dealt with this dilemma in a highly Quasi-Reflective manner, exhibiting examples of both early (Stage 4) and later (Stage 5) Quasi-Reflective thinking. First of all, Lisa made several statements when considering this dilemma which indicated that she was beginning to reason under the assumption that knowledge was not certain and

that there existed problems for which simple solutions did not exist; this occurred when she remarked that "no one has yet found the perfect solution" for accommodating diverse academic needs and she "had not decided" how she felt about the interventions being provided for a little girl in her class. (It is also striking to note in this respect that Lisa spontaneously used the term "dilemma" when describing her feelings about how lower-level academic achievers could be helped to succeed in school; this indicated that she was indeed comprehending the nature of a dilemma as a problem without a simple solution.)

As is typical of Stage 4 thinkers, Lisa was also able to acknowledge her own biases and interpretations as an influence on her beliefs when she admitted that she had made assumptions about the girl needing special services based on her speech and behavior; she also appeared to be at least outwardly open to new information and the beliefs of others as influences on the formation of her own beliefs when she reminded herself to remember that collaborating with colleagues could benefit her students despite her own reservations or sense of "ownership" of the educational experience of students in her class. This determination to relinquish her sense of "ownership" over her students could also have indicated that Lisa was putting less emphasis on the importance of an authority figure (herself as a classroom teacher) on the learning and development of her students. Quasi-Reflective thinkers also have a tendency to depend less on authority as a source of knowledge (and Lisa's belief that other teachers could help her meet the needs of her students more effectively might also be interpreted as a reliance on expertise of veteran teachers, it appeared to be the process of collaboration among many colleagues rather than dependence on that expertise which Lisa was advocating at this point).

Lisa's methods for justifying her beliefs also often demonstrated reasoning typical of Stage 4. For example, Lisa made attempts to utilize evidence to support her point of view, such as when she stated that tracking had been "proven to be ineffective," although her use of evidence was not sophisticated in terms of citing the source for this claim or examining the factors influencing the implementation and success or failure of tracking as an educational strategy. She also sometimes tended to equate her personal beliefs as evidence, as when she used her beliefs about the danger of a teacher communicating a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of low expectations to some students or of students falling into a cycle of "learned helplessness" as the basis for her conclusions about how teachers needed to assist learners who did not achieve at high academic levels (while these situations of "learned helplessness," etc., might be legitimate concerns for educators, Lisa did not present or evaluate evidence to support her beliefs about this in a sophisticated manner).

In addition to Stage 4 thinking, Lisa also appeared to be engaging in reasoning typical of Stage 5, the later phase of Quasi-Reflective thinking. For example, as she attempted to understand and apply her knowledge of such issues as inclusion and mainstreaming, Lisa was beginning to recognize and try to explore the complexity of this dilemma, which is a type of reasoning first associated with individuals functioning at Stage 5. Her comment that "this is a key example of the full inclusion debate in action" indicated that she was not only considering the dilemma of how to structure interventions which would best assist a specific student but also putting the issues into a broader context, also typical of Stage 5 thinkers. Finally, Lisa's repeated assertion that teachers needed to put in continuous effort to find and implement strategies which would support students in light of each student's unique strengths and needs implied that Lisa was operating under several

assumptions associated with Stage 5. These are the assumptions that an individual's (in this case a teacher's or student's) point of view is embedded in a specific context (in this case an educational environment or unique life of a student), that interpretation is a necessary and legitimate process for resolving a dilemma (in this case interpretation on the part of a teacher attempting to find a successful strategy for helping a student), and that in resolving a dilemma an individual (for example, a teacher) must evaluate evidence (for example, about a student's needs) in light of his or her limitations in order to reach a resolution to a dilemma.

Dilemma 5: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Lisa dealt with this dilemma briefly and infrequently but did make some statements about her beliefs concerning the question, mainly in the context of group discussion 1 (3-19-03) at which this dilemma was presented as the main topic for discussion, but on other occasions as well. She first mentioned this issue in journal 2 (2-16-03) when she wrote about how impressed she was with Ms. Samuel's methods for managing the classroom, including the use of consistent classroom rules for behavior, engaging the students in completing regular "jobs" around the classroom, and the regular posting and reviewing of a daily schedule. Lisa liked the consistency of these practices, particularly the use of the schedule, which she felt was important because many students, "like myself," could become very anxious when they did not know what to expect next and this could affect their behavior and academic performance.

In group discussion 1 (3-19-03), Lisa's first response to the dilemma posed to the group about the degree of control which a teacher needed to exert over students in order to

successfully manage the class was to reiterate that she admired Ms. Samuel's very consistent, "firm but caring" manner of dealing with management and discipline issues in the classroom, comparing Ms. Samuel's techniques favorably to other cooperating teachers with whom she had been placed and whose practices appeared ineffective to her. Lisa also admitted that she found managing a classroom challenging in the context of student teaching, as she was not sure how much authority to take over students in the classroom, when she should step in when situations arose with students, or how she should do so, due to her limited teaching experience and lack of an extensive repertoire of disciplinary strategies to implement in various situations. She further agreed with several of her peers in the discussion that college courses offered very limited guidance in this area, as they often provided a great deal of theory concerning management and discipline without illustrating or exploring the nuances of its practical application in various situations or environments. Lisa revisited this dilemma one final time in group discussion 2 (3-25-03), during which she again remarked that she appreciated Ms. Samuel's ability to exert her influence over the students to keep the daily goings-on of the classroom smooth but also expected students to be accountable and take responsibility for their behavior, again using her comparison of Ms. Samuel with previous cooperating teachers with whom she had been placed as evidence that Ms. Samuel's practices were preferable.

Lisa's approach to this dilemma did not provide as much illumination into her reflective judgment as was provided by some others due to her brief and infrequent statements about the dilemma, but it did show certain patterns of reasoning that should be considered in an overall analysis of Lisa's reflective judgment level. In general her approach showed some instances of Pre-Reflective thinking. This occurred when she

appeared to be basing her beliefs about effective management practices primarily on her observations of and personal experiences with her various cooperating teachers, and when she displayed discomfort with the uncertainty she felt about how she might be able to take on a role of authority in the classroom in terms of management or how she could discern what steps she could take as a student teacher when intervening in disciplinary situations. However, Lisa also appeared at times to be engaging in thinking typical of Stage 4 or early Quasi-Reflective reasoning.

For example, Lisa's statement that she believed Ms. Samuel's practice of posting and reviewing a daily schedule was a beneficial one was based largely on her assertion that many students, as she herself had done as a child, often needed to know what to expect and experienced anxiety when this need was not met. This indicated that Lisa might have been regarding her personal beliefs about how students perceive and feel about their days in the classroom as "evidence" to justify her position about this practice, and also that she could have been acknowledging that her personal interpretation of her own school experience was a factor in her beliefs, both of which are typical reasoning patterns of individuals functioning at Stage 4. Finally, Lisa's statement about the limited usefulness of the guidance about management issues provided by her college courses could indicate that she is not accepting the authority of her professors or the strategies suggested by textbooks as a source for unquestionably correct knowledge, also indicative of probable Quasi-Reflective thinking about this dilemma.

Dilemma 6: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction?

Lisa struggled continuously throughout her field experience with various aspects of this dilemma, particularly in terms of how as a teacher she could present new material and concepts in an organized, structured way and ensure that her students were receiving the academic content they needed in order to be prepared for future grades, standardized tests and the future, while still allowing students time and opportunities for free exploration and questioning, sharing of personal connections with the material, and direction and ownership of their own learning.

In her second post-observation interview (3-20-03), Lisa remarked that she had wanted to allow students to explore the science materials, develop their own predictions, and internalize the concepts through constructivist methods, but was also concerned about still making sure that by the end of the lesson the students understood the basic concepts. "I think they have to explore their own ideas and curiosity too…it shouldn't just be about this one thing that you want to cover for the day," she said. While trying to adhere to this philosophy, however, Lisa was still concerned that the students' predictions about how the marbles would descend the ramps often seemed unreasonable or misguided to her, and she was not sure whether experimentation would reveal this to the students. Ultimately Lisa decided that she had done her best to balance those two concerns; she was comforted by the fact that the school's spiral science curriculum would allow the students to revisit this concept at another time and refine their understanding, and she found it powerful that the students' perceptions of the material could change so substantially "instead of reading something out of a textbook, to do it themselves and see it in action.

During group dilemma discussion 2 (3-25-03), the participants discussed the dilemma of whether it was more beneficial for a teacher to implement teacher-directed or

student-centered methods of instruction. Lisa's view was that a teacher should balance the two types of instruction, using examples of practices she had observed in cooperating teachers to illustrate this and pointing specifically to Ms. Samuel's teaching as a good example of this type of balance. While Lisa stated that she still believed there was some material which students could not be expected to learn through hands-on exploration and that teachers needed to take the responsibility to present and guide students through such material, the teacher should also give students choices about how to demonstrate their understanding and to supplement the curricula to which they were expected to adhere when necessary to meet the needs of their students. She appeared to regard the decision about when to alter or modify standardized curricula as the individual teacher's choice, noting Ms. Samuel's practice of adding activities she had found or made to the math program School A used.

When the participants were asked about what they felt had influenced their beliefs about this dilemma, Lisa agreed with some of her fellow participants that her college courses had had some effect on the development of her views but that their usefulness and influence was limited in many ways. Lisa felt there was only a certain amount of knowledge about teaching one could gain through coursework without having the opportunity to apply that knowledge in practice and that some of the strategies presented in her courses did not seem to make "common sense;" she found this was true most often in cases where the professors did not have recent elementary classroom teaching experience. Despite this, Lisa stated that she always attempted to keep herself open to the possibility of learning something new from every course or educational experience.

Lisa revisited this dilemma in her journal for week 6 (3-27-03) when she wrote about how disconcerting she had found the question of how much control to exert over her lesson on horses and how much to allow her students to explore and share stories related to the material. When displaying her horseback riding artifacts, Lisa said that the lesson became "hectic" and she did not know when to stop the students from sharing and asking questions in order to move on and present new material to them. Lisa was glad that the students appeared to be enjoying the lesson and felt that "when you introduce a new topic, you have to give them time to react and adjust to it…it is important for children to have fun once in while without having to live up to high expectations," but was concerned that they were not absorbing all the material she had planned to present to them. Lisa's beliefs about this dilemma were also tested when she felt compelled to follow Ms. Samuel's suggestion to eliminate a section from her lesson which focused on engaging the students in the process of posing questions about the topic about which they would like to learn; Lisa ended up expressing appreciation for Ms. Samuel's assistance but reflecting that if it had been her own classroom, she would not have omitted this process simply for the sake of time, as she felt Ms. Samuel had done.

Lisa also dealt with this dilemma in her final essay (5-24-03), when she discussed the need for schools to implement grade-level learning and teaching standards and rigorous curricula which often demanded teacher-directed instruction. Lisa felt that curriculum frameworks and standards were necessary to ensure that all teachers taught "appropriate material" and that all students had equal access to a quality education; however, she again expressed the belief that individual teachers should have the freedom to modify and adapt mandated teaching standards when they felt the needs of their students called for such

action. Lisa felt that high standards for teacher licensure were necessary to ensure that teachers had the vital communication and literacy skills and general knowledge to engage in this process. "I believe there is a certain knowledge base that teachers should have," Lisa wrote, although she did not elaborate on what she viewed this knowledge base to be and how teachers could attain it.

As has been the case through much of this analysis, Lisa's approach to this dilemma again showed some Pre-Reflective reasoning but also, to a greater extent, Quasi-Reflective reasoning. There were some instances, for example, in which Lisa appeared to be exhibiting a Pre-Reflective assumption that at least some knowledge exists which is certain and easily transmittable from one person to another; this occurred when she asserted that there was some material which students could not be expected to learn through student-centered instructional strategies and simply needed to be presented in a structured way, when she advocated standards to ensure that teachers transmitted a certain body of "appropriate material" in the same way to all students, and when she suggested that there was a discrete "knowledge base" which all teachers should have before beginning their work in the classroom. Lisa's statement reflecting the rather nebulous or ambiguous view that some of the practices taught to her in her college coursework did not make "common sense" also revealed a Pre-Reflective tendency to make decisions about one's views based on what "feels right" rather than on systematically and carefully evaluated evidence. She also appeared to be relying heavily on direct observation and personal experience as influences on her views, as when she used the examples of her cooperating teachers primarily to illustrate the need for balancing teacher-directed and student-centered instruction.

However, Lisa also seemed to be progressing into Quasi-Reflective styles of reasoning as she approached this dilemma. First of all, Lisa's acknowledgement that she had tremendous difficulty knowing how much control and direction she should take in her observed lessons indicated that she might have been beginning to operate under the assumption that there were problems, like this one, to which simple solutions did not exist; this recognition is typical of individuals in Stage 4. Lisa also expressed a professed openness to new information and others' points of view as she developed her beliefs when she stated that despite her feeling that some of what she learned in her college courses was limited in its usefulness, she still tried to learn something new from all her courses and educational experiences.

In addition, as is characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers, Lisa showed several signs of becoming less reliant on authority figures or experts as sources of knowledge. This occurred when she advocated letting children indulge their natural curiosity about new topics rather than forcing them to focus on what the teacher (an "authority" in the classroom) planned to cover for the day, emphasized the powerful nature of hands-on learning in science rather that simply reading about it from a textbook, and critically examined the contributions of her college professors as influences on her beliefs about teaching practice. Lisa could also have been demonstrating the belief that knowledge provided by authority figures should not be accepted without question when she stressed that an individual teacher should have the freedom to modify or deviate from mandated curriculum standards or frameworks, typically designed by "experts" in the field of education. (Furthermore, this last statement by Lisa could also have indicated that she was operating under the assumption that interpretation by an individual is a legitimate and

necessary part of the process of approaching a dilemma, which is actually characteristic of more sophisticated thinking associated with Stage 5, or the later phase of the Quasi-Reflective level.)

Dilemma 7: How can students be motivated to participate in learning experiences in the classroom?

Lisa reflected on two basic aspects of this dilemma: what might account for differences in motivation in different groups of students, and how a teacher might motivate a student who appeared to be having difficulty engaging in classroom activities in a meaningful way. Her first reflection on this dilemma occurred as a result of an instance involving a specific students who she noticed having difficulty participating in a task and whom she was frustrated at being powerless to help in this capacity. In her first post-observation interview (2-27-03), Lisa discussed how there had been one student who repeatedly said that he did not know what to draw on his quilt square. Lisa made suggestions and tried to question him to help him think of something he would like to draw, but to no avail. "I didn't know what to do," she stated, "and it was so hard. I didn't really know what to say to him. I tried all I could think of and it didn't seem to work. I just tried to give whatever ideas and options I could."

Lisa revisited this dilemma in her journal entry for week 3 (3-4-03). She wrote that in general she had noticed that the students in School A appeared more motivated than students in other schools where she had observed, and she wondered what might account for this. She admitted that she had "not yet figured out" why some groups of students seemed more motivated to learn in school than others, and she wondered whether extrinsic motivation from home or personal qualities of individual teachers might be important

factors. Lisa wrote that "I am not yet sure what the answers to these questions are," but resolved to try to identify what motivated the students in her class so that she could apply this knowledge to other classrooms in which she would teach in the future. Upon further prompting, Lisa also acknowledged that although she students were probably best motivated by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, she tended to think first of those motivators that had been meaningful to her and helped her succeed as a student, such as grades and the influence of her parents.

Lisa wrote about this type of incident occurring again in her fourth journal entry (3-16-03). During an activity in which students were directed to draw a picture from their imagination or from a story Lisa had read them, one girl grew increasingly frustrated with her picture, erasing and trying to redo it several times and finally crying. Lisa felt sorry for the little girl, who seemed to be such a "perfectionist," and attempted to accept the girl's feelings. Lisa bristled at Ms. Samuel's suggestion that students sometimes used crying as an excuse for not completing their work and that this should not be tolerated (although Lisa did comment that "I fully understand and appreciate this") and attempted to help the girl overcome her frustration with her work and enjoy the creative activity. "At the end of the lesson she was crying, and I felt horrible," Lisa wrote. "I still do not quite know what to do in those types of situations."

The incident led Lisa to reflect that she had noticed this "perfectionism" in the students in School A to a much greater extent than she had ever observed it in her other placement schools. She wondered whether the faculty, parents or students themselves at School A were holding the students to unreasonably high expectations and whether this might be causing the students the kind of anxiety which might lead to the incidents she had

observed in her classroom with students becoming frustrated that they did not know exactly what to draw or felt they could not do it well enough. As she reflected on how a teacher might encourage students to get beyond this "road block," Lisa commented that teachers could "encourage students to become creative, to stress to them that such activities have no right or wrong answer, and that they will mostly be graded on their ability to use their own thinking, not ideas from a book, to produce their work."

As has been the pattern in Lisa's analysis, this dilemma revealed that Lisa was likely operating at a transitional level between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective levels of reflective judgment, although most of her statements regarding this dilemma place her roughly at Stage 4, or the earlier phase of Quasi-Reflective thinking. Lisa's discomfort with the uncertainty and feeling of being overwhelmed by the complexity of the dilemma of how to motivate a discouraged student were apparent, and her practice of employing tentative decisions based on what "felt right" or whatever she could think of at the time to help those individual students, were characteristics of Stage 3 thinkers. However, much of what Lisa said regarding this dilemma indicates that she was well on her way to transitioning to Stage 4.

Lisa's repeated admissions that she did not yet know what to do in these types of situations with individual students and that she simply could not answer questions about what motivated students in general indicated that she was beginning to assume that knowledge could be uncertain, or at least temporarily uncertain, and that there were no simple solutions to some problems; this marks a significant shift between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking.   When she discussed how a teacher could motivate her students in a creative activity by reminding them that it was their thinking that mattered

and not a "right or wrong" answer or an idea from a book, Lisa was suggesting that there exists some knowledge which cannot be found in books or discretely transmitted from one person to another, which also points to Quasi-Reflective thinking. Lisa also showed another characteristic of Stage 4 reasoning when she acknowledged her own bias and interpretation about the topic of motivation, stating that she realized she tended to think first of motivating factors that had helped her be a successful student.

Finally, when she did not agree with Ms. Samuel's assessment that a girl in the classroom might be crying as an "excuse" to avoid having to complete her task, Lisa did not accept this explanation or give up her attempts to console and encourage the student, which shows a Quasi-Reflective tendency not to unquestioningly accept the knowledge provided by authority figures or experts. However, Lisa did not judge Ms. Samuel's beliefs on this matter to be right or wrong, saying that she understood and appreciated Ms. Samuel's view, which also exemplifies the Quasi-Reflective tendency to hesitate to make those types of judgments on the beliefs of others.

Summary of Lisa's Reflective Judgment Level

Lisa's data suggested strongly that during the period of data collection, she was engaged in the process of transitioning between the levels of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking. Most of her statements indicated thinking associated with Stages 3, 4 and 5 on the Reflective Judgment Model, with the majority of the data placing her at Stage 4, the earlier stage of the Quasi-Reflective level. As the data collection period progressed, Lisa's reflective judgment appeared to become situated more and more firmly into the Quasi-Reflective level, as she continuously displayed more characteristics of Stages 4 and 5, and fewer of Stage 3. This is consistent with the findings of Wood (2001), which places

the average RJ level of college juniors at approximately 3.5, and the research of Lynch,

Kitchener, & King (1994) which designates the average RJI score of college juniors as

3.74.

The primary indicator that Lisa was transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-

Reflective thinking was the manner in which she appeared to begin internalizing a belief

that knowledge is not always certain and readily available. Though she still exhibited

signs of the discomfort and confusion which Pre-Reflective thinkers associate with this

discovery, Lisa also showed the types of attempts to negotiate this epistemological

standpoint into her thinking system that are characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers.

Lisa's consideration of her own and others' points of view became increasingly open and

less dependent on her assumptions and previous beliefs; she began attempting to explore

complex issues in a multidimensional and balanced way; and she showed increased

attention to the evaluation of evidence and the use of systematic inquiry in order to justify

her beliefs rather than relying on experts or authority figures or unexamined assumptions.

Lisa did not yet appear to be completely grounded in Quasi-Reflective-level

thinking, however; she still exhibited many characteristics of Stage 3, the final phase of

Pre-Reflective thinking, in her early data, and these continued in decreasing frequency

through the data period collection (it is typical, according to Kitchener and King's

research, for individuals to engage in thinking patterns associated with more than one stage

at any given time, although this generally takes place within a larger process of progression

from earlier stages to more sophisticated ones).

In conclusion, although Lisa's data indicated that she exhibited characteristics of

reflective judgment associated with Stages 3, 4, and 5, the majority of the data placed her

in Stage 4. This indicates that during the data collection period, Lisa was probably going through a time of transition between Pre-Reflective reasoning and Quasi-Reflective reasoning, although the preponderance of Stage 4 characteristics and the evidence of possible Stage 5 characteristics indicate she may be closer to the end of this transition to the beginning (a reflective judgment level which is not uncommon for college students of Lisa's age). This suggests that Lisa is approaching dilemmas of practice within a framework wherein she has come to accept the uncertainty implicit in the act of knowing, but has not yet learned how to negotiate this uncertainty in a sophisticated manner or justify her beliefs and decisions through objective, systematic and reflective inquiry.

Notes on the Reflective Process

Lisa's data were extensive and rich; she consistently wrote lengthy entries in her journals, responded thoughtfully to prompts used in the dialogue journaling process, participated at length in post-observations interviews and wrote a detailed, substantial final essay, and her words and writing often provided great insight into her reflective judgment level. This might have been because she had certain intellectual or personality traits which disposed her to do so, as suggested by Friedman (1995), or because she was at an appropriate developmental level of reflective judgment to thoughtfully examine her beliefs about issues of teaching and learning in an introspective and exploratory manner.

Part of the purpose of this study, as put forward in the original research questions, was to determine possible events, processes or experiences which might have influenced changes, if any were detected, in the participants' reflective judgment. While it would not be possible to prove definitively from this study that specific events were direct "causes" for changes in Lisa's reflective judgment, it should be noted that Lisa's statements often

showed higher levels of reflective judgment or more elaborate articulation of her beliefs when she was responding to prompts designed to help her delve more deeply into her beliefs, particularly in her dialogue journal entries. This is significant because it suggests that preservice teachers might engage in more meaningful reflection about their field experiences, and about their beliefs about teaching and learning, if they are provided with feedback and prompts specifically designed to help them explore their beliefs and opportunities to reflect about and articulate those beliefs. This point reflects the suggestions made by Reiman's (1999) work on social roletaking and guided reflection.

Although some of Lisa's initial journal iterations did contain comments demonstrating that she was attempting to examine her experiences in the classroom in light of her own beliefs, there are numerous examples in Lisa's data illustrating that participating in the dialogue journal process and being offered prompts about her beliefs led to her elaborate on and possibly re-examine her beliefs about teaching and learning. For example, in Lisa's first journal entry (2-9-03), she made passing remarks about the impressive facilities and resources of School A and the diversity of the students in her classroom and the school, but it was not until after she was questioned further that Lisa directly acknowledged her assumptions about students who were bussed, explored more fully the possible ways in which disparity of economic resources might influence student achievement, and expressed her feelings about unequal distribution of resources as an "injustice." In her second journal entry (2-16-03), Lisa described how impressed she was with Ms. Samuel's smooth management of daily activities in the classroom and her acceptance of the native languages of her ESL students, but only after prompting did Lisa delve more deeply into her beliefs about why management practices such as Ms. Samuel's

made a difference in the classroom and her beliefs about bilingual education in general. Further questioning during Lisa's first post-observation interview (2-27-03) led her to acknowledge that she did not know how to resolve issues involving student motivation such as the problems she had encountered trying to encourage individual students to participate in a creative activity, and to elaborate in great detail about her perceptions of this issue.

Lisa commented in journal 5 (3-24-03) that she felt encouraging students to improve their literacy skills was important, but she only reflected on the strong impact which reading had made on her life as an influence on her belief when prompted further. When she described her lesson on horses in journal 6 (3-27-03), Lisa described feeling uncomfortable not knowing how much time to allow for student exploration and sharing when she wanted to cover certain factual material about horses and feeling disconcerted by being compelled to follow Ms. Samuel's suggestion to eliminate a part of her lesson; further prompting led her to discuss why she felt that the question of balancing presentation of factual material with student exploration was important, to acknowledge how difficult that question was to resolve, and to elaborate on the reasons why she believed that Ms. Samuel had been mistaken in her suggestion. In journal 7 (4-4-03), Lisa described the new situation of a girl who had begun to receive special services and Ms. Samuel's dissatisfaction with the arrangement and posed several practical questions about what a teacher might do in order to meet the needs of a student who was not achieving at high academic levels, but after she was questioned further, Lisa went on to reflect about how this situation represented "the full inclusion debate" and to finally conclude that no one had a "perfect solution" for this dilemma.

In conclusion, the most striking aspect of Lisa's engagement in the reflective process throughout this study was the fact that in numerous instances, prompting through dialogue journals appeared to facilitate Lisa's further exploration of issues about which her initial entries were primarily descriptive or gave only nebulous or limited articulations of her beliefs. A second pattern in Lisa's data was that she was willing to participate in extensive reflection during group dilemmas discussions, indicating that the social interaction or other factors having to do with that context could also have been a positive influence on her ability to examine her beliefs about dilemmas of practice. As previously stated, it cannot be definitively concluded from this study that certain interventions could be directly responsible for increases in preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels. However, Lisa's data strongly suggests that these types of prompting and guided reflection should be further researched and explored as a means for helping preservice teachers to acknowledge their own assumptions, to understand their beliefs and the factors that have influenced their beliefs, and to find meaning in the experiences they have as they prepare to become teachers.

Case Study 2: Sherry

Part A: Description of Case

Sherry is a Caucasian female who was twenty-one years old and a college junior at
the time of this study. Sherry was born in a small town in New England and raised there
by her parents, both employed in a family plumbing business. She has a younger brother
and younger sister. She describes her family as very close and herself as a devout Catholic
whose faith is an important part of her life. She chose the university she attended because
it was a Jesuit school which was close to her home and, though she hopes to live in her
home town ultimately, she wished for a slightly different atmosphere in college than that of
the small town where she grew up. Sherry loves the water, reading, and working with
children, who she finds "brutally honest and carefree." Besides the earlier pre-practicum
experiences she completed at the university, both of which took place in urban elementary
schools, she has had numerous experiences working with children with special needs in a
summer program. Sherry considers herself a very determined and dedicated person,
thought she admits she can be self-conscious and considers this a weakness.

Although Sherry has always loved working with children, she notes that her
decision to pursue a teaching career was also based in her feeling that she was neither
qualified nor had the desire to work in anything else, having done well in school but not
having been passionate about most of her studies; however, her experiences in the summer
program made her feel sure that working with children was her calling. Sherry's beliefs
about teaching include a belief that regardless of planning, a teacher can never anticipate
everything that will happen in the classroom, a belief that children are capable of
succeeding far past a teacher's goals if they are given support and encouragement, that

children are unique and bring a great deal of experience with them to school every day which affects their school experience, and that teaching is an immense responsibility and extremely important role in the lives of children. (*All biographical information provided by Sherry via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-19-03*)

For her third pre-practicum, Sherry was placed in a kindergarten classroom in a suburban elementary school. What follows is a description of her experience in that classroom as recorded through her dialogue journals, post-observation interviews, group discussions, and final essay.

In Sherry's journal entry for Week 1 (2-7-03), she wrote that she was excited to be working with children younger than those with whom she had been previously placed and in a different environment, as her two prior placements had been in urban schools. In anticipating how this placement might be different, she reflected that "children and children" and that they have similar characteristics, but that their diverse backgrounds played a large part in who they were. She also noticed immediately that her new placement school clearly had much higher financial resources than her previous two schools, "and that is helpful. I can already see that the opportunities for the children at this school are better than they were at the other two schools I worked in." In fact, Sherry was "in awe" of the facilities and materials in the kindergarten classroom. She wished all schools could enjoy the supplies, computers, specialist time and new, cheerful building which the students at this school did, especially because "children see this." Sherry commented that although these types of resources had a heavy impact on students' school experiences, "the teacher plays a large role in making up the difference."

Sherry was also surprised and intrigued to see the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of her classroom. In the class of 20 students, there were 9 different primary languages spoken. Sherry looked forward to observing how this diversity was accommodated within the classroom and the school, and also to seeing how her cooperating teacher handled the implementation of IEP's with individual students who had special needs.

Sherry found she enjoyed working with the young children, who wanted to talk to her and have her attention. She felt that she needed to learn how to handle the different needs of children at this age, particularly in terms of supervising them for safety and helping to guide their socialization. Sherry used her own experience as a child to guide her behavior with these young children:

> Ultimately my job is to meet the needs of these students and when the needs are different, the practice is different…I remember when I was younger I was an extremely nervous child. I did not observe any children like that but I think that it has made me think more carefully about the way I explain things so as not to scare or confuse any students.

Although she did not get to spend much time with her cooperating teacher, Ms. Darcy, on the first day, Sherry's first impression was that she "seems like a wonderful teacher," and she was happy to see Ms. Darcy, Nancy (the full practicum student placed in the classroom), and the classroom aide collaborating and interacting in a friendly manner. Ms. Darcy directed Sherry to the aide for information frequently, and Sherry reflected about an aide's role in a classroom. Sherry commented that she thought aides could become "bitter" at having to work so hard for little pay or reward and that they had a

different relationship with students than the classroom teacher did, since perhaps students might feel less threatened by the aide, spend more one-on-one time with the aide.

Sherry concluded her journal entry by briefly describing the day's activities. The students were excited about snow that had fallen. They had a morning meeting and then Sherry accompanied them to art, where they made pictures of their homes with differently textured materials; Sherry liked the tactile nature of the activity and noticed that some students' pictures were very representational in nature and others more abstract. The students did some phonics work, had "catch-up" time to finish work not completed during the week, had lunch and free time, and made plans for Valentine's Day and their 100th Day of School celebration coming up. Sherry was excited at the end of the day, hoping to learn a great deal through the semester and ask Ms. Darcy more questions the next week.

Sherry's journal entry for Week 2 (2-14-03) described how she had felt more engaged with the class this week, that the students were becoming more receptive to her, and that she was feeling more like a responsible member of the classroom "community." One thing that impressed Sherry was the level of parent involvement in the school and her class. She spoke with several parents, many of whom came to drop their children off in the classroom each morning, and found the level of involvement "refreshing" compared to that of the parents in her previous schools, most of whom she rarely saw. When asked why she thought there was such a difference between the schools in this area, Sherry reflected that she was not sure how much of this had to do with the socioeconomic level of the school, but since the parental involvement appeared so much higher in the school with financial resources that were apparently substantially greater, she thought it was probably a large

factor:

> Parents who are in better paying jobs generally have employers who are more understanding of parental needs. I think that it is wonderful that these children have parents who care so much but I think that it is children with a lower SES that need the parental support more.

Sherry commented in this journal entry on the collaboration she witnessed in her classroom, noting that although the physical layout of the classrooms appeared to be designed to facilitate collaboration and the teachers all seemed "friendly," and that she saw Ms. Darcy and the other kindergarten teachers implement similar activities with their classes, Ms. Darcy usually simply told Nancy the plan for the day rather than both of them planning collaboratively. Sherry thought it would benefit the class if Ms. Darcy and Nancy had more time to sit down together and make plans during times such as after school or when students were at specialist classes:

> I think that the day could run much more smoothly if Ms. Darcy and Nancy were planning together. I feel as though Nancy does not have a lot of responsibility in many ways and that she could be much more beneficial to both the children and Ms. Darcy if she was given some more responsibility.

Sherry also noticed differences between the interactions among the "younger" faculty such as aides, interns and student teachers, who discussed both classroom issues and their own personal lives together, and the "older and more experienced" faculty who discussed teaching ideas but did not appear to share as much with each other in a purely social manner.

Sherry observed and participated in a Valentine's Day activity designed by Ms. Darcy in which students were given materials to put together in a specific way so that they each created identical Valentine cards to take home for their families. Although Sherry commented that the cards turned out very cute and that Ms. Darcy did "a very nice job" of giving directions and modeling the process, she felt she the students had little freedom in contributing creatively to the project:

> I understand that Ms. Darcy wanted the children to take something very nice and special to their parents. But I think that parents also enjoy something that their child used his or her imagination to create. I think that Ms. Darcy could have provided the materials…but not required them to complete the activity exactly as she did. I think that providing the students with a model and a demonstration of how to do it would help the children who needed a more structured approach. However, I think that if she required the children to use all of the materials, but let them place the pieces where they wanted, it would also have been nice. In this way she could have provided structure but also let the children be a little more creative.

Sherry ended her entry by discussing the kindergartners' performance on a math activity requiring them to estimate the number of small hearts in a jar, count them, separate and graph them by color, and record the numbers of hearts of each color. Sherry noticed they needed little help other than occasionally reminding them of directions, and was impressed with their performance on the task.

Sherry's first comment in her journal for Week 3 (2-28-03) was that the day had gone well and she was feeling more comfortable in the classroom, working more with the students and had had a chance to talk with Ms. Darcy more about the university's

requirements for her pre-practicum experience. Sherry was glad to observe Ms. Darcy

teach a formal lesson on rhyming and to "see some real learning," since much of the class

time on Friday was often spent on catching up on work not yet finished from earlier the

week. Sherry found the rhyming activity, which involved reading a book to the children

and having them complete a cut/paste worksheet activity, fast paced and engaging.

However, it was also a challenging activity for many students, so she was glad to see that

there were enough adults in the room that each small group of students had an adult close

by to assist them.

The small group with whom Sherry worked on the activity included Michael, a

student whose primary language was Russian and who found the activity extremely

difficult. Sherry attempted to keep Michael from getting too frustrated when he didn't

understand the directions, couldn't identify the pictures on the worksheet, or forgot the

words for them (and therefore could not pick a rhyming word). Sherry held Michael's

scissors, glue and pencil and gave them to him when needed to prevent him from working

too fast and making errors, a strategy which she said worked to a certain extent although

Michael was still "very frustrated." It was difficult for Sherry to ascertain how much of

Michael's difficulty with the rhyming activity was due to the language barrier and how

much was due to his understanding of the concept.

Sherry had time that week to discuss her requirements and her background with

Ms. Darcy, who shared with Sherry that she had had many pre-practicum students in the

past and was familiar with the requirements. Ms. Darcy admitted to Sherry that although

she loved teaching kindergarten now, earlier in her teaching career, she had been more

interested in teaching older students. This sentiment resounded with Sherry, who still felt

that "there is a lot more you can do with third graders" but wondered if she felt that way

because she observed little structured teaching on Fridays when she visited the class.

(Despite this, Sherry still pointed out that she was "very impressed with how much Ms.

Darcy has accomplished with these students though.")

During this meeting, Sherry was very surprised to learn that Ms. Darcy did not

keep a daily lesson plan book; instead, she "just knew" what she was going to teach and

told Nancy the plan verbally each day. Ms. Darcy said this was the first year she had ever

taught this way and admitted that it was probably not the best example to set for a new

teacher. When asked about her beliefs concerning this, Sherry wrote "thought it might be

good if Ms. Darcy still had some lesson plans" and that "this is not the most effective way

to teach," but also wrote that she felt "Ms. Darcy is an experienced teacher and this method

seems to work for her."

In Sherry's journal entry for Week 5 (3-14-03), described another "somewhat

crazy" Friday during which the students were all working on different activities which they

had not completed during the week or having free time if they had finished. Sherry found

it difficult to assist the children since she did not know all the directions for their weekly

activities and wondered how the students could keep track of what they needed to do "with

so much going on around them." When asked how she might approach the task of helping

children complete their work at their own individual paces, she suggested keeping a chart

of all activities students needed to complete and checking off work which was handed in.

She also reflected further on her beliefs about Ms. Darcy's way of structuring Friday as a

"catch-up" day:

At first I thought this method was too crazy and I would not want to do this in my classroom but then I realized it is better to let students work at their own pace…I also think that it is better to let students move on to the next activity when they complete one rather than make them sit and wait until all students are finished…especially in a kindergarten classroom where the children's ability levels vary so greatly.

Sherry had another experience working with Michael that day, assisting him with a cut/paste activity in which students were given the task of putting the steps for making maple syrup in the proper sequence. Again, Michael found the task frustrating. The directions were not reiterated to Michael before he went to work on the activity, and he first just glued the pictures "anywhere." When Michael seemed confused even after Sherry tried explaining the directions further, she took him aside, spread out the pictures, and tried to help him sequence them individually. When even this proved too overwhelming for Michael, Sherry showed him pictures one by one and asked him to tell her whether they basically took place in the "beginning," "middle," or "end" of the process, which appeared to be more effective, but Sherry was still unsure about how to best assist Michael in his learning process:

It is very difficult to tell whether Michael really needs help or when he is just frustrated. I think that either way if a teacher has the time to work with him it is helpful to do so. I cannot imagine how frustrating it must be for him not to be able to communicate his needs and his lack of understanding. Michael also just wants to complete the activities so when he does not understand the directions well enough to complete the task it increases his frustrations.

Sherry attempted to discuss her concerns about Michael with Ms. Darcy, who surprised Sherry by saying that she thought Michael was "playing" Sherry for additional help because she was a new person in the classroom who did not know his routine. While Sherry admitted that this was a possibility, she was not satisfied with this approach to dealing with Michael's learning on a daily basis:

> …maybe he does, it's difficult to tell. I think you really have to know your students to know when they are behaving that way…but I also feel that Ms. Darcy has become so frustrated with him that she tends to leave him on his own more often than he should be.

Finally, Sherry again noted how impressed she was with these kindergartners' ability to handle seemingly very challenging academic tasks. Watching them work on a complicated activity creating pictures of animals using tangrams, she reflected on how a teacher might be able to foster students' ability to approach difficult tasks with patience, confidence, and perseverance:

> I think just letting a student know that you think they are capable of a task like this is very helpful. I also think that if the teacher reaffirms the fact that it is a difficult assignment and that it is okay to struggle through it, that also reassures them.

On 3-19-03, Sherry participated in group dilemma discussion #1, which posed the dilemma of how strictly and rigidly a teacher should exert control over a class in terms of discipline and management. Her first comment was to point out that there were certain rules of behavior for which all students needed to be accountable, but that each student and situation was different, and that as long as students were all treated "fairly," then a teacher could handle given situations in a variety of ways according to specific circumstances.

Knowing one's individual students very well, Sherry pointed out, was an important step in being able to decide how to handle discipline or management issues that arose in the classroom. She discussed the management system her previous cooperating teacher had implemented, a very structured system in which students consistently received check marks and other types of reinforcement for specific behaviors (both positive and negative). Sherry estimated that although this system worked very well "95% of the time," it did not provide help in de-escalating extreme or severe situations or preventing a student from harming self or others.

In general, Sherry said she felt that the teacher did not need to be "the authoritarian of the class" and make students afraid of what would happen if they get out of line, "because that's what kids do." Rather, the teacher should set up structure and expectations in the classroom, consistently remind students of the reasons why each rule was necessary, and step in if things got "out of control," but allow the students to develop responsibility and accountability for making choices about their own behavior. She also stated that she believed the teacher need to set up more structure in classes with younger students and with more heterogeneous classes, pointing out that if students came from different cultural backgrounds, they may all behave according to different expectations at home, so it was more the teacher's responsibility to "set common ground" in terms of behavior expectations in school. In addition, Sherry said that it was important to help students understand why a teacher might sometimes take different action with one student than with another by reminding them that everyone is different, with different needs, and the goal is to help everyone achieve to the best of his or her ability. If a teacher consistently

encourages students to help each other in this capacity, Sherry said, students would engage in this because they "want to see themselves and their classmates succeed."

Sherry agreed with others in the group that as a student teacher it was difficult to know how far to step in and administer discipline or implement specific management strategies without the guidance of the cooperating teacher. She also commented that as a student teacher, it was important but tricky to establish oneself with one's students as an adult or authority figure and not merely a friend to them, because "it's important that they don't walk all over you."

Sherry reflected that her beliefs in the area of management had been influenced by her previous teaching experiences. In the summer program where she worked with students with special needs, Sherry learned that these students could "push her to her limit" and force her to come up with creative ways of resolving behavior issues with them based on their qualities and needs as individuals. Her own experience in school also influenced Sherry's beliefs in this area; being a shy, quiet student who tended to fade into the background, she appreciated teachers who encouraged her to be more vocal and social without drawing conspicuous attention to the fact that she was doing so. Sherry hoped to be able to subtly be able to assist other students like her in the same gentle, encouraging way. She also noted that her beliefs were influenced in part by the theory she learned in the university courses in her teacher education program. Though she didn't feel it was possible to take ideas from a book and use them exactly that way in a classroom – "it doesn't always work the way they say it will in the book!"

In her final comment in the discussion, Sherry revisited the topic of how best to help a diverse group of students all complete a set of tasks when each one had a different

ability level and would progress through the tasks at different rates, a question she had first

considered when reflecting on the Friday "catch-up" procedures in her classroom. At first,

Sherry said, she had doubted that anything could get done with students all doing different

things and yelling for the teacher's attention; however, now she thought it was more

beneficial to let the students finish at their own pace, even though this presented a

challenge in terms of managing the progress of the class as a whole.

Sherry's journal for Week 5 (3-21-03) dealt primarily with an incident involving

Michael and Ms. Darcy which had made Sherry uncomfortable and caused her to reflect

deeply on her beliefs about teaching. After art class, when students had been directed to

take their free drawings home with them, Michael apparently became confused about the

instructions and attempted to return his drawing to the art classroom. When not allowed to

do so, he became frustrated and cried, which caused Ms. Darcy to become exasperated

with him and tell him to stop. After this, Michael tried again to take his picture back to the

art classroom, at which point Ms. Darcy ran to him, took him aside, and "yelled at him."

Sherry was surprised and found this behavior on Ms. Darcy's part extreme. When

questioned about her feelings on the incident, Sherry wrote that she thought Ms. Darcy's

behavior was inappropriate, looking back to her own childhood to elucidate her feelings:

> I also think back to an experience I had when I was in elementary school and had
>
> done something wrong. I was so ashamed of myself and felt as though the teacher
>
> would hate me forever. I still remember the way I felt more than twelve years ago.
>
> I would hate for a child to go through something like that.

Interestingly, however, despite her extreme discomfort with Ms. Darcy's actions

and her apparent certainty that this behavior on a teacher's part could have a strong impact

on a student's emotional state, she was reluctant to overtly criticize Ms. Darcy ("She wasn't feeling well that day, it was like anyone having a bad day and getting carried away") and pointed out in her second journal iteration that Michael had not seemed "too affected" by the incident, although he continued to be "whiny" and appeared to avoid Ms. Darcy through the rest of the day.

Sherry described the rest of the day as having been "low key" since Ms. Darcy was indeed not feeling well, but still other incidents occurred that stimulated Sherry's reflections on Ms. Darcy's management practices. When a student failed to "freeze" for directions after a specific signal as the class had learned to do, Ms. Darcy knocked a game piece with which he had been playing out of his hand, and when one student accused another of hitting her, Ms. Darcy confronted the student in a manner which Sherry described as public and embarrassing. Sherry was disturbed and confused about how to interpret these incidents, noting that she herself did not think Ms. Darcy's actions had been the best choice but hesitating to judge them as wrong:

> I think the student should not have been embarrassed in front of the whole
> class…Ms. Darcy should not have yelled the way she did and it should have been
> more of a meeting on what to do if a student does something you do not like. I
> hope that Ms. Darcy was a little bit more on edge today because she was not feeling
> well, but I have seen her yell at students before…I just know if I was treated that
> way in kindergarten I would have hated it and would have been so afraid to do
> anything wrong.

Sherry continued discussing her beliefs about how to handle incidents involving student misbehavior, pointing out that it is important to deal with a student privately and kindly, and find out the reason for what is happening:

> I think it is also important to let the student know that you still care about them and that you still believe in them. Everyone makes mistakes and we should expect our students to make mistakes. I think that just giving the students who may have been hurt by Ms. Darcy's discipline some one-on-one attention and praising them can help them feel cared about in the classroom.

On 3-25-03, Sherry participated in the second group dilemma discussion, concerning the question of deciding how much classroom instruction should be primarily teacher-directed and how much student-centered. Sherry pointed out several times that she felt there should be a balance between the two types of instruction; she felt that there were times students should be provided with some structure, background information, and choices about what learning would interest them and how to demonstrate their learning. However, she believed there were also cases in which the students would not be able to learn what was needed just by hearing, "Here are the materials, go for it…" In addition, she expressed the belief that not every topic would be exciting or interesting to every person, and that the teacher therefore needed to take a more active role in directing learning so that students would all learn what was necessary:

> I think there are definitely some things that no one ever wants to learn but they're important, so you kind of have to structure them. I think you need to be open to what the students are interested in and what they want to do , but also make sure you're preparing them for the next grade level and for life.

The question of how strictly teachers should be required to adhere to state or school system-mandated frameworks or standards arose, and Sherry again advocated a balanced perspective toward these frameworks, noting the contrast she had observed in her previous placement schools, one of which was very "standard conscious" and devoted much time to rigorous preparation for state-mandated standardized tests, and one of which placed her with a teacher who did not even write down lesson plans. Again, while maintaining that some material simply needed to be taught to students whether they chose it or not, Sherry stated her belief that having to adhere too strictly to mandated curricula could limit a teacher's excitement and freedom, and that this could be communicated to students or affect them indirectly, and that teachers also needed to cover certain areas such as socialization skills which were often not included in official curricula. She also pointed out that if the teacher did use more constructivist or student-centered methods, the teacher needed to "really consider what you're valuing more" in assessing student learning, "because there are so many options of what the students can produce, and you have so much more to consider than if you're just doing a worksheet or a paper and pencil activity."

Sherry's beliefs on this dilemma were influenced partially by her own experience transitioning from an extremely structured, teacher-directed elementary school environment to a middle school in the Coalition of Essential Schools, a group of institutions guided by principles of constructivism, collaborative learning, and student choice and responsibility for learning, which Sherry liked to a certain extent although she disliked the heavy use of group work in her middle school since she felt one person in the group often did most of the work and others got the same grade. However, she had found

the transition between the two types of schools tricky, underlining her belief that in order to prepare students for future classrooms they should experience a variety of instructional methods so they are not prepared to function in only one type of learning environment.

Sherry also identified her college courses as an influence on her thinking as a teacher. She found that many of her courses did not offer useful practical guidance but were still helpful "because it gets you thinking about why you do or don't believe in something." However, he found one course especially helpful because rather than simply giving requirements or failing to explain why certain teaching strategies might be more appropriate in certain situations and others better in different contexts, the professor taught her class that:

> …don't do things just to do them. Know the reason behind it. Don't do this just because I gave it to you. Know your students, know why you're doing it, know how to adapt or change it to benefit…I think that's real important.

Sherry's final comment in the discussion was to agree with others in the group that decisions about teaching such as that addressed in that day's dilemma question were much more complex than most people realized.

On 3-28-03, I observed Sherry teach a lesson to her class and interviewed her afterward. The lesson was a combination of science and art during which she read the story *Frederick* by Leo Lionni to the class and then engaged them in an activity wherein they mixed water, colored with food coloring, on wax paper with droppers to experiment with mixing the colors. Sherry had been nervous and anxious about a few things when she prepared for the lesson: that the hands-on nature of the activity would inspire the students' enthusiasm too much and things might get out of control; that Ms. Darcy had been absent

the day before so Sherry did not have an opportunity to find out exactly what activities on this topic the students had already done; that the transitions during the lesson would be difficult to manage; that her worksheet might confuse the students; and in general that she wanted to do the lesson well and "prove" herself to Ms. Darcy. However, she reminded herself throughout the lesson that she was capable of making it successful, and by drawing on her experience working with children in her summer job (which she felt helped her to become confident, flexible and more assertive as a teacher) and other pre-practicum experiences, was able to relax and ultimately thought the lesson had gone smoothly and been a successful one for the students.

She was surprised that the students simply "took her word for it" that the three primary colors could be mixed and was glad they would have the opportunity to explore this in a hands-on way because "seeing it is so much more helpful, to actually see and do science, than to just read about it." This was a belief influenced by her science methods course, in which the professor allowed the class to try all the activities out from a student's perspective and realize the difference between learning science by doing and just being told about science.

Sherry commented several times that she was impressed at the students' engagement in the lesson and overall academic level, noting that she had used the vocabulary word "absorbed" and not thought of explaining the word until a student asked about it, prompting her to be grateful that these students were in the habit of quickly asking for clarification if they needed it, and that they had made many connections between the concept of mixing colors and other concepts involving color they had studied, such as the seasons and the senses. The students were also eager to volunteer to help their classmates

who needed assistance (though they sometimes had to be reminded to help their friends rather than simply do the activity for them). Noticing the students' engagement in the lesson and academic abilities prompted Sherry to wonder about the differences she observed between this class and others in which she had been placed, both in urban neighborhoods:

> I find myself so awestruck at the level they're at sometimes…I mean, I've seen them add. I didn't start adding until second grade, and I kind of wonder sometimes how much further behind they are at the other schools I taught at. I mean, some of my third graders last semester were struggling with basic addition skills…the kids here have already achieved at this level, where the kids over there are still struggling at the third grade level…there are times I wish I was here more, and could see more.

Finally Sherry discussed how helpful she had found talking to her fellow pre-practicum students, both about planning for her observed lessons and about classroom issues in general, and commented on the value for her own reflections she had found in the group dilemma discussions:

> The meetings can be so helpful, even if it's just someone confirming what you're seeing or thinking. Or even…it's so much more beneficial than some of the other pre-practicum requirements, because it eases your mind, and it brings up a lot of things that I wouldn't necessarily think about otherwise, and be like, 'oh wow, that's an interesting point, I wonder what people think about this…' And it's informal, and we all feel comfortable enough…I don't think anybody's ever feeling like, 'oh, I can't say what I want because of what other people might think.' I

mean I know that I completely trust these people not to have a problem with what I say, and I think the rest of the people feel the same way.

In Sherry's journal for week 6 (3-28-03), she reiterated some of the points she had made in the interview about her lesson, remarking especially that she had been more anxious about proving herself to Ms. Darcy than she had been in prior placements. Sherry was still having difficulty reconciling her disagreement with some of Ms. Darcy's practices, and her discomfort with Ms. Darcy's apparent lack of guidance for Sherry's required lessons, with her respect for Ms. Darcy as a teacher:

Although most of what I observe Ms. Darcy doing is great, the things that I disagree with make it really difficult for me to approach her and ask her why she decided to do what she did. I think I really wanted this lesson to go well so I could show Ms. Darcy that I knew what I was doing and could be trusted to take on more responsibility…Ms. Darcy seemed somewhat surprised and a little bit annoyed that I had to teach specific subjects to the students. She was not sure what would be good for either one of my lessons.

Finally Sherry attempted to resolve this issue by concluding that "after all I may not see eye to eye with some of Ms. Darcy's ways, but ultimately I am there for the students, both to teach them and to learn from them."

Sherry concluded her journal by describing how the students had been engaged in a system wherein they earned marbles in a jar for good behavior and had an opportunity to brainstorm and vote on rewards for filling the jar; she was pleased to see "a fun activity that reinforced positive behavior after such a difficult day last week with the disciplinary actions taken by the teacher."

In Sherry's journal for week 7 (4-4-03), she discussed how the day had gone well and she was enjoying her placement. Although she still had issues with some of Ms. Darcy's practices, Sherry balanced that against her feeling that she was "becoming comfortable and confident in her abilities," and continuing to "learn through both what I agree with and do not agree with."

Sherry began the day accompanying the class to art class, where students were making a picture of a healthy meal, including utensils; she was interested to see the differences in culture represented by details in the students' picture, including that of one Asian girl who asserted that she needed to draw chopsticks rather than a knife and fork. "I was surprised to see the art teacher taken aback by this comment," Sherry wrote, "because there is such a diverse background at this school I would have thought she would realize that some students were making Asian meals that required chopsticks."

Sherry spent considerable time working with Michael again this week, and she described her observations and interactions with him. She was pleased when a girl who spoke both Russian and English offered to assist Michael with an activity, but eventually the girl told Sherry that Michael couldn't do the activity without her, and that she was attempting to do it for him. Sherry was concerned and confused:

> First of all I had never seen this student help Michael before. Also, I wondered where she got this idea that Michael was not capable of doing things on his own. I am concerned about where this message is coming from and the potential damage it can do Michael. I sprang in and helped Michael with the rest of his work.
>
> In the activity the students were to draw a picture and write a sentence about it, and

Sherry learned that Michael had an impressive amount of knowledge about the desert (the subject of his picture) but that during this type of drawing/writing activity, he was often allowed to write only one word about his picture instead of a whole sentence. Sherry had Michael write an entire sentence word by word this time, "which was more of a problem only because he didn't think that he should have to write a whole sentence." Having noticed over the previous weeks Michael's fascination with numbers and knowing how many steps he needed to take before he could move on to another activity, Sherry encouraged Michael by having him count the number of words in his sentence and count off each one as he wrote it.

The day ended with a game of "Guess Who" – the children closed their eyes, one student silently left the room, and the others tried to guess who was missing. Sherry thought the children "loved" the game and that it helped built classroom community, but felt that it went on too long and "I got the feeling that they were just playing it because Ms. Darcy did not want to start something else, even though there was at least half an hour before the end of the day."

On 4-8-03, Sherry participated in the third group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was maintaining professional boundaries (a discussion following a viewing of a videotaped seminar on that topic, which also fulfilled another pre-practicum requirement). The first aspect of the topic on which Sherry commented was the degree of physical contact that should take place between a teacher and students, especially young children. Sherry felt that a teacher should never touch a student in a negative way, as in when disciplining the student ("I don't ever think that you should be touching kids, but I feel like especially today, where things can so quickly be misconstrued, you can get yourself into so

much trouble"). She was also uncomfortable even initiating positive physical contact with students, having learned through her summer job that there were strict guidelines about what kind of touching of students was appropriate. However, she felt it was often a sad situation when teachers were so hesitant to touch students, whether out of fear of the touching being misinterpreted as invasive or abusive or simply out of respect for the students' persona space, that children, especially young children, might not be receiving healthy expressions of affection and support from any adults:

> I think it's really sad that there are so many kids out there who aren't getting the attention and the affection that they need at home, and we're put in a position where we can't really give them what they need.

Sherry also noted that her kindergartners appeared to have a different type of boundary with the teacher than with their classroom aide, who they seemed more willing to approach for help and hugs.

Sherry then discussed experiences in her past, generally in middle and high school, when she noticed that boundary issues with her own teachers had caused her discomfort. She described having baby-sat for a teacher and although she ultimately became fairly close with that family, she felt "really weird and awkward" about it, especially when the teacher complained to her about school problems, wanting her to assist him in approaching the administration about those problems as the "student voice." Sherry had also had experiences wherein she worked in her high school office as an assistant to the vice principal, who treated her as more of a friend than a student and insisted on her calling him by his first name, and knew a young teacher who ended up marrying one of his former students. "That was bizarre, and so uncomfortable…" she recalled. "I can see how some

of my teachers with really bad boundaries could never accomplish anything in their classrooms."

On 4-10-03, I observed Sherry teach a second lesson and interviewed her afterward. Ms. Darcy had asked Sherry to do a lesson on the theme of cooperation, which posed some challenges for Sherry. First, she considered putting students on teams to cooperated on a task but did not want to engage them in a task that would involve them competing against each other. Second, she was concerned that Ms. Darcy's suggestion of simply having to sit silently and listen to a story would not engage them meaningfully in the concept; when Sherry suggested having the students come up with strategies collaboratively for solving a problem, Ms. Darcy expressed doubt that the students could do this. However, ultimately Sherry decided that "something at least where they could talk and communicate with each other would definitely help more, and I think they can get a little bit more out of it from trying to figure out together how to do it."

Finally she chose a group task in which she constructed a construction-paper stepping-stone "bridge" across the carpet and the students were required to come up with cooperative strategies for making it across the bridge. Sherry was anxious the night before her lesson, worrying that the students might argue or not want to cooperate, or that they wouldn't all get across the bridge when her main goal was just for them to see how cooperation could make that possible. The lesson went smoothly in Sherry's opinion; students encouraged each other to try different strategies and congratulated each other when they were successful. Dealing with Michael provided some challenges as usual, but Sherry felt that she had developed enough of a relationship with Michael to insist gently that he participate when he gave her his usual first response to a task, which was to say that

he could not do it. When Sherry was unsure whether the language barrier was preventing Michael from understanding the directions, she gave him time to process the directions and patiently provided him with cues to help him cross the bridge.

Sherry finally commented about how she had noticed what a fine line exists between facilitating and steering students in an activity and letting the students take control of the experience themselves. She had to constantly observe and assess how much structure and assistance to provide, which was complicated, but Sherry felt she had handled that ongoing challenge to the best of her ability:

> It's sometimes really difficult to know how much they hadn't realized. So I tried to see where they were going to take it, and if they needed more guidance, try to give them that, but I felt like they were doing pretty well. So I let them take it where they were going to take it, and kind of steered them when I thought they were getting too far off track.

In Sherry's final reflective essay (5-19-03), she discussed the topic of whether an achievement gap exists between urban and suburban students and if so, whether standards and standardized testing could be effective means of closing that gap. She first stated that "there is no doubt that there is a gap between suburban school achievement and urban school achievement," that this gap existed for many reasons, and that no one strategy was likely to "mend this gap."

Sherry first proposed that students in urban schools did not achieve at levels as high as students in suburban schools because urban schools "lack resources, often including effective teachers, and the belief that students can succeed, which suburban schools have." Sherry used her own observations in her placement schools as evidence for this, pointing

out that her suburban kindergarten students were already performing in math at a level higher than the urban third graders with whom she had worked; she also asserted that the urban schools she had seen were run-down, overpopulated, had few and outdated resources, and employed underqualified teachers who struggled with their students and an "attitude of defeat." Without funding and resources comparable to those of suburban schools, Sherry proposed, urban schools could not provide the same education to their students; even if high standards were implemented, schools with resources to purchase science kits, for example, would always outperform schools with no more materials than a chalkboard and paper. In addition to this, Sherry claimed that people's beliefs and assumptions about urban students were an important factor in the achievement gap:

> Unfortunately most people know that students from urban areas do not achieve at the same level as suburban students do…therefore teachers have lower expectations, believe they and their students can't succeed, and give up. Students who do not believe they can succeed generally do not succeed….many people believe that urban students are tough, rough and disrespectful, but this is far from the truth.

Sherry's opinion was that standards did have advantages, for they provided structure for teachers to know what to teach (she wrote that she was "terrified" of creating her own curriculum and standards "make the thought of having my own classroom a little bit less scary") and ensuring that teachers would cover such things as reading skills and basic math skills, "that must be taught." However, Sherry did not believe that standards should be followed so rigorously by teachers that they failed to consider individual

students' needs and interests, for she felt that students needed to be able to collaborate and have a sense of ownership in what they learn in order to succeed.

Sherry was not optimistic that standardized testing would be an effective strategy for closing the achievement gap and even expressed concern that high-stakes testing would be "very dangerous" and harm urban students. Having found her state-mandated exam for high school graduation "extremely difficult, and much too long," she felt that one test should not determine whether students graduated. Some children, Sherry wrote, were hindered in their test performance by anxiety, "and some children are just not good test takers; they may do wonderfully in class but that does not matter if they do not pass the exam."

Having "thought a great deal" and being saddened by the differences in resources between suburban and urban schools, Sherry had come to the conclusion that equalizing all schools' budgets and resources would be the best way to narrow the achievement gap. Unfortunately, however, Sherry wrote that besides the lack of school resources, urban students had different school environments and different lifestyles and the "playing field" between urban and suburban students might never actually be level:

> There is no way to know for sure that this will in fact narrow the gap. In education there are no guarantees. I believe it is a process of trial and error, of course prior knowledge and experience should be taken into account but it is still very much a guessing game.

The following sections of this case study will include a discussion of the types of dilemmas which Sherry encountered in her practice, an analysis of Sherry's reflective judgment level based on her written and spoken statements about those dilemmas, and a

discussion of how the processes of reflection employed in this study might have influenced

Sherry's reflective judgment development over the course of the semester.

<div align="center">*Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment*</div>

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of

three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by

Sherry during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which

Sherry appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or

actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Sherry's

epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely

operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level

suggested by Sherry's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Sherry's

engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Sherry's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: How can a teacher accommodate the needs of a group of students who

are culturally, racially, and/or linguistically diverse, functioning at different levels of

academic ability or achievement, and/or different types of learners?

Sherry began reflecting on this dilemma in her first journal entry (J1, 2-7-03), in

which she stated that her classroom population was made up of students with widely

diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and academic levels. She reported that nine

different primary languages were spoken by the students in her classroom. She wondered

how a teacher could meet the needs of such a diverse group of students. In reflecting on

this dilemma, Sherry articulated her belief that her job as a teacher was to understand the

needs of each student and that "when the needs are different, the practice is different." She

recalled how her own individual personality as a "nervous child" had influenced her experience in school and her belief that a teacher must take into account the unique characteristics and needs of students in order to help them succeed. She also resolved to watch how her cooperating teacher, Ms. Darcy, handled the diversity of the class and to learn more about the way in which Ms. Darcy designed and implemented IEP's for individual students.

Sherry revisited this dilemma later in her journal entry for week 4 (3-14-03) when she made observations about the manner in which Ms. Darcy structured Friday as a "catch-up" day for students to complete work they had not finished during the week. This process usually meant that different students were working on several different projects at once, many of them calling for the teacher's assistance frequently, and at first Sherry found this "somewhat crazy." She found herself uncomfortable with the idea of trying to keep track of where each student was in his or her work and trying to assist different students at different tasks simultaneously, and wrote that she would want to have the students' work time structured and their progress recorded in a more organized way. However, when prompted further about this beliefs concerning this method of instruction, Sherry responded in her second journal iteration that she had changed her point of view and now felt that this process of letting students work at their own pace, completing tasks to success without having to feel rushed to move on to something else or to wait for others when they were ready to move on, was an effective way to accommodate the various learning styles and ability levels of the class, even if it did present challenges in terms of managing the class as a whole. She reiterated this belief in the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03).

Sherry's approaches to the dilemma of how to accommodate the needs of a diverse group of students demonstrate patterns of thinking which are characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 2 or 3 (the end of the Pre-Reflective level) and Stage 4 (the beginning of the Quasi-Reflective level). During the data collection, Sherry may have been in the midst of transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking.

For example, Stage 3 thinkers are likely to rely heavily on authority figures or experts as sources of knowledge and on their own experiences to justify their beliefs. When Sherry noted the diversity in the classroom in terms of culture, language, and academic ability level, the first means of finding strategies for accommodating this diversity she identified was to resolve to observe the actions of her cooperating teacher, clearly an authority figure for Sherry in this context. Sherry also stated that her own experience as a "nervous child" and her memories of how her teachers had dealt with her had influenced her belief that a teacher needed to tailor her practice to the needs of the individual student. Individuals functioning at Stage 3 of the Reflective Judgment Model are also commonly uncomfortable and confused by uncertainty, and Sherry experienced this at first when she initially reacted to the "catch-up" time on Fridays. Having different students working on different tasks and all asking for help at once, without knowing how far each would progress on his or her assigned task, created an atmosphere of uncertainty concerning the activity in the classroom with which Sherry was uncomfortable, and her first assessment of this type of work time was that it was too hectic and inefficient.

However, Sherry also exhibited thinking characteristic of Stage 4, the beginning of the Quasi-Reflective level. As she resolved to learn more about how the school accommodated the wide linguistic diversity of its student population and how Ms. Darcy

implemented IEP's for students with special needs, Sherry commented that she was looking forward to learning how Ms. Darcy and other faculty at the school approached these issues. This indicates at least a professed willingness to re-examine her own viewpoint on the dilemma in light of new information and others' points of view, a characteristic of Stage 4 thinkers. In fact, after further reflection, Sherry did indeed state that she had changed her point of view concerning Friday "catch-up" time, which further supports the idea that she was willing to rethink her beliefs in light of new information. Sherry's revised opinion on "catch-up" time, that it was an efficient means of allowing students to work at their own paces despite the management and instructional challenges it presented, also indicated Stage 4 thinking, as it suggested a belief that there would be no simple way to resolve the dilemma of accommodating different ability levels in the classroom and that a complex and possibly more problematic strategy would be required to address the issue.

Dilemma 2: What is the most effective way for a teacher to plan instruction for students?

Sherry reflected on this dilemma mainly as a result of observing Ms. Darcy's planning practices and of having to design and implement her own lesson plans for the lessons she was required to be observed teaching for her pre-practicum. Sherry's first mention of this dilemma occurred in her journal entry for week 3 (2-28-03), when she observed Ms. Darcy's practice of teaching without writing up any lesson plans whatsoever ahead of time. Sherry quickly concluded that she believed this was not the most effective way to teach, although she was hesitant to openly judge Ms. Darcy for her lack of

planning, commenting that "Ms Darcy is an experienced teacher and this seems to work for her."

Sherry also described how she had confronted dilemmas of planning in both her post-observation interviews (Int 1, 3-28-03; Int 2, 4-10-03); she spoke of being anxious when planning because of her concerns about the hands-on or cooperative elements of the lessons possibly getting out of control, how the lesson she taught would fit in with what the students had already learned and would learn later, and how she would handle transitions during the lessons. Sherry noted that her beliefs about how she should plan her color mixing lesson had been influenced by her science methods course, which had fostered a belief in her that science needed to be taught through a hands-on approach (Int 1, 3-28-03). A final interesting point about Sherry's approach to this dilemma was that in determining how to plan her second lesson on cooperation, Sherry ultimately rejected the opinion of Ms. Darcy, who encouraged Sherry to present the lesson by talking or reading to the students and having them sit and listen only. Sherry did not take Ms. Darcy's advice, deciding instead to present the lesson in a way which would allow the students to communicate and relate more personally to the concept of cooperation (Int 2, 4-10-03), as she believed that letting the students work out a problem cooperatively would be a more valuable learning experience for them than sitting and listening to her talk about cooperation.

Sherry's approach to this dilemma also reflects a mix of thinking characteristic of reflective judgment levels 3 and 4. For example, Sherry experienced a great deal of anxiety when planning her lesson over her uncertainty about how the students would participate in the lesson, how she could successfully manage it, and whether they would

understand the concepts, and this was confusing and difficult for her. Becoming confused and overwhelmed in the face of a dilemma as complex as how to plan and implement a lesson (as any lesson is affected by myriad factors, some of which are unpredictable) is characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 3. Sherry also may have been exhibiting Stage 3 thinking when she acknowledged the authority of her science methods professor as a source of knowledge and an influence on her beliefs about teaching science in a hands-on way.

However, in addressing this dilemma, Sherry also demonstrated that she was engaged in thinking beyond the Pre-Reflective level. For example, when Sherry learned that Ms. Darcy did not keep a plan book, she formed her own point of view about this not being the most effective way to teach. Instead of simply accepting Ms. Darcy's practices as knowledgeable and appropriate simply because she could be considered an authority figure or expert, Sherry decided that Ms. Darcy's practices were in opposition to her beliefs about teaching and learning. This suggests an approach to authority typical of early Quasi-Reflective thinkers who, unlike Pre-Reflective thinkers, are sometimes cynical about the knowledge which comes from authority figures or regard their own opinions as equally valid as those of an expert.

This attitude toward authority was also demonstrated by Sherry's decision to use the lesson plan for teaching cooperation which she believed would be most beneficial rather than the one suggested by her cooperating teacher. (It is interesting to note that in addition to the simple fact that Sherry rejected the authority of Ms. Darcy as her primary source of knowledge about how the lesson should be taught, this could also have reflected a belief that the students themselves would learn more effectively by working the problem

out themselves than by accepting what Sherry, as an authority, told them about cooperation.)

Even when she disagreed strongly with Ms. Darcy's practices or suggestions, however, Sherry was reluctant to judge them as "wrong," pointing out instead that this method must work for Ms. Darcy, an experienced teacher. This is characteristic of Stage 4 thinkers, who believe that individuals' points of view are often the result of idiosyncratic factors and who are therefore hesitant to openly judge others' beliefs as right or wrong. This also occurs in individuals transitioning from Stage 3 to Stage 4, who sometimes believe that teachers engage in different methods because they have different "styles" which work for them as individuals, rather than because they have inquired into, evaluated, and chosen their practices based on evidence about which method is more appropriate.

Dilemma 3: How does disparity of economic resources between schools or school communities affect students' education, and what steps could be taken to remedy problems caused by this disparity?

In Sherry's first journal entry (2-7-03), she stated that she was "in awe" of the resources and facilities enjoyed by the students and faculty at School A, commenting that having extensive financial resources for materials and programs must make a difference in students' educational experience but speculating as well that the individual teacher "plays a large role in making up the difference" in schools where those types of resources are lacking. In her second journal entry, (2-14-03), Sherry continued to ask questions and reflect about the impact of financial resources, or the lack thereof, on students' education when she noticed that parental involvement seemed much a more integral part of the school community in School A than in an urban school with much more limited financial

resources in which she had been previously placed. Based on her observations at both schools, Sherry commented that she thought the socioeconomic status of the school community was a "large factor" in differences in parental involvement, stating that this was probably due to the fact that parents of a higher socioeconomic status probably worked at jobs where their employers were more understanding of their need to participate actively in their children's education. Sherry revisited this dilemma again when she reflected on the first observed lesson she taught, noting that she thought the academic levels of these suburban first grade students were as high as those of the urban third graders with whom she worked in her last field experience, wondered why this seemed to be the case, and wished she could learn more about this question (Int 1, 3-28-03).

Sherry dealt extensively with this dilemma in her final essay about the existence of an achievement gap between suburban and urban students, as she identified disparity of economic resources as the major factor causing this gap, which she asserted existed without a doubt (FE, 5-19-03). One of Sherry's main justifications for asserting that this gap existed and that economic disparity was the root cause of it was consideration of her own observations in two schools whose economic resources were vastly different and the impact she perceived that this had on the students' educational experience. Sherry made several strong statements about this in her essay, such as "Most people know that students from urban areas do not achieve at the same levels as suburban students do"; "I have seen that there is a very clear difference in what students in urban settings are being taught and what students in suburban schools are being taught"; "Students as well as teachers at the urban school have lower expectations"; "Many people believe that urban students are tough, rough and disrespectful, but this is far from the truth"; and "Students who do not

believe that they can succeed generally do not succeed." Sherry concluded that equalizing financial resources between schools had to be done in order if the achievement gap was to be closed, but also admitted that she believed there was no one sure strategy to close the gap and that "there is no way to know for sure" if any strategy would definitely succeed. Sherry asserted that there were "no guarantees" in education, that she considered resolving dilemmas such as this one "a process of trial and error" and "very much a guessing game."

Sherry's approach to this dilemma reflects a hint of Pre-Reflective thinking, as exemplified by her strong reliance on her own observations in two different schools as evidence that an achievement gap existed between suburban and urban schools and that economic disparity was the chief cause of this gap. However, most of Sherry's statements with regard to this dilemma demonstrate early Quasi-Reflective thinking. Sherry's questions about why she was observing such a difference in suburban and urban schools show a professed openness to new information that might influence her point of view. In addition to this, Sherry's final essay clearly shows a belief that knowledge about the educational process is uncertain and that there exist complex dilemmas for which no simple solutions exist. This is typical of Stage 4 thinkers and shows that she has taken an important step in moving on from the Pre-Reflective belief that the knowledge necessary to resolve such a dilemma is certain and accessible or only temporarily uncertain. Sherry even states when debating this dilemma that it may never be possible to know for sure whether any given strategy is the best way to resolve the achievement gap, an assumption which is more typical of Stage 5 thinkers. However, most of Sherry's statements still reflect early Quasi-Reflective thinking, as her approach to justifying her beliefs about the dilemma are often idiosyncratic and she tends to equate her personal beliefs with evidence,

such as when she speculates about why parents in higher-paying jobs might be more likely to be involved in the school community and uses her assumptions about what "most people know," what "many people believe," and what "there is no doubt" about to justify her belief about the impact of economic disparity on the academic achievement of urban students.

Dilemma 4: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Sherry dealt with this dilemma primarily in the context of the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), which posed the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order to successfully manage the class, but she also encountered the dilemma in her actual practice, particularly during week 5 (3-21-03) when she experienced strong internal conflict over Ms. Darcy's handling of several disciplinary issues. In the first group discussion (3-19-03), Sherry somewhat advocated a philosophy of balance in the way in which a teacher should design and implement a system for managing a classroom. The teacher, Sherry stated, needed to set up the structure, routine and expectations for the class and step in to take charge if disciplinary situations or interpersonal conflicts got "out of control," but could deal with specific situations according to circumstances and the needs of individual students in order to help unique students succeed in the classroom and learn to be accountable for their own behavior. The teacher did not have to be the "authoritarian of the class" or make students afraid to make the mistakes which children naturally do, but should make an effort to treat each child fairly in terms of what the child needed at the time. Sherry based much of her point of view on the observations she had made in her placement classrooms and her previous

experiences working with students in a summer program but noted that it was also influenced by her college coursework (although she pointed out that she accepted what her professors told her about management with a grain of salt because, as she said, "things don't always go the way they say it will in the book").

Sherry's philosophy of management was also influenced by some personal beliefs which she appeared to regard as evidence. For example, she stated that it was especially important to set up a "common ground" of behavioral expectations in a classroom where students came from many different cultural backgrounds because they would experience different kinds of expectations at home. (This may be true, of course, but she did not provide evidence for this and it could be equally true that students from similar cultural backgrounds might still be held by parents or guardians to widely different behavioral expectations at home.) Sherry also justified her stance on management on the belief that if given the right encouragement, students would help each other improve their behavior because ultimately students wanted to see each other succeed (again, this could be true, but her statement was based on personal opinion rather than reasoned inquiry into evidence about children's behavior or typical patterns of interpersonal dynamics in a classroom).

This dilemma was brought to the forefront for Sherry and described by her in her journal entry for week 5 (3-21-03). Sherry was very uncomfortable with the way Ms. Darcy had yelled at a student because he did not follow her directions about what to do with the picture he had made in art class and with the way Ms. Darcy had confronted a student accused of hitting another child in a manner Sherry considered harsh, humiliating, and too public. This led Sherry to reflect on her beliefs about how Ms. Darcy should have handled the situation and to state strongly her belief that students should not be yelled at or

humiliated in class. Sherry based her statements on her observations of the impact of Ms. Darcy's actions on the students and on her memories of her own school experience, commenting on how difficult and upsetting such an incident would have been to her as a child. However, even as Sherry wrote about her strong feeling that Ms. Darcy had behaved inappropriately, she was reluctant to criticize Ms. Darcy too harshly, mentioning that Ms. Darcy had not been feeling well and could have just been having a bad day.

Sherry's approach to this dilemma shows vestiges of a Pre-Reflective approach but also several elements of more sophisticated Quasi-Reflective thinking. For example, Sherry's first instinct was to regard the teacher as the individual who needed to make sure things did not get "out of control" in the classroom, which indicates at least some tendency to regard the authority figure as the source of knowledge and direction in the classroom; however, her comment that the teacher did not need to be "the authoritarian" indicated that she was moving away from the belief that authority was the primary source for this knowledge and control of the classroom environment. Sherry also exhibited Pre-Reflective thinking to a certain degree when she based her beliefs on discipline and management strongly on her personal observations and experiences, but she also tried to incorporate evidence about the impact of diverse cultural backgrounds on the management needs of a class and about students' desire in general to help each other succeed in the classroom. While it is true that Sherry's statements on those points were really equations of personal belief to evidence rather than arguments based on reasoned inquiry and evaluation of evidence (another characteristic of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective, thinking), her attempt to justify her opinion with what she regarded as evidence showed that she was beginning to see that her point of view needed to be established with

justification more substantive than simple observation, deference to authority or the attitude that any point of view is equally as valid as any other.

Sherry demonstrated other patterns of thought associated with early Quasi-Reflective thinking as well. In stating that a teacher needed to allow for different circumstances and unique personalities of students when deciding how to deal with disciplinary issues fairly, for example, Sherry showed that she was beginning to work under the assumption that there were dilemmas to which no simple solutions existed, an important departure from Pre-Reflective thinking in which knowledge is considered certain and problems considered generally solvable with a "best" solution. (This even demonstrated a hint of Stage 5 or late Quasi-Reflective thinking, as Sherry could have been indicating that she believed that an individual's point of view – in this case the teacher's approach to dealing with a student – was embedded in the context in which the problem arose.)

As is also the case with Quasi-Reflective thinkers, Sherry also exhibited a certain cynicism or disappointment with the knowledge provided by authority figures when she asserted that "things don't always go the way they say it will in the book" and when she ultimately rejected the disciplinary practices of Ms. Darcy, obviously an important authority figure in Sherry's student teaching experience. While Sherry might have been showing Pre-Reflective thinking in relying heavily on her memories of her school experience as a child to influence her beliefs about what Ms. Darcy had done, she also appeared to be acknowledging this personal interpretation or bias about the incidents she had observed, which is another characteristic of Stage 4 thinking, as is reluctance to judge

others' beliefs as definitively right or wrong, which Sherry experienced even when she felt

that Ms. Darcy's actions had been in opposition to her beliefs.

    Dilemma 5: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction?

    Most of Sherry's statements concerning this dilemma occurred in the context of group dilemma discussion 2 (3-25-03) during which this dilemma was presented as the topic for discussion, but she also encountered and spoke about the dilemma in her second journal entry (2-14-03), second post-observation interview (4-10-03), and final essay (5-19-03). Sherry's first encounter with this dilemma occurred when she observed the class Valentine-making activity (2-14-03). Sherry felt that although Ms. Darcy "did a nice job," she had designed the art project in a manner that was too rigid, restricting students' creativity and limiting their sense of ownership of the project.

    In group discussion 2 (3-19-03), Sherry first remarked that although she felt a teacher should strive for a balance between teacher-directed and student-centered instruction, there were always going to be certain "things that no one ever wants to learn but they're important, so you kind of have to structure them" in order for students to be prepared "for the next grade and for life." Sherry also commented, when the discussion turned to the topic of whether highly structured standards and curricula should be utilized in order to ensure that each student was exposed to the same material in the same grade, that having to adhere rigidly to such standards would probably limit the teacher's sense of control and enthusiasm for teaching, which would be communicated to the students, indirectly affecting their educational experience as well. (Interestingly, when dealing with this topic again in her final essay (5-19-03), Sherry reiterated her belief that overly rigid

standards of curriculum could limit the freedom of teachers and students to engage in meaningful learning. However, she also admitted that she found the idea of a standardized curriculum grounded in traditional teacher-directed instruction comforting because she was "terrified" at the idea of having to form her own curriculum and the thought of standards "makes the thought of having my own classroom a little less scary.")

Sherry acknowledged that her views about teacher-directed and student-centered learning were influenced by experience moving from a highly structured elementary school to a highly constructivist middle school, a transition which had been difficult for her, and by her college coursework. Sherry stated that she especially appreciated the guidance of professors in her coursework who would "get you thinking about why you do or don't believe something" rather than simply telling the class which strategies were the most effective for teaching.

Sherry also reflected on this dilemma when she considered her observed lessons, especially in her second post-observation interview (4-10-03), when she stated that the experience had made her realize what a "fine line" existed between steering and facilitating students' learning through the lesson and allowing them to take control of the cooperation activity. It had been difficult to know when she should step in and redirect students when their strategies for crossing the bridge were clearly not going to work and when she should let them figure this out on their own and learn from it. Sherry found herself having to engage in a continual process of observation and decision-making about how much guidance to provide, and she found this challenging and complicated.

Sherry's approach to this dilemma shows some Pre-Reflective (mainly Stage 3) thinking and also early Quasi-Reflective (Stage 4) thinking. In some cases, Sherry's

statements reflected an assumption that knowledge was certain, concrete, and could be discretely transmitted, such as when she said that there was certain knowledge in which students might never be interested, but needed to know nonetheless and it was the teacher's responsibility to provide them with that material. Sherry also conveyed a strong sense of confusion with uncertainty and discomfort with complex dilemmas, a characteristic of Stage 3, when she spoke about being "terrified" at having to go into a classroom where there was no highly structured curriculum to follow. However, most of Sherry's statements on this dilemma reveal Quasi-Reflective thinking.

When Sherry made her judgment about Ms. Darcy's Valentine activity, she was able to form a point of view clearly different from that of the authority figure in the classroom, Ms. Darcy, which is more a characteristic of Quasi-Reflective than Pre-Reflective thinking. She refrained from overtly criticizing Ms. Darcy's practice as right or wrong, also a trait of Quasi-Reflective thinkers, who tend to accept idiosyncratic justification for decisions and have difficulty judging one point of view as better than another. While relying heavily on her personal experience transitioning from elementary to middle school might be a Pre-Reflective way to form a point of view, Sherry also may have been indicating that she recognized that this experience could have contributed to a bias on the issue, a Quasi-Reflective characteristic, as is equating personal beliefs with evidence in justifying a point of view, something which Sherry did when she made statements about the potential for rigid standards to affect teachers' and therefore students' attitudes to the curriculum. (This may be true, but Sherry did not substantiate it with evidence, merely stating the belief as if it were fact.) Sherry similarly exhibited Stage 4 thinking when she spoke of her appreciation of professors who would "get you thinking

about why you do or don't believe something," as this suggests at least a professed willingness to re-examine her own point of view in light of new evidence and the beliefs of others, and when she noted how complicated the "fine line" was between guiding student learning and allowing them to take control and progress in their own way with a learning experience, indicating that she believed that there was no simple, readily accessible solution for that dilemma.

Dilemma 6: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Sherry dealt with this dilemma continuously, mainly as she attempted to integrate herself into the students' learning environment in a meaningful way which would allow both her students and herself to learn, and when she was confronted with the striking differences between her beliefs and some of Ms. Darcy's practices. In group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), Sherry first expressed her anxiety about filling her role in the classroom because she felt she did not know quite where to step in when situations arose with students or how far to take the responsibility for guiding their learning or resolving conflicts when she did step in. Taking on the role of the authority figure in the classroom rather than that of a friend was tricky, Sherry commented, but it was important to know how to do this so that students "don't walk all over you." Sherry said that she felt more guidance from her cooperating teacher would help her to be better prepared for this challenge. Sherry also expressed confusion about her role in her first post-observation interview (3-28-03) and sixth journal entry (3-28-03) when she spoke about wanting to

conduct a well-taught lesson in order "prove" herself to Ms. Darcy and hopefully be entrusted with more responsibility in the classroom.

One of the most prevalent recurring conflicts with which Sherry struggled was the experience of finding that she strongly disagreed with many of her cooperating teacher's practices. This was a difficult and confusing situation for Sherry. Sherry often dealt with this by reflecting on why she believed Ms. Darcy had made errors in judgment or followed inappropriate practices but not blaming or overtly judging Ms. Darcy in the process. For example, in journal 2 (2-14-03) Sherry wrote that she would have gone about designing and carrying out the Valentine-making project in a different way in order to allow the students more freedom and creativity, but she still wrote that Ms. Darcy had done "a very nice job with the activity." In journal 3 (2-28-03), Sherry expressed a strong belief that teaching without any written plans, as Ms. Darcy did, was not an effective way to teach, but she still conceded that "Ms. Darcy is an experienced teacher and this method seems to work for her." During week 5 (3-21-03) Sherry was seriously upset by Ms. Darcy's handling of several discipline situations, so she reflected about why she did not think Ms. Darcy had taken the appropriate action but still allowed for the possibility that Ms. Darcy had only behaved this way because she was not feeling well or been having a bad day. In journal 6 (3-28-03) Sherry revisited this dilemma again, noting that "most of what I observe Ms. Darcy doing is great" but admitting that she was uncomfortable approaching Ms. Darcy to ask questions about her practice when she had done something in opposition to Sherry's beliefs. Sherry made a final comment about this in her seventh journal entry (4-4-03), writing that although she did not always agree with what Ms. Darcy did, she could "learn through both what I agree with and do not agree with."

Sherry's approach to this dilemma shows some Pre-Reflective but mainly Quasi-Reflective thinking. Sherry's anxiety and confusion about how active a role to take in the classroom and what particular action she should take reflect a discomfort with certainty that is characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinkers; her desire for guidance from her cooperating teacher and her need to avoid having students "walk all over her" also suggest that there were points at which she still considered an authority figure to be an important source of knowledge whose power and expertise should be respected. However, a strong theme in many of Sherry's written and spoken statements about Ms. Darcy was that she was able to articulate a point of view about her practice which was clearly different from that of Ms. Darcy, an expert and authority figure in the classroom, but was not prepared to openly judge Ms. Darcy's beliefs and practices as right or wrong. This is very characteristic of Stage 4 thinkers, who have progressed to a point in their view of authority which allows them to reject the opinion of an expert if it conflicts with their beliefs, but who allow for highly idiosyncratic justification of beliefs in others and consider personal "styles" of teaching to be acceptable grounds for different beliefs about practice.

In addition to this, Sherry's statement about "learning through both what I agree with and do not agree with" suggests that she was at least outwardly willing to re-examine her point of view in light of new information and the beliefs of others. (She may not actually have done so; in fact, observing Ms. Darcy's practices may have served only to reaffirm Sherry's beliefs rather than challenge them. However, it is the declaration of willingness to examine one's point of view in this manner, not necessarily the sophisticated ability to carry out that goal, which characterizes Stage 4 thinking.)

Dilemma 7: What if the dilemma itself is a student? How can a teacher resolve the dilemma of helping a student succeed when that student appears to face many complicated and serious challenges to academic progress and performance at once, or it is not clear which issue is causing him or her difficulty?

Sherry's experience working with Michael represented her main encounter with this dilemma. Sherry spent a great deal of time assisting Michael with classroom tasks and reflected on his progress in several journal entries and her second post-observation interview. She described her first experience with Michael in her journal for week 3 (2-28-03). In trying to assist Michael with a rhyming activity, Sherry found that she and Michael both became frustrated. It was difficult for Sherry because she could not tell how much of Michael's difficulty was because of the language barrier, as his primary language was Russian, or how much was due to his possibly not understanding the concept of rhyming. Sherry handled the situation as best she could, observing that Michael had a tendency to rush through the work and holding onto his materials until he needed them in order to try to keep him focused, reinforcing the directions for him, and helping him to remember and pronounce the words on the worksheet, but she still noticed that he was extremely frustrated with the activity.

The following week, Sherry assisted Michael with a sequencing activity, noting again that "it is very difficult to tell whether Michael really needs help or when he is just frustrated" (3-14-03) and trying strategies for breaking down and simplifying the task as they occurred to her. When she spoke to Ms. Darcy after working with Michael that day, she did not accept Ms. Darcy's opinion that Michael was capable of the completing the

work on his own but simply "playing" Sherry for extra attention, and she resolved to keep looking for strategies to help him succeed.

Sherry revisited this dilemma again in her seventh journal entry (4-4-03), when she described stepping in to assist Michael when a classmate who had been helping him reported that Michael had said he could not complete the activity without her, and she was therefore doing the work for him. Concerned that Michael might be developing (or projecting) an attitude that he was not capable of completing his work or succeeding in school, Sherry worked with him once again, using what she had observed about his behavior and personality (such as the fact that he liked counting down what he had to get done) and her beliefs about his ability (in this case, that he was able to write an entire sentence to describe his picture just like the rest of the students in the class) to help her come up with strategies to assist him. Similarly, when Sherry conducted her second observed lesson, she reported in her post-observation interview (4-10-03) that she decided to insist gently on Michael's participation because she had noticed that his first response to a task was often to say that he couldn't do it.

Sherry's approach to this dilemma shows both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective patterns of thought. For example, Sherry was very uncomfortable with her uncertainty about what specific issues were hindering Michael, and this made it difficult to proceed with helping him with his work. The feeling of being highly confused by uncertainty and overwhelmed by the complexity of a dilemma is typical of Pre-Reflective thinkers, as is the practice of making tentative decisions according to what "feels right" in order to resolve a problem, which Sherry did when she thought of strategies on the spur of the moment to help Michael understand his tasks. However, Sherry also exhibited Quasi-

Reflective thinking when she rejected the opinion of an authority, Ms. Darcy, who said that

Michael did not really need Sherry's help and was just trying to get extra attention from

her. Instead of accepting this, Sherry reflected that she needed to keep looking for

strategies to help him succeed, indicating either a Pre-Reflective view that the knowledge

to resolve this dilemma was only temporarily uncertain or the more Quasi-Reflective view

that perhaps there was indeed no simple solution to this dilemma but that she still needed

to look at new information and consider different strategies in order to resolve it.

Summary of Sherry's Reflective Judgment Level

The spoken and written statements made by Sherry in her data reveal that she

appeared to exhibit thinking patterns characteristic of a range of reflective judgment levels

over the semester, exemplifying the transition from Pre-Reflective thinking to Quasi-

Reflective thinking. This is consistent with research on the Reflective Judgment Model

which suggests that individuals generally function within a range of reflective judgment

levels (King & Kitchener, 1994), and indicates that Sherry's reflective judgment level was

probably between 3 and 4, the level identified in the research literature as the average level

for a traditional-aged college junior (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

During the data collection period, Sherry made several statements demonstrating thinking

which was grounded in the Pre-Reflective level, in which individuals assume that

knowledge exists with certainty (or temporary uncertainty), that it can be transmitted

concretely, and that knowledge could be obtained and justified through direct observation

and via authority figures or experts. However, there were also instances in which Sherry

made statements that were was characteristic of Stage 4, the beginning stage of Quasi-

Reflective thinking, in which individuals perceive knowledge to be uncertain, consider

some problems as more complex and requiring a reasoned process of justification (though they may actually justify knowledge through idiosyncratic means or inconsistent use of evidence), and regard authority figures as individuals with points of view rather than absolute sources of knowledge to be accepted without question.

Based on this analysis, we can conclude that during the data collection period, Sherry was functioning at a level fairly typical for college juniors, one in which she exhibited characteristics of both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking; therefore, she was likely engaged in a dynamic, though not necessarily directly linear, transition from one level to the next. As Sherry was functioning at the transitional level between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking, she was not generally able to expand her process of justification to include objective inquiry into complex issues and examination and evaluation of evidence, using instead more idiosyncratic means to justify her beliefs. However, the fact that she was beginning to regard knowledge as uncertain and to see some problems as complex dilemmas indicates that she was in the midst of a significant evolution in her views about knowledge and her approach to resolving dilemmas.

Notes on the Reflective Process

In order to understand how we as teacher educators can more effectively support preservice teachers as they learn to negotiate ill-defined dilemmas of practice, it would be informative to examine how the process of reflection on their field experiences could be stimulating their reflective judgment development. Three main points about Sherry's process of reflection through her student teaching experience stood out as possible indicators that the reflective process in which she was engaged was contributing to her reflective judgment development. These are: (1) the recurrence of particular dilemmas in

her reflections at various points during the semester, (2) the comparative depth of reflection in her responses to journal prompts as compared to her initial journal entries, and (3) the value which she placed on having opportunities to discuss dilemmas of practice with her peers and supervisor in an informal, comfortable setting.

First of all, as noted in the first section of this case analysis, certain dilemmas presented themselves repeatedly throughout the semester. There were numerous instances, for example, in which Sherry revisited dilemmas related to such issues as her role as a student teacher (Group Discussion 1, Interview 1, Journal 6, Group Discussion 3) and her conflicted feelings about Ms. Darcy's practices (Journal 3, Journal 4, Journal 5, Journal 6, Journal 7), the question of how to help a student such as Michael succeed despite many challenging issues (Journal 3, Journal 4, Journal 5, Journal 7), concerns about balancing her guidance of students during instruction with allowance for student creativity and exploration (Journal 2, Interview 1, Group Discussion 2, Interview 2, Final Essay), and the question of economic disparity between schools and its effect on student achievement (Journal 1, Journal 2, Interview 1, Final Essay). It is possible that the semester-long process of revisiting issues based on what she observed in the classroom and continual reflection and reexamination of her beliefs about those issues could have contributed to Sherry's growth in the area of reflective judgment. This is consistent with research literature discussed in Chapter II which suggests that continual and structured opportunities for reconsideration of the factors influencing one's beliefs could foster reflective judgment development, for the more an individual thinks about a dilemma in light of experiences and different points of view, the more likely he or she probably is to evolve in his or her way of

approaching those types of dilemmas (Cicala, 1997; Kitchener, Jensen, & Wood, 1998; Kitchener et al, 1998, Thompson, 1995).

The second factor which might have influenced Sherry's reflective judgment development was the process of responding to specific prompts about dilemmas, particularly in the context of her dialogue journal entries. Sherry turned in seven journal entries, five of which ultimately included responses to prompts by the supervisor about her experiences and beliefs. Sherry's initial entries tended to be highly descriptive, simply telling what she had seen in the classroom and sometimes simply expressing a general feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction about her day in the classroom. However, when prompted for deeper reflections about what she had observed, her responses became more detailed, more complex, and much more enlightening concerning how she was approaching the dilemmas and why she believed what she did about teaching and learning. This may have been due to the nature of the prompts themselves or the simple fact that Sherry was given the time and opportunity to revisit the issues she found meaningful in a thoughtful, reflective way. However, the fact that this occurred several times through the course of the data collection period indicates that the process of responding to questions about her initial reflections on her classroom experience should be identified as suggesting a potential influence on Sherry's thinking and development.

Several examples of this were evident in Sherry's data. For instance, in Journal 2 (2-14-03), Sherry discussed the high level of parent involvement she had observed in School A, noted that this was a change from what she had observed in previous placement schools, and commented that she found it "refreshing" to see the parents at School A participating so intensively in their children's education. However, it was not until after

Sherry was prompted about her beliefs on this topic that she began considering the possible impact of the parents' socioeconomic level on their level of school involvement or articulating some of her assumptions about this issue, such as her belief that children of lower socioeconomic status needed parental support more but were less likely to receive it. In Journal 3 (2-28-03), Sherry reported learning that Ms. Darcy kept no written plans for teaching, but she did not express her own belief that this was an ineffective practice until prompted. In Journal 4 (3-14-03), Sherry described her impression of the "catch-up" time she observed on Fridays and gave only her initial impression of this process as being hectic and possibly unproductive. However, when prompted about her beliefs on this practice, she reflected on strategies she might use to make it more constructive and even adjusted her view slightly to accommodate her belief that students need to be given opportunities to progress at their own pace, even if this presented management challenges for the teacher. In Journal 6 (3-28-03), Sherry reiterated thoughts about her discomfort with some of Ms. Darcy's practices and behavior, generally focusing on simply reporting Ms. Darcy's apparent annoyance with the requirements placed on her by the university for Sherry's field experience and mentioning her emotional reaction to Ms. Darcy's behavior toward her, but when prompted, Sherry was able to reflect more deeply on how being presented with practices in opposition to her beliefs might actually be a useful method for re-examining and refining her own philosophy of teaching.

Finally, one very telling quote from Sherry's first post-observation interview (Interview 1, 3-28-03) reveals that the social interaction and discussion that occurred about dilemmas of practice in the group dilemma discussions was a highly valuable element of the reflective process for Sherry. She found that being able to discuss her experiences and

beliefs in a trusting, non-threatening environment where she was supported and yet also exposed to different points of view and questions about her beliefs was a significant contributor to her ability to understand what she experienced and learn to look at dilemmas in different ways. This also supports research on the Reflective Judgment Model suggesting that engaging college discussion about ill-structured dilemmas and the ways in which students approach them can stimulate their reflective judgment development (Cicala, 1997; Kitchener, Jensen, & Wood, 1998; Kitchener et al, 1998, Thompson, 1995).

Case Study 3: Katie

Part A: Description of Case

Katie is a Caucasian female who was 21 years old at the time of this study and a college junior with a double major in Elementary Education and Human Development and minor in Special Education. She is originally from the northeastern United States, where she resides with her parents and younger sister, and enjoys sports, especially softball and water polo. She cited positive experiences working with children in a summer camp and the influence of her mother, a Physical Education teacher, as factors in her decision to become a teacher. She stated that her philosophy of teaching had been influenced by her professors in college, who gave her information and strategies to help her teach successfully, and by her field experiences, in which she learned to put theory into practice and developed the desire to teach in an inner city school. "Through my field experiences," Katie wrote in her autobiographical sketch for this study, "I have been able to form my educational philosophy and my continual inquiry practices will allow for constant reflection as a teacher. For her third pre-practicum experience, in which she participated during this study, Katie was placed in a first grade classroom at School A, a public elementary school in the suburbs of a large northeastern city. (*All biographical information provided by Katie via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-23-03.*)

In her journal entry for week 1 of her placement (2-9-03), Katie noted that she had been previously placed in School A for her first pre-practicum, during which she also worked with a first grade class. She described the cooperating teacher with whom she had worked as a new young female teacher who brought lots of new ideas to her practice, and Katie admitted that she thought she had learned a lot about the school from that field

experience but that "I found this week though, that much of what I had already thought was a little different."

Katie's cooperating teacher for this field experience was indeed very different from the one with whom she had worked, first of all. Katie described Mr. Redman as older, with many years of teaching experience and a practiced routine, and she noticed the many projects and natural materials displayed in his room, feeling that "his room and his nature reeks maturity, experience, and success." Katie felt that the students were positively affected by Mr. Redman's personality, experience, and teaching ability:

It was incredible how different the levels of intelligence the students had in Mr. Redman's class as compared to the first grade class I had last year. I am left wondering does years of experience really make that big of a difference? To be honest now that I have seen the difference, I am scared to be a first year teacher.

Katie also considered this new group of first graders to be "more advanced" than the students she had taught in her second pre-practicum, third graders at an urban elementary school, noting that these young children were able to divide, write full sentences, and sit and listen well. It was difficult for her to pinpoint the differences but she felt that these children somehow seemed "better off" than both the groups of students with whom she had been previously placed. Katie asked many questions about this, wondering whether other first graders did indeed perform as well as this group seemed to, whether this group had fewer emotional problems than she had observed in her other first grade class, and if so, how much of an impact the individual teacher had on these issues. She concluded she would have to "wait and learn…I am very interested to see if I can answer these strategies

somewhere down the road. I am waiting to be shown some of the strategies of a master teacher."

Katie's final comments in her journal were to note that her class was made up mostly of Caucasian students and a few who appeared to be Asian American, to observe that several class parents brought their children into the classroom and worked math problems with them in the morning, and to briefly wonder whether the socioeconomic status of this school community had an effect on the children's education. (Katie did not submit a second iteration of this journal entry in response to supervisor prompts.)

In Katie's journal entry for week 2 (2-20-03), she reported that seven out of the 20 students in the class were out sick, which made for a very "calm and subdued" atmosphere in the classroom but that the children still appeared eager to learn. The rest of Katie's journal entry was a discussion of the school's mission statement (a topic suggested by the official pre-practicum syllabus). Katie wrote that the school's mission was articulated as the mission to educate students to become responsible adults capable of contributing to the quality of life in a free and changing society, and that it placed high value on community support, talented faculty, parental involvement and fostering lifelong learning. When asked whether the faculty all seemed aware of the school's mission statement, put it into practice, and why that would be important for a faculty, Katie said that it did not appear to her that the faculty had more than a cursory knowledge of the mission statement itself but did appear to put its values into practice. She felt that faculty should be aware of the mission statement and critically think about it in order to meet their goals, as being part of a faculty "implicitly forces you" to follow the mission statement.

When asked elements of the mission statement which she observed being carried out in practice, Katie wrote that the school did communicate its commitment to fostering pride in the rich diversity of the school community by creating an open atmosphere, reaching out to newcomers, providing bilingual education and specialists in many languages; she had also witnessed students translating for each other and helping each other. She also noticed a particularly strong parents presence in the school, in keeping with the mission statement, and felt the parents were playing "an active role" in their children's learning, both in the classroom and at school functions. When asked how the parent presence in School A seemed different from that of the urban public school in which she had previously been placed and what she believed might account for the differences, she reflected:

At (*previous school*) you never saw parents unless there was a problem with the child. I think this difference accounts to the environment and family settings. There, a lot of my students lived with adults other than their birth parents. Many live in situations where the guardians are just getting by, as compared to the parents here. I think because of this the parents there were often working during the school hours and were unable to make flexible schedules as these parents can. I think these are most definitely my assumptions, but I wouldn't doubt that this has much to do with it. I do think that as parents though, all of them care for their children and their well being but often show it in different ways.

Katie's journal entry for week 3 (3-3-03) dealt primarily with her observations about the reading program she observed in her placement classroom (structured reading groups using textbooks or readers) and a comparison of this program with what she had

seen in her last placement (leveled Guided Reading groups using trade books and focusing on decoding, comprehension, and learning strategies). Katie wrote that she found merit but also drawbacks to each type of program.

First, she believed Guided Reading was possibly a less efficient means for helping lower-level readers succeed than the reading groups she observed at School A. "This system, from what I have seen," she wrote, "has proven to provide these first graders with more knowledge in the reading area. The students read at the same level as the third graders at my other school and have a better understanding of comprehension in most cases." When asked how she made this conclusion, Katie wrote that seeing the reading theory behind both programs in practice in her placement classrooms allowed her to see and evaluate the differences between them.

However, Katie also felt that there were elements of Guided Reading which could benefit the reading group work she observed in Mr. Redman's class, such as use of trade books, knowledge of literature, and reading strategies. In her own classroom, Katie wrote, she would attempt to create a "balanced literacy program using both of these methods," which led her to reflect that this issue reminded her of the debate between proponents of whole language reading instruction and highly phonics-based reading instruction. When prompted further on this issue, Katie stated her belief that a teacher should "stay in the middle of the two extremes" rather than simply utilize whichever strategy was most fashionable in the teaching profession at the moment, becoming knowledgeable in all practices and knowing her students well in order to fit the needs of particular students with specific aspects of the programs. She felt a teacher needed to research all possible methods and consult master teachers with lots of experience:

Even if you get people on the other side of the argument who feel strongly, you can ask their opinions to what the most important aspects are…I think that it is best if we as teachers don't get swept away by the new while forgetting the old, but instead take into consideration everything that is out there.

In Katie's journal entry for week 4 (3-17-03) she noted that things were "going well" in her placement and described an event that day in which teachers and parents had collaborated to create a Japanese Girls Day celebration involving songs, artifacts, authentic Japanese snacks and a doll-making activity. Katie was impressed with the collaboration and parent involvement and thought it was "a great way to do a culture study in an exciting manner." However, most of her entry dealt with her experience leading a reading group by herself, an occurrence which both nurtured her confidence in her teaching but also left her unsure about the expectations placed on her by Mr. Redman.

Mr. Redman asked Katie to work with a reading group in the hallway (for quiet and privacy) but gave her little specific direction on what processes to follow, so she used her previous experiences in Guided Reading groups to help her think of productive questions to ask to help the students understand vocabulary, make predictions about the text, interpret the illustrations, and make connections to other texts and themselves. Katie felt the students were responding well to her direction and understanding the text successfully. However, when she brought the group back to the classroom she was "a little confused" to find that Mr. Redman had been expecting her to assign the group reading homework, which she had not realized and had not done. When asked to elaborate on how this experience had affected her, Katie wrote:

I was taken aback because I was never directed to do this and I didn't think this was my job, nor was I the right person to do this. I was surprised that he would expect me to do this task when I wasn't told to do so. I felt bad for the rest of the day that I had done something wrong, but every time I thought about it I kept thinking, how would I now to do this or what to even tell them to do? I thought that was up to the authority of the real classroom teacher…I was a little bit upset about this. I don't think he meant to make me feel bad, but I just question why this was a responsibility of mine.

On 3-19-03, Katie participated in group dilemma discussion 1, the topic of which was the question of how a teacher should decide how strongly to administer discipline in the classroom and how much control to take over the students in the classroom. Katie first reiterated what she had written in Journal 1, contrasting the two first grade classrooms she had observed at School A and commenting that discipline depended on the kids in the classroom. She found the "vast difference" between the two classes hard to believe and speculated that "stressful environments at home" might have contributed to what she saw as a high level of behavioral and emotional problems in the first classroom at School A in which she had been placed. In the third grade classroom at the other school in which she was placed, Katie said that the teacher had an "awesome" system, very structured and clear, first controlled completely by the teacher but intended to eventually foster accountability in the students for their own behavior. Katie liked the fact that this system had been consistent, and consistency became a recurring theme in the rest of Katie's comments in the discussion, though a difficult one to articulate.

Katie stated that students needed structure, but this structure needed to be consistent so students knew what to expect and could become accountable for their actions. "The rules should be fair," Katie stated, "but it's kind of like the end result is more important than the way you go about it, as long as you're being consistent in the way you deal with each child at the same time, sort of…" In addition, she believed the teacher needed to teach directly strategies for improving behavior just as she would teach reading strategies. Katie also felt that Mr. Redman was often not consistent enough in his classroom management when students did not follow the rules, and admitted that this made it difficult for her to step in a as a pre-practicum student and know how to deal with behavior issues, because there was no clear system for doing so and she was simply forced to "react" to problems that arose (something students could "take advantage of"):

> I'm not really too sure…like I sit there and I watch and I try to see what his system is, but it's so inconsistent, I have no idea, like maybe tomorrow, I'm worried – not worried, but just like I'm wondering if I'm supposed to be, like, 'don't call out,' or not, because some of them get away with it, cause they're kids that don't usually do it, where there's a few kids that do it all the time so they always get reprimanded, so…that's hard too. Jumping into it and not really having a consistent system.

Another comment Katie made during the discussion was that her beliefs about discipline and management were often influenced by observations of practices with which she disagreed, which she took "as a tool" to come up with a better system. Observing her cooperating teachers taking actions which she would never want to take reminded her of the way she felt students should be treated:

I've had teachers that have yelled and not been caring, and I've seen that happen, and I don't think the child really understood what they did wrong or how to go about fixing it, because they were yelled at. I don't think that is effective. So when I take that into account, I know to use a voice that isn't yelling or that type of thing.

On 3-20-03, I observed Katie conduct a lesson and interviewed her afterward. Her lesson was designed to coordinate with a unit Mr. Redman was doing with the class on ancient Greece, involving looking at amphoras, decorative or utilitarian vases showing scenes of everyday life. Katie discussed the use of the amphora with the class, showed them illustrations from books, and then had them decorate their own drawings of amphoras with scenes from their own daily lives in order to connect the knowledge about ancient Greece to their personal experience.

Katie did not respond in great detail to most interview questions but in general felt very positive about the lesson, saying that planning it had been relatively easy. She felt that the students had understood it well and been able to comprehend the idea that "daily life" could be very different in different times, places and cultures. As she had stated the previous night in the group discussion, she had been anxious about managing the class because she found Mr. Redman's management style rather loose and sometimes inconsistent, but she found by reviewing some simple rules before the lesson the class required minimal redirection for behaviors such as talking out without raising their hands. She felt very comfortable: "I'm feel like I'm just so used to this now I don't even get nervous…for me, it's just very natural." Katie attributed the ease with which she was able to take on a more active leadership role in the class to the fact that these students were accustomed to working with many different adults in the class and her previous efforts to

get to know each of them personally and be "professional at all times" with them in voice and manner so they would understand she was there to help them. Katie was also pleased to see that the students were so enthusiastic and engaged in the lesson, even predicting that they were going to be constructing their own amphora pictures. She had wondered if her ESL students, most of whom spoke Japanese as their primary language, might need some concentrated effort from her to get them "into" the lesson, but found they all seemed engaged and were discussing the topic. She was glad to see that her lesson appeared to meet the needs of all different types of students in the class, even her ESL students.

Katie's final reflection during the interview was about the relevance of her lesson to multicultural education:

I think it gives them a real idea that there are other ways to live and there are other cultures and that different places have different ways of life and they need to understand that. Even – like in the broad spectrum, but even in their own classroom, that there are people that do different things, by giving them a choice of talking about what their everyday life consisted of, it gave them a real feel for what their cultural background was, and they could talk about that.

Katie continued reflecting about her lesson in her journal entry for week 5 (3-20-03). She said that teaching this lesson had been her best experience with the class so far. She had wanted to connect ancient Greece with the students' real experiences, which when questioned, she said was a valuable goal because it would be easier for the students to make inferences about others when they can compare and contrast others' lives with their own. "I think it also shows them," she wrote, "that learning doesn't have to be hard

because it really stems from knowing about a thing as simple as your own life – everybody

can talk about themselves, so connecting learning to that only makes it easier."

Katie was gratified to hear that others, including Mr. Redman, thought she had

done an excellent job teaching:

> It was so nice to know that other 'master' teachers were planning to use my idea,
>
> activity sheets, etc…even more importantly, I felt that the lesson really gave me a
>
> chance to prove myself to Mr. Redman. Although I knew this wasn't something I
>
> had to do, I felt that he had thought of me as just another student teacher when I
>
> wanted him to hold high expectations and a lot of respect towards me.

Katie wrote that receiving compliments from Mr. Redman was really just a "confirmation"

of the thoughts she had had about her performance, and that the real reward for her was

being able to teach and show others how much she loved teaching. However, she believed

that giving and receiving feedback about one's or others' instructional practices was an

important part of the teaching profession. When asked why she believed this, she wrote

that this allowed one to improve one's teaching: "Sometimes it is simply another opinion

in the matter, which is always helpful when you are unsure about how to do something."

On 3-25-03, Katie participated in the second group dilemma discussion concerning

the dilemma of the use of direct instruction vs. student centered learning in the classroom.

Katie's statements on this topic demonstrated the point of view that a balance between the

two methods was best. Direct instruction, she stated, was sometimes necessary but often

involved instruction of strategies which students could use to pursue and understand

information on their own. It was difficult, she maintained, for teachers to implement

constructivist or student-centered instruction when they were pressured to elicit high

performance from students on standardized tests, but teachers could probably use constructivist methods ("where the teacher isn't the sole giver of information but it's more about the students, how they're learning, not what they're learning, almost") to help students learn the "big ideas," which according to "research," would lead them toward specific details of information they would need in order to pass standardized tests. Katie also pointed out that both types of instruction could be utilized in fostering lifelong learning in students: "You're never going to have all the tools to really know everything, but if you're trained to be a learner, then you can continue on doing that, and that's really important as a teacher."

Katie also expressed the belief that problem solving might be best taught not by planned direct instruction but through "teachable moments," and discussed observing a teacher at a previous placement doing this. When a problem arose, the teacher would discuss it with the class and take suggestions on how to solve it, and then guide them to a resolution. "As a leader, that's kind of your role, but it was never directly based on that and it was their ideas."

Katie reflected that she had performed well in school under a heavily direct-instruction-based model, but realized that this sort of teaching did not meet the needs of all students:

> It's hard for me to put myself in those shoes because I was never that type...but I can see how the kids in my class weren't getting as much out of it as I was, so now as a teacher I can understand why these other principles would really help out those types of kids.

Finally, Katie elaborated on the educational philosophy she had developed, influenced greatly by one professor who tended to give students insight about putting different educational theories into practice rather than simply telling them which method would work best in a given situation, that "there is a balance…when it comes down to it, there are different ways to do it, to take little bits and pieces and put them together."

In her journal entry for week 6 (3-31-03), Katie wrote that it had been a hectic day but that two things had reinforced her perception that there was a strong school community at School A: the return to class of a student who was in a wheelchair due to recent surgery, and a bake sale the first grade had had to pay for a field trip. When the boy had returned to class in a large cast and a wheelchair, his parents had been worried about him being able to navigate the classroom without injury, and Katie spent much of the day helping him and the class adjust the physical environment to accommodate the wheelchair. She also noticed that students, faculty, administration, and staff all welcomed the young man back to school. This reminded Katie of her own elementary school, where she felt teachers were excited to see her and made her feel at home: "I always thought that made me feel that I did belong and was a true member of the school community. I could tell that he felt the same way and how it gave him confidence about getting back to school."

When she observed students bringing in and selling baked goods to earn money for a field trip, Katie was "amazed" at how much the parents and school staff contributed to the process. Again this reminded her of her own elementary school, where staff and parents often collaborated on school-wide projects. Building such a sense of community took time and hard work, Katie wrote, but she felt it was important and should be a goal in any school: "I believe it adds to student learning and social skill as well, and all in all it

makes the school a brighter, happier place to come to each day for everyone involved in the school."

Katie did not submit a second iteration of this journal entry in response to supervisor prompts.

In her journal entry for week 7 (4-8-03) Katie wrote that it had been a hectic day filled with many special classes, a fire drill, a school assembly about tap dancing, and an early dismissal. She led a brief reading group and felt the students were "willing and engaged"; she did not respond to prompts about why she felt it had been successful or what other strategies she might have used if it had not been so.

Katie felt that even though there had been little time for structured classroom instruction that day, it had still been a valuable experience for the students:

Although the children weren't required to take on numerous tasks throughout the

day because of the business surrounding the day, I wasn't worried that the day was

a waste. I thought the assembly on tap dancing was excellent and they got to learn

about something different than their usual studies. Sometimes I think it is okay to

just take a break and have a fun day even though there is tons to learn. The

experiences can sometimes serve as a qualified learning experience in my opinion.

Katie was prompted about why she held this belief and how she might justify it to someone who claimed that only highly structured classroom experiences could provide valuable learning to students in the classroom, but she did not turn in a second journal iteration in response to prompts.

On 4-8-03, Katie participated in the third group dilemma discussion about how teachers can maintain proper professional boundaries. She spoke only twice, briefly. First

she commented that it was difficult to know where to draw a personal boundary as a teacher because one felt the need to give students attention and affection without crossing personal boundaries or being vulnerable to criticism, lawsuits, reprimands, etc. She discussed her admiration of a previous cooperating teacher who walked her students to the bus each day and said goodbye to them with their choice of either a handshake or a hug in an attempt to build community and make the students feel secure and cared for. The students usually wanted hugs, Katie said, "and it just showed how much they really needed that attention. But it wasn't initiated by her, and it wasn't like in a bad way at all, it was just like, 'see you later, we had a good day together.'"

At her current placement, Katie noted, the kids were usually "all over" and "very touchy feely" with Mr. Redman, who tended to joke with them, call them by nicknames, etc. Katie was not quite sure whether this was maintaining proper boundaries or not, "but then again, he's been teaching a really long time and it works for him, so you know…"

On 4-10-03 Katie conducted her second observed lesson and I interviewed her afterward. The lesson had entailed using books and visual aids Katie had made to teach students about the life cycle of a plant, and engaging them in the process of planting seeds themselves. Again, Katie had felt comfortable planning and conducting the lesson, although she had been "most worried" about having time for everything she'd planned and managing the process of having students individually come to a teacher and plant a seed in a cup, since she had not been able to discuss this with Mr. Redman until right before the lesson. She talked about how she had made decisions as the lesson was in progress, such as choosing to write vocabulary on the board and briefly discuss new words with the

students but not to take too much time trying to make them comprehend difficult scientific terms:

> I was kind of thinking about it in the way I could reach a bunch of different levels by doing that. You know, kind of get the basics for the kids who don't now those big words or can't really handle those big words. But then I know there's kids in this class that definitely can handle those vocabulary words, so I wanted them to be able to get them too.

Katie also struggled, as she had previously anticipated she might, with knowing when to redirect students' behavior and cut them off when they excitedly began sharing their own experiences and knowledge about plants. She wondered how she could maintain momentum, structure and order without dampening students' enthusiasm:

> I mean, they were giving the right answers, it was just a matter of them not having their hands raised. But I mean like I said sometimes they get away with that a lot, where they don't have to raise their hands. So coming in, it's hard to get real structured with them…I even had to kind of limit their comments, be like, 'okay, last one,' because I knew that it would just keep going on and on…and it's hard too, only being here once a week, because if this was my own classroom, I'd definitely be able to continue that conversation.

In her journal entry for week 8 (4-15-03), Katie continued discussing her perception of the lesson. This time, although she reiterated that she felt the lesson had been successful, she commented that she was less confident about teaching science than other subjects and so she was more uneasy than she felt she would have been teaching another subject area. She felt her inexperience in teaching science was one factor in this

("obviously that would cause me to be a little more nervous") and also remarked that she was worried that her lack of comfort with the subject matter might have been communicated to her students, a problem she hoped to work on in the future "to make sure that I don't spread my negative feelings about science to my students, whether it is implicitly or explicitly." This also led Katie to reflect about her beliefs concerning the stereotype that women are not as good in science as men:

> I think that although I fit into this category that this stereotype is false and so again this will be something I have to work on as a teacher. I need to be sure that I am sending students, especially the female ones, the message that science is really fascinating and that they can be successful in it.

(Katie was questioned further about what had influenced her thinking about this stereotype, her belief that it was false, and her beliefs about the impact of a teacher's attitude towards a subject on students, but she did not submit a second journal iteration.)

Katie hoped to improve as a science teacher by taking theories she had learned in her science methods class, focusing on teaching students to pursue scientific inquiry with ease, and communicating to students that science is always changing and interesting. "I don't think it is bad on my part not to be inclined toward science," she wrote, "but I think it is something I need to be aware of. By being aware I will be one step ahead in adapting my teaching to include this portion of my own style in a positive manner."

Katie's last journal entry was for week 9 (5-1-03) contained a general reflection on her field experience over the semester. She felt that the experience had strengthened her feeling that teaching gave her joy and that she was "blessed" to be able to work with

students. Katie believed that the experienced reinforced her belief that teaching was definitely for her:

> Though teaching I can find my true self by matching my gifts with the world's needs. This is something not many people can truly say. But I do feel teachers can relate to this. The art of teaching is the ability to give to those who are in need, but also get something back. It is the relationships in life that give us meaning. In the world of teaching you can never live alone. The smiling faces of the diverse persons sitting in their desks looking to you as the ultimate human being will always offer you relationships.

Katie was questioned about what experiences had influenced her beliefs about relationships giving life meaning and how teaching fulfilled that need in teachers, but did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts.

Katie submitted a final essay on 5-23-03. She chose the dilemma about whether standardized tests could be considered a useful tool for focusing and improving instruction, or a process that would lead to "teaching to the test" and limitations on how students were perceived and evaluated. It should be noted that Katie did not actually write a new essay in response to the question. She submitted a paper she had written for a course on the topic of standardized testing, so she did not focus on some of the reflective judgment aspects of the assignment. However, as the paper she turned in was in the form of a letter to the governor about standardized testing and was written in first person and contained many specific statements about her beliefs, the essay has been included in Katie's case study.

Katie made strong personal statements against the overuse of standardized testing as a criterion for graduation and other purposes, such as "I believe the misuse of the results

of this high stakes test has led to woes for both schools and students" and "I believe that

this test is a crude measurement and is fundamentally flawed." She pointed out that use of

standardized tests was a poor way to measure a school's yearly performance because of

natural fluctuation in scores from year to year, changes in school size, disparities between

scores of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, poorly worded and

confusing questions on tests which often measured background knowledge more than

comprehension, and the fact that the tests were norm-referenced rather than criterion-

references and so did not give an accurate portrayal of a student's learning but simply

compared students' performances to others'. "Scores have been found to be higher for

students who live in towns of higher socioeconomic status," Katie wrote. "When a town is

surrounded by more money, the students overall do better. Haney [2002] found that per

capita income is by far the strongest factor in predicting scores." She also pointed out that

the lack of a standardized curriculum made it impossible to construct a test that truly

measured mastery of skills for any particular grade level, and asserted that pressure on

teachers to elicit high performance on tests from students had led to "teaching to the test"

and a lack of constructivist teaching in classrooms.

Katie also discussed problems with standardized tests in terms of special education.

According to an article Katie quoted, 90% of students with learning disabilities did not

pass the state-mandated test. Although the state had provided a portfolio alternative for

students with special needs, Katie wrote:

> I have heard rumors that there have been about 600 appeals for students to use this
>
> portfolio alternative, but that only one student has actually been able to pass the test
>
> using this method. Whether this data holds true or not, it can be concluded that

students with disabilities are systematically being cheated out of successfully performing.

In order to support her arguments, Katie used several quotes and statistics from research articles, which she cited in a reference list at the end of the essay, and she ended her letter with a strongly worded plea to the governor to re-evaluate the use of the state-mandated standardized test in light of the controversies and conflicts she had pointed out in her letter.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Katie during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Katie appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Katie's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Katie's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Sherry's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Katie's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: What accounts for the differences in behavior and achievement in seemingly similar groups of students (for example two classes of the same grade in the same school)? How much impact does the individual teacher have on these differences, especially in terms of length of career teaching experience?

Katie did not address this dilemma continuously through the field experience, but the topic did arise in her first journal entry (2-9-03) and she reiterated her thoughts about it during the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03). In her first journal entry, Katie noted that she had been placed in School A two semesters previously for her first pre-practicum field experience. Katie wrote that she found a strong contrast between the academic achievement, maturity level, and frequency of behavior issues between Mr. Redman's first grade class and the first grade class in which she had been previously placed, the teacher in which was new to the teaching profession. "It is incredible how different the levels or intelligence are," she wrote. Katie wondered whether the higher levels of academic achievement and less frequent disciplinary problems were due to the influence of Mr. Redman, whom she perceived to have "maturity, experience, and success." She admitted that wondering whether Mr. Redman's "years of experience really makes that big a difference" led her to feel "scared" to be a first year teacher trying to elicit the same behavior and academic performance from a group of students as a veteran teacher might be able to do. Katie concluded that she would simply have to "wait and learn" and "wait to be shown some of the strategies of a master teacher."

In the first group dilemma discussion, Katie revisited this issue. She shared with the group that she perceived a "vast difference" between the academic performance and behavior of the two first grade classes at School A in which she had been placed. This time, though, rather than attribute what she perceived as higher academic performance and student behavior to Mr. Redman's qualities or experience as a teacher, she stated that she believed it was "stressful environments at home" which might account for the high number of emotional/behavioral problems she had perceived in the other first grade classroom.

Although this was not a dilemma revisited frequently by Katie, her statements about the dilemma could be enlightening in terms of understanding the level of reflective judgment at which she was functioning at the time. Katie's statements about this dilemma generally reflect a Pre-Reflective level of reflective judgment. Her belief that it was Mr. Redman's experience and expertise in teaching which accounted for the academic performance and low incidence of behavioral problems and her plan to learn more about this by observing "the strategies of a master teacher" suggested that she was still very reliant on authority figures and experts as a primary source of knowledge. Similarly, her anxiety over the uncertainty about which attributes of an individual teacher might influence these factors in a classroom and her feeling of being "scared" to handle a class on her own without a great deal of experience are examples of the confusion and discomfort over uncertainty which characterize Pre-Reflective thinking. Furthermore, her "wait and learn" attitude suggested that she might also regard the knowledge about this dilemma to be only temporarily uncertain, also a Pre-Reflective tendency. Katie's statement in the group dilemma discussion that she believed "stressful environments at home" were probably the cause of the behavioral problems and lower achievement she observed in her first School A placement classroom appeared to exemplify the Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective, tendency to equate one's personal beliefs as evidence, since she did not appear to have systematically gathered or evaluated any evidence to support this claim; however, most of Katie's statements regarding this dilemma evinced Pre-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 2: How does disparity of economic resources between schools or school communities affect students' education, and what steps could be taken to remedy problems caused by this disparity?

In her first journal entry (2-9-03), Katie commented that the first graders in Mr. Redman's class not only appeared to exceed the first graders in her previous placement classroom in terms of achievement and behavior, but also seemed "better off" than the third graders with whom she had worked in an urban public elementary in her second pre-practicum field experience. She noticed that these first graders seemed able to sit and listen well, divide, and write full sentences, tasks with which she had observed the third graders struggling. Also in this journal entry, Katie reported that she observed a substantially higher degree of parental involvement in her present placement classroom than had existed in the urban public elementary in which she had worked previously, and she wondered in passing whether the socioeconomic status of the families or school communities had an effect on either the children's academic performance or the level of parent involvement.

Katie did not respond to prompts about her beliefs concerning this in a second iteration for journal 1, but she did revisit the possible relationship of family or school socioeconomic levels to parental involvement in school in her second iteration of journal 2 (2-20-03). Unlike the first grade classroom at School A, where Katie observed parents regularly bringing their children to the classroom and working math problems with them in the morning, in the urban school where she had been placed before. "You never saw parents unless there was a problem with the child. I think this difference accounts to the environment and family settings." Katie wrote that she believed this happened because students in urban schools were more likely to live with guardians than with their actual parents and that these guardians might be less likely to become involved in the children's education, and that parents of students in urban areas were more likely to work in jobs

where they did not have the luxury of the type of flexible scheduling that would allow them to participate heavily in their children's school experience. "I think these are definitely my assumptions, but I wouldn't doubt that this has much to do with it," she wrote.

Katie revisited this dilemma in her final essay about the use of standardized tests. She asserted that there was definitely a relationship between socioeconomic status and cited a research quote to support her claim:

> Scores have been found to be higher for students who live in towns of higher socioeconomic status. When a town is surrounded by more money, the students overall do better. Haney (2002) found that per capita income is by far the strongest factor in predicting scores.

Katie went on to assert that this was one of the reasons why a student's performance on a standardized test should not be used as the sole or main criterion for high school graduation or making other high stakes decisions about the student's education.

Katie's responses to this dilemma over the semester indicated some Pre-Reflective (primarily Stage 3) but mainly Quasi-Reflective (Stage 4) thinking. Katie's dependence on her personal observations and experience in her three placement classrooms as the basis for making her judgment about the differences between the schools could exemplify Pre-Reflective thinking. However, there was also evidence in Katie's approach to this dilemma that she was transitioning to the Quasi-Reflective level; she was beginning to try to examine the dilemma's complexity and use evidence to support her point of view, although she was not yet able to do this in a sophisticated or consistent manner. As Stage 4 thinkers tend to do, Katie was able to acknowledge her own bias as a factor in her point

of view ("I think these are definitely my assumptions…") but was not able to re-examine those biases in order to refine or develop a more sophisticated approach to the problem ("...but I wouldn't doubt that this has much to do with it"). Katie sometimes equated her personal beliefs with evidence (a characteristic of Stage 4), as when she asserted that urban schools probably had a lower level of parental involvement because students of lower socioeconomic levels often lived with guardians rather than parents or because those parents worked at jobs with inflexible schedules. (This may be a correct assessment of certain influences on parent involvement, but Katie had not explored evidence in a mature way before making the claim.) In her final essay, Katie did attempt to use evidence to support her point of view when she quoted statistics and statements from research on the subject; however, her use of the evidence was not consistent. Rather than showing that she had explored various sides of the issue, she appeared to be simply quoting passages which supported her view; furthermore, it should be noted that one of the researchers Katie frequently quoted was also a professor at her university from whom she had taken a course, so she might have simply been reflecting a point of view taught to her by that professor rather than systematically seeking out and evaluating evidence to use to support her position. When dealing with this dilemma in general, Katie attempted to acknowledge her biases but was unable to re-examine her point of view in light of that acknowledgement, and though she showed the beginnings of the use of evidence rather than relying on authority or personal observation to inform her position, she was not yet able to do so consistently; these are all characteristics of individuals entering the early stage of Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 3: How can a teacher accommodate the needs of a group of students who are culturally, racially, and/or linguistically diverse, functioning at different levels of academic ability or achievement, and/or different types of learners?

Katie first dealt in depth with this dilemma in her third journal entry (3-3-03), when she compared Mr. Redman's implementation of a reading group system with the Guided Reading program she had observed in another placement classroom, a third grade class in an urban public elementary. At first Katie commented that she thought Mr. Redman's system must be more effective than the previous schools' reading program since his first grade students appeared more advanced in reading than the third graders with whom she had worked. "This system, from what I have seen, has proven to provide these first graders with more knowledge in the reading area," Katie commented. "The students read at the same level as the third graders at my other school and have a better understanding of comprehension in most cases." However, she then went on to explore various facets of each reading program and advocated a balanced use of different types of programs for the instruction of reading, each with their individual strengths and weaknesses and potential uses with students of differing academic abilities and learning styles.

As she compared the two types of reading programs, Katie also noted that the characteristics of each program led her to relate her comparison to the wider debate in the educational field about the effectiveness of phonics-based vs. whole language reading instruction. She stated her view that in deciding what kind of reading instruction to implement, a teacher should "stay in the middle of the two extremes," not "get swept up in the new while forgetting the old," and listen to others' views about the issue, as she felt

there was always something to be learned, even from someone who held the opposite point of view as one's own.

In her first post-observation interview (3-20-03), Katie revisited the issue of dealing with diversity in the classroom in a slightly different way as she reflected on the way her amphora lesson might foster respect for cultural diversity in her students. She hoped the lesson would show them how different cultures might view their own societies, and go about their daily lives, in very different ways and how these differences should be respected. "There are other ways to live and other cultures…and they need to understand that in the broad spectrum, but even in their own classroom, that there are people that do different things…"

Katie's approach to this dilemma reflected a rather wide mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking. There were some instances wherein she appeared to be following a Pre-Reflective pattern of basing decisions on direct observations and personal experience, such as when she surmised that Mr. Redman's reading program was superior to that of her previous placement classroom because she had assessed the first graders' reading ability and comprehension to be as high as that of her urban third grade students. This is an incomplete use of evidence to support her claim at best, since she could not really determine based on her limited experience that the two class' reading levels were that similar or that it was Mr. Redman's reading instruction that caused his first graders' reading levels to be as high as those of third graders in another school. However, in other statements, Katie appeared to be exhibiting more Quasi-Reflective thinking patterns, some associated with Stage 4, the earlier phase of the Quasi-Reflective level, and some even characteristic of Stage 5, the later phase of that level.

When Katie advocated taking different perspectives and points of view into account when making a decision about reading instruction, she exhibited the Stage 4 characteristic of being willing, or at least claiming to be willing, to re-examine one's point of view in light of new information or the ideas of others. When she suggested that a balanced perspective was probably the best way to go about choosing and implementing a reading program and related her comparison to the two reading problems to the larger debate about phonics and whole language instruction, Katie demonstrated an attempt to view the complexity of the issue and an attempt to achieve a balance in looking at the factors involved, which is characteristic of Stage 5 thinkers. Katie attempted to place issues in a broader context, as is typical of individuals at Stage 5, when she discussed her objective to use the amphora lesson to communicate to students about the need to understand and embrace cultural diversity; her statements about this also indicated that she might be operating under the Stage 5 belief that the diverse points of view are an integral part of the human experience. Katie's approach to this dilemma appeared in general to be more Quasi-Reflective than Pre-Reflective.

Dilemma 4: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Katie addressed this dilemma primarily in the context of the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03) at which it the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order to manage the class successfully was presented as the topic. Her first comment was to state that consistency might be more important for a teacher than control in managing a class, although she had difficulty articulating precisely how a teacher could come up with a consistent way to treat students fairly. "The rules should be

fair," Katie said, "but it's kind of like the end result is more important than the way you go about it, as long as you're being consistent in the way you deal with each child at the same time, sort of…" Katie felt that Mr. Redman's disciplinary methods lacked consistency, and this disturbed her both because she felt this was not the most effective manner to manage the class and because it left her feeling unsure about how to go about addressing disciplinary issues that might come up when she taught the class on her own. In the third group dilemma discussion (4-8-03), Katie reflected that she also thought Mr. Redman's manner with the students was too casual or "touchy feely," which might send them inconsistent messages or be inappropriate, but she did not judge him too harshly for this ("but then again, he's been teaching a really long time and it works for him, you know…"). Finally, Katie remarked that she tried to use observations of her cooperating teachers' practices "as a tool" to come up with better ones if she did not agree with what she saw those teachers doing.

Katie's approach to this dilemma showed mainly characteristics of Quasi-Reflective thinking. For example, when she talked about needing to make rules fair and treatment of students consistent but was unable to explain how this might be done, she appeared to be realizing that this was a problem with no simple solution (typical of Stage 4) and possibly even beginning to acknowledge that one's point of view about dealing with an individual student was embedded in the unique context in which the teacher and student were working together (typical of Stage 5). Like many individuals functioning at Stage 4, Katie also did not unquestioningly accept the actions of her cooperating teachers simply because they were authority figures or experts, as when she regarded some practices of her cooperating teachers as a "tool" to come up with what she considered more effective

practices and openly reflected that Mr. Redman's management style was not one she herself would want to adopt completely. However, Katie also was hesitant to criticize Mr. Redman too severely, and she relied on a perspective typical of individuals transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking when she justified his practices to a certain extent by stating that his years of experience had probably contributed to his development of his management and that this was a "style" which worked for him personally.

Dilemma 5: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction?

Katie dealt with this dilemma primarily in the context of the second group dilemma discussion (3-25-03) at which this issue was presented as the topic for discussion, but also revisited it later in her second post-observation interview (4-10-03). In the group discussion, Katie stated her belief that a teacher should balance both types of instruction. It would be necessary, Katie claimed, for the teacher to cover certain required curriculum material and prepare students for mandated high-stakes tests but felt that in covering this material the teacher could also incorporate some constructivist methods of teaching and learning as well, "where the teacher isn't the sole giver of information but it's more about the students, how they're learning, not what they're learning, almost." Katie had admired the way a previous cooperating teacher had deviated from strictly teacher-directed instruction and used "teachable moments" to help students learn how to resolve interpersonal conflicts effectively. The teacher had helped the class brainstorm ideas for solving such problems and ultimately led the class in deciding what action should be taken and how the problem might be prevented in the future. Katie liked the way this teacher

had guided the students in coming to their own understandings of social interaction and their own behavior, "as a leader – that's kind of your role, but with her it was never directly based on that and it was [the students'] ideas."

During the discussion, Katie shared that she recalled having been taught in a very teacher-directed fashion through most of her school years and had been very successful in her academic achievement, and she had realized when she decided to become a teacher that there were many students for whom those methods were not the most effective. "It's hard for me to put myself in those shoes because I was never that type," she stated. As she had undergone the first stages of her professional education to become a teacher, she formulated a philosophy of teaching which advocated using a balanced mix of different types of instructional methods based on what would best serve the students' needs: "There is a balance…when it comes down to it, there are different ways to do it, to take little bits and pieces [of different methods and teaching approaches] and put them together."

Katie confronted this dilemma in her practice when she taught her second observed lesson and spoke about this in her interview afterward (4-10-03). During the lesson, Katie had been confused trying to determine how much she herself should direct the discussion about plants and to what extent she should allow student sharing and questioning to direct the course of the lesson. Having a great deal of factual information to present but not wishing to quell the students' enthusiasm or prevent them from making personal connections to the material, Katie had been unsure about directing students to raise their hands to talk and choosing a point at which to end the students' sharing of personal stories and move on to a new point. This was particularly difficult for Katie because she felt Mr. Redman had not provided an example of consistency in dealing with the management

aspect of this issue. "Sometimes they get away with a lot, where they don't have to raise their hands. So coming in, it's hard to get real structured with them," she said.

Katie's approach to this dilemma appeared to be typical of an individual transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. Her confusion and anxiety at being uncertain about the degree to which she should take control of the course of her lesson is characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 3. However, her statements during the group dilemma discussion revealed a perspective on knowledge that was more Quasi-Reflective in nature. Her description of the ideal classroom as one being focused not on the teacher but on the students and their process of learning, and her admiration of a previous cooperating teacher's method of guiding students toward finding ways of solving problems on their own rather than simply telling them what to do, could have indicated that she was beginning to regard knowledge as uncertain and constructed by the individual, not simply a discrete entity which could be transmitted from one individual to another or provided by authority figures. Katie's focus on the concept of balance in choosing instructional methods also appeared Quasi-Reflective in nature, as she was realizing that this was a problem for which there was no simple solution and attempting to examine and address the complexity of the dilemma.

Dilemma 6: How do an individual teacher's strengths and weakness in regard to academic subject matter affect students? What steps can teachers take to ensure that students have a positive experience with material that they themselves find intimidating or challenging?

This was not a dilemma with which Katie dealt on a continual basis through the semester, but she submitted one journal entry (week 7, 4-8-03) which contained some

statements that could provide illumination into Katie's reflective judgment level. In this journal, Katie reflected about the lesson she had taught on plants and wrote that she had been less comfortable teaching this lesson than she had been during others, and she felt that this had been because she did not consider herself to be particularly adept in that subject. This led her to reflect on a stereotype she had encountered in school that girls were not as naturally talented at science as boys were:

> I think that although I fit into this category that this stereotype is false…I need to be sure that I am sending students, especially the female ones, the message that science is really fascinating and that they can be successful in it. I don't think it is bad on my part not to   be inclined toward science, but I think it is something I need to be aware of. Be being aware I will be one step ahead in adapting my teaching to include this portion of my own style in a positive manner.

These statements demonstrate thinking very typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, the earlier phase of Quasi-Reflective thinking. First, Katie very explicitly acknowledged a personal bias which she thought was affecting her development as a teacher and could have an impact on the learning experiences of her students. Being able to acknowledge personal interpretation as a factor in one's beliefs is typical of Stage 4, as is making the claim that one is open to re-examination of one's views based on new information or the input of others, which Katie did when she resolved to remain aware of her feelings about the subject of science and to look for ways which would allow her to communicate positive messages about the subject and foster successful student learning in that area.

Dilemma 7: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Katie addressed this dilemma in journals, group discussion, and a post-observation interview. First, in journal 4 (3-17-03), Katie wrote at length about her feelings of being confused and upset when she found that Mr. Redman had expected her to assign homework to the reading group he asked her to lead. Since he had not mentioned this to Katie, was startled and uncomfortable to find that he had expected this of her and seemed displeased that she had not done it:

> I didn't think this was my job, nor was I even the right person to do this…I kept
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> thinking how would I know to do this or even what to tell them to do? I thought
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> this was up to the authority of the real classroom teacher…I don't think he meant to
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> make me feel bad, but I felt bad the rest of the day that I had done something
>
> wrong.

In group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), Katie brought up another condition of being a student teacher which was causing her confusion: the inconsistency she perceived in Mr. Redman's management styles and procedures. Katie felt that Mr. Redman did not set a consistent example of how he dealt with disciplinary issues and was "worried" that when she took over the class for her observed lessons, she would have no real guidelines about how she should deal with those issues herself when they arose. "I'm not really too sure," she stated. "It's hard jumping in without a consistent system." In her first post-observation interview (3-20-03), Katie mentioned that this had caused her some anxiety as she planned and implemented her lesson.

In journal 5 (3-20-03), Katie revisited the topic of negotiating her role and relationship with Mr. Redman as she participated in her field experience when she reflected further on her first observed lesson. She felt proud of the success of the lesson, pleased that other "master" teachers had heard about the lesson and wanted to borrow her ideas and materials to use with their own classes, and that she had had the opportunity to "prove herself" to Mr. Redman, which she greatly desired to do. "I felt he thought of me as just another student teacher when I wanted him to hold high expectations and a lot of respect toward me," she wrote. Later in this journal entry, Katie also discussed her appreciation of being able to teach a lesson and receive feedback about it from an experienced teacher. "Sometimes it is simply another opinion in the matter, which is always helpful when you are unsure about how to do something," she wrote.

Katie's statements in regard to this dilemma were a mix of Pre-Reflective (in this case Stage 3) and Quasi-Reflective (Stage 4) thinking. Some of Katie's statements could indicate the high reliance on authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge and direction which is typical of Pre-Reflective thinkers, as when she was taken aback that Mr. Redman had expected her to assign homework without being asked to do so or given any direction concerning what that homework assignment should be; she felt that this wasn't her responsibility and she could not have been expected to know how to fulfill it without his guidance anyway. Katie also might have been naturally deferring to Mr. Redman's authority when she wrote about wanting to make a good impression on him with her teaching in order to gain his respect. As is the case with individuals functioning at Stage 3, Katie also appeared to be very confused and anxious about the uncertainty of not having a

reliable and consistent model provided by Mr. Redman to help her know how to manage the class when she taught them.

Katie also showed Quasi-Reflective thinking, however, in some of her statements regarding Mr. Redman's authority and expertise and her own development as a teacher. Although at some points she appeared to regard Mr. Redman as the foremost authority in the classroom and to rely on him heavily for knowledge and direction, Katie also demonstrated that she did not accept, or intend to emulate, all his practices, and at some points she appeared to regard her own point of view and practices as equally as valid as those of Mr. Redman or any other experienced teacher. For instance, Katie definitely expressed at several points during the field experience that she found Mr. Redman's management style too lax or inconsistent. She found this unsettling not only because it left her without a solid example to follow when she taught the class on her own, but also because she felt this approach would give unclear messages to the students about what was expected of them, and she made it clear she would not follow Mr. Redman's practices in this area. Katie also showed the Quasi-Reflective characteristic of claiming to be open to re-examination of one's point of view based on new information and the ideas of others when she discussed her belief that it was important to get feedback from colleagues and use that feedback in order to improve and refine one's teaching practices.

Dilemma 8: Are high-stakes standardized tests a valuable instrument for assessing and improving student learning, or do they limit what teachers teach and negatively affect the ways in which students develop and demonstrate understanding of academic material?

Katie made several statements about this dilemma in her final essay (5-23-03). She expressed her beliefs that "the misuse of the results of high-stakes tests has led to woes for

both schools and the students" and that "[the state-mandated standardized test currently in use] is a crude measure and is fundamentally flawed." Katie quoted some research articles in order to support her point of view that the results of high-stakes tests were often influenced by the socioeconomic level of the students or school community in general, the effects of poorly worded questions, the lack of a standardized curriculum, and the fact that it was norm-referenced rather than criterion-referenced. She claimed that the use of such tests would lead to "teaching to the test" and pressure on teachers to elicit high test performance from their students at the expense of other aspects of their education. She also claimed that students with learning disabilities were at a disadvantage in trying to pass the standardized test currently in use and that the accommodations provided to assist them were often ineffective:

> I have heard rumors that there have been about 600 appeals for students to use this portfolio alternative, but that only one student has actually been able to pass the test using this method. Whether this data holds true or not, it can be concluded that the students with disabilities are systematically being cheated out of successfully performing.

Katie's approach to this dilemma reveals thinking typical of an individual transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. Katie's strong belief statements are characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 4, who can sometimes appear very strong and even "stubborn" in expressing and defending their beliefs. (Of course, it should be considered that since the essay was written apparently in one of Katie's classes as a persuasive letter on her point of view, and was not in direct response to the final essay instructions, Katie could have been presenting beliefs in this strongly

worded manner simply to make the letter more compelling and persuasive.) However, most of the statements Katie made in discussing this dilemma which suggested transitional thinking between the Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective levels concerned her use of evidence to support her claims.

In justifying her beliefs about high-stakes standardized tests, Katie appeared to have moved beyond the Pre-Reflective level, where she might have used the beliefs of authority figures or experts or her own direct observation and personal experience as the primary justifications for her position. Her attempts to use evidence, however, lacked sophistication and were often incomplete and inconsistent. Some of Katie's statements seemed to equate her personal beliefs with true evidence, as when she claimed without providing support that standardized tests would lead to "teaching to the test." Katie's logic was also inconsistent when she stated that even if the "rumor" she had heard about the way students with learning disabilities were expected to pass the standardized test did not "hold true," one could still conclude that students with those disabilities were "systematically" prevented from performing well on the test, an assertion which did not seem reasonable or fully substantiated based on her argument.

Furthermore, while she did quote and cite some research articles to substantiate her claims, it was not apparent in any way that Katie had systematically gathered and evaluated evidence supporting different sides of the question; she merely appeared to have chosen several citations from research which she already knew would support her position. In addition to this, it should be noted that several of Katie's quotes cited the work of a university professor who had taught one of Katie's courses; this professor was a well-known researcher on this issue and an individual who strongly supported the same point of

view which Katie espoused in her essay. Therefore, in assessing Katie's use of this evidence to support her position as it applies to her reflective judgment, we must consider the possibility that Katie was simply repeating back information she had heard or read in this professors' course, or advocating a position to which she had been exposed extensively in his class, rather than presenting this evidence as the result of her own inquiry and evaluation.

Summary of Katie's Reflective Judgment Level

Katie appeared to be in the midst of the transition between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking during the data collection period for this study. Though she sometimes appeared to regard knowledge as certain and was often confused and overwhelmed by uncertainty and complex dilemmas, as Pre-Reflective thinkers tend to be, Katie also showed that she was beginning to operate under the assumption that there were many problems about which knowledge could be uncertain and difficult to acquire and for which there are no simple solutions. Her statements regarding knowledge and justification sometimes showed a heavy reliance on authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge, but there were also instances in which Katie rejected the practices or beliefs of authority figures such as her cooperating teachers and appeared to regard her own point of view as equally valid as that of an expert in her field.

In many instances, Katie demonstrated a highly Quasi-Reflective approach to dilemmas. She exhibited at least a professed openness to re-examining her own point of view, appeared to strive for balance in her beliefs when she struggled with complex dilemmas even when she did not fully comprehend the complexity of the issues, and made statements indicating that she believed that one's point of view was embedded within a

certain context in which that point of view was developed or manifested.   During the semester Katie showed that she was trying to use evidence to justify her beliefs, which is a significant departure from Pre-Reflective thinking, but she was clearly still engaging in early Quasi-Reflective patterns of thinking in the inconsistent manner in which she sought out, evaluated, chose and presented evidence to support her point of view. The reflective judgment level suggested by Katie's data is consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

In order to assess the value of the type of guided reflection employed in this study for fostering reflection and reflective judgment growth in preservice teachers, each case study contained herein includes an examination of the participant's engagement in the process of reflection through the data collection period. Several points about Katie's engagement in the reflective process of this study bear consideration: (1) the fact that responding to supervisor prompts in her dialogue journal entries might have elicited more in depth reflection on her beliefs than was contained in her original iterations; (2) the great extent to which Katie participated in group discussions and the thoughtfulness of her reflections in that context; and (3) the fact that although her final essay was not written specifically in response to the instructions provided by the researcher, it still provided some informative and enlightening insights into Katie's reflective judgment level.

Katie submitted nine journal entries and returned second iterations in response to prompts and questions for four of those: journals 2 (2-20-03), 3 (3-3-03), 4 (3-17-03) and 5

(3-20-03). Within the journals for which she submitted responses, it did appear that Katie might have been engaging in more in depth examination of her beliefs in response to the prompts, suggesting that this process might be a useful one for teacher educators to explore in order to facilitate reflection in preservice teachers on beliefs about teaching and learning and on the way in which they approach dilemmas. For example, in journal 2 (2-20-03), Katie's first iteration contained detailed information about the various components of the school's mission statement, but primarily in terms of describing the various goals set forth in the mission; she did not reflect on her beliefs about the purpose of having a mission statement, the ways the mission statement might affect the manner in which teachers put educational strategies into practice, or the differences she had seen between various schools in terms of mission statements until questioned. In journal 3 (3-3-03), Katie gave a meticulous description of her perception of Mr. Redman's approach to reading instruction and compared various aspects of this program to the Guided Reading program she had seen implemented in other schools, but this was mainly a discussion of how different elements of each program might benefit different types of readers and foster good decoding and comprehension skills. When she was prompted about her beliefs concerning the way teachers chose and implemented various reading instruction programs, however, Katie's comments became much more focused on her philosophy of teaching and she explored her belief that teachers must take a balanced and eclectic approach to such decisions.

Katie's fourth journal entry (3-17-03) contained a description of an incident in which she had been put in charge of a reading group and been surprised and dismayed to find that Mr. Redman had expected her to assign reading homework to the group despite

the lack of any direct instruction from him to do so or any guidance about what type of homework assignment might be appropriate. In her first iteration, Katie simply described the incident and her discomfort with the situation. When asked to delve further into why the occurrence had affected her so strongly, however, she made statements which appeared to reveal a great deal of information about how Katie was approaching the situation in terms of her attitude towards Mr. Redman as the "real authority" who should have made the decision about the homework and her anxiety about how she could possibly have known the appropriate course of action without guidance from him; this information was quite illuminating in terms of understanding Katie's reflective judgment level and how she was addressing dilemmas of practice at this stage of her professional development. Finally, in her fifth journal entry (3-20-03), Katie first made some comments about an observed lesson she had taught, concentrating mainly on how pleased she was that the lesson had gone smoothly, but upon prompting went on to elaborate in greater depth about how she felt her lesson might have fostered a sense of connectedness with their learning in her students. In general, responding to supervisor prompts in journal entries did appear to elicit more substantive reflection from Katie about her experiences, although she did not complete this process for all nine journal entries. This could have been due to any of several reasons; she might not have been developmentally ready to engage fully in the process, she might have had time constraints or a heavy workload, or she simply might not have possessed an intellectual disposition to engage fully in the process, for example.

Group dilemma discussions appeared to be a productive means for reflection in Katie's case, particularly the first two discussions. In group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), Katie went into great detail describing her impressions of different schools and

classrooms in which she had been placed, her philosophy about the importance of structure, fairness and consistency in classroom management, and the way her experiences and observations had influenced her beliefs on this issue. In the second discussion (3-25-03), Katie explored further her perspective that the most effective approach to instruction was a balanced one which took into account various theories and practical ideas, comparing the relative value of curriculum- or teacher-drive instruction with the impact of instruction taking place through spontaneous "teachable moments" and discussing her realization that she needed to be aware that other people did not always experience academic success when taught through the methods had been successful for her. These are all reflections which provide enlightening information about Katie's beliefs, her assumptions about knowledge and justification of decisions in the face of dilemmas, and her self-awareness about what influenced her thinking and reasoning about these issues, and this could indicate that group discussions are a valuable means for promoting reflection about dilemmas in practice for preservice teachers. Katie's participation in the third discussion was more limited than in the first two, consisting of only two brief statements which she made at different times in the discussion, but this could have been because this meeting included the viewing of a videotaped presentation and therefore there was simply a shorter amount of time for discussion.

Katie's post-observation interviews and final essay also provided some illumination into her reflective judgment, but not to as great an extent as her journal iterations and group dilemma discussion statements. In her interviews, for example, Katie's remarks tended to be confined to the area of expressing relief that her lessons had appeared to go smoothly, brief and mainly technical explanations of her reasons for taking certain actions

over others (how she had planned transitional periods during the lessons, decided which vocabulary to focus on with the students, or found or designed the materials she had used, for example) with only limited references to her beliefs about teaching and learning in response to interview questions. While it is not possible to know for sure why Katie's reflections in this context might have differed from that in her journal entries or group discussions, the possibility that the stress of the situation in being observed by the supervisor might have made it difficult to engage in deep reflection immediately following her teaching "performance" should be considered as a possible factor influencing this pattern.

Katie's final essay also provided helpful information about her beliefs and the way in which she stated and justified them. Although I would have preferred that Katie had turned in an essay specifically written in response to the instructions designed for the research study rather than turn in an assignment she had written for one of her courses on the same topic, I was still able to cull some pertinent statements from her writing. This suggests that even in situations wherein teacher educators give preservice teachers assignments which are not specifically geared to assess reflective judgment, it would still be helpful for them to be aware of written and spoken statements which give an indication of the assumptions and beliefs influencing those preservice teachers' reflections and actions.

Case Study 4: Stephanie

Part A: Description of Case

Stephanie is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a junior in college majoring in Elementary Education and Human Development at the time of this study. She is from a small town in a northeastern state near the state where her university is located. She has two younger brothers and enjoys reading and spending time with friends. (*All biographical information provided by Stephanie via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-29-03*.)

On a snowy day, after some initial confusion at the school about her placement which made her rather "stressed out," Stephanie was placed in School A, a first grade classroom in a public school in a suburban area outside Boston for her third pre-practicum. In her journal entry for week 1 (2-12-03), Stephanie described her cooperating teacher, Mr. Redman (the same cooperating teacher who also worked with Katie, Case Study 3, on a different day of the week) as "nice" and the classroom environment "stimulating for students" with its many learning stations, class pets, computers and classroom library. Stephanie immediately noticed a difference between this school and her previous placement school, a large urban public elementary with a community center integrated into the school: the parents at School A brought their children to the classroom and began working with them on a morning math problem; every student had a parent with whom to work. This was very different from the school environments in which she had been placed previously. Stephanie was excited to see this parent involvement and interested to learn more about how the teachers integrated the parents into their students' education,

especially how the teachers knew at what point to "draw the line" in terms of parent involvement in the classroom:

> Right now I think that parent involvement is such an important issue, but at the same time, I feel that if parents begin to dictate what is happening in the classroom then the teacher loses control and this does not always benefit the children. It is important to stay in control.

Stephanie spent most of the day observing and trying to get to know the students on a personal level; she also participated in working with a reading group and found the students' reading levels to be surprisingly high. She ended her journal entry by discussing her expectations for this field experience, which she hoped to keep minimal aside from hoping that all her observation and participation would provide as much of a learning experience for her as her last placements had. "I think that the less expectations I have the better my experience will be," she wrote, "because I will not be focusing on one or two things. Instead, I will be taking everything in and will be more open to different things." Stephanie did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts this week.

In Stephanie's journal for week 2 (2-18-03), she described how her class had celebrated Valentine's Day, reflected on her own development as a teacher thus far, and discussed the types of collaboration she had seen in her present and previous placement schools. Stephanie described how the class had started the day by decorating their Valentine distribution bags, gone on to do some reading groups and other work, and then had a party before lunch for which many parents had come to help and brought treats. She thought this had been a good schedule for the day since:

…on holidays, especially holidays on Fridays, before a week's vacation, children are often a little weird. The class was well under control and they were able to enjoy the holiday as well which is so important as a teacher to maintain control.

When asked how this Valentine celebration might be different from what she might see at other schools, Stephanie contrasted this class' celebration with the one that might be going on for the same occasion at her previous placement school, where she speculated there would likely be much less parental involvement and would probably not all be able to provide Valentines or treats to distribute, but where her previous cooperating teacher probably "thought of a fun way for the students to celebrate it though."

Stephanie took some time to reflect at this point about how she felt she had developed as teacher through her field experiences. She felt she was more confident in taking initiative with students as a result of spending more time in the classroom, learning from articles how to plan lessons to adhere to standards, and having been exposed to more and more lesson ideas and teaching strategies through observation and sharing with cooperating teachers and fellow student teachers. Stephanie also considered her sense of appropriate classroom management to be more developed, which made teaching "less stressful" for her; for example, she felt more attuned to students' behavior and interactions than she had been and more able to notice if she needed to intervene in a potential problem situation. When asked how her experience teaching had helped her in her development of a philosophy of discipline and management, Stephanie also wrote that she had learned that "it's OK to be stern with students when necessary so that they know that while you care about them, they do have to listen and respect you when you are teaching them," and that she needed to maintain firm and clear expectations with her students.

Stephanie admired the collaboration she saw in School A in general, especially where coordination and sharing of ideas between cooperating teachers and student teachers was concerned, but she did not see teachers on grade levels working together to coordinate, plan, and share ideas as she had been impressed to see teachers doing at her last placement school. When asked how teachers could foster collaboration with each other, she responded that they must be willing and open to the idea of collaboration and must not only get along, but also take that interaction to a professional level to plan, discuss their strategies, and request and offer help for solving problems. She wrote:

> I think an individual teacher should be willing to discuss things working in their classroom or things not working so that they can get help for things. I think a difference between the collaborative efforts at the two schools is that the teachers [at her previous school) look to each other for things that work and also, their students are overall more difficult at times and they do need to look to other teachers for help so that they are not as overwhelmed with everything if things get difficult. There is more of a feeling that they are not alone. I also think that a lot of it has to do with luck that when they were hired they all got along and made a very nice cohesive unit.

In her journal for week 3 (2-25-03), Stephanie wrote that she was glad to see that the students remembered her after their winter vacation and that it had been a "slow day in terms of my involvement," which was limited to mainly observation and working individually with a few students. She hoped she would become more and more involved as the weeks went on and used the rest of her journal to further discuss professional collaboration, compare and contrast the teaching styles of her present and last cooperating

teachers and her role in the classrooms of each, and to examine an incident that had occurred with a student in class that day.

Stephanie found it hard to collaborate with so many people in her classroom. She had to coordinate her lessons and experiences with three different people: Mr. Redman; Ellen, a full practicum student who had been placed in the classroom and was there every day; and Katie, a fellow pre-practicum student who was placed in the same classroom a different day of the week and with whom Stephanie tried to coordinate lesson plans. This was challenging for Stephanie because she had to make sure that her lessons integrated with the full practicum's ideas and planning, structure ways to meet her many college requirements and coordinate them with Ellen's, which were extensive, and be able to follow up and keep up to date on the class's progress when she was only there one day a week. She commented that it must be difficult for Mr. Redman to handle all this collaboration too, as he sometimes accidentally called the Stephanie and Katie by each other's names.

Stephanie found Mr. Redman's teaching and planning style to be loosely structured in comparison with that of her previous cooperating teacher, Ms. Inman, and this was something to which she found she had to adjust consciously. She had liked when Ms. Inman guided her through lessons to teach so that they would flow well with her overall classroom plans, something which Mr. Redman did not do: "He does not seem as concerned with the flow, so I guess that no matter what I do, it will fall in with the class routine or make it fit in." When asked about her beliefs concerning the type and extent of planning that was necessary for a teacher and how one might plan thoroughly and still be

prepared for spontaneous opportunities to teach concepts other than those in the lesson plan, she wrote:

> I think that teachers always need to allow for teachable moments to fit in. They are things that the students can relate to and take interest in. However, in standards based education, the teacher must do a lot of planning to fit in the curriculum as well as the possible teachable moments. If the teacher is not structured enough, then I feel that he or she would seem very disorganized and the children may be getting a disservice, however, if they over plan, they may lose sight of teachable moments because they are trying so hard to stick with their rigid plans.

Stephanie also found a vast difference in the management styles of Ms. Inman, who managed her classroom in a highly structured way, and Mr. Redman, who appeared to Stephanie to have no real system for behavior management. "This makes it hard for me," she wrote, "because when I go to teach, I do not really know what I would do if the kids misbehaved." Stephanie was able to come up with some ideas for how she could go about addressing students' misbehavior when she taught them by herself, but she still felt she would rather have a structured system to guide her decisions when students' behavior became an issue. When asked how she might make decisions in the midst of teaching a lesson about behavior issues that arose spontaneously, Stephanie wrote:

> It would depend on the situation. I think that if they call out or something I would remind them that it isn't appropriate and then maybe give them another warning. If they continue to act out, then I will maybe ask them to step out to calm down and rejoin the group when they feel they can participate. It is hard to do that though simply because not   all of the kids will respond positively to that. At least in first

grade, many children still try to please the teacher and get sad if the teacher gets

upset, so me reminding them once would be enough.

That day in the classroom, Stephanie was called on to deal with exactly the type of

complicated behavior issue about which she felt unsure. When a student came to her and

complained that another student had told him to "shut up," Stephanie asked the other

student if this was true. When he said yes, Stephanie calmly told him that was not a nice

thing to say and he should apologize, at which point the student became very upset, began

to cry, and denied he had said it. She was not sure how to handle the situation; she

eventually simply tried to console him and say that she wouldn't do anything about it since

she had not herself heard him tell the other student to "shut up," but that she hoped she

would not hear him or anyone else say that.

Stephanie felt very guilty and disturbed about making the boy cry and about not

knowing what to do. She wondered if she should have simply told the boy who

complained to her that she didn't hear anything but would take action if she did, but that

led to other questions for which she had no answer:

> If I did that, what if it was something more hurtful, could I just say that since I
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> didn't hear anything I wouldn't say anything to the student? What is a better way
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> to handle a situation where the child comes to you saying something another child
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> did in a classroom where there seems to be very little discipline codes?...I really
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> have no idea. I think this is something that could vary depending on the student.
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> Maybe you could talk to the student later or try to get the truth. I don't know. I
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> think this is something I will get more of a feel for as I practice.

During week 4 (3-14-03), Stephanie taught her first observed lesson, which involved reading the class the Greek myth of Phaeton and Helios (coordinating with a unit on Greek myths Mr. Redman was doing with the students) and engaging them in a sequencing activity, done in pairs, which required them to put strips of paper describing events from the story in the correct sequence, glue them down on large piece of colored construction paper, and decorate the rest of the paper with a scene from the story. After the lesson Stephanie participated in an interview.

In general Stephanie thought the lesson had gone well and that the students had completed the activity satisfactorily and enjoyed themselves. She admitted that it had been a busy time for her, as she had "bitten off a lot" that semester by taking six courses on campus in addition to her pre-practicum, so she was glad that the hard work she put into planning the lesson appeared to have paid off and she could feel satisfied at having taught well. She had had to modify the story to shorten it and make it easier for the students to understand, but felt she had engaged them successfully with the reading and listening experience and that they had understood the rather complicated myth. Though the myth dealt with death at one point, Stephanie said she had been prepared for any consequences of dealing with that subject that might arise with young children:

> I was prepared…in the back of my mind, I was just like, 'oh, no, hopefully no
> one's lost someone recently and they feel they need to talk about it,' just because
> you never know, something like that could come up.

There were other aspects of the story, such as a section which mentioned constellations, which Stephanie was not sure if the students comprehended, but she was

pleasantly surprised at the way the students attempted to help each other answer questions when they were confused.

Some unexpected events during the lesson, Stephanie felt, had actually been educative for both her and the students. For example, after directing the students to put their sequencing strips in order on their paper but not to glue them down until she checked their accuracy, she realized that she had checked one group and mistakenly allowed them to go ahead and glue their strips down. "So I ran back over there and pulled them, and I was like, 'No, don't let the glue dry! I made a mistake!' And they were like, 'You made a mistake?' And I was like, 'Yeah, I made a mistake.'" Stephanie was actually pleased to have an unplanned opportunity to demonstrate to the students that everyone makes mistakes. She also reflected that though students had become confused because there turned out to be two sequencing steps which could really go in either order correctly, she was glad they could see that sometimes there are different ways to look at and understand a story:

> So I used that as an example of, it's important because some things can, um…not everyone's going to always have the same answer for everything. So some things are more your interpretation, or what you think about the story…I think that was good for them to see, to know that everything's not always cut and dry. I mean it might confuse them now, but eventually it will help them. I took both [as correct answers], because they're right…in a different interpretation, it could have been either way.

Stephanie reflected that she had enjoyed herself teaching, felt calm and patient while doing so, and found professionalism in language, behavior and treatment of her

students easy and natural for her as a teacher. She attributed this to her years of experience working with children in various capacities such as giving swimming lessons over the summers, commenting as well that these experiences taught her that "you have to understand that like, I'm not always going to be perfect, someone might go in the wrong lane, but that's okay!" Exploring the reasons why she felt positive about her role as a teacher led to other observations about what she felt were important qualities and skills in a teacher:

> This is good, because a lot of times I do question, is this for me? Because you get around teachers or students where, like, artistically everything comes so naturally…I can't even draw nice letters…I'm not saying everyone is like this, but you see the girls, where it's like everything is all about art projects and like the creative crafts…I don't know…I'm not like that.

Discussing how calm and patient Stephanie was with her young students also led to a brief discussion of her beliefs on discipline. She didn't like it, she wrote, when she saw a teacher get frazzled and be too quick to yell at students, yell unnecessarily, or yell at them as a scare tactic, but she found it confusing to try to know just how firm one should be with young children and how much firmness was appropriate:

> I feel like there's a fine line between disciplining, like disciplining that's appropriate, and yelling, like an outburst… 'Why did you do that?' or you know, like, 'You can't do that!'….I don't know…it depends too, because I mean if there's something that's entirely inappropriate, I think it needs to be taken care of right away. But you know, like if someone grabs the wrong book, some teachers might

just yell…but I don't think you can   do that…then it makes them afraid to make a mistake.

Stephanie continued reflecting about her lesson in her journal entry for week 4 (3-16-03). She still felt generally pleased with the outcome of her lesson, as Mr. Redman had complimented the way she had engaged the children to practice an important skill for their grade level (sequencing) and shared a complicated story with them successfully. When asked how the lesson had influenced her professional development as a teacher, she responded that she felt it had contributed to her increasing sense of confidence in herself as a teacher. In order to plan the lesson, she had taken a myth Mr. Redman gave her and asked her to come up with an activity for, consulted the first grade state curriculum standards for an appropriate first grade level skill on which to focus, and used "backward design" to plan a sequencing lesson based on her goals, objectives and the standards, and she felt it had been a successful experience.

Stephanie commented that looking back, she did wish she had spent more time checking for understanding with the many ESL students in her classroom. However, she felt she had made a good decision by pairing those students with "stronger students" who could assist them with language issues or comprehension as they completed the sequencing activity. When prompted further about this strategy, Stephanie reflected on the results of this decision:

I found that the pairing worked well, except that two of the students did not want to work with each other. I told them that they had to and they should be excited about it because they would both make a cool picture together and things went smoothly after that. If one party got frustrated I could have helped explain it to the student

who didn't understand and remind the other child that they need to be nice when working with their friends and that they should help each other and not finish first.

Stephanie also remarked that she found it unusual that Mr. Redman was implementing a unit on Greek myths, a topic not included in the first grade curriculum standards. She had not discussed this with Mr. Redman and was not sure what his rationale for doing this was or whether the topic was really appropriate for first grade, although her perception was that these particular students seemed to be handling the unit well. When asked about her beliefs concerning Mr. Redman's decision to teach this unit despite the fact that was not part of the curriculum standards, she posed some questions and reflected:

> Is it ok to bypass standards if students are learning at a higher level? Is he really bypassing standards, or is he trying different curriculum to fit into the standards? I really was not sure…I guess looking at the standards more closely, [the Greek myth unit] can be tied in with first grade standards. It just seems to fit better with later grades and their standards.

Her description of this class as "learning at a higher level" led Stephanie to elaborate on this observation she had made about the students. Her perception was that they did indeed seem to be mastering difficult skills, concepts and vocabulary more quickly than students in her previous placement, which had even been a third grade. Stephanie felt one could attribute this difference largely to the fact that these first graders appeared to get vastly more support and academic practice at home than the third graders in her previous classroom, where Ms. Inman "seemed to get very little support no matter how hard she tried to advocate that it was necessary for child success in school."

The following week (3-19-03), Stephanie participated in the first group discussion concerning discipline and management dilemmas in the classroom. Her first comment was to agree with some members of the group who found it difficult to define their roles as pre-practicum student teachers and discern how much they should intervene in disciplinary issues that arose in their placement classrooms. Stephanie discussed how the lack of a clear system of reminders and consequences in her present placement made her feel unsure about when to step in and when to step back and let her cooperating teacher take charge of the situation:

> You don't know where your boundaries are as a student teacher. You don't want to say, 'Don't talk,' to the one kid who hardly ever raises his hand but you don't know that coming in…so I think it was just for me, it's a matter of what do I feel more comfortable handling and what do I feel more comfortable watching, to know what I would do when it's my classroom.

Stephanie also agreed with a fellow participant who proposed that students, particularly young children, are often motivated to behave well because they were gratified to know they were making their teachers happy with them; she shared a story of a little boy with whom she had worked extensively in a prior placement, noting that if she even hinted she was "sad" at his behavior, he would respond to redirection immediately.

When the discussion turned to an examination of how well their college courses had prepared them to handle classroom management, Stephanie agreed with fellow participants that the courses sometimes emphasized theory to the exclusion of preparing prospective teachers to apply that theory realistically in their practice or to deal with unexpected situations. Stephanie described her college courses, both those focusing on

instructional methods and those geared toward preparing preservice teachers to manage their classrooms, as "…just very cut and dry…it's like you tell little Johnny to do this, he's going to do it and understand it, and if he doesn't, then there's a ten-step thing you can do and he's going to understand it." Stephanie asserted that rather than relying on any one theory or set of theories as one's "Bible" for teaching, a teacher needed to try different things and form his or her own philosophy and practice based on many different ideas with different potential applications:

> You can't just take it all from one theory…just from like what Carl Rogers says is the most effective way. Like maybe you'll see something that he does that you like, but you like what someone else does, and it's kind of like you take in little bits and pieces from various theorists and various people, and people that you meet, they may not even be theorists but they might have something that works just as well as what Piaget says you should do. So I think it's important to keep that in mind then…you can make something your own by taking from a lot of other people.

Stephanie's journal entry for week 5 (3-21-03) began with a description of the action she observed Mr. Redman taking in order to help the class adjust to the absence of one of their classmates, a boy who had had to have surgery on his foot. Stephanie was impressed with the way Mr. Redman kept the students posted on Noah's recovery and took them to visit Noah at his home. The students were excited to take the trip and relieved to see their classmate recovering, and Mr. Redman had them make get-well cards for Noah. During this process, Stephanie worked one-on-one with a student with limited fluency in English and one with "poor writing skills," and discovered that the process of offering

them assistance in writing left her with some unanswered questions, which she resolved to the best of her ability:

> One dilemma I thought of when I was working with these children was how much do I guide them? Do I correct every spelling mistake? Do I give [the ESL student] the traditional statements found on get-well cards? I was unsure what to do, so I helped with spelling if the word was completely wrong or if they asked me, then I helped him only when he did not know what else to say in the letter.

Finally, Stephanie discussed the ways in which Mr. Redman and other school faculty had helped the students deal with an international situation. Two days prior to her classroom visit, the United States had declared war on Iraq. Stephanie watched as Mr. Redman discussed this openly with the class and was impressed with his goals of making sure the students felt safe and encouraging them to ask questions about anything that might be confusing or frightening them. The principal had also sent home a newsletter for parents about helping children understand the wear, suggesting that parents talk to their children about the situation, offering resources, and advising them to keep things clear and simple, answering children's questions rather than offering too much detailed information. Stephanie appreciated seeing this because "that is something I may have to deal with as a teacher and my courses really do not prepare me for how to handle situations like that that come up in the classroom." She regarded Mr. Redman's methods to be effective in this situation, and wanted to keep his behavior in mind as a model for her behavior with her own future classes.

At one point Stephanie listened to Mr. Redman dispel a rumor (about Iraqi soldiers tainting oil fields with poisonous gas that would kill any American soldiers who came

within 100 miles of it) that had one little girl very worried, and reflected, "It made me realize that children do pick up a lot and that's why it's important to keep them posted on the truth about current events because they might be hearing lies that can scare them or confuse them."

Stephanie did not turn in a second journal iteration for this week or any of the remaining weeks of her field experience.

The following week (3-25-03), Stephanie participated in the second group dilemma discussion, dealing with the respective benefits of implementation of teacher-directed or student-centered instruction, and made several comments. She contrasted her present placement school with prior placements in schools with very limited financial resources; she was dismayed to report that there was much less hands-on, student-centered activities in the latter, and much more emphasis on preparation for state-mandated standardized tests "just because a lot of the kids in those schools were so far below the level where they needed to be." In her current placement with Mr. Redman, on the other hand, Stephanie observed what she regarded as much more well-rounded educational experiences for the students and much less rigid adherence to the state curriculum frameworks, though she was hesitant to make assertions about the reasons for this contrast:

> [Mr. Redman] doesn't seem very tied to the standards at all. Like they're doing Greek myths in the first grade and I know that the curriculum frameworks, I don't think that they're in there until much later so…I think it depends on like the kids that you have in your classroom and what not.

When the group began discussing the idea that some instruction might necessarily have to be teacher-directed to ensure that students received knowledge and skills they

would need to function in later grades and in society, Stephanie reflected that this applied

not only to academic and functional skills but to social interaction skills as well. She

considered one purpose of attending school to be to learn to get along with people, whether

one liked them or not, and pointed out this was especially important in some cases because

children might not always be getting this type of guidance at home:

> A lot of kids don't get that at home. I mean, I know I had that at home, but I also
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> know that I've been in enough school situations where, like, you'll just see a kid
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> react by hitting someone and you're like, 'Well, that's not what you're supposed to
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> do.' But at the same time, at home, they don't know that's not what they're
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> supposed to do. Maybe they see that, or maybe they watch it on TV, or…you know
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> what I mean? You just don't know.

Stephanie claimed that her former cooperating teacher Ms. Inman had done an excellent

job incorporating this into her teaching by dealing immediately with spontaneous issues

involving personal conflicts and by designing specific lessons for her students to help them

remember and use strategies for resolving those conflicts; this seemed to "stay with the

kids," Stephanie remarked.

As the discussion turned to the benefits and drawbacks seen by the group to

student-centered or constructivist teaching philosophy and methods, Stephanie recalled

that while she herself was taught math in school mostly by mainly teacher-driven methods,

her younger brother had for years experienced a new math program, one very constructivist

in nature, and had had a great deal of trouble adjusting to it. He would ask her for help on

his homework, she recounted, and she was not able to help him understand the questions

because she wasn't familiar with the way the mathematical concepts were being presented

in the program. This, she claimed, had contributed to his having "gaps" in his understanding of "the basics and fundamentals," making mathematics classes a "huge struggle" for him. However, Stephanie also discussed how she had seen Ms. Inman incorporate strategies designed to help students strengthen their basic computation skills and memorization of math facts into that same program with her class.

Discussion of the difficulties inherent in trying to balance different types of instruction in a classroom led the participants to remark on the lack of understanding about the complexities and challenges of teaching which they felt was present in their college peers who were majoring in other subjects. They complained that many of their peers held "stereotypes and stigmas" about the profession of teaching, regarding it as a job that "anyone can do." Stephanie commented that teachers go back every day and do their job because they love it, but that it was a complicated and draining profession "and I don't think that people can understand that unless they experience it." She elaborated on the "gap" she saw between some people's simplistic perceptions of teaching practice and the complex reality of teaching:

> When you're planning a lesson, you have to think, well, 'if I do it this way, is that student going to understand, because he doesn't know English that well?' Or like if some kid comes to you with this like traumatizing situation, you have to know how to respond, and I feel like so many times because we're not crunching numbers or like, we're not solving the ozone layer, like how to close the gap, you know what I mean?

When Stephanie visited her classroom on week 6 (3-28-03), Noah had returned to school, confined to a wheelchair while his foot healed, and she was interested in observing

how this was accommodated in the classroom since it was a new situation to her. She thought it was handled in a very positive way; Mr. Redman made space for Noah to navigate his wheelchair through the classroom, the adults in the classroom helped him move without hurting his foot, Noah had a good attitude and didn't complain, and the other students were very willing to help him in any way necessary.

That day Stephanie assisted as the students did an activity with partners. She was concerned that she had previously noticed some students "groaning" when assigned to partners or not wanting to work with certain other people ("…therefore I made sure to tell them that they are expected to work nicely with their partner no matter who it is"). She thought the students seemed to be following that direction and didn't notice any interpersonal difficulties between partners, "at least I didn't see any, but you never know. A lot can happen in one group when working with another." When the activity was done, Mr. Redman hung up the students' finished work in the hallway, which Stephanie was pleased to see "because the students are able to take ownership of their work and be proud of it because Mr. Redman really encourages them to do well."

Despite her approval of this and many of Mr. Redman's other practices, something else occurred that day which made Stephanie quite uncomfortable and concerned with his judgment. During sharing time, a student shared an article about a teacher from the school receiving a signed letter from President George W. Bush, and Mr. Redman made what Stephanie recognized as a disparaging, rather sarcastic opinion about the President's intelligence. She did not think that the students all picked up on the comment and doubted whether they would even have understood if it they had, but she was concerned nonetheless:

As a teacher we can shape students to make educated decisions, but we should not express our opinions in such a way that they begin to think like we do, especially about our leader. Mr. Redman has his opinion of President Bush for reasons that they students may not understand, and in a time where they are hearing mixed sentiments on the war, and what it really means, and 'is Bush right?'…I do not think Mr. Redman's comment was appropriate.

During week 7 (4-4-03), Stephanie taught her second observed lesson and participated in a post-observation interview. Mr. Redman had asked her to do something related to the "Scholastic News" magazine they regularly received in the classroom, so she designed a lesson around the topic of that magazine, golden lion tamarinds. The students read the magazine, discussed the information, and then made a bar graph where each chose a paper strip representing their favorite animal (out of four choices) and placed it on a graph. Stephanie felt that the lesson had gone well, even though she was not quite familiar with their routine for using the magazine in class and received little guidance from Mr. Redman about what the topic of the lesson should be (she had learned in an Educational Strategies course that a graphic organizer was a helpful way to synthesize information with children, and so decided on the bar graph, and the rest of the lesson plan just "fell into place"), and that the students had listened and followed directions well.

At one point, the magazine discussed regions where tamarinds and other endangered species lived, and this led to the impromptu use of a world map to familiarize the students with some concepts related to geography and climate as well as map reading skills. Even after the topic had moved to a general exploration of the world map, which was not in her lesson plan, Stephanie allowed the discussion to continue because she felt

the students were engaged, interested, and making personal connections to the topic which assisted their understanding and motivated them to learn more:

> You know, you have this whole lesson planned, but then they start talking about other things. And I think it's important that, you know, that they feel validated, that their thinking, you know, just because it's not in the box of what I wrote in my lesson plan doesn't mean I can't talk about it. So I mean, because it's also important, they need to know, like tamarinds need to live where it's hot. And you know, they might never talk about tamarinds again, but you know, the understanding of the map is something they can take with them.

Besides trying to decide how extensive to allow the map discussion to become, Stephanie encountered several other situations requiring her to make decisions on the spot as she was teaching. For example, she experienced the enthusiasm of young children who often wanted to tell stories of their own and make comments as they were reading the magazine, which caused them to call out to speak frequently without raising their hands; Stephanie had to figure out how much to allow the calling out and how much to remind the students to take turns speaking, as well as how much sharing she should allow before returning to her lesson plan. She felt the students needed to be able to get out what they were excited about saying, that their enthusiasm was not a fault, and that if she did not let them share enough they would not be able to pay attention to the information contained in the lesson; therefore, she had to negotiate this dilemma continuously:

> You kind of just use your gut as to when it's getting out of hand. And I think that's the hard thing, is because you want everything to be prescribed for you, like

written, like if two people talk, do this…but I think sometimes you just have to go with your gut feeling…it depends on your group of kids, your environment.

Stephanie was also unsure what to do when she found a student was reading ahead in the magazine rather than staying with the class as they read together. She dealt with the situation by redirecting the student back to the page the rest of the class was reading, emphasizing to the little girl that it was important to listen closely so that she would know what part the class was reading. "Especially at a younger age, it can't hurt them to read it more than once," Stephanie said. "I think it's important that they realize that some things, they do have to participate in as a class." Had the student been upset with this, Stephanie speculated, she might have been able to make the child feel more positive about the incident by reminding her that practice reading will always help her, or that she might be able to assist others at her table who had difficulty understanding the reading.

Because she had been nervous about being observed and wanted the lesson to go smoothly, Stephanie admitted that she had considered "cheating" by only calling on students who she knew were strong readers, thereby reducing the chances that the class would have to stop and wait while she guided a weaker reader through the selection. However, she decided against this, eventually thinking of strategies she might use in such cases, because she knew she had to learn how to incorporate weaker readers into a group reading activity and because she realized that "everything I do sends messages" and her behavior might cause those readers who were not included to feel that she did not like them or have confidence in their ability. She emphasized strongly that she knew that the practice of neglecting the weaker readers would not serve them well, either academically or emotionally:

I can pick up on that when it happens to me, and it's frustrating at times if it happens to you, if you're not the person the teacher really likes…so that's why I just realized that I can't start that now. And I don't want to…that's not part of my philosophy, that's not what I believe education is, you know, making yourself look good by only calling on good students to participate, because you have a class of twenty individuals. Each person is part of the community…I have to make sure they all feel involved, and they all feel like they can do it, because they can.

Stephanie's final comment during the interview involved the observations she had made contrasting the educational situations in schools with extremely limited financial resources, such as her previous placement school, and the suburban school in which she was now placed, one with abundant materials, facilities and resources. She felt there was something "calling her" to teach in an urban setting, "because I feel like there is so much potential there, it's just that population of students doesn't get…a lot of teachers don't want to go there." In fact, recounting how someone had told her she must be "crazy" to want to teach in the extremely challenging setting of an urban classroom, she responded, "…and I just said, how can you say that? What if it's you? What if that was your child in that school?"

In her journal entry for week 7 (4-8-03) Stephanie mentioned again that she had been happy with the outcome of her tamarind lesson, and reiterated some thoughts and reflections about what the impromptu world map exploration had made her think. This type of occurrence, she wrote, showed that a teacher needed to be prepared to teach extensions on various topics and not be limited strictly to what was initially planned for the lesson. She discussed ways she might have extended this part of the lesson even further,

such as taking the students to the library to view other maps and globes, perhaps focusing on countries where tamarinds lived or simply letting the students increase their understanding of the maps by examining different representations of geographic areas.

Stephanie also found that the experience with the maps tied in to her ongoing examination of the theory and philosophy behind her teaching practice. She related how in her science methods course, there had been discussions about the need to take advantage of teachable moments and not necessarily take every part of every lesson from the standards, since students should be allowed to explore a topic in which they have a vested interest so they could see knowledge and education as something to which they are personally connected. Stephanie went on to ask questions about the issue of how much instruction should be based on curriculum standards:

> Should we teach directly to the standards? Is it our duty as educators to simply teach the standards or should we try to go beyond that and make learning experiences more meaningful for students? I feel that while I see the need for standards, and realize that to prepare my students for [the state-mandated standardized test] or other standardized tests, I have to follow them, so that my students will not be at a disadvantage going into the test. However, I also feel that they can be so limiting at times and students cannot always make meaning out of a standards based curriculum since the standards are at a state or national level and do not tie in all the time with what they are learning at a local level.

After spending the day assisting students as they held a bake sale to raise money for a local art museum and noting the creative and practical ways Mr. Redman came up with for students to count the money (a fairly new skill for them), Stephanie commented that the

day had been exhausting, fun, and "caused me to think about my philosophies of teaching, which I feel is a way to help me get better at my practice."

The third group dilemma discussion was also held on 4-8-03, but Stephanie was unable to attend.

Stephanie's journal entry for week 8 (4-17-03) described her last day in Mr. Redman's classroom. She went together with Katie, another pre-practicum student teacher who was placed in the same classroom on a different day of the week, and the two gave the students treats they had brought. Stephanie was touched by the students' goodbyes to her but also saddened by the thought of not being with them any longer, as well as by the fact that the students were at that time dealing with the loss of their class pet, Sammy the iguana, who had died earlier in the day. Stephanie felt Mr. Redman handled the situation well, talking to the students about what happens and how people feel when a person or a pet dies and about how it was all right for them to feel sad or uncomfortable about it. The students wrote down (and some shared) their favorite memories of Sammy, which Stephanie thought was a considerate way for Mr. Redman to allow the students to deal with their feelings.

Stephanie reflected in this journal entry about how she was excited for her full practicum, which would take place the following semester, and about how she felt she had developed as a teacher during her latest field experience. She felt she had grown in her ability to connect educational theory with lesson planning and teaching strategies and was particularly proud of her improvement in instructional planning, though she reflected that even when a teacher had planned well, he or she needed to be prepared for spontaneous challenges and "teachable moments":

If I had not planned or prepared well for my days and my lessons, then they would not have been as successful. However, I do realize that no matter how well I plan them, I will not take into consideration everything that may happen and I need to be prepared for tangents or other situations that may come up. By doing this, I will help my students have meaningful lessons that they can relate to.

Stephanie submitted her final reflective essay on 5-29-03. She chose to discuss the dilemma of whether or not the implementation of curriculum standards and high stakes standardized testing might serve to correct the perceived "achievement gap" existing between students in suburban and urban schools.

Stephanie first pointed out that having had experiences in both suburban schools (when she was growing up) and urban schools (in her pre-practica), she didn't agree fully with either "side" of the debate. She asserted that because a student's school experience is influenced by many factors other than standards or testing, the use of testing could not be the sole method for improving students' educational experiences or closing the achievement gap.

While Stephanie conceded that educational standards in general could benefit students by ensuring that they were all exposed to the same material, concepts and skills regardless of variation in teachers, outlining what students needed to learn as they moved from one grade to the next, and preparing them to perform well on standardized tests, she did not believe that heavy reliance on standards and/or high stakes testing would not close the "achievement gap" because there were many more factors than these influencing student success in school. For example, Stephanie discussed the importance of students' home and school environments as influences on their educational progress. "I feel a major

part of the reason for the disparity in achievement is the environment that these children are from outside the classroom," she wrote. "The environment shapes the expectations the child has for themselves; it also impacts the resources a child has available to them to use in aid for their education." Stephanie cited her observations in urban schools in which she had completed field experiences, with their lack of financial resources and technology, as examples to illustrate her point of view, noting that schools which were impoverished financially often led to students becoming "impoverished in spirit."

Stephanie also cited family stability, or the lack thereof, as an influence on students' achievement which standards and testing could not address. She discussed how she had seen, in one of her urban field experience placements, parents who did not help their children with homework, attend parent-teacher conferences, and, Stephanie felt, simply did not appear to offer a great deal of support to the school's efforts to educate their children. "They are focused on other things and do not reinforce what is being taught in the classroom," she wrote, and felt this might communicate to students that the parents felt education was not important. "In these situations," Stephanie asserted, "teaching high standards will not matter because if students do not view their education as important they will not care enough to do well to pass the tests."

In addition to emphasizing the importance of students' family lives and the degree of involvement of their parents in their education, Stephanie also pointed out that in comparing the achievement of students in different schools, one must take into account that one school being in a suburban area and one being in an urban area would not represent the only difference between the two environments. She stressed, for example, that factors such as the existence of learning disabilities in students and whether or not a

given school had an effective team implementing IEP's for particular students would also affect the picture of student achievement in that school as a whole:

> There are so many different aspects of a child's world that affect them in different ways that I feel it is impossible to say one simple cause and effect relationship exists between standards and the achievement gap in these two different types of schools.

In justifying her point of view, Stephanie explained what she had personally seen and experienced, stressed the importance of considering the unique contexts in which classroom teaching and learning occurred, and expressed concern that those with opposing points of view might be misusing or misinterpreting evidence to support their claims:

> I know that evidence may go against what I believe in this area, however, no school district is alike and maybe in some communities where there is a push for the achievement of standards and high stakes testing, the achievement gaps are lowered. Also, experts who look at data want that data to support their personal belief about how the system works…it is possible to manipulate numerical results to support what you want it to support. This involves researcher biases, so therefore, people can get different results when studying the same thing because they can interpret the numbers to fit into what they want them to fit.

Stephanie concluded her essay by stressing that her experiences in different school systems had led to her development of the idea that "there is no cut and dry relationship between standards and the achievement gap" and that measures other than high stakes testing, such as reforms designed to improve the structure and stability of urban school

communities, would also be necessary steps for helping students in urban schools achieve at a high academic level.

<div align="center">*Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment*</div>

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Stephanie during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Stephanie appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Stephanie's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Stephanie's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Stephanie's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Stephanie's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: What accounts for different levels of parent involvement in different schools, and how does this affect students' learning and school experience?

Stephanie discussed this dilemma in several early journal entries and revisited it in her final essay. In her first journal entry (2-12-03), Stephanie recorded that she had seen several of the parents of students in her first grade classroom bring their children to the classroom and work with them on math problem in the morning. She wrote that she thought this type of parent involvement in school was important but felt that parents should not be allowed to "dictate what is happening in the classroom, or the teacher loses control and this does not always benefit the children. It is important to stay in control." In her second journal entry (2-18-03), when considering how her class had celebrated Valentine's

Day, Stephanie considered the topic of parent involvement, as she had seen many parents come to assist for the party and bring supplies and treats. She speculated that in her previous placement school, an urban public elementary with more limited financial resources than School A, there would probably be less parent involvement but that the teachers would probably still think of "a fun way for the students to celebrate it."

The issue of the influence of parent involvement on student success in school arose again in Stephanie's fourth journal entry (3-16-03) when she discussed her lesson on Greek myths. Stephanie had been surprised that first graders could handle a topic so complex, and reflected that this class seemed to be "at a higher level" than other first grades she had seen or even than the third graders she had taught in her previous placement, as this group appeared to be able to master skills, concepts and vocabulary faster than those third graders did. When prompted about why she might be perceiving this difference, Stephanie wrote that she thought that parental support for student learning and involvement in their educational process probably accounted for a great deal of the difference. "Here the parents work closely with Mr. Redman to help their child while in [the third grade class] the teacher seemed to get very little parental support no matter how hard she tried to advocate that it was necessary for child success in school," Stephanie commented.

Finally, when Stephanie reflected about the use of standardized tests in her final essay (5-29-03), she asserted that standardized tests could not be used as a reliable method of assessing and improving student learning because there were many factors which influenced student test performance, and she cited "family stability" and parental support as one of these factors. She contrasted the way students in schools like School A, where there was a great deal of parent involvement, might perform on standardized tests with the

way students in an urban public elementary such as the one in which she had been previously placed might perform, concluding that parents of students in the urban school did not support the school's efforts to educate their children. "They are focused on other things and do not reinforce what is being taught in the classroom," she wrote, and felt this might communicate to the students that the parents felt education was not important. "In these situations," Stephanie commented, teaching high standards will not matter because if students do not view their education as important they will not care enough to do well to pass the tests."

Stephanie's approach to this dilemma showed characteristics of both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective levels of reflective judgment. Statements indicating Pre-Reflective thinking included Stephanie's strong assertion that teachers need to "stay in control" in the classroom, which suggested a reliance on authority figures as sources of knowledge, and her speculation that the lack of parental involvement might have an impact on the manner in which students celebrated a holiday but that the teacher would still find a way to make it fun for the students, which suggested that at that point Stephanie was yet not seeing the complexity of the issue or perceiving the deeper impact that this disparity between schools might have on the students.

In other statements, Stephanie's perspective about this dilemma appeared more Quasi-Reflective in nature. For example, when she suggested that the level of parental involvement in School A and her previous placement school might be a strong influence on the relative academic performance of the students, she appeared to be becoming more aware of the complexity of the issue but was not able to explore it in depth to question why the levels of parent involvement were so different, how specifically this impacted student

learning, and what steps institutions of learning might take to remedy the resulting

disparity, a perspective typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4. In her final essay,

when Stephanie speculated about parents being "focused on other things" and how their

lack of involvement might cause students to believe that their performance on standardized

tests, or in school in general, was not important, Stephanie also showed characteristics of

Stage 4 Quasi-Reflective reasoning, as she was attempting to explore the issue but

equating her personal beliefs about parents in certain school communities with solid

evidence to justify her position.

Dilemma 2: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage
a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Stephanie dealt extensively with this dilemma over the course of the data collection

period, and her statements about the dilemma appeared to show an interesting evolution

over the course of the semester, for while her earlier comments on the topic focus highly

on the importance of a teaching maintaining control over the class, her later remarks show

less certainty about this and more reflection about the complexity of the dilemma. In her

first journal entry (2-12-03), as noted above, Stephanie claimed that it was important for

the teacher to "stay in control" of the class. She reiterated this idea in her second journal

entry (2-18-03), when she stated that one reason the class' Valentine party had been so

successful was because "the class was well under control and they were able to enjoy the

holiday as well which is so important as a teacher to maintain control." Also in that

journal entry, in a response to a question about how her philosophy of discipline and

management had developed as a result of her experiences in the classroom, she wrote that

she had learned "that it's OK to be stern with students when necessary so that they know

that while you care about them, they do have to listen and respect you when you are teaching them."

As the semester went on, however, Stephanie's attitude toward discipline and management became less rigid than suggested by her early journal entries, and she appeared to begin acknowledging the uncertainty inherent in the dilemma. In her third journal entry (2-25-03), Stephanie still appeared to favor a system of classroom management that was concrete, consistent and focused on the teacher's control of the classroom, but she began to realize that this was not always going to be the case when she was teaching and that she would have to adapt to different situations. She wrote about the different management styles of Ms. Inman, a previous cooperating teacher who had used a very clear and highly regimented system of discipline, and Mr. Redman, who appeared to have no structured system at all, and she was uncomfortable at the idea of taking over Mr. Redman's class in this kind of atmosphere. She realized that in this case she would have to deal with management issues based on her judgment at the time the issues arose, and she speculated about strategies she might use. "It would depend on the situation," she wrote, commenting further that she might utilize strategies such as asking a student to calm down or to leave the group if necessary, but noting that "it is hard to do that though simply because not all of the kids will respond positively to that. At least in first grade, many children still try to please the teacher and get sad if the teacher gets upset, so reminding them once would be enough."

In the same journal entry, Stephanie wrote at length about a management incident which she had had to handle on her own and about which she was clearly unsure she had made the right decision. When she confronted a student who had told another student to

"shut up," she attempted to correct him kindly but ultimately felt very guilty and distressed about her actions when the student began to cry. Stephanie went into great detail about how the incident had affected her:

> What if it was something more hurtful?...What is a better way to handle a situation where the child comes to you saying something another child did in a classroom where there seems to be very little discipline codes? I really have no idea. I think this is something that could vary depending on the student…I don't know. I think this is something I will get more of a feel for as I practice.

In her first post-observation interview (3-14-03), Stephanie again discussed her feeling of uncertainty about how much control she should exert over her young students in terms of discipline and explored how sometimes yelling at students, a practice of which she did not approve, was sometimes mistaken for firmness and that this was not beneficial for the students, saying, "I feel like there's a fine line between disciplining, like disciplining that's appropriate, and yelling, like an outburst…I don't know…" She considered how she could ensure that serious disciplinary incidents were dealt with right away in a manner that would keeps students safe and prevent serious incidents from occurring in the future but would not make students "afraid to make a mistake." She concluded that handling disciplinary situations would depend on the student and the situation.

The dilemma of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order to manage a class successfully was posed as the topic of the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), and Stephanie made several comments about her beliefs on the topic. Stephanie again stated that she felt young children tended to want to please their teacher and that this

would prevent many discipline issues from arising or becoming severe, but pointed out that it was still difficult for her to know exactly how to structure a consistent disciplinary system or deal with spontaneous behavioral problems. She noted that discipline and management, as well as instructional strategies, were not as "cut and dry" as her college professors sometimes made them seem, and stated that a teacher needed to understand and choose from various ideas for classroom practice rather than rely strictly on one method:

> You can't just take it all from one theory…just from what like Carl Rogers says is the most effective way. Like maybe you'll see something that he does that you like, but you like what someone else does, and it's kind of like you take in little bits and pieces from various theorists and various people, and people that you meet, they may not even be theorists but they might have something that works just as well as what Piaget says you should do…you make something your own by taking from a lot of other people.

Stephanie's approach to this dilemma showed an interesting mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Her initial tendency to adhere to the concept of the teacher's control of the classroom and her obvious confusion about how to manage a class without a clear example or highly structured system were characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinkers, as was her belief that the knowledge about how to manage a class might be only temporarily uncertain and she would "get more of a feel for" it with further classroom experience. However, Stephanie showed signs not only that she was beginning to understand the complexity of this dilemma and but also that she was trying to explore ways in which she might eventually find a reliable, if necessarily constantly evolving, way to resolve it, which are characteristics of Quasi-Reflective reasoning.

When Stephanie acknowledged that she was unsure how to handle management situations in general and specific incidents such as the one with the boy who told a classmate to "shut up," reflected that her handling of disciplinary issues would "depend on the situation," stated that discipline was not as "cut and dry" as her professors might make it seem, and pointed out that there was "a fine line" between disciplining and yelling, she demonstrated that she was beginning to operate under the assumption that there were problems to which no simple solutions existed, a strong indicator of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective, thinking. Quasi-Reflective thinkers also tend to equate their personal beliefs for evidence to justify their points of view, which Stephanie did when she proposed that disciplining young children might not be as complicated or difficult as others on the whole because young children wished to please their teachers.

In addition, Stephanie showed the Quasi-Reflective trait of being unwilling to accept the knowledge or direction of certain individuals based solely on their status as authority figures or experts when she expressed doubt about the "cut and dry" way her professors presented management strategies and reflected that in order to develop a sound philosophy and effective practice, it was just as helpful to consider the ideas of those who "may not even be theorists" as those of experts. Finally, Stephanie's comments about taking "bits and pieces" and "making something your own" when developing a philosophy of classroom management were also indicative of late Quasi-Reflective thinking (Stage 5), as individuals at that stage tend to be willing to re-examine and refine their points of view based on new information and the ideas of others, able to see that points of view are embedded within a certain context, and that individual interpretation is a legitimate and necessary step in approaching a dilemma.

Dilemma 3: How can educators successfully collaborate with each other in a school, and what effect does teacher collaboration have on the school environment and on student learning?

Stephanie did not mention this dilemma frequently but made several statements regarding this question in her second journal entry (2-18-03) which could be enlightening in terms of understanding her reflective judgment. Stephanie wrote that she had observed a great deal of collaboration within her individual placement classroom and School A in general in terms of cooperating teachers and student teachers working together, but had not observed grade level teams collaborating about what they were teaching their students and new ideas they might try. When questioned about how she thought productive and constructive collaboration among teachers could be fostered, she responded, "I think an individual teacher should be willing to discuss things working in their classroom or things not working so that they can get help for things." She speculated that perhaps she had seen more collaboration of this type in her previous placement school because "the students are overall more difficult at times and they do need to look to other teachers for help so that they are not as overwhelmed with everything if things get difficult" and because "a lot of it has to do with luck that when they were hired they all got along and made a very nice cohesive unit."

Stephanie's statements about this dilemma indicated reasoning typical of individuals transitioning from Stage 3 (late Pre-Reflective thinking) to Stage 4 (early Quasi-Reflective thinking). Her statement that collaboration in one school might have been more extensive because of the "luck" that the teachers simply got along well suggested that she was assuming that the idiosyncratic "styles" of different teachers had a

great deal to do with whether they collaborated, rather than this being a conscious decision they had made in order to foster student learning and their own professional development; this is typical of individuals at Stage 3. Some of Stephanie's comments on this issue, however, were typical of Stage 4 reasoning. For example, Stephanie's statement that a teacher should be willing to share successful practices and seek help when having a problem suggested that she was attempting to be open to re-examination of her own beliefs, as individuals at Stage 4 often claim to be willing to do (even though they are not always able to do so in a sophisticated manner). Finally, Stephanie also appeared to be attempting to explain her belief about the high level of collaboration in her previous placement school by presenting "evidence" which was actually personal belief, as when she proposed that teachers in that school probably had to collaborate more because the students were so "difficult;" this is characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 4, who have begun to try to utilize the process of justifying beliefs through the use of evidence but have not yet learned to do so in a consistent or highly reflective manner.

Dilemma 4: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Stephanie encountered this dilemma at several points during her field experience. First, in her third journal entry (2-25-03), Stephanie remarked that she was finding it difficult to function in a collaborative fashion and conduct her field experience with so many people in the classroom. In addition to working with Mr. Redman, Stephanie also had to work closely with Ellen, the full practicum student also placed in that classroom, integrating her ideas for teaching her observed lessons with Ellen's lesson plans and

working around Ellen's extensive university requirements. Stephanie worked closely with Katie, the other pre-practicum student placed in her classroom on a different day of the week (also a participant in this study) to plan their observed lessons, and she remarked that collaboration between this many people increased the difficulty of the field experience somewhat.

In the same journal entry, Stephanie brought up another issue which made teaching in her placement classroom a challenging prospect, which was the fact that (as noted earlier in this analysis) Mr. Redman did not appear to have a consistent system of management and discipline on which Stephanie could model her own teaching practices. "This is hard for me," Stephanie wrote, "because when I go to teach, I do not really know what I would do if the kids misbehaved." Stephanie mentioned this issue again in the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), commenting that Mr. Redman's lack of a clear system of behavioral reminders and consequences for students made her unsure about when she should step in and handle discipline issues on her own and when she should step aside and let Mr. Redman handle them himself. "You don't know where your boundaries are as a student teacher," Stephanie said, "So I think it was just for me, it's a matter of what do I feel more comfortable handling and what do I feel more comfortable watching, to know what I would do when it's my classroom."

Stephanie's relationship and comfort level with her cooperating teacher became a serious issue during her sixth week in the classroom, and she wrote about this in her sixth journal entry (3-28-03). During a class discussion, Mr. Redman had made a disparaging and sarcastic remark about President George W. Bush, and even though she was not sure

the children had understood his comment, she strongly disagreed with his choice to say what he had:

> As a teacher we can shape students to make educated decisions, but we should not express our opinions in such a way that they begin to think like we do, especially about our leader…Mr. Redman has his opinion of President Bush for reasons that they students may not understand, and in a time when they are hearing mixed sentiments on the war, and what it really means, and 'is Bush right?'…I do not think Mr. Redman's comment was appropriate.

Finally, in her second post-observation interview (4-4-03), Stephanie discussed another issue concerning her role as a student teacher which she had encountered in planning and implementing her lesson. She admitted that because she had been being observed, she had considered calling only on students who she knew would not struggle to read aloud in the classroom in order to decrease the chances that she might have to stop the flow of her lesson and deal for a prolonged period of time with a student who had trouble with the reading. However, based on her previous experience and her beliefs about her professional development and philosophy, Stephanie decided this would not be the appropriate course of action and she attempted to engage every student fully in all the segments of her lesson. She felt that calling only on students who were excellent readers would make it seem that she favored them over the other students, and reflected, "I can pick up on that when it happens to me [as a student], and it's frustrating…if you're not the person the teacher really likes…so that's why I realized I can't start that now," Stephanie said during the interview. She also believed that conducting the lesson in this way was against her personal and professional beliefs:

And that's not part of my philosophy, that's not what I believe education is, you know, making yourself look good by only calling on good students to participate, because you have a class of twenty individuals. Each person is part of the community…I have to make sure they all feel involved.

In dealing with this dilemma, Stephanie displayed both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Stephanie's confusion at having to collaborate with so many people and her anxiety over having to manage a class without having an example on which to base her decisions were typical of the confusion and discomfort in the face of uncertainty which characterizes individuals at the Pre-Reflective level, as was her tendency to make tentative decisions about when to step in and handle discipline problems based on what "felt right" or what made her most comfortable. In some instances, however, Stephanie's approach to the dilemma showed characteristics of Stage 4 reasoning.

Stephanie's reaction to Mr. Redman making what she felt was an inappropriate comment in the classroom, for example, demonstrated a highly Quasi-Reflective attitude toward the idea of acceptance of knowledge based on an individual's status as an authority figure or expert. Stephanie's strong feeling that Mr. Redman should not influence his students' ability to make their own decisions about questions concerning political issues and her explicit statement that his action had been inappropriate indicated that she was definitely moving beyond a stage of reflective judgment in an individual would accept an authority's point of view without questioning its validity. In discussing this, one of the reasons Stephanie cited for her disagreement with Mr. Redman's action was her feeling that in a confusing and difficult time such as wartime, it was important to instill respect and trust for national leaders in the students, which might be interpreted as a Pre-Reflective

tendency to trust authority figures unquestioningly. However, when one analyzes

Stephanie's discussion of this incident, it becomes apparent that her own beliefs

specifically regarding the President's actions or the nation's status of being at war were not

her main point of emphasis; in fact, she did even express one way or the other whether she

thought the nation's leaders had been justified in declaring war or not. Stephanie's

primary point of justification for her objection to Mr. Redman's comment was her belief

that a teacher should not influence his or her students unduly with his or her own opinions,

but should help prepare students to make their own "educated decisions" about issues.

Therefore, even if one did interpret Stephanie's discomfort with Mr. Redman's criticism of

the President as an unexamined propensity to respect individuals (i.e. the President) solely

because they are authority figures, the fact that she openly voiced disagreement with the

choices made by Mr. Redman (also an "expert" and authority figure in an immediate sense

for Stephanie) based on her beliefs about an appropriate philosophy of teaching indicates

that she was certainly at least beginning to realize that she could not rely simply on an

individual's status as an "expert" as justification for accepting that person's point of view.

Finally, Stephanie exhibited Quasi-Reflective reasoning when she decided against

calling only on students who she was sure could read aloud with little or no assistance, a

decision she made in order to fulfill the students' academic and affective needs rather than

make herself "look good" while she was being observed teaching. By acknowledging that

she had to make the decision based on her beliefs about the meaning and purpose of the act

of teaching rather than on the goal of appearing to be an effective teacher during her

observation, Stephanie was beginning operate under the assumption associated generally

with Stage 4 that this was a problem that she could not resolve with a simple and

superficial solution. Her comment about having a "class of twenty individuals" in which

"each person is part of the community" could even have indicated that Stephanie was

viewing the situation from the perspective associated with Stage 5, or later Quasi-

Reflective thinking, that diverse points of view were inherent in the human experience; this

would mean that Stephanie knew she needed to include all her students, with their varied

reading abilities and academic needs, into every learning experience she structured for

them.

Dilemma 5: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed

or student-centered methods of instruction?

Stephanie encountered and reflected on many aspects of this dilemma throughout

her field experience. First, in her third journal entry (2-25-03), Stephanie discussed Mr.

Redman's apparently very loosely structured style of planning and teaching, and this led

her to reflect on how extensively a teacher should plan learning experiences and how

tightly one should adhere to one's plans if spontaneous and unexpected opportunities for

other types of learning might arise. When questioned about her beliefs about this,

Stephanie wrote that she felt a teacher had to plan thoroughly and still accommodate

unplanned opportunities for learning by allowing for "teachable moments" and exploration

of topics which students found compelling or interesting. She debated how a teacher might

do this successfully, especially when teaching with a standards-based curriculum:

> In standards based education, the teacher must do a lot of planning to fit the
>
> curriculum as well as the possible teachable moments. If the teacher is not
>
> structured enough, then I feel that he or she would seem very disorganized and the

children may be getting a disservice; however, if they overplan, they may lose sight

of teachable moments because they are trying so hard to stick with their rigid plans.

In her first post-observation interview, Stephanie dealt with this dilemma again

when she discussed how an element of a sequencing task she assigned her students as part

of her lesson on a Greek myth might be open to student interpretation, and how she felt

this was actually a valuable experience for the students. During the lesson, it came to

Stephanie's attention that because of some ambiguity in the way the myth had been

presented in the text Stephanie read to the students, there were two possible ways for the

students to arrange their sequencing strips to tell the story and that each way could be

reasonably argued to be the "correct" answer. While she could have decided to take a

more teacher-directed route by simply deciding for herself which answer was more

reasonable and held students accountable for sequencing their strips in that way, Stephanie

accepted both possible answers as correct and used this as an example to show the students

that there were questions for which everyone might not have the same answer and that

different answers could still be considered justifiable. "So some things are more your

interpretation, or what you think about the story," Stephanie said. "I think that was good

for them to see, to know that everything's not always cut and dry. I mean it might confuse

them now, but eventually it will help them."

As Stephanie reflected on that lesson in her fourth journal entry (3-16-03), she

encountered yet another aspect of the dilemma about teacher-directed vs. student-centered

instruction. She noted with interest that Mr. Redman had chosen to teach the students a

lengthy unit about Greek mythology despite that fact that this topic was not part of the

state curriculum standards for first grade, based on his assessment that the students were

capable of handling this challenging material and that they were interested in it. This led Stephanie to question how much instruction needed to be based on teachers' implementation of strict curriculum standards and how much should be tailored to the academic strengths, needs and interests of a specific group of students. "Is it ok to bypass the standards if students are learning at a higher level? Is he really bypassing standards, or is he trying different curriculum to fit into the standards? I really was not sure," she wrote.

This dilemma was presented to all participants during the second group dilemma discussion (3-25-03), and Stephanie made several comments. First, she shared with the group how Mr. Redman had decided to teach the unit on Greek mythology and explored her thoughts about how closely teachers should adhere to curriculum standards and present material according to those guidelines, commenting again that "he doesn't seem very tied to the standards at all…I think it depends on like the kids that you have in your classroom and what not." Further discussion on the general question of teacher-directed and student-centered instruction led Stephanie to state that in her field placements, she had observed much less hands-on, student-centered learning taking place and much more teacher-directed instruction and test preparation in schools with limited financial resources, "just because a lot of the kids in those schools were so far below the level where they needed to be." Finally, Stephanie reflected that her beliefs about this question had been influenced by her experience as a student, as she had always been very successful when taught by teacher-directed methods, and her memories of her brother having difficulty transitioning from school where mathematics were taught by more traditional teacher-directed methods to one where a highly constructivist and student-centered math program was utilized

(although she noted that she had seen a previous cooperating teacher use that same math program quite effectively).

During her second post-observation interview (4-4-03), Stephanie reflected about how she had had difficulty finding the balance between the teacher-directed and student-centered aspects of her lesson about golden lion tamarinds. Having a great deal of factual material about the animal to cover, Stephanie was unsure how much time to allow for students to share stories about their experiences with animals and make personal connections with the material. In order to resolve this dilemma as the lesson was in progress, Stephanie found she had to go with her "gut feeling" to ascertain when she needed to move on to present a new point to the students:

> I think that's the hard thing, because you want everything to be prescribed for you, like written, like 'do this'…but I think sometimes you just have to go with your gut feeling. It depends on your group of kids, your environment.

During her lesson Stephanie found that her students gained a higher degree of understanding of the material by exploring a world map, an activity which had not occurred to her as she planned the lesson. She was glad that this opportunity had arisen and felt she had made the right decision in allowing the students to take time to understand how to use the world map to answer their questions about where tamarinds lived even though it was not part of her lesson plan:

> I think it's important that…they feel validated in that their thinking, you know…just because it's not in the box of what I wrote in my lesson plan doesn't mean I can't talk about it…the understanding of the map is something they can take with them.

In her seventh journal entry (4-8-03), Stephanie continued reflecting about how she had taken time from her planned lesson to allow students to develop a fuller understanding of the world map, which caused her to question again how much instruction needed to be based on teachers' implementation of curriculum standards rather than allowing students to pursue learning that interested them and about which they felt personal ownership. "Should we teach directly to the standards? Is it our duty as educators to simply teach the standards or should we try to go beyond that and make learning experiences more meaningful for students?" she wrote. Stephanie concluded eventually that while she believed curriculum standards were necessary for teachers because teaching without them would put students at a "disadvantage" as they prepared for standardized tests, she also felt that "they can be so limiting at times and students cannot always make meaning out of a standards based curriculum." She finally commented that she was glad that her classroom teaching experiences gave her the opportunity to reflect about this and other important questions, as this "caused me to think about my philosophies of teaching, which I feel is a way to help me get better at my practice."

Stephanie's final comment on this dilemma occurred in her eighth journal entry (4-17-03), in which she reflected that no matter how meticulously she planned learning experiences for her students, there would always be instances in which she would have to decide whether to stick with her original plans be flexible enough to accommodate students' questions, their desire to learn about other topics, or their need to be taught in a different way than what she had planned:

If I had not planned or prepared well...I would not have been as successful.

However, I do realize that no matter how well I plan, I will not take into

consideration everything that may happen and I need to be prepared for tangents or other situations that may come up.

Stephanie's many thoughtful statements about this dilemma are quite illuminating in terms of understanding her reflective judgment. As was the case with several dilemmas she encountered, Stephanie's approach to the question of whether instruction should be teacher-directed or student-centered showed highly Quasi-Reflective reasoning. A few elements of Stephanie's approach to the dilemma suggested Pre-Reflective thinking, such as the confusion she experienced due to the uncertainty inherent in the decision about what type of instruction a teacher should implement in the classroom, and she showed a typically Pre-Reflective tendency to make decisions based on what "feels right" (as when she talked about having to go with her "gut feeling" when she taught a lesson). However, the rest of Stephanie's statements regarding the dilemma were more typical of individuals functioning at Stages 4 and 5.

Based on her continuous questioning about this dilemma and her repeated acknowledgement that she was not sure how to resolve it, Stephanie clearly perceived that this was a dilemma for which there was not a simple solution, a perception which Quasi-Reflective individuals have started to assimilate into their way of approaching problems. Stephanie also made several statements which indicated that as is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, she was also beginning to operate under the assumption that knowledge was not always certain and easily accessible or transmittable from one individual to another. Examples of this are Stephanie's statements about her realization that while planning was necessary as a teacher, it was not sufficient for ensuring successful student learning because she could not anticipate everything that might come up during a

lesson, and her use of the sequencing activity as an example to herself and the students that interpretation was often an important part of learning.

Stephanie's statements reflected a Quasi-Reflective attitude toward authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge as well. When she advocated the use of "teachable moments" rather than rigid adherence to curriculum standards which limited teachers' and students' freedom to pursue learning which was relevant for them, Stephanie indicated that she did not consider the authority or expertise of those who had designed the standards as paramount, nor did she believe that the authority of the teacher in implementing an official curriculum was more important than the consideration of the needs of individual students in determining what was taught and how it was taught.

Stephanie's approach to this dilemma showed several other patterns of reasoning typically associated with Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking. For example, she was able to acknowledge her personal bias and interpretation as influences on her beliefs when she discussed how she herself had been successful as a student when taught by teacher-directed methods, and she professed a willingness to re-examine her point of view when she noted that she had seen a cooperating teacher successfully implement a certain highly constructivist elementary mathematics program which had caused Stephanie's brother difficulty and when she expressed her appreciation of opportunities to think about and improve her teaching practice). In addition to this, even though Stephanie was making rudimentary attempts to explore the complexity of the dilemma and the many factors that had some bearing on how one might resolve it, she sometimes equated her personal beliefs with evidence as she justified her point of view, such as when she speculated that teachers at an urban elementary school might be employing highly teacher-directed methods and

focusing on test preparation rather than student-centered learning because "a lot of the kids in those schools were so far below the level where they needed to be."

Although most of Stephanie's data in regard to this dilemma suggests Stage 4, there were also a few indications that Stephanie was reasoning in a manner more typical of Stage 5, or the later phase of Quasi-Reflective level. It did appear that she was attempting to explore and understand the complexity of the problem in a sophisticated way than she did with some other dilemmas, for example. Her repeated comment that the way one resolved this question would often depend on the specific group of students one was teaching and the environment in which they were being taught showed that she might have been acknowledging that a point of view about such a dilemma is embedded in a certain context, and that individual interpretation is a legitimate and necessary part of addressing an ill-defined dilemma, which is a perspective characteristic of Stage 5. Finally, as individuals who are functioning at Stage 5 have begun to do, Stephanie was able to discuss the dilemma not only in terms of Mr. Redman, her own observed lessons, and other specific personal experiences, but also in terms of the broader context of the current debate in the field of education about standards-based curriculum and instruction. In general, Stephanie's approach to this dilemma was very enlightening and strongly suggested Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 6: How can a teacher accommodate the needs of a group of students with highly diverse linguistic backgrounds and varied academic needs?

Stephanie addressed this dilemma briefly in a few journal entries, mainly in terms of how she could foster successful class participation and comprehension in her students who spoke English as a second language. In her fourth journal entry (3-16-03), as she

discussed her lesson on Greek mythology, Stephanie reflected about how she had made a "good decision" by pairing her ESL students with "stronger students" in order to improve the chances that her ESL students would comprehend the language and concepts involved in the story and activity. "I found that the pairing worked well, except that two of the students did not want to work with each other," Stephanie wrote. "I told them that they had to and they should be excited about it because they would both make a cool picture together and things went smoothly after that." Later, in her sixth journal entry (3-28-03), Stephanie discussed how she had used this pairing technique during another lesson she taught, "and I made sure to tell them that they are expected to work nicely with their partner no matter who it is."

In her fifth journal entry (3-21-03), Stephanie again considered the topic of how to assist ESL students in their participation and comprehension when their English skills were limited and she did not speak their primary language. When the students were given the assignment of creating their own get-well cards for a classmate who had had surgery, Stephanie assisted several of the ESL students but was still unsure about how much and what type of guidance she should offer them:

> One dilemma I thought of when I was working with these children was how much do I guide them? Do I correct every spelling mistake? Do I give them the traditional statements found on get-well cards? I was unsure what to do, so I helped with spelling if the word was completely wrong or if they asked me, then I helped only when they did not know what else to say in the letter.

Since Stephanie did not reflect extensively about this question, it offers only limited insight into her reflective judgment level. In general, she addressed the problem by

making tentative decisions about what "felt right" to her, which is a Pre-Reflective manner of reasoning typical of Stage 3 thinkers, but she also appeared to be acknowledging that this was a problem with no simple solution and attempting to refine and re-examine her point of view, which is characteristic of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking. In fact, it is also interesting to note that when presenting her thoughts and many questions about this issue, Stephanie spontaneously used the term "dilemma," suggesting that she was quite well on her way in the progression toward Quasi-Reflective thinking, as her natural and unprompted use of this language is another strong indicator that she was developing a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of this type of problem.

Dilemma 7: Does an "achievement gap" exist between students in suburban schools and students in urban schools? If so, what accounts for its existence? Are high-stakes and/or standardized tests a valuable instrument for assessing and improving student learning and closing this "gap," or do they limit what teachers teach and negatively affect the ways in which students develop and demonstrate understanding of academic material?

Stephanie addressed this dilemma primarily in her final essay (5-29-03), for which she chose this question as her topic. Stephanie stated that she did not agree with either "side" of this debate, but did assert that she believed standardized testing could not solve the problem of the achievement gap because testing did not have the potential to address the myriad factors which influenced an individual student's academic performance. Stephanie's belief was that there was "no cut and dry relationship between standards and the achievement gap" and went on to elaborate:

> There are so many different aspects of a child's world that affect them in different
> ways that I feel it is impossible to say one simple cause and effect relationship

exists between standards and the achievement gap in these two different types of schools.

Stephanie went on to propose that high stakes or standardized testing would also not be viable means of closing the achievement gap because students' performance in school and on tests was also influenced by their home environments (Stephanie appeared to be referring at least in part to the relative financial resources of those environments), a factor which testing could not address:

I feel a major part of the reason for this disparity in achievement is the environment that these children are from outside of the classroom. The environment shapes the expectations the child has for themselves; it also impacts the resources a child has available to them to use in aid for their education.

Stephanie also commented that based on her observations in her placement schools, she felt that the financial resources of a school had a significant impact on students' ability achieve academically, for schools which were impoverished financially often led to students who were "impoverished in spirit."

As Stephanie concluded her essay, she reflected that she realized that there were others who held opposing points of view about the use of high stakes tests as a means for closing the achievement gap, but that she felt one needed to be cautious in accepting the evidence used to support this point of view:

I know that evidence may go against what I believe in this area, however, no school district is alike and maybe in some communities where there is a push for the achievement of standards and high stakes testing, the achievement gaps are lowered. Also, experts who look at data want that data to support their personal

belief about how the system works…it is possible to manipulate numerical results to support what you want it to support. This involves researcher biases, so therefore, people can get different results when studying the same thing because they can interpret the numbers to fit into what they want them to fit.

Stephanie's approach to this dilemma suggested a highly Quasi-Reflective manner of reasoning including elements of both Stage 4 and Stage 5. First, her assertion that there was not a "cut and dry" or "simple cause and effect relationship" between standardized testing and the achievement gap clearly indicated that she had progressed beyond the stage where she might regard this dilemma as a simple one involving certainty and an easily accessible resolution. While she did sometimes equate her personal beliefs with evidence regarding this issue as individuals functioning at Stage 4 tend to do (for example, when she proposed that a school's financial impoverishment would tend to make students "impoverished in spirit"), Stephanie also demonstrated some more sophisticated reasoning styles typically associated with Stage 5. For example, Stephanie appeared to be truly aware of the dilemma's complexity and attempting to explore it. In addition, when she expressed the belief that neither "side" of the debate was entirely correct, for example, this indicated that Stephanie had possibly begun to focus on finding a balanced approach to the dilemma as Stage 5 thinkers tend to do, and when she mentioned that no school district was alike and that therefore the results of research about standardized testing might vary from one school or district to another, Stephanie appeared to be acknowledging that one's point of view was embedded in a certain context.

Finally, Stephanie's remarks about the use of evidence by "experts" and researchers who might manipulate results in order to support their positions were quite illuminating in

terms of her reflective judgment. Clearly, for example, Stephanie was beyond the stage where she would accept the knowledge of an authority figure or expert without question, which suggested she was no longer functioning at a primarily Pre-Reflective level. Furthermore, her attention to the idea that "evidence" could be shaped or manipulated indicated that she was aware, as individuals functioning at Stage 5 have become, that an individual needed to evaluate evidence rather than accept it without question and that one's own interpretation was a legitimate and necessary step in forming one's point of view about a dilemma.

Summary of Stephanie's Reflective Judgment Level

Stephanie's data indicated on the whole that she was functioning at Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective reasoning, through most of the data collection period. She occasionally showed some vestiges of Pre-Reflective thinking, such as when she appeared to be confused or overwhelmed by complex dilemmas or adhering rigidly to the idea authority figures as holders of control and knowledge. However, these instances were much less frequent than those in which Stephanie appeared to be learning to accept the uncertainty of knowledge with less anxiety, acknowledging that many dilemmas had no simple solutions, attempting to use and evaluate evidence to support her point of view and consider the validity of others', and integrating the perspective that diverse points of view were an inherent part of the human experience into her world view. Stephanie was not consistently able to seek out and evaluate evidence to justify her beliefs, sometimes relying on idiosyncratic differences between individuals as an explanation for different points of view or equating her personal beliefs with evidence. Nonetheless, she appeared to be close to completing the move from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning, based on the

fact that she was frequently and consistently incorporating the assumption that knowledge was not always certain and that her beliefs needed to be justified by some means other than reliance on personal observation and experience or the views of authority figures or experts. She also showed occasional indications that she would soon be ready to utilize more sophisticated means of inquiring into dilemmas and considering their complexity through a balanced perspective, taking into account the implications of the dilemma on a broader context than simply her own personal experience.

On the whole, most of Stephanie's statements regarding the ill-defined dilemmas she encountered in her practice could be associated with Stage 4 of the Reflective Judgment Model, though she displayed occasional characteristics of individuals functioning at Stage 3 or Stage 5. This is consistent with research that states that individuals may display characteristics associated with a range of reflective judgment levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994), and that traditional-aged college juniors typically function around Stage 3 to Stage 4 of the Reflective Judgment Model (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

Stephanie engaged extensively in the reflective processes employed by the research study, although she did so to different degrees depending on the type and context of reflection. She responded to prompts for only three of her nine journal entries, and missed the third group discussion, but participated expansively in the other two discussions and her two post-observation interviews, and turned in a detailed and apparently very thoughtfully considered final essay.

Stephanie responded to prompts for journal entries 2 (2-18-03), 3 (2-25-03), and 4 (3-16-03). Although the infrequency of her responses prevents the researcher from drawing definitive conclusions about the impact of this process on her reflective judgment development, Stephanie's responses to prompts suggested that those prompts could have encouraged and stimulated her propensity to engage in deeper reflection about her observations and practice in the classroom. (Stephanie did mention during her first post-observation interview on 3-14-03 that she was having a very busy semester, having "bitten off a lot" in terms of her field experience and a heavy course load, so this may have contributed to the infrequency of her submission of second journal iterations.) In journal 2 (2-18-03), for example, Stephanie made passing reference to the way Mr. Redman had structured a Valentine's Day celebration for his class, noting only that the students had appeared to enjoy themselves but that the classroom was still "under control," but further prompting led her to discuss how what she had seen might differ from the way students in other classrooms might be experiencing this special day and to reflect about why their experience would be different. In this journal entry Stephanie also discussed the collaboration she had observed amongst teachers in School A, but did not elaborate on her beliefs about how teachers could foster successful professional collaboration and why this might occur more easily in some environments than others until she responded to further questioning.

In her third journal entry (2-25-03), Stephanie contrasted the instructional and management styles of Mr. Redman and a previous cooperating teacher in her initial iteration, but reflected much further in her second iteration about which of these approaches to instruction and management were more beneficial or effective and why, and

how a teacher might be able to go about making decisions about these issues while in the midst of the ongoing process of teaching. Finally, in her fourth journal entry (3-16-03), Stephanie discussed how the lesson she had taught had appeared to go smoothly and how the students had been successful at the task, but did not reflect about how the lessons she taught might be influencing her own professional development until prompted. Her second iteration also included much more detailed information and reflection about issues she had brought up in her first iteration concerning her beliefs about the pairing strategy she had employed in order facilitate the comprehension of her ESL students, the teacher's decision to teach a unit which was not part of that grade's official curriculum standards, and the reasons why this particular class seemed to be "learning at a higher level" than others she had seen.

One point which stands out when examining Stephanie's data is that she appeared to be quite comfortable engaging in reflection about her practices and beliefs in the context of her post-observation interviews, which distinguishes her data somewhat from that of several of the other participants. In addition to making more technical comments about the methods she had implemented in teaching the lessons, Stephanie was also very willing to reflect more deeply about the implications of her actions in terms of broader issues and about her beliefs and philosophy of teaching. In her first post-observation interview (3-14-03), for example, Stephanie began by simply remarking that the students had seemed engaged and successfully completed the task she gave them, but she went on to discuss how her admission to the students that she had make a mistake and the fact that the students had found two different answers which could both be argued as "correct" had caused her to think about the meaning of her actions as a teacher. Discussing the calm,

confident way she had approached the task of teaching her observed lesson also led her to reflect on the way the teacher's presentation could affect the students and the "fine line" that existed between appropriate discipline and yelling at students.

In her second interview (4-4-03), Stephanie again showed her readiness to use the experience of teaching her lesson as a stimulus for reflection not only on the technical aspects of the lesson but about her beliefs as well. Following the lead of the students, who apparently needed to explore a world map in order to understand what they were reading and who wanted to share personal connections to the material, led Stephanie to reflect that not all valuable learning in a classroom would necessarily come from "the box of what I wrote down in my lesson plan." Looking back on her decision not to take the safe route of calling only on students who were strong readers in order to avoid situations in which she might appear to be struggling in her observed lesson led Stephanie to reflect that she felt that this type of action did not represent who she was as a teacher and that she hoped never to succumb to that type of temptation when she worked with students. Stephanie also reflected on the ways in which this lesson and others which she had taught had influenced her belief that she would ultimately like to teach in an urban school.

In group discussions, Stephanie was also quite willing to explore and articulate her beliefs. In group discussion 1 (3-19-03), Stephanie discussed her philosophy about the importance of consistency in management and the difficulty she had had in taking on a role of authority as a student teacher in Mr. Redman's class, where she felt there was little clarity and consistency in terms of discipline; she also discussed her belief that teaching was more complex than was often communicated in her teacher education courses and the need to understand many different theories and practices and apply whatever was most

appropriate given the unique needs of one's students. In the second group discussion (3-25-03), Stephanie reflected on the differences she had seen in the types of instruction implemented in schools with widely different financial resources, the teacher's decision about whether or not to adhere rigidly to curriculum frameworks if the needs and interests of her students directed her to do something different, and the ways in which her personal experience as a student had influenced her beliefs about instruction.

In her final essay (5-29-03), Stephanie submitted an extensive and thoughtful presentation of her beliefs about standardized testing as a possible means to eliminate the achievement gap. Stating first that she did not agree with either "side" of the debate, she attempted to consider the complexity of the issue and justify her beliefs. Although she justified her beliefs at some points by relying mainly on her personal observations in placement schools and might have presented some of her assumptions as if they were facts, she engaged in the process of writing her essay in response to the instructions fully and made many statements illuminating the way in which her level of reflective judgment contributed to her evolving perspective on the issue.

In conclusion, Stephanie participated in all aspects of the reflective process in this study, and she seemed particularly apt to engage in substantive reflection about her beliefs in the contexts of post-observation interviews or group discussions. This could possibly have been because she was stimulated to engage in reflection about her practice by the immediacy of just having engaged in the act of teaching in the case of the interviews, or because the element of social interaction was an important one for her in the case of group discussions. In terms of the benefit this study might have for teacher educators wishing to help preservice teachers develop in the area of reflective judgment or simply to facilitate

reflection about their field experiences, it is important to note that these contexts were valuable ones for fostering Stephanie's reflection.

Case Study 5: Andrea

Part A: Description of Case

Andrea is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a junior in college with a double major in Elementary Education and Communications at the time of this study. She grew up in an outlying suburban area of the large northeastern city in which her university is located. (*All biographical information provided by Andrea via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-19-03.*)

For her third pre-practicum experience, Andrea was placed in a first-grade classroom in School A. The record of Andrea's field experience in a first grade classroom in School A began with her journal for week 1 (2-10-03), in which she reported having been "incited to ponder the starkly erroneous expectations I had earlier carried with me" about the public school in which she was placed. Andrea had been looking forward to teaching in another "urban public school," since she had been placed in two urban public schools for previous field experiences (Andrea appears to have misidentified School A as urban rather than suburban; while it is a public school, it is located in a neighborhood outside a large city and is part of a different school district than that of the main city). Andrea wrote that based on what she had seen firsthand in her field experiences and by drawing on her prior knowledge, she had formulated a view of public and private schools to be "polar opposites." After seeing the school, she wrote, she realized that she had "allowed my mind to further perpetuate inaccurate generalizations" about urban and suburban schools.

Andrea went on to describe the differences she noticed between her earlier conception of a public school and the reality of School A as a public school. The first

"misconception" which Andrea reported having challenged was that public schools "do not have as plentiful, adequate resources as private schools," as she observed that her first grade classroom in School A, as well as the school itself, enjoyed more copious educational resources and more modern facilities than the private elementary school she herself had attended ("the building itself resembles an estate, a mansion," she wrote). Andrea found this interesting, "because I always thought that public schools were more or less forced to invent their own resources from the limited offerings they could accumulate…right?" Andrea also wrote that she was reconsidering her previous assumption that "students in public schools have a greater need for good teachers than do students in private schools," which she had formulated based on her earlier conception of public school students:

> …the ones who cursed, smoked cigarettes in the bathroom, and even threw desks at teachers…these were the students who need good teachers, to help them learn respect for themselves and others, to become something better than what life had lined up for them…right? In response to both questions, or until recently, both unquestioned beliefs, the answer is simply: ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Andrea concluded her journal entry by distilling her perceptions of her first visit to School A by writing that learning could take place everywhere, at all times, and that schools were all unique, "like snowflakes." "The wisdom that I so unexpectedly stumbled on this past Thursday shed light upon my ill-formed conceptions about trends in public and private school settings." (Andrea did not submit a second journal iteration in response to supervisor prompts.)

Andrea's journal entry for week 2 (2-18-03) focused on the work she had done on reading with Sarah, a six-year-old girl in her class, for an intervention study required by her reading methods course. Ms. Keane, Andrea's cooperating teacher, had been unsure about whether Andrea should work with this little girl because of a variety of issues which presented challenges to her academic progress. Andrea had Sarah read aloud to her a beginning-level book, and found that Sarah had an extremely difficult time both concentrating and sounding out words, often appearing annoyed or angry when Andrea asked her to sound out words or focus more attentively on her reading. "I would judge from my experience with her that she most likely has ADD or even ADHD," Andrea wrote. When asked how she had assessed this, Andrea wrote that she had noticed that Sarah was unable to focus for a long period of time and often ended up looking around the room and focusing on other things in the classroom. If this were because of a physiological condition which Sarah could not control, Andrea wrote, then "other roads may need to be explored in addressing the issue, such as medication."

Andrea felt that Sarah's inability to focus caused her severe frustration and sometimes anger. When Andrea asked her to sound out words, Sarah "sighed in annoyance," refused to do so, complained that her regular teacher did not make her sound out words, and rushed through pages apparently reading from memory or just saying random words. When questioned about how she might encourage Sarah to become engaged in the reading process in a manner that would prevent such frustration, Andrea had difficulty coming up with potential strategies other than the simple coaxing she had tried already:

I am very unsure of how to do this actually. I thought that having her follow along with her finger might help as she sounded out the words to me, but it did not seem to make much difference. I think her distractions and frustrations may lie in the fact that she is still in the same classroom as the other students, and she often turns from reading in desperation to find something more exciting and enticing going on around her.

Due to Sarah's avoidance of help, anger, defensiveness and inability to focus, Andrea concluded that the little girl was a very insecure student, "not because she has learning disabilities but because she does not believe in herself." Andrea wrote about how she had learned in her reading methods course that students who perceived that they were poor readers would often stay poor readers because of the negative influences of a leveling system in reading, teachers' inconsistency with them, low expectations, and lack of encouragement. When questioned about how a teacher might stop this cycle once or prevent it from being set it motion, Andrea suggested that a student like Sarah should be read to each day so that she could see how to work on sounding out words and make reading a smooth process. Andrea wrote of her earnest desire to help Sarah to become a better reader and also to be less defensive and more confident:

I only hope that with the help of Ms. Keane, I will learn the best ways to work with Sarah…I hope to help Sarah rise from this cycle of negative reinforcement into a newfound state of self-confidence in her abilities to succeed not only at reading but in all areas.

Andrea's journal entry for week 3 (2-25-03) included a description of the class celebration of the Japanese Girls' Festival. She noticed several items displayed in the

classroom such as dolls, articles of Japanese culture, decorations, treats, and posters explaining Japanese traditions for this special day, and was excited to be part of this "novel event." She met the Japanese bilingual teacher, who led the students in Japanese songs, explained the customs for the day, and showed the students how to write their names in Japanese and to fold origami, which Andrea thought was a wonderful way to let the students "create something to represent all that they had learned that day as well as having something to bring home and show their families."

Andrea ended her journal entry with a reflection about why she had found the day so meaningful and how it had influenced her ideas about the way she would teach her students in the future:

> Teaching the students typical Japanese traditions was very important because, of the two first grades, at least ten or more students are Japanese. I feel that this honorary celebration was a great way to expose students to one another's cultures, and I only hope that such celebrations of diversity will continue throughout the year to teach students open-mindedness as well as cultural awareness.

Andrea was questioned further about her beliefs concerning teaching students those qualities, why she felt it was important, and what role the teacher should play in developing open-mindedness and cultural awareness in students, but she did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts.

On 3-19-03, Andrea participated in the first group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was the question of how much control or authority a teacher should exert in the discipline and management of a classroom. Andrea's first comment was to say that although it was a good idea to have rules for behavior in the classroom and to set up the

expectation that the students respect the teacher as an authority from the very beginning of the school year, but that the students should be involved in the process of creating those rules ("I think this would be more effective than just dictating the rules to them"). The teacher needed to remember, Andrea stated, that she would need to make "situational decisions" based on what is going on in the classroom and not rely entirely on a rigid set of rules:

> There's no way to say that there are certain rules, you follow them or you don't, and I think that in any case, rules are always sort of bent, in a way, and I think that you need to just think of being fair. Fairness isn't necessarily that you treat the rules the same every single time…I think fairness is that you take in account the reasons why the rules weren't followed.

Andrea used an incident she had observed in an earlier placement classroom as an example of this, describing how a student who had forgotten to write down a homework assignment in his planner, mistakenly answered "yes" when asked if he had done his homework, and then called a "liar" by his teacher and made to write a letter home to his parents explaining his offense to them. Andrea felt that the teacher had misunderstood the situation and taken inappropriate action. "You really need to take the time to understand kids and the reasons that maybe a rule or expectation wasn't met," she stated, "because a lot of the time you could misjudge it without realizing it." Andrea asserted that the teacher needed to look at situations not only from the adult's/teacher's perspective, but also from the student's perspective: "It's really important to kind of take a moment before making a lot of judgments or before making a decision and just kind of seeing things from other people's perspectives."

Andrea agreed with some other participants in the discussion that it was difficult as a student teacher to know what her role was regarding administering discipline when the need arose in the classroom. "I think a lot of the time, we are prepracs, so we are intimidated about addressing stuff because we don't really know what our role is," Andrea stated. Andrea felt that if she were the one who was "in charge of the situation" or the teacher was not close by, she should try to take initiative in resolving a disciplinary situation or bring the situation to the teacher's attention if she felt that addressing it was beyond her capacity or comfort level. However, if the teacher was close by, she was more likely to let the teacher handle the problem and talk to the teacher later to learn why she had chosen a certain course of action to resolve the problem. In addition to general confusion or uncertainty about her role in the classroom, one of the most problematic factors Andrea had encountered as a student teacher trying to manage a group of students was the difficulty inherent in trying to be seen as an authority figure in the eyes of the students:

> The teacher is there all of the time and for a preprac who is there once a week for ten weeks, by the eighth, ninth, tenth week you get the respect hopefully that you would like, but then again, you're gone after that…and by the end when they do start to respect us and get used to us and see us as an authority, we're gone…and I think that is probably hard for kids then, to really have the same level of respect, because they have in the back of their minds that this teacher is just temporary so…maybe it's not the same.

Finally, when the group was asked what factors had influenced their beliefs about discipline and management, Andrea agreed with some others in the group that their college courses on management were of limited practical use:

> You really can't just read something in a book. You can't just read a theory, you can't just be told in a textbook the way to do anything, the way to teach anything, the way to manage a classroom…because it really does depend on who you are as a teacher and what you value and who your students are, and you know, the context of your classroom.

On 3-21-03, Andrea taught a math lesson to her first grade class and I interviewed her afterward. The main concept of the lesson was counting by twos, and after making a presentation to the entire class, Andrea had them come up with strategies for counting pairs of items by twos. The children had their choice of strategies for doing so; most used Unifix cubes, others made drawings, still others acted out the problem, etc. In general, Andrea thought the lesson had gone well. She was not sure the students had all internalized the concept of counting by twos by the end of lesson. "There were times when I really didn't know what I should be doing, because everyone needed help," she reflected, unsure as well whether she could have assisted those who needed the most help in a small group the way she had done if Ms. Keane and the full practicum student in the classroom had not been there. However, she was pleased to see the students engaged in the activity and was impressed with the variety of strategies they devised for solving the problem and demonstrating their understanding to her. "There are just so many options if there is a student who doesn't grasp it one way," she stated, "it's good that there are other ways and that they're encouraged to do the problem in other ways."

Andrea also noticed that some students were relying on more concrete methods for working out the problem and others were able to deal with it more abstractly, both of which she felt were acceptable at this level. Many of the students were actually familiar with the process of multiplication and were approaching the problem that way; Andrea had been aware that some students were advanced in enough in math to do this and had been slightly anxious that her lesson might be too easy for them, but she also knew there were some who had not yet mastered the basics of the process of counting by twos, "so I didn't know if it was good or bad, like if the lesson was on the right level or not." Andrea and Ms. Keane had decided that they would provide more difficult problems for those students who completed the assigned task quickly and with ease, as well as opportunities for those students to assist their classmates who needed help.

Andrea was glad that she had insisted that the students not only show her they had the correct answer to the problem but also to explain to her how they had arrived at the solution. "If you can't explain your work," she reflected, "then it's a lot tougher than if you just write it and no one questions you…you might not even understand it." She remembered how in a previous placement a group of third graders had done a math activity involving multiples and students had simply yelled out guesses, so fast there was no time to give them feedback about how they had come up with their answers. "If it's not questioned, the student just thinks that's how they do it, everyone guesses," Andrea stated. "So I definitely think it's good that at this age they do have answers to back up why they chose a particular answer or why they did it this way."

Andrea's final comments about her lesson involved an unexpected incident that had arisen with a little girl in the class. After Andrea had sent the group to their seats to

complete their task, a young girl approached her and said that she had had a bad dream which she was scared would come true. Caught off guard and concerned for the student, but still feeling the need to keep in control of her math lesson in progress, Andrea attempted to briefly console the girl by telling her that dreams were not real and that the one she had would not come true and then redirected her back to the math activity. The girl appeared mildly comforted and returned to the math task, but Andrea was concerned about whether she had handled the situation appropriately:

> I didn't know what to do at that point so I was like, ah, everyone's going back to work, and I didn't know what to say to her…I tried to talk to her and I didn't really want to get into the whole dream thing, but I just said, 'Dreams aren't real though, it won't happen, it's just a dream.' She said okay, and started walking away…and she seemed okay, but then I was just like, 'Oh my gosh!' I didn't know what I was going to do…

In her journal entry for week 4 (3-21-03), Andrea continued reflecting about her lesson. She had enjoyed working with young children (having been previously placed in third and fifth grade classrooms) but found it "challenging" to reach all the students because they were at such a wide variety of ability levels – some, for example, were able to read at a fifth grade level and others were barely reading at all. When asked how a teacher might accommodate this diversity of academic levels, Andrea wrote that she admired how Ms. Keane handled this by providing materials such as books and math problems for a wide variety of ability levels in order to accommodate students learning basic skills as well as those who were more advanced. Andrea did feel that her math lesson had challenged students of all levels in her classroom as well as giving them the freedom to try whatever

strategies and methods for solving the problem they found most meaningful; she was surprised but impressed that they came up with so many different strategies. When prompted further about this, however, Andrea was unsure how she would have incorporated those different strategies into the lesson if the students had not come up with them on their own. "Had they not, I feel like my having to explain so many strategies may only have confused them rather than helped them," she wrote.

Andrea reiterated that she thought the lesson had gone well and thought about modifications she might make to the lesson plan if she ever taught it again, such as modeling the use of the Unifix cubes to solve the problem and moving around the classroom more to check all students' understanding rather than spending most of her time working with a small group she had put together after noting that they were all having the most difficulty with the task. When asked how she had come up with these ideas for modifying the lesson, she responded that "students' responses to the lesson are always a good indicator of what revisions could be made to make the lesson stronger and more effective."

Teaching this lesson also solidified Andrea's feeling that she wished to teach at the first grade level when she began teaching on her own. When asked why she believed this grade level was where she felt most comfortable or useful, she was not able to pinpoint anything in particular about the grade which suited her more than others, but felt that "the more I am there, the more I love it." She felt that the young children inspired her to be the best teacher she could be and that she learned from them ("their young minds seem so hungry for knowledge that I cannot help but strive to teach them to the best of my ability").

The second group dilemma discussion took place on 3-25-03, but Andrea did not attend.

In her journal entry for week 5 (3-28-03), Andrea described her class' field trip to an art museum, "a world of wonder, of beauty, and of intrigue." The students apparently visited this museum regularly and had told her about it, and when they arrived their first task was to spend some time in the museum's courtyard and talk about what was different about it since their last visit. Led by Ms. Keane and the art museum staff, the children then viewed and discussed a painting of a Spanish dancer by an artist whose work they had seen in the museum before (Andrea was impressed that the students remembered what they had learned about the artist). When the students described what they saw in the painting, Andrea noticed that the children paid great attention to detail, as she had also seen them do in their experiences in Writer's Workshop in the classroom. Then the students were given their sketchbooks to work in, and Andrea was "completely amazed" at the children's sketching ability, their attention to detail, and their excitement about and interest in the art.

The experience at the museum inspired Andrea to think about how she might integrate art in to her curriculum as a teacher. She felt that incorporating art into young children's school experience was an important and often misunderstood endeavor:

> Very often, we assume that young children cannot comprehend or appreciate works of fine art; however, they may very well comprehend it far better than adults…I hope that when I have my own class, I too can inspire their young minds by expanding their horizons and exposing them to even more than what most adults consider to be 'fine art.'

Andrea was questioned about how she had arrived at these beliefs about "fine art" and about how experiences with art might influence children's development, but she did not turn in a second journal iteration in response to prompts this week.

On 3-27-03, I observed Andrea conduct a lesson with her first graders about Greek mythology. She was not available that day to conduct her post-observation interview. I made five subsequent attempts to reschedule the interview via phone and email, but Andrea either did not respond to these requests or was unavailable for the interview. However, she did include a length post-lesson reflection in her journal for week 6 (4-5-03).

Andrea had chosen for her lesson the subject of Greek mythology, a topic which the first grade had been studying at length since her arrival in the placement. After seeing students listen to stories about myths, read stories to each other, and explain the stories they had heard, she was impressed by the enthusiasm and attention with which the students approached the topic and with their ability to answer sophisticated comprehension questions about the myths they learned. "Much like I had wrongly assumed earlier in the year that fine art was too mature for first graders to appreciate and understand," Andrea wrote, "so too was I mistaken about the study of Greek mythology."

In order to plan the lesson, Andrea had first brainstormed ideas with Ms. Keane, and they quickly came up with the idea of having students create their own gods and goddesses, name them, describe in writing their characteristics and powers, and draw a picture of them. Andrea felt the strengths of this lesson were that it built on the students' prior knowledge and interest in Greek mythology, that it integrated writing, art, creativity, and social studies concepts, that it included a focus on detail (a concept on which she had seen Ms. Keane concentrating with the students) as the students developed and drew their

gods and goddesses, and that it required students to perform in different intelligences. When asked why she felt this last point, functioning in different intelligences, was important, Andrea wrote:

> I very strongly believe in Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory. I know that there are students of all learning styles in every classroom and I think that it is every teacher's duty to allow students to perform in a variety of ways in order for all students to achieve to their full potential as learners. As a teacher, it is important to always allow for assessments of all styles in order to better evaluate the learning process in your classroom.

Andrea also reflected about some challenges she had had to address in implementing the lesson. Some students, for example, had had difficulty coming up with ideas for gods/goddesses or names (when prompted, Andrea suggested that she might alleviate that problem in the future by giving clearer and more varied samples both of gods/goddesses and names), and some used the ideas that the class had created during their brainstorming session rather than creating a new god or goddess. Andrea had been concerned as well about two students in her class with ADHD and how well the lesson would accommodate their needs; she ultimately used a strategy to assist them involving grouping them with students of similar skill levels. When questioned about this method, Andrea wrote that she had seen teachers successfully use this strategy in reading groups and liked the fact that this type of grouping allowed all students to feel like part of the group and still receive support from their peers who were working on the same skills they were, "in accordance with theories of Vygotsky that support cooperative learning." (Andrea did not respond to questions probing her beliefs about Vygotsky's theories.)

Andrea speculated that if she did the lesson again, she might improve it by recording ideas brainstormed on the class on the whiteboard or chalkboard, show a detailed sample description, name and picture of an invented god or goddess before the students began their writing process, and encourage students to share what they had created (although she would not require students to share if they were uncomfortable doing so). Andrea felt that feedback from her cooperating teacher and her supervisor was helpful in forming her ideas for modifying and improving the lesson. "Both have proven to be great resources to me in terms of providing both positive as well as critical feedback from which I can better assess my teaching strategies."

In concluding her reflection, Andrea wrote that she felt that her lesson had been a successful integration of art, language, and history, that the students had been enthusiastic about the activity on the whole, and that her proposed modifications would improve the lesson the next time she taught it. She also wrote that she believed teaching this lesson helped her become a better teacher, as more experience teaching lessons could only help her improve her methods of teaching. To illustrate this, Andrea included a quote (which she attributed to Les Brown but did not cite fully) expressing that as a teacher, "you cannot expect to achieve new goals or move beyond your present circumstances unless you change." When asked how she saw herself developing, changing as a teacher, and refining her teaching philosophy and practices through her experiences in the classroom, Andrea responded:

> Learning about myself as a teacher allows me to improve upon my weaknesses and strive to accommodate for all types of learning within the context of my classroom. I think that my own experience with teaching is extremely important but just as

important is what I observe from the wonderful teachers I work with. The teaching strategies that Miss Keane models are an extraordinary example from which I hope to adapt my own similarly successful strategies.

In her journal entry for week 7 (4-6-03), Andrea described having conducted an impromptu math lesson with a small group of students. One child in the class had brought in a game for practicing counting change, a concept on which the students had been working in math, but when the students tried to play it they were confused by the directions, so Ms. Keane asked Andrea to take a small group of students into the hallway and learn how to play the game. The students examined the materials and game pieces and brainstormed ideas about how it might be played before reading the directions and trying it out. Once they had practiced, Andrea felt the students were enjoying and learning from the game because it was "obvious" that they enjoyed working with money even before they played the game and "apparent" from their successful playing that they understood both the directions and the concept of counting coins collectively to try to come up with a dollar.

Andrea thought the game was a fun and beneficial addition to the class' math curriculum. When questioned about how much she believed a teacher's role should include making decisions about curriculum and materials, and what the teacher could do if he or she found the required curriculum insufficient, inappropriate, or in need of supplementation, Andrea acknowledged this as a challenge to teachers, advocating careful attention to the curriculum but also ongoing evaluation and modification to ensure that it suited the students' needs:

I think that it is so difficult to determine whether or not curriculum is appropriate all of the time. Also, there is so much required to cover within the curriculum that it is very difficult to decide what to focus on closely within the classroom. I think that making sure you teach to the curriculum is essential to being a teacher, but it is also important to introduce students to other ideas and things when the teacher finds them to be as important as curriculum topics.

In the interest of her own development as a teacher, Andrea was glad to teach this impromptu lesson. Although she felt that having planned lessons was the most organized approach to teaching, she also believed that "having to teach without a plan is a reality at times" and that having experience doing so would prepare her for unexpected teaching situations in the classroom. When questioned further about why she believed this was important, Andrea did not delve more deeply into this belief but reiterated that "I think being able to jump into any situation without notice is an important skill to develop and constantly improve on as a teacher."

On 4-8-03, Andrea participated in the third group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was how a teacher can maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students, parents, and school colleagues. The participants watched a videotaped presentation on the subject to fulfill a university requirement for their field experience and then a discussion was held about the dilemmas which the presentation brought up for the participants. Andrea participated infrequently in this discussion but did make a few comments. She said that she found it difficult to tell where she as a teacher should "draw the boundaries" in terms of physical contact between herself and her students. This was especially true, Andrea had found, when comparing younger children (who were "huggy and touchy" and

often appeared to crave physical affection) with older children (who were more apt to keep their distance physically from their teacher), and when trying to ascertain whether different types of interaction with students were called for in different contexts.

Andrea also remarked that a teacher must be careful when developing personal relationships with students not to appear as though she is playing "favorites." As an example of this, Andrea mentioned that many of her first grade students frequently wished to hold her hand when the class traveled through the hallway, and that she was unsure whether this was appropriate, "especially if your teacher almost allows it…it's kind of like how do you go along with it without it being unfair? I don't know."

Andrea commented that keeping appropriate professional boundaries often involved issues other than physical contact between teacher and students, particularly the question of how far a teacher should step into the role of "parenting" a student if she perceives that a child's basic needs are not being met. Andrea gave the example of a previous cooperating teacher who had bought a student a small eyeglass repair kit since his glasses frequently broke. Andrea commented that the teacher was serving the child's needs, but might have been taking on too much of a parenting role with the student; she stated that she wondered what would happen to that student when he moved on to the next grade, where the teacher might be less inclined to provide that type of caretaking.

Andrea's journal entry for week 8 (4-13-03) dealt with an incident she had observed in her classroom involving a fight between two boys and the manner in which Ms. Keane handled this disciplinary issue. The parents of Martin (the boy who admitted hitting the other student first) were called, and Martin's nanny came to pick him up. Andrea was able to observe the interaction between Ms. Keane and the nanny, who

informed Ms. Keane that Martin's mother was out of the country on one of her frequent

trips and that Martin's brother had been behaving poorly in school lately as well. When

asked what she made of this situation and what kind of strategy might help Martin, Andrea

wrote that it was "obvious" that Martin was missing his mother and therefore craving

attention:

> His means of achieving it right now are through negative behaviors. I do not think
>
> that waiting until his mother returns will make any difference in the situation
>
> because very clearly, she is in and out of his life, and her discipline will therefore
>
> have little lasting impact on his behaviors.

Andrea also found herself distressed to hear Martin's nanny speaking unfavorably

about the Martin's father right in front of him, saying that the father was mean and spanked

Martin and his brother and that Ms. Keane should deal with the boys' mother instead.

Andrea thought it was very "inappropriate" of the nanny to "belittle the boys' father in

their presence" and wished Ms. Keane had stopped the conversation and asked the nanny

to continue it in private. Andrea wrote that she did not want the boys hurt in any way and

did not think the nanny should be telling Martin that his father was a bad person. When

asked to elaborate on why she believed this, Andrea wrote:

> I think that in my own experiences, I know that my parents have always been the
>
> people I look up to most in my life. If at a young age, someone had told me that
>
> my parents were not as caring and infallible as I thought, I would have been
>
> crushed. To be told that your role models don't care about you is one of the most
>
> horrible things that any child could experience.

Andrea's journal entry for week 9 (4-17-03) gave a description of a science lesson she had taught to her first graders. Andrea had used the lesson plan and materials developed by Katie, one of her fellow student teachers in School A, to teach the students about the life cycle of a plant. Andrea read the students a story about a seed growing into a plant, presented a poster and some factual information on the life cycle of a plant, discussed new vocabulary with the students, and asked them questions to assess their comprehension of the cycle. Following this, Andrea, Ms. Keane, and the full practicum student teacher in the classroom assisted the students in planting bean seeds in cups; the students made predictions about how their seeds and plants would grow and would thereafter keep daily logs with writing and drawings to record the growth of their plants. Andrea thought the lesson had gone well and that the students had showed excellent comprehension; when asked how she could tell this, Andrea noted that she could observe the students' enjoyment and noted how they made connections between their prior knowledge and what they learned during the lesson. "I think that units on science usually spark students' interest," she also commented, "especially when it is something they can physically see to understand."

As she assessed the success of her lesson, Andrea explained that she would have had to manage the lesson very differently had there not been three adults in the classroom to manage the three groups into which she had divided the class during seed planting time. When asked about her beliefs concerning how and why a teacher should plan various strategies for implementing and managing a lesson, Andrea stated that she believed it was always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared in order to be ready to handle unexpected circumstances:

In any situation, a teacher should be able to adapt. With over-preparation, the key is to go with the plan that is most appropriate for the context of the classroom…being more prepared helped me to plan for all situations so that in the event that an unexpected situation arises, I can always adapt accordingly.

Andrea wrote her final essay (5-19-03) in response to the dilemma of whether "fair and equal treatment" in school meant that the same pedagogy should be applied to all students, or whether it meant giving each student what he or she needed and making instruction culturally and academically relevant. Andrea began her essay by stating that although "fair treatment" might sound like a simple term, "in my search to find a conclusive answer to this question, I have come full-circle and ended up once again without any universal definition for this commonly debated term."

Having one set of standards for instruction and discipline of students to which a teacher could adhere in any situation sounded ideal and equal, Andrea wrote, but in truth it was not, since it implied consistency in all situations regardless of "extenuating circumstances" which might have some bearing on the appropriateness of a given course of action. Equality, Andrea believed, was not as worth pursuing in education as was equity, which "focuses specifically on providing justice in the context of individual differences." To illustrate her point, Andrea posed a hypothetical situation involving a pediatrician's office: even if the staff of the doctor's office believed firmly in a strict policy of administering treatment in order of patients' arrival, the need to suspend this policy might arise if a seriously injured child arrived and needed medical attention before one who had been waiting for treatment for a common cold. In this case, Andrea argued, the nurse would never tell the more injured child to wait his or her turn. "It seems preposterous that

any such scenario would occur," Andrea wrote, "but in a lesser form, it happens every day in schools."

Andrea also used the legal system as an example of a system which attempted to address the subtle nuances of disputes and criminal acts in meting out justice, as she believed the educational system should do when addressing individual students' needs. "In much the same way as criminals' ranging motivations and explanations, students' individual differences affect how they learn, behave, and perform in school," Andrea asserted, "thus they must be treated accordingly to promote their highest potentials."

Andrea went on to discuss the ways in which individual differences affected students' experiences and performances in school. She pointed out how a student's learning disability might hinder concentration or understanding, how a student from a "broken family" might not be receiving sufficient love and attention, how a student with "language or cultural barriers" might have difficulty translating words or relating to other students, or how a student who lacked the basic necessities such as food, shelter and warm clothing might experience his or her school days quite differently than one who was provided with those things. In the conclusion of her essay, she reiterated her belief that a teacher should strive for equity in his or her treatment of individual students with unique backgrounds and needs:

> Even with this diverse array of students, there are still others who do not fit nearly into any of these mentioned categories…only when a teacher takes into account the diversity of all students and treats them according to their personal needs will students all be treated fairly not only in terms of discipline, but more importantly, in terms of ultimately achieving their academic potentials.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Andrea during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Andrea appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Andrea's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Andrea's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Andrea's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Andrea's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: What are the differences between the type of educational experiences provided for students at public and private schools, why do these differences exist, and how do these differences affect students' development and achievement?

Andrea addressed this dilemma in her first journal entry (2-10-03). First she admitted that she had harbored "starkly erroneous expectations" and "inaccurate generalizations" about what School A would be like based on the fact that it was a public school (although she seemed to have mistakenly identified it as an urban rather than suburban school). She discussed the fact that she had expected School A, since it was a public school, to have limited financial resources and meager facilities and educational materials, an expectation which turned out to be unwarranted ("the building itself resembles a mansion," she wrote). Andrea also acknowledged that she had held a belief that public school students had a greater need for "good teachers" than those in private

schools because public school students were more likely to be unruly and violent and to need to learn respect for themselves and others in order to prepare them for their future roles in life. However, at the end of her journal entry, Andrea confessed that her new attitude toward both of these formerly "unquestioned" beliefs was "ABSOLUTELY NOT!"

Although Andrea's statements about this dilemma were limited to one journal entry, they provided insight into her reflective judgment level at the time of her field experience. Andrea's statements suggested that she was transitioning between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective styles of reasoning. Her perspective on the differences between public and private schools was clearly highly influenced by her personal experience, which is a Pre-Reflective characteristic. However, Andrea was also quick to acknowledge her biases about the issue and to state that she was attempting to re-examine her beliefs in light of what she observed in her new placement, both of which are characteristics of individuals functioning at Stage 4, or the earlier phase of the Quasi-Reflective level.

Dilemma 2: What if the dilemma itself is a student? How can a teacher resolve the dilemma of helping a student succeed when that student appears to face many complicated and serious challenges to academic progress and performance at once, or it is not clear which issue is causing him or her difficulty?

Andrea also dealt with this dilemma in one journal entry only, but her approach to the dilemma is nonetheless relevant to an overall assessment of her reflective judgment. In her second journal entry (2-18-03), Andrea recorded how she had begun working one-on-one with Sarah, a young girl who was having difficulty with reading and apparently was

struggling in other areas as well. Andrea read aloud with Sarah, who seemed to have extreme difficulty both in decoding words and in staying focused on the reading selection and the process of reading. Andrea judged "from my experience" that Sarah probably had ADHD because of the behaviors she exhibited during the reading session and the difficulty she had concentrating on her reading. "Other roads may need to be explored in addressing the issue, such as medication," Andrea wrote. Andrea believed Sarah's inability to focus caused her frustration and anger, although she admitted that she was "not sure" how this problem might be addressed.

Andrea further stated that she believed Sarah felt insecure, "not because she has learning disabilities but because she does not believe in herself." Having learned a theory in her reading methods class positing that students who were poor readers often stayed that way because they were caught in a cycle of factors such as negative reinforcement, the effects of a rigid leveling system in reading, and the low expectations of their teachers, Andrea's goal became to help Sarah develop a smoother process of decoding words which would foster less defensiveness and more confidence in her reading ability – confidence which would ultimately spread to other area's of the little girl's life. She hoped to learn strategies from Ms. Keane which would help her guide Sarah toward feeling confident "not only in reading but all areas."

Andrea's approach to this dilemma also showed signs of mainly Pre-Reflective and some Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Her swift diagnosis, based on her "experience," that Sarah had ADHD and her judgment that low self-confidence was a primary cause of Sarah's problems indicated that Andrea was probably not grasping the complexity of this individual student's situation; this suggested that she was functioning at a Pre-Reflective

level. Andrea also exhibited a rather unquestioning attitude toward the knowledge

provided by authority figures or experts, such as those who taught her college courses and

her cooperating teacher Ms. Keane, and an assumption that the knowledge necessary to

help Sarah learn was only temporarily uncertain, which are Pre-Reflective tendencies as

well. These could be seen in Andrea's quick application of the theory she had learned in a

course to explain Sarah's issues and her assumption that she would be able to obtain the

knowledge necessary to resolve Sarah's issues from Ms. Keane.

It is possible that Andrea was employing some Quasi-Reflective reasoning as well.

Her acknowledgement that the issues causing Sarah to struggle should be explored more

fully and her admission that she was unsure about how to address the frustration she sensed

in Sarah, for example, could have indicated that she recognized that there was not a simple

solution for resolving Sarah's reading difficulties, and her assertion that Sarah was

insecure because she did not believe in herself could have suggested that Andrea was

equating her personal belief with evidence about the cause of Sarah's reading problems.

Both of these are typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, or the early Quasi-

Reflective level. However, Andrea's overall approach to the dilemma in terms of her

limited consideration of the complexity of Sarah's issues and her reliance on authority

figures or experts as sources of knowledge to resolve those issues were more suggestive of

Pre-Reflective than Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 3: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage

a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Andrea dealt with this dilemma specifically in the first group discussion (3-19-03),

at which the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order

to manage a class successfully was presented as the topic for discussion, and in her eighth journal entry (4-13-03). In the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), Andrea stated that in structuring a system of management and discipline, a teacher should have clear behavioral rules for the class from the beginning, but that the students should help set this system up, since this was "more effective than just dictating the rules to them." In addition to this, Andrea stressed that even in light of these clear and consistent rules, the teacher would have to make "situational decisions" about what action would be fair and appropriate at a given time with a given student. She defined fair treatment of students not as treating all students the same way all the time, but recognizing that "rules are always sort of bent," considering the reasons why a student might not have followed the rules, and attempting to see the situation from the student's perspective as well as her own. Andrea stated that her college courses had had limited usefulness in preparing her to do this since "you can't just read something in a book" about management and discipline and make it work in any classroom with any group of students. "It really does depend on who you are as a teacher and what you value and who your students are, you know, the context of your classroom," she stated.

In her eighth journal entry (4-13-03), Andrea observed the way her cooperating teacher handled a disciplinary issue and reflected on her response to the incident. When a student had admitting to hitting another, Ms. Keane had called the boy's parents, and his nanny came to pick him up and have a discussion with Ms. Keane. The nanny informed Ms. Keane that the boy's mother was out of the country on one of what were apparently frequent trips, and Andrea concluded that it was "obvious" that the boy was behaving this way because he missed her and was acting out. Andrea wrote that it would probably not

help the situation to wait until the mother returned so she could contribute to handling the situation because "very clearly, she is in and out of his life, and her discipline will therefore have little lasting impact on his behaviors." Andrea also reacted strongly to the way the nanny was speaking to Ms. Keane about the boy's father, whose discipline the nanny characterized as severely inadequate, feeling that the nanny should not be degrading the boy's father right in front of him. When asked to reflect further about her beliefs on this, Andrea wrote that her parents had always been important role models for her and if at a young age, someone had told her that my parents were not as "caring and infallible" as she thought, she "would have been crushed. To be told that your role models don't care about you is one of the most horrible things that any child could experience."

Andrea's approach to this dilemma generally suggested Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Andrea's comments in the group discussion concerned the necessary flexibility of classroom rules, the need to consciously view situations from the different perspectives, and the importance of the roles which the individual needs of students and the classroom context play in making management decisions. This could have indicated that Andrea was recognizing that this was a complex problem to which there was no simple resolution, that individual interpretation regarding dilemmas was a legitimate and necessary part of the reasoning process, and that an individual's point of view was embedded in a specific context. Andrea also exhibited a typically Quasi-Reflective cynicism in the knowledge provided by authority figures when she asserted that there were serious limitations to the knowledge her college courses could provide for her about making management decisions. Andrea also displayed the early Quasi-Reflective reasoning style of equating one's personal beliefs with evidence, as individuals at this stage are apt to do since they are

beginning to recognize the complexity of issues but have not yet mastered the ability to seek out and evaluate evidence consistently, when she assumed that the mother of the boy involved in the hitting incident would probably be unable to make a difference in his behavior since she was "in and out of his life."

Andrea's reaction to the discussion between the boy's nanny and Ms. Keane was an interesting one in terms of assessing her reflective judgment. On one level, Andrea's insistence that parents were role models whose caring and ability should not be impugned might suggest a Pre-Reflective deference to authority figures. However, this comment might also have indicated that Andrea was attempting to understand the personal biases and interpretations which had influenced her opinion on the matter, or that she was questioning the practices of Ms. Keane, an "expert" in Andrea's classroom context. This comment could therefore suggest that Andrea was in the process of transitioning from the Pre-Reflective to the Reflective level.

Dilemma 4: How can a teacher accommodate the needs of a group of students who are functioning at different levels of academic ability or achievement and/or are different types of learners?

This was the dilemma with which Andrea dealt most extensively in her data. There were many instances in which Andrea struggled with the question of how she could help all her students to be academically successful when they appeared to have widely varied ability levels. Andrea first discussed this dilemma in her first post-observation interview (3-21-03). Andrea remarked that she had been unsure both during and after the lesson whether all the students had grasped the concept of counting by twos and reflected that "there were times when I really didn't know for sure what I should be doing, because

everyone needed help." She felt that she had made effective choices in her attempts to help all her students achieve this goal, however, by allowing them to come up with their own strategies about how to solve the problem she posed to them, giving them choices about how to demonstrate their understanding, and requiring them to show their work and explain why a certain strategy had made sense to them and how they had arrived at their answer. "There are just so many options if there is a student who doesn't grasp it one way," she said. "It's good that there are other ways and they're encouraged to do the problem in other ways." When planning her lesson, Andrea had been aware that there was quite a wide range of ability levels in the class and felt that "I didn't know if it was good or bad, like if the lesson was on the right level or not." Observing that the students were approaching the task through widely different strategies – some more concrete, some more abstract, some even involving multiplication – reassured Andrea somewhat that she had designed a learning experience which would accommodate the needs of all the students.

In her fourth journal entry (3-21-03), Andrea again discussed how "challenging" it was for a teacher to meet the needs of her students because of their different ability levels; she noted that there were first graders in her class reading at a fifth grade level, while others were barely reading at all. Responding to a prompt about her beliefs concerning the way a teacher might approach this issue, Andrea wrote that she admired the way Ms. Keane provided materials and activities geared to a variety of ability levels and always thought of new ways to challenge the students who finished a task before others or appeared to be at a more advanced level. She also wrote that a teacher should be prepared to modify lessons based on students' responses, which were "always a good indicator of what revisions could be made to make the lesson stronger and more effective."

In journal 6 (4-5-03), as she reflected on a lesson she had taught about Greek mythology, Andrea again addressed the question of accommodating students with diverse academic ability levels by reflecting that she thought her students had had a successful experience with the lesson because it integrated various intelligences. "I very strongly believe in Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory," Andrea wrote. "I know that there are students of all learning styles in every classroom…it is every teacher's duty to allow students to perform in a variety of ways in order for all students to achieve to their full potential." In this journal entry Andrea also wrote that she hoped she had successfully accommodated the special needs of some of her students, those with ADHD, by implementing the strategy of pairing them with students at similar skill levels so that they could receive peer support; she cited Vygotsky's theories about cooperative learning as a factor in her decision.

Andrea revisited this question again in her journal for week 7 (4-6-03). After describing helping students work with a money counting game, she concluded that accommodating the needs of all students meant that a teacher might have to make decisions about modifying or supplementing the curriculum if it did not accommodate the students' needs. "I think that it is so difficult to determine whether or not curriculum is appropriate all the time…it is very difficult to decide what to focus on in the classroom," she wrote. "It is important to introduce students to other ideas and things when the teacher finds them to be as important as curriculum topics."

In her final essay (5-19-03), Andrea addressed this dilemma again when she discussed what "fair treatment" of all students really meant in terms of instruction. Andrea wrote that she was "without any universal definition for this commonly debated term" and

felt that "extenuating circumstances" often contributed to one course of action being more "fair" in a given situation than another. To illustrate her point, Andrea used the metaphor of a doctor's office, pointing out that an individual who was seriously ill or injured than others might be treated before those who had already been waiting for treatment at the office for a minor illness, and claiming that the same principle applied to education. Andrea asserted that many factors – academic needs, family issues, language or cultural issues, poverty, physical differences, etc. – influenced the needs of all individual students and therefore what type of treatment would be "fair" for each one. "Only when a teacher takes into account the diversity of all students and treats them according to their personal needs will students be treated fairly…in terms of ultimately achieving their academic potentials."

In approaching this dilemma, Andrea again appeared to be transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective levels of reflective judgment. Some of Andrea's statements and actions might indicate a more Pre-Reflective attitude. For example, Andrea was clearly confused and somewhat overwhelmed by the uncertainty of whether her lesson would successfully help all her students master the concept of counting by twos and exactly where she needed to focus her energy during the course of the lesson, and she still appeared to be relying somewhat heavily on Ms. Keane's guidance, both of which suggest a more Pre-Reflective perspective on the dilemma. (In addition, it should be noted some of Andrea's statements, such as those in her essay about fairness and students achieving their academic potentials, might be characterized as the type of "romantic" beliefs statements often made by Pre-Reflective thinkers, but there is no evidence to indicate that is the only

reason she might have expressed her beliefs in this manner.) However, Andrea also displayed highly Quasi-Reflective characteristics in dealing with this dilemma.

First, Andrea appeared to grasp that this dilemma was a complex problem which involved uncertainty of knowledge and to which there existed no simple solution, a recognition at which Pre-Reflective thinkers are not yet able to arrive. Her belief that her students needed choices and a widely varied repertoire of strategies in order to understand the concept of counting by twos and to demonstrate their understanding suggested that Andrea was viewing learning and the acquisition of knowledge as tasks requiring individual interpretation and exploration and not one always involving only simple transmission of information by an authority figure such as the classroom teacher. Andrea's statement about the need to modify one's practices based on student responses to the strategies one utilized indicated that she was at least professing to be willing to re-examine her own beliefs and practices, an attitude more typical of Quasi-Reflective than Pre-Reflective thinkers. Finally, Andrea's extensive argument that fair treatment of students had to include consideration of the many factors influencing that student's unique needs and school experience and the context in which the teacher dealt with the student indicated that she was viewing interpretation as a legitimate and necessary part of formulating a point of view and resolving a dilemma and that an individual's point of view was embedded in a specific context, which is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 5, or late Quasi-Reflective reasoning.

Andrea's use of the theories of Gardner and Vygotsky as support for her practices bears further examination in terms of how it relates to her reflective judgment level. While one might interpret Andrea's citation of the work of these famous educational theorists as

reliance on the knowledge of experts in making decisions, which suggests Pre-Reflective thinking, it could also be argued that Andrea's use of these theories to justify her point of view showed that she was attempting to integrate evidence into her decision-making process. Andrea did not elaborate in response to prompts on the reasons why she believed "very strongly" in Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory or why she found Vygotsky's theories particularly relevant, which indicated she might not have been evaluating this evidence to justify her decisions about classroom practice in a sophisticated or consistent way. However, this attempt to incorporate evidence into the process of supporting her point of view rather than relying solely on personal experience or idiosyncratic justifications could represent a significant departure from Pre-Reflective reasoning.

Dilemma 5: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

Andrea dealt with two main concepts within this area. In several journal entries, Andrea reflected on what she might learn from her experiences in her field placement in order to improve her teaching practice. In the third group dilemma discussion, she reflected on the importance of, and strategies for, maintaining positive professional boundaries with students.

In her sixth journal entry (4-5-03), Andrea wrote about teaching an observed lesson and what she might learn from the experience. She wrote that she appreciated receiving feedback about her teaching performance from both her university supervisor and cooperating teacher, as "both have proven to be great resources to me in terms of providing …feedback from which I can better assess my teaching strategies." Andrea felt that teaching this lesson had contributed to her increasing confidence in herself as a teacher and

her determination always to remain open to modifications and improvements she could make in her practice. "You cannot expect to achieve new goals or move beyond your present circumstances, unless you change," Andrea wrote. "Learning about myself as a teacher allows me to improve upon my weaknesses and strive to accommodate for all types of learning within the context of my classroom." In response to a prompt about what processes she felt benefited her most in improving her practice, Andrea wrote that she thought her personal experience teaching was "extremely important," but that "just as important is what I observe from the wonderful teachers I work with." Andrea noted that she felt Ms. Keane's models of teaching had been an "extraordinary example" on which to model her own practice.

Another reflection Andrea made about the ways in which her field experience had helped her develop as a professional was an articulation of and elaboration on her belief that no matter how well a teacher planned for instruction, she needed to be prepared to deal with unexpected situations and modify instructional plans accordingly in the midst of the act of teaching. Andrea was confronted with this dilemma in her practice during her first observed lesson when a little girl approached her in the middle of a math lesson to express anxiety over a bad dream she had had; in her post-observation interview (3-21-03), Andrea stated that she had been somewhat thrown off by the incident, was not sure what to do, and tried to briefly comfort and redirect the student. In journal 7 (4-6-03), Andrea described teaching her students an impromptu lesson on counting money using a board game one student had brought in to share with this class, and this led her to reflect that although she thought that teachers needed to make plans and be organized, "having to teach without a plan is a reality at times…I think being able to jump into any situation without notice is an

important skill to develop and constantly improve on as a teacher." Andrea reiterated her

beliefs on this idea in journal 9 (4-17-03), when she asserted that even though she believed

it was better for a teacher to be over-prepared than under-prepared, the teacher should be

able to "adapt" in any situation ("being more prepared helped me to plan for all situations

so that in the event that an unexpected situation arises, I can always act accordingly").

In addition to reflecting on how her teaching episodes in her placement classroom

influenced her professional development, Andrea also considered the issue of how to

maintain professional boundaries when she participated in the third group dilemma

discussion (4-8-03), at which this question was presented for discussion. Andrea felt it

was hard to tell what boundaries a teacher should set in terms of physical contact between

teacher and students, especially since different actions might seem appropriate in different

contexts and there were differences in how much physical affection and support seemed to

be necessary when working with younger children and older children. Andrea stated that

boundaries were important in ensuring that teachers did not play "favorites" with students;

she commented that it had been difficult for her to be sure about this type of issue in Ms.

Keane's classroom, where students often wanted to be close to her or hold her hand but

where Andrea was concerned that this type of action might communicate favoritism to the

students and make some feel left out. "It's kind of like, how do you go along with it

without being unfair? I don't know," she commented. She also related a situation in a

previous placement classroom involving a cooperating teacher who had bought one of her

students an eyeglass repair kit which he needed; Andrea thought it was kind of the teacher

to supply this when the student's glasses were constantly breaking, but she wondered if

this type of "parenting" behavior was appropriate on the teacher's part and what would

happen to the student when he moved on to a classroom wherein the teacher did not take this type of action.

Andrea's approach to this dilemma demonstrated a mix of characteristics associated with reflective judgment levels 3 and 4, suggesting she might have been in the midst of the transition between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective levels of reflective judgment. Andrea's commitment to the idea of receiving feedback about her teaching and modifying her practice in order to make it more successful, for example, showed that she was at least outwardly willing to re-examine her beliefs about her teaching practice in light of new experiences and information provided by others, which is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, but she still appeared to have a rather unquestioning attitude toward the knowledge provided her for this purpose by "experts" such as her supervisor and cooperating teacher, which is more characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinking. Andrea also clearly attributed a great deal of what she learned about her teaching practice to her personal experiences in the classroom and the example provided by her cooperating teacher, which also suggested that she was operating under the Pre-Reflective assumption that these were the best sources of knowledge.

However, Andrea's assertion that no matter how prepared a teacher was, she would have to be prepared for unexpected situations indicated that she might be viewing knowledge as uncertain and evolving rather than certain and concrete, an important departure from Pre-Reflective reasoning. This view of knowledge as uncertain (and of dilemmas as complex problems without simple solutions) was reiterated in many of Andrea's comments about her lack of sureness about where a teacher should draw professional and personal boundaries when working with students. Although she did not

yet appear able to confront such dilemmas through systematic inquiry and acquisition and evaluation of evidence, Andrea's apparent recognition in some instances of knowledge as an uncertain entity implied that although she still operated under some Pre-Reflective assumptions, she was no longer relying wholly on Pre-Reflective perspectives about knowledge and resolution of dilemmas.

Dilemma 6: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Andrea did not deal extensively with this dilemma, but the statements she made with regard to the question appeared to be generally representative of the reflective judgment level suggested by her approach to other dilemmas. During group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), as the participants were discussing issues of discipline and management, Andrea remarked that as a student teacher, she was often "intimidated" and unsure about when she should take initiative in handling disciplinary issues that arose in the classroom by herself, and when her cooperating teacher was close by, she tended to step back and let the cooperating teacher deal with disciplinary situations. Andrea also remarked that she found it difficult to establish herself as an authority figure with the students in her placement classroom because as a pre-practicum student teacher she was only in the classroom one day a week for ten weeks and by the time "they do start to respect us and get used to us and see us as an authority," her placement was over.

Andrea's statements about this dilemma suggested that certain elements of Pre-Reflective thinking were still predominant in her reasoning. Her confusion and anxiety in the face of uncertainty about the extent to which she should take a leadership role in her

placement classroom were typical of individuals functioning at the Pre-Reflective level, as was her apparent reliance on the concept of authority as an important element of the teacher's position in the classroom. Although Andrea did not address this dilemma in any extensive manner and the researcher would therefore not rely on this particular dilemma to provide an exhaustive representation of her reflective judgment level, it should be noted that these statements do not generally contradict the overall depiction of her reflective judgment level as suggested by her statements regarding other dilemmas.

Summary of Andrea's Reflective Judgment Level

Andrea displayed characteristics of both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning in her approaches to dilemmas of practice, suggesting that she might have been transition from one level to the next during the data collection period. In many instances, Andrea appeared to be beginning to operate under the assumption that knowledge was not always certain and to explore ways to resolve dilemmas in light of that realization. This is an important step in the transition from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. Andrea exhibited other characteristics of Quasi-Reflective reasoning as well, such as a beginning recognition of the complexity of certain problems, a professed willingness to re-examine her beliefs and her practice, the belief that an individual's point of view is embedded in a specific context, and the belief that an individual's interpretation is a legitimate and necessary step in approaching a dilemma.

However, Andrea was not able to function consistently at a Quasi-Reflective level. Although she showed attempts to use evidence as a means to justify her point of view, for example, she was not always able to explain fully her use of that evidence or to indicate that she had been able to evaluate its validity, and it seemed that she still showed a strong

reliance on her personal experience and the knowledge provided by experts and authority figures in developing and justifying her point of view. Therfore, Andrea appeared to have begun the transition from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning, but was not yet close to being fully grounded in the epistemological assumptions and reasoning style of Quasi-Reflective thinking. The reflective judgment level suggested by Andrea's data is therefore consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

In order to provide insight into how teacher educators might develop a more thorough understanding of preservice teachers' reflective judgment and utilize various means of promoting reflection in preservice teachers about their beliefs and their teaching practice, the participation in various aspects of the reflective process by the preservice teachers who took part in this study must be examined. Andrea participated in all four elements of the reflective process utilized in this study – dialogue journals, group dilemma discussions, post-observation interviews, and the final essay – but to different degrees and with slightly different and interesting results. For example, it might appear that Andrea participated more fully in the dialogue journal process than in the group dilemma discussions or post-observation interviews, as she submitted at least one journal iteration for each week of her field experience (and second iterations for six of the nine weeks) but attended only two out the three group discussions and participated in only one interview rather than two. However, it could also be argued that the group discussions were more of

an impetus for Andrea to examine and articulate her beliefs about teaching, learning, knowledge, and justification of her decisions about dilemmas than was the journaling process, as her statements in the group dilemma discussions often involved a greater degree of acknowledgement of uncertainty about dilemmas of practices and more recognition of the complexity inherent in those dilemmas than did her journal entries. In addition to this, the fact that Andrea submitted several journal entries within a short period of time near the end of the data collection period could indicate that she might not have been receiving the full benefit of the dialogue journal process as a means for thoughtfully and carefully exploring her beliefs in light of the complex dilemmas she encountered in her teaching practice. Andrea's final essay (5-19-03) was similar to her journal entries in that she put forward strong beliefs about "taking into account the diversity of all students…not only in terms of discipline, but more importantly, in terms of ultimately achieving their academic potentials" but did not engage close examination of how this momentous task might possibly be accomplished in the reality of a classroom.

Andrea submitted initial journal entries for all nine weeks of her field experience and second iterations for journals 2 (2-18-03), 4 (3-21-03), 6 (4-5-03), 7 (4-6-03), 8 (4-13-03), and 9 (4-17-03). Andrea's initial journal entries could frequently be characterized as consisting mainly of descriptive passages about specific incidents occurring in the classroom and very general statements about her beliefs about which she provided little elaboration. In addition to this, even in her second iterations, Andrea's tendency was to put forth her point of view in a manner which sounded fairly certain, and she did not appear inclined to examine those beliefs meticulously, to demonstrate more sophisticated reflective judgment, or to consider alternate points of view. Although in her second journal

reiterations in response to prompts Andrea occasionally restated her beliefs more strongly

and explicitly than she had in her original entries or sometimes referred to being uncertain

about how to resolve a teaching problem – such as in journal 2 (2-18-03) when she stated

she was "very unsure" about how to help Sarah overcome her frustration with reading –

her journal entries generally appeared to lack a high level of examination of, or an openly

questioning attitude toward, the beliefs she already held.

For example, in her response to journal 8 (4-13-03), Andrea responded to a

probative question about the situation in which a student had struck another child by

commenting that it was "obvious" that this child was acting out because of his mother's

frequent and lengthy absences from his life and that the mother's discipline was unlikely to

have an effect on the boy. While this was a strong belief statement, Andrea did not discuss

how she perceived this to be "obvious," suggest any other possible explanations for the

boy's behavior, or consider the complexity of the family's dynamic and its effect on the

student's behavior. In her response to journal 6 (4-5-03), Andrea supported her strong

belief in Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory by firmly stating that she "knew" there

were students who were stronger in one intelligence area than another and that it was the

teacher's "duty" to find ways to accommodate those students; in the same entry, Andrea

supported her decision to pair students with ADHD with others by citing Vygotsky's

theories on cooperative learning, but even upon prompting she did not discuss why she felt

these theories were an appropriate basis for her decision other than to note that she had

seen other teachers use this method successfully. Furthermore, in her responses to prompts

about journals 2 (2-18-03), 4 (3-21-03), and 6 (4-5-03), Andrea also drew heavily on her

observations of the practices of her cooperating teachers as examples which she wished to

follow and as justifications for specific teaching practices, rather than examining the purpose of, and possible alternatives to, those practices. While these comments in Andrea's second iterations might provide valuable insight for those seeking to understand her reflective judgment level during the data collection period, they do not demonstrate that participating in the dialogue journal process was stimulating her to think about dilemmas of practice in a more reflective manner than she had in her original entries.

Another point that should be noted about Andrea's participation in the dialogue journal process was that several of her later entries were submitted in a rather short period of time. Journals 6, 7, 8, and 9, which should have been submitted as reflections on four consecutive weeks of her field experience, were submitted within a period of twelve days. This could have simply been because Andrea's academic schedule became busy or she had other time commitments which necessitated her postponing the writing of her journal entries, or because she was not disposed toward participating fully in the process, or for some other unknown reason. Teacher educators wishing to utilize dialogue journaling as a means for promoting reflection in preservice teachers about their practice should be aware that their participation could be affected by such factors and attempt to eliminate any such obstacles to preservice teachers' full participation in the process.

A notable difference between Andrea's written statements in her journals and her participation in group dilemma discussions and her post-observation interview was that, although she did not take part in three discussions and two interviews as specified by the design of the study, her spoken statements in discussions and an interview often included much more explicit acknowledgement of the uncertainty of knowledge and recognition of the complexity of dilemmas of practice than her written journal statements, which usually

tended to suggest a much more certain perspective about knowledge and justification of resolutions to dilemmas. For example, in group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), Andrea stated that there was "no way" to determine classroom rules which should be followed in all cases, advocated the teacher's use of "situational decisions" about management issues based on the specific circumstances surrounding the incident, and asserted that teachers needed to be able to look at discipline situations from the students' perspective as well as their own. This suggested that Andrea was showing an awareness of the complexity inherent in the dilemma about the degree of control a teacher needed to exert in establishing effective management policies for the classroom.

Similarly, in her post-observation interview (3-21-03), Andrea appeared to begin to accept the uncertainty inherent in the process of trying to help several students with varying academic abilities and learning styles to internalize a mathematical concept, and she was willing to admit that she had been startled and uncertain about how to handle an incident wherein a first-grade girl interrupted the lesson to tell Andrea she had had a frightening dream. Finally, in group discussion 3 (4-8-03), Andrea displayed a similar readiness to accept and explore the uncertainty and complexity of the dilemma about maintaining professional boundaries as a teacher, stating that she found it difficult to know how to do this, that she thought different boundaries were appropriate in different contexts, and that she was at a loss to resolve the issue of how a teacher could show affection and support to young children without playing "favorites" in the class.

In conclusion, while Andrea participated to a certain degree in all aspects of the reflective process, she appeared to be most willing to acknowledge uncertainty of knowledge and the complexity of dilemmas in group discussions and her post-observation

interview. This could possibly have been because the context of social interaction and continuous probing was an important factor in stimulating her reflections, because some of her journal entries might have been completed in a rushed fashion not allowing her to write at her optimal reflective ability, or for some other factor not known to the researcher, but it should be noted here so that teacher educators can take this pattern into account when planning and implementing processes to promote reflection in preservice teachers about their beliefs and practices. Andrea participated in some responses to probative questions in dialogue journals, but it is not clear that this process elicited more reflective statements about her beliefs than put forward in her initial entries.

Case Study #6: Jill

Part A: Description of Case

Jill is a Caucasian female who was 20 years old and a junior in college at the time of this study. For her first two pre-practica prior to the data collection period, she had been placed in a science classroom in an urban public school where she worked with children in several grade levels, including a kindergarten, an integrated second grade and a bilingual second grade, and a private urban Catholic school. She had had extensive experience working with children during the previous six summers as well, having worked at a suburban summer school program for special education students. Jill felt that having been exposed to many meaningful experiences in so many different teaching settings helped her have a better idea of what she wanted to do in future years as a teacher. *(All biographical information provided by Jill via personal e-mail correspondence, 4-27-03.)*

Jill was placed in a combined third and fourth grade classroom in School B. When Jill submitted her journal entry for week 1 in her placement (1-28-03), she wrote first that having been placed in urban schools for her first two pre-practica, she had been disappointed at first to find out that she had been placed in another urban school for her third field experience. However, she wrote that those feelings "disappeared" when she got to her new school, and she conceded that since "I grew up in the suburbs and taught in [a suburban area nearby] for 5 summers, so I guess I know what it's like." Jill wrote that she "loved" the school, and she was especially relieved to find that her new cooperating teacher, Ms. Mason, was a young, enthusiastic, welcoming figure in her new classroom and "not a strict, old lady who was set in her ways…then I would be shy and afraid to do anything."

Jill was struck by the personality of her new class. A combined third and fourth grade classroom with only 14 students, the class was a "handful." When she was briefly put in charge of the class, Jill found that a handful of them "don't listen, do what they want and get so angry when a teacher tells them to do what they don't want to do," a situation she felt was exacerbated by her being new in the classroom and not having yet had time to earn the students' respect and trust. She hoped that once she was able to do this, the students would be more willing to listen to her, although she expressed trepidation as well that "it takes a while to build that teacher-student relationship…and with some students it never happens." Jill did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts for this week.

In her second journal entry (2-5-03), Jill wrote about how busy her particular day of the week (Tuesdays) for visiting the class was because of the many special-areas classes scheduled for that day, described her observations of the class's morning routine, and related a challenging experience she had had in trying to resolve a dilemma mentioned the previous week, that of how to manage this group of students. Jill described the class's morning meeting as "not a traditional one because the students have so much trouble following directions, sitting down and being quiet…they come at 9:30 and are still running around at 9:45." When asked to elaborate further about her beliefs concerning how a teacher might successfully use a morning meeting as an organizational, interpersonal, and academic process for the classroom, she wrote:

> I personally think that morning meetings are a great idea for any class in any grade as long as they are done correctly. Morning meeting provides a chance for the students to transition into 'school' mode and it is also an opportunity to go over the

schedule for the day so the students know what is expected of them. With more casual, whole group meetings like these, the children can gain a sense of 'class' and 'teamwork.' This class is very difficult to do all of these things with. Students are always getting up, walking around, speaking out and not following directions. I am not sure exactly what procedure I would use, but this one does not seem like the best. However, it could be just that. Some days the students calm down and listen and morning meeting is a success.

Jill then observed the morning literacy block as Ms. Mason guided students through independent reading time, held a reading group and conducted a mini-lesson on phonics. She then accompanied the class to a local university, which offered the use of their gymnasium and lessons taught by their teacher education students to some of the classes at Jill's placement school (although they were not able to offer this to all students in the school). Jill thought that it was generous of the university to provide this opportunity since there was no gymnasium at her placement school, found that the students "LOVE it…they spent over an hour running around, screaming, flipping…they burnt off so much energy."

At one point during the day, Jill was left alone with the class by Ms. Mason, who had to go outside the room for a conference, and Jill was forced to revisit her dilemma about how a teacher, especially a student teacher, would be able to gain from her students the respect and trust necessary to manage the class safely and efficiently. Being left alone with the class relieved the pressure on her in one respect, "because I wasn't being observed by anyone…I wasn't shy," but also made her feel more pressured, as she had to take charge of the class as the sole adult in the room. She began by trying to engage the students in an impromptu game, but found them less than eager to follow her directions

("of course they refused to play! Heaven forbid they cooperate!"). However, Jill remembered that Ms. Mason was implementing a reward system for the class by awarding "points" to each table for effort and behavior, so she was able to utilize this technique in order to make the situation somewhat more controlled. She commented on her mixed feelings about relying so heavily on the reward system as a means for managing the class:

> So I totally manipulated them! I don't really like that system, but I do agree that sometimes it is the only thing that works. And to be a student teacher on her second day alone with the class for 45 minutes…I had no other choice!

Responding to a prompt in her dialogue journal about this dilemma, Jill referred to the reward system as "difficult:"

I think there are pros and cons to every kind. Doing whole class rewards is tough because if one or two children misbehave, the entire class will suffer. Individual reward systems put too much focus on the students who have trouble misbehaving. This would discourage certain students who struggle every time to earn points. Small group rewards seem like a happy medium. It keeps the focus away from individuals, and also encourages teamwork – helping each other out. However you still run into a problem where one student can ruin it for a whole group.

Jill was touched that some students tried to give her "hints" about how to keep the class under control by suggesting catch phrases and the like used by Ms. Mason, but felt that most of the students were either obeying her solely in order to earn points for their tables or simply still weren't listening to her despite any action she took. In general, she felt after having this time in charge with the class that she had a bit more faith in herself in terms of working with the students, although she admitted that she still felt unsure about

her abilities in this area, slightly confused about her role, and not totally confident in her

knowledge of her students:

> I go back and forth. There are times when I just want to cry and run away because
>
> they do not listen to me. And I never know when to step in because it is still only
>
> my second day – I'm still getting a feel for everything…of course there are always
>
> kids who won't listen, but hey – you can't win everything. I just hope that this
>
> respect that the students are finally getting for me carries through to next week.

In her journal for week 3 (2-11-03), Jill wrote first that she was pleased to find the

students listening carefully to directions and interrupting less frequently than usual during

morning meeting, and she was able to begin a literacy study with an individual student (a

requirement from her language arts methods course). She explained to the girl, Laura, that

this was something she was doing as part of her learning to become a teacher, and Laura

seemed happy to help. After reading together for a while to establish a comfort level, Jill

conducted a running record with Laura, which she felt gave her a better understanding of

Laura as a reader; Jill found Laura to be a strong reader with some issues in fluency, which

Jill felt would probably improve more through practice than through instruction.   She also

surmised that Ms. Mason must do this kind of evaluation frequently, as Laura did not seem

fazed or nervous at being evaluated at all; Jill hoped that this would make her evaluation of

Laura less likely to suggest mistakes that could have been made just out of nervousness at

being "tested."

Jill concluded her journal entry with a discussion of her fascination with the

personal backgrounds and stories of her students, which they were beginning to share with

her. She wrote that she had been aware that "it being a [public urban school] that there

would be students with several different ethnic backgrounds, languages, and cultures," but she was not prepared for how personally the students' life experiences would touch her. One significant moment for Jill was when a boy in her class, one of a small group of Portuguese-speaking students, sighed, "I miss Brazil," and Jill wondered what moving from his country of origin must have been like:

> It had never occurred to me until then that these kids really had/have a life over there and that they have been taken away from that. Whether or not their lives here are better, I do not know. I just can't imagine living in America and then having to move and grow up in a completely different culture and speak a different language.

Jill wrote about other students as well whose backgrounds and stories had spurred her thinking. For instance, one girl discussed dining etiquette in her family, who were from China, and another girl was talking at length about holidays she celebrated with her family, ones with which Jill was unfamiliar. Jill was very interested in learning more:

> I wish that when I was growing up there were children like that in my classes…That is definitely something, as a teacher, that I would focus on and celebrate more in my class…As an adult I can say now that it is important for teachers to recognize and celebrate the many cultures represented in a classroom.

Jill also stated that she was glad the students were sharing stories about their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as she felt that this type of sharing was the only way to achieve acceptance of differences: "Without knowledge of the different cultures around us, people become ignorant and prejudiced."

Jill also wondered about the background of another girl who said her family had come to the United States because of a war in which her father had had to fight, which

surprised Jill, since "I actually had no idea she was from another country. She speaks

English well and I assumed she was – and this will sound horrible—a black girl from [the

city]."   When asked about how her realization that she had made this assumption had

influenced her thinking, she wrote that everyone makes assumptions and judgments and

that it was really not possible to avoid doing so, but that it was important to recognize

when making assumptions that they are precisely that:

> When making assumptions based on premature or incomplete evidence it is crucial
>
> that people know they are just assuming and that they know a lot less than they
>
> think. Without this understanding, people just start judging groups of people and
>
> forming prejudices. I am always prepared when I make assumptions…in fact I
>
> almost always assume my assumptions are wrong!

Jill ended her journal with the comment that her life had been "pretty boring"

compared to the stories these eight-and nine-year-old students had to tell. However, when

prompted further about her beliefs concerning the importance of developing cultural

awareness and tolerance and the way in which her classroom experiences influenced these

beliefs, Jill responded:

> When I see all the diversity and cultural celebration in the school it makes me want
>
> to have that same sense of identity. Too often, white people are seen as being the
>
> norm and therefore, 'cultureless.' However, I do have an ethnicity and I do have a
>
> culture and traditions. People take such pride in their cultural and ethnic identity
>
> and I wish I had that pride. It makes me want to research my own background and
>
> find something that I can celebrate, identify and take pride in!

In her journal entry for week 4 (2-25-03), Jill wrote that having not seen the students for two weeks because of school vacations, she found herself slightly nervous about returning to the classroom for her visit, but was pleased to find that "unlike the first day, I was not intimidated right off the bat." Jill observed morning meeting and a Writer's Workshop session involving a mini-lesson on the five senses, which Ms. Mason helped the students integrate into their current project, writing their memoirs. Jill thought that most of the class worked very hard, despite occasional interruptions, and accomplished a great deal on their assignment: "They seem to really like these memoirs because it is personal and interesting for them." She gave some individual assistance to a boy in the class, Daniel, who was having difficulty coming up with ideas for writing even though his topic was his dog ("who he absolutely LOVES"); Jill tried to encourage Daniel to write the first paragraph by telling him she really wanted to hear more about the topic.

Jill spent more time with Daniel that day, working with him one-on-one while the other students had lunch (Daniel, who had had to stay behind from PE time at the local university because he had lost the privilege of participating due to behavior issues, had already eaten). She played cards with Daniel, which he seemed to enjoy, and engaged him in a math game she thought of on the spot. Jill felt that spending this extra time with Daniel was beneficial not only because she was able to "really get Daniel thinking and involved with the game" to improve his addition skills, but because the two of them bonded and respect between them grew. Jill reflected on Daniel's school experience, commenting on the many difficulties he had had in class, academically, emotionally, and behaviorally:

Another thing I noticed is that Daniel, when alone with a teacher, is focused and well behaved. But once other students are involved, his attention span is so limited. It's too bad that this is the case. He is a bright boy and I almost want to home school him just so he can get the attention and see how smart he really is!

Jill concluded her journal entry by connecting her reflections about Daniel to a "Special Issues in Teaching" seminar (a requirement for the pre-practicum) she had recently attended, the topic of which was the reality of teaching in urban schools. The seminar was conducted by several teachers who were currently teaching in urban schools, and Jill wrote that she appreciated hearing "the truth, not just what they want us to think." Jill was struck by a few key points of the presentation. First of all, she wrote that the seminar helped her understand that first-year teachers often enter their first job thinking they are going to be the "best teacher" but that that was usually far from the case:

First year teachers go in thinking they are prepared to face the world, but they never are. But that's ok because no one ever is. The first year is chaotic and discouraging. But experience and practice will eventually help you become the best teacher.

Jill also was interested in the distinction the seminar leaders made between those who regard teaching as a job and those who saw teaching as a vocation, and she resolved to become one of the latter. "When I teach it will be my life – not because it has to be, but because I want it to be," she wrote. "I want to make a difference in lives and in education. Teaching will not just be my job…I belong in a school helping children develop and learn." Finally, Jill was impressed with one of the teachers leading the seminar, who espoused the philosophy that she should teach in the place where she was most needed,

meaning in this case an urban school with extremely limited financial resources. Although

Jill wrote that she was not yet at the point of making that realization for herself yet, she

thought and hoped she was "getting there," as she expressed great admiration for a teacher

who would choose his/her teaching position "not because the school system is great, the

students are kind, the curriculum is perfect, or because the job is easy," but because he/she

wanted to work in a place where qualified teachers were badly needed. "That is a very

noble way to look at things," Jill wrote. She did not submit a second journal iteration in

response to prompts for this week.

During week 5, Jill conducted her first observed lesson with the class and

participated in an interview with me afterward (3-11-03). The objective for this

mathematics lesson was for the students to use blocks or Unifix cubes in order to find as

many ways as possible to group addends into a certain sum of cubes (for example, to create

a group of 5 cubes, the students could make groups of 4+1, 2+3, 2+2+1, 1+1+1+1+1, etc.).

They then had to find a pattern which would predict how many possible ways there would

be to make a group of addends for any given sum, check their predictions, and record the

ways to group addends into sums on graph paper. Jill gave a brief introduction to the class

and then let them work individually or in small groups, as they chose, to complete the

activity.

Jill's first statement during the interview was "I thought that was an absolute

disaster," although there were several positive points Jill eventually articulated about her

lesson. She felt, for example, that most of the students had enjoyed the use of the

manipulatives and had understood at least the basic idea that there were many ways, in

most cases more ways than the students had expected, to group the blocks into different

numbers. Though she admitted having been nervous about teaching her first lesson because of some behavior issues she had observed in the class, Jill was also relieved to find that many students were persistent in trying to complete the task and that though there was a great deal of talking and movement during the activity, this appeared to be mostly related to the activity and not as distracting as it could have been. She also felt successful in the way she had dealt with Daniel during the lesson. He had shouted "bor-ing!" during her introduction, which Jill had ignored and hoped the other students had ignored as well when they saw that she did not intend to waste time struggling to divert their attention from Daniel's outburst; Jill also kept a close eye on Daniel throughout the lesson, trying to redirect him when he seemed intent on simply wandering from table to table and eventually facilitating his inclusion with one small group: "We eventually found him a little group where he could sit down…that happens a lot…kids act disinterested a lot, but then they see the different cool things that everybody else is doing and they want to join."

However, the lesson "definitely didn't go as planned" for Jill, and she reflected during the interview about how this had happened and how the activity might have been more successful. Her main challenge in implementing the lesson was that the students became easily confused when they had to identify every possible way of grouping the blocks, predict patterns and graph their results. Some of the students concluded quickly and "stubbornly" that there was a simple pattern involved (for example, five ways to make a group of five, six ways to make a group of six, etc.) and refused to accept suggestions that this was not accurate until Jill or other students actually came up with other ways and showed them tangible evidence. Then, since they had not identified every possible way to

group the blocks, they were unable to discern the pattern and had difficulty making predictions and producing the graphs.

Jill was at first surprised that the students had had so much trouble with the activity, which she considered to be focused mainly on addition (although it was also a pre-multiplication activity since it involved some cases where small, equal groups were repeated to form larger numbers, i.e. 2+2+2 = 6). Jill had thought the activity was geared more to second grade level than third or fourth; in fact, she had worried that the lesson was going to be "insulting" because it was too easy for the class:

> Maybe it was not fair to expect that third or fourth graders would be able to do
> that…but this is kind of a second grade lesson to do with number sense…and these
> kids aren't on grade level…this is something that I brought in from my math
> [methods] class because it's for a younger grade, and I thought that maybe it would
> work because I knew that they were…lower. But I didn't know how low they
> were, because this is the first time I've seen them do math. I thought it would be a
> fun activity building on knowledge that they already had, but it turns out I don't
> know if they necessarily already had that knowledge.

Because of this, Jill said that if she were to do another math lesson, she would make it "more personalized for this class, rather than just a third or fourth grade level lesson in general."

Jill eventually ventured several guesses, other than this first one regarding the students' basic level of mathematical knowledge and number sense, about what had made the activity so difficult for many of the students. First of all, the lesson required students to be familiar with the manipulatives and be able to use them with ease. Jill had seen the

blocks in the room and had assumed that the students had used them before, but this did

not turn out to be the case, so she inferred that unfamiliarity with the blocks made it

difficult for the students to manipulate them within the context that required them to

incorporate this activity with problem-solving thinking. She also thought that her lesson

had been very different in structure and philosophy from the types of math experiences the

students had had before, as it was grounded in a constructivist philosophy, whereas

previously students had not been learning math through methods of discovery:

> They're doing a lot of memorizing, like multiplication facts. They're not seeing it
>
> as anything except for symbolic numbers…which is the way I learned it too. But
>
> we're just not being taught to teach that way, so it's kind of not really matching
>
> up…we are taught to teach number sense through exploration and self-discovery,
>
> and had this class been learning in this style, they would have understood the
>
> activity more.

Other ideas Jill had for improving the lesson were the use of an overhead projector

to demonstrate how to fill out their recording/predicting worksheet and graph paper,

making her introduction to the lesson slightly longer and more thorough, and checking for

students' understanding of their task before she had them go back to their tables to begin

with the manipulates. She reflected about why she had cut her introduction rather short

and how this had possibly affected the students' level of success with the activity:

> I was planning on explaining more, and hoping to do a class thing on an overhead
>
> or something…but once I started doing it they were just…they stopped paying
>
> attention a little bit, and…they were getting a little restless. I figured, you know,
>
> they understand the directions. And the beginning I thought they did, until I saw

that they weren't breaking the numbers down completely. They thought they understood one thing, and they did understand one thing, they just didn't understand what I was talking about.

In her journal for week 5 (3-11-03), Jill touched briefly on these issues again, and concluded that she did not consider the lesson "a complete failure" after all. She pointed out that this lesson was probably one from which each student could learn something, no matter his or her precise level of mathematical understanding and that whether or not they each finished the worksheet exactly correctly was not the point. When prompted further about this, she responded:

> Even though no one got the correct final answer, some of them started getting the hang of it and, time permitted, may have come up with the solution. It is the process, not the product that is most important. If every answer by every student is incorrect, that is ok at this point. But what is important is that I got students thinking in a new way, and hopefully this can help them as they develop their number sense and math skills.

The rest of Jill's fifth journal entry described the first "actual regular day" she had witnessed in the classroom, as the students did not take their usual trip to the university for P.E. Jill thought the students were fairly well-behaved despite the disruption in their routine, and she was very busy that day: "I did more work today than I ever have done in a pre-practicum…and that's not a bad thing." Jill spent a great deal of time in particular working with students in language arts, as she led a small reading group and conferenced with several students during Writer's Workshop. During her reading group, Jill previewed with the students the new book about safaris which they would be reading by having them

look at and discuss illustrations, begin constructing a K/W/L chart concerning what they knew and would want to know about safaris (they came up with "wonderful and creative ideas and questions"). She also engaged the students in an impromptu vocabulary lesson by having them go through the book and identify words that were unfamiliar to them.

After defining and discussing the words, they began reading the book, which they did not have time to finish but Jill was glad that they had spent time covering some important information. She judged that before the lesson, the students had had a general, though not specific, understanding of what a safari was and about some African animals ("I assume this because they were asking interesting questions about the animals' habits and lifestyles"). Jill was satisfied with her decision to talk about new vocabulary before beginning the reading of the book; when asked about her decision to proceed this way, she wrote that she felt that this activity made the students more prepared to comprehend what they read and prevented them having to stop the flow of their reading by pausing to define new vocabulary (or inadvertently missing the unfamiliar words altogether). Following this, Jill spent time conferencing with students in Writer's Workshop; they were at the revision stage of their writing, and though she found it difficult to resist the temptation to suggest punctuation and grammar corrections at times ("I guess I better get used to that"). When prompted about her beliefs concerning the purpose of structuring the writing process in the specific sequence outlined by Writer's Workshop method, Jill wrote that she understood that editing needed to be focused on more at a later stage in the students' writing:

The revision stage comes before the editing stage because what the student is trying

to say is more important than whether or not he/she says it correctly. If editing were to come first, and then revising, it would go to waste. Editing a paper that does not make sense structurally will still not make sense after you edit. Also, if you edit a paper for punctuation, and then go back and revise a few sentences, you will have to go back yet again to edit that.

Jill ended her journal with a final comment that she was pleased that she and the students seemed to be "warming up" to each other more and more; she noticed that students now seemed more comfortable sharing stories with her and asking her, not just Ms. Mason, for help. Even "a few of the more 'difficult' boys" had begun showing off their work to her when they were proud and she was more able to redirect them when they had trouble concentrating, "a very rewarding experience."

On 3-19-03, Jill participated in the first group dilemma discussion concerning the question of how much control a teacher should exert over students in managing a class and implementing a disciplinary system. Jill's first comment was that she thought a classroom should be managed strongly and consistently, with the focus on maintaining respect between teacher and students and among the students. She did not believe that a teacher needed to employ exactly the same rules, management methods or consequences with each student, "because people respond differently to rules and expectations than other people around them." To illustrate this, she described the way Ms. Mason dealt with Daniel in class (she did not give his name) by having a "special, unspoken agreement" with him that although he did not always follow along with what the class was doing, he would do as he wished and eventually he would decide to do the work. Jill did not propose that this type of arrangement would be effective for every student, but stressed that "it's definitely up to

the teacher, depending on the kids and what's wr—I don't want to say wrong with them but things that might be troubling them, family background, and everything like that."

Jill elaborated on this position later in the discussion by expressing her belief that taking different action in dealing with different students did not necessarily mean that the teacher was giving some students "special treatment," as long as the students realized that the teacher was doing so in order to help a class full of unique individuals reach the same goals: "Students have to understand that it's not necessarily that they're getting more, but that everybody in the classroom itself has the same goal, to maintain the comfortable, safe classroom environment."

In discussing the question of how much control the teacher should exert over the class in terms of management and discipline, Jill expressed her belief that it was not really appropriate for the teacher to be asserting dominance and control over the class all the time, insisting that the class do what he/she said simply because the teacher was in charge. This, Jill claimed, would not benefit students' development of personal responsibility in the long run:

> …that's not really teaching anything. The students are just learning to obey, not learning to become the people that they're going to have to become…one of the biggest things is that the students themselves are responsible for their own behavior, they shouldn't behave waiting for teachers to…mold and shape them to what they should be. They should do what they're expected to do and control themselves.

Jill elaborated on her belief about the inappropriateness of relying solely on one's

authority as the teacher to control a classroom by discussing the evolution of her relationship with her current placement class; she related how she had had extreme difficulty in trying to get students to listen to her or follow directions at the beginning, but how through time she had begun to know them better and she and the class had developed respect for one another. Though she still felt that her ability to manage the classroom was a bit shaky because the students were aware that she herself was a student just learning to become a teacher, there had been a noticeable improvement in their response to her when she had developed more meaningful relationships with them and demonstrated that she cared about them and could potentially help them achieve success in school.

Jill's final remark during the discussion concerned the question of how she had come to believe what she did about discipline and management. First Jill stated that, unlike some of the other group members, she could not really rely on her experience as an elementary student to know what actions she should take if a student misbehaved, because growing up she was extremely conscious of her behavior, always trying to behave properly and do what she was supposed to do; she recalled being very upset when she felt she had misbehaved and disappointed her teachers. In fact, Jill proposed that in addition to knowing what rules to set and what consequences for misbehavior to administer, a teacher should be aware of the "flip side" of discipline: the motivation which a respectful, encouraging relationship with a teacher will provide for a student to do his or her best. She stated:

> I think that when they have reinforcement of, hey, my teacher recognized that I did
> [something positive]…that has to go along with discipline, because not only do
> they know what NOT to do, but they know what TO do. And there's a mutual

understanding, like, I want to make my teacher proud of me, or I don't want to

make my teacher upset. Then maybe that can motivate a student to behave better.

As the group continued exploring possible influences on their beliefs about

management,

Jill voiced her agreement with several group members that her college courses had been

only marginally helpful in providing guidance in this area. Although some courses had

exposed Jill to various theories about classroom management, she did not think this was

sufficient preparation for implementing a management system that would afford

opportunities for success in widely varying situations with individual students:

[Theory] can only take you so far, just because everything is just so individual and

contextual. They can give you fundamental ideas, but I don't think there's any

teacher in the world that can say they model their classroom after one specific

theory – and if they do, I want to know that theory! (*mild laughter among the*

group) I just don't think it covers all the basics, and then whatever else the kids

have to throw at you.

Jill also felt that one could only gain a limited understanding of classroom

management through such techniques as reading, discussing, and watching videotapes,

common practices in her courses, because "you'll never learn what you're comfortable

with or what you are able to actually do in a situation, unless you're actually out there

doing it." Jill's final remark was wishing that the students participating in pre-practica

could meet regularly in small groups as they went through the semester, in order to discuss

these kinds of issues and share experiences with peers who had all been placed in the same

role as student teachers.

For her week 6 classroom visit, Jill traded days with another pre-practicum student who visited the same classroom on a different day, so each of them could see what the class was "like" on a different day. In her journal entry for this week (3-20-03), Jill wrote about working with her reading group again, which she found very satisfying because the three girls in her group were hard-working, enthusiastic and helpful. Once again she led the group in a pre-reading K/W/L activity, guided them through the reading of the non-fiction book, and then had the students add items that they had learned through reading the book to the chart. At the end of the reading group, one girl said she "couldn't wait" to start reading chapter books, which Jill thought was wonderful: "I love that she is so enthusiastic…about reading longer, more challenging books. It also shows me that she feels like she's becoming a better reader and she may be ready to move on."

After the class had their annual pictures taken and worked on letters to their pen pals (students at a local college), Ms. Mason began a math lesson during which students were each to construct a paper strip divided into various fractions. At one point Ms. Mason had to step out "because two boys were throwing tantrums in the hallway" and Jill was asked to continue teaching the lesson. She found this task quite challenging:

> It was hard not having looked over the lesson before trying to teach it – because as much as I understood it, it was IMPOSSIBLE to explain. I would start saying one thing, and then I'd backtrack and start over and jump ahead – it was a mess. The poor class was clueless.

Eventually Jill realized that dividing the same paper strip into several different fraction segments was probably confusing the class, and though she was not able to implement this idea at the time, she reflected later that the activity might have been clearer

and more productive for the class if four different paper strips had been used to demonstrate halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths: "This way, separate fractions could be labeled without the other ones getting in the way and confusing them. However, the class could use the strips to compare and see the relationships between the fractions."

Jill concluded her journal entry by describing how she had reluctantly done the class's read-aloud session when the students asked for her to do it instead of Ms. Mason. Not being familiar with the read-aloud procedure, the book, or the tone of voice in which the book should be read, she was hesitant ("I honestly didn't want to"). However, she took on the task and ultimately judged that she had done an acceptable job despite her misgivings:

> I guess I did all right though. I found myself reading a little fast at times, and I stumbled across a few words. I felt stupid, but that's ok. Practice makes (almost) perfect, so I just have to work on that one a little more.

Jill did not submit second journal iterations in response to prompts for this week or any of the subsequent weeks of her field experience.

Jill described her visit during week 7 (3-25-03) as "just like any other Tuesday." First she worked with her reading group as usual, and reflected in her journal that although she enjoyed teaching language arts to her group, she was uncomfortable with continually having to do so with little to no preparation:

> I decided today that I hate not having a lesson planned out. I never thought I'd be saying this, because writing lesson plans can be so tedious. But this is my third week working with this reading group and each time I don't know what I'm doing until the last minute. My three students are already sitting there at the table before I

know what book we're reading or what activity we'll be doing. If I could I'd plan a lesson to bring on Tuesdays, but Ms. Mason never tells me anything – I don't even think she knows what I'm going to be doing until Monday or so.

Jill pointed out that she did not consider this situation to be Ms. Mason's fault: "I don't really blame her. She has so much stuff going on in her room, I'm just glad that she gave me my own reading group to work with."

Despite the lack of time to prepare, Jill still felt she implemented a successful reading group lesson. She had the students in her group make inferences from the book's illustrations and headings about what they might learn, led the group in reading the book, and again discussed the definitions, usages and spellings of vocabulary words pointed out by the students as unfamiliar to them. In many cases this process resulted in spontaneous discussions of other language arts ideas, for example the difference between the words "piece" and "peace."

Jill also described, but did not reflect extensively on, a lesson Ms. Mason did at the end of the day in order to prepare her students for the writing section of the upcoming state-mandated standardized test. Ms. Mason showed the students two sample responses to a writing prompt, one marked with an extremely high score and one with a very low score. She then helped the students discuss why one was considered well done and one poorly done, and had them brainstorm ideas about how they might respond to the same question in a testing situation.

This same week (3-25-03), Jill participated in group dilemma discussion 2, which focused on the question of which type of instruction was more effective, student-centered or teacher-centered. Jill initially agreed with many members of the group that student-

centered instruction was valuable ("a wonderful idea") because giving students a voice about what they learned and freedom to make choices about the way they learned it helped to motivate students, made them proud of what they learned, provided students with a wide variety of learning styles opportunities to succeed, and gave them "a sense of ownership of their knowledge." Although Jill recalled having been taught in her elementary years mostly through teacher-directed methods and techniques such as worksheets, at which she excelled easily, she agreed that instructional practices needed to be more varied than this in order to accommodate the needs and learning styles of different types of learners.

However, Jill also agreed with some others in the group that "you'll always run across kids that don't really go anywhere from it…there is only so much they can do on their own." Therefore, Jill stated, in order for students to learn about topics they might find "boring" or to "expose them to everything" to prepare students for the many challenges that would confront them later as citizens, the teacher needed to be prepared to guide students and take responsibility for structuring many of their educational experiences. Jill also asserted that sometimes teachers needed to expose students to material they might not have chosen for themselves simply because students do not always know what they will ultimately find interesting or rewarding. To illustrate this, Jill discussed the experience of her roommate, who had never considered studying philosophy before starting college but who was now thinking of majoring in the subject because of a core philosophy course which had greatly stimulated her interest and opened up new ways of thinking to her. "I think that's what elementary teachers have to do at the very very basic level," Jill stated, "is teach math and science and social studies, and even the not so fun stuff that might become something of interest."

Despite her belief that highly teacher-centered instruction was sometimes necessary, Jill did indicate that even this type of instruction needed to be implemented in a way that motivated and stimulated the thinking of students as much as possible. She proposed that even when teachers had to design and structure learning experiences for the students, they should provide choices within the structure of those experiences for student exploration and discovery. Jill emphasized that the teacher's role should be that of a facilitator: "I don't necessarily think that a teacher should be expert, the one authoritative person in the classroom, but kind of just a coach."

Jill commented that it was difficult as a pre-practicum student to implement a wide variety of instructional styles and methods because she had so many required tasks from her own teacher preparation program to keep track of and complete:

> All education is valuable, to some extent. But I think it's hard at this level to really read into a class like that and get really involved as far as the skills that I really think the class needs. I don't know the class well enough to teach them what they need…I'm teaching them what I need for my classes.

When the discussion turned to the question of which personal experiences might have influenced the participants' beliefs on teacher-centered and child-centered instruction, Jill concurred with several group members that her college courses could only provide limited guidance in understanding and utilizing various instructional methods because so much of teaching involved "thinking on your feet all the time." Jill believed that courses could not always prepare a teacher for the unexpected questions and misconceptions students could have about material and that even content that seemed very simple could be extremely problematic to explain to students. She recalled several instances when she was

teaching her reading group and suddenly found herself at a loss to correct a student's misunderstanding about certain subject matter:

One girl thought that sand came from baby rocks throwing up. And I had no idea what to say to her, how to explain it to her, like no, you just crush up rock and it's sand. But that's one of the things where, like, what do you say? I wanted to laugh, but I wasn't going to laugh at her, and I was like, okay, where do I start?

The group laughed together at the seeming strangeness of the situation which Jill had found herself, and they shared similar experiences wherein they had had to try to clarify what seemed like a simple concept to students who were trying to understand it for the first time.

In her journal for week 8 (4-1-03), Jill wrote about how the third graders in her class had taken the reading/writing portion of the state-mandated standardized test while the fourth graders joined a fifth grade class for the day. Jill worked with the third graders and her first reaction was surprise at how little experience and the degree of difficulty the students had at "bubbling in" their personal information on the test answer sheets: "I know that by the time I was in third grade I had taken standardized tests…every year. Of course the only way you can learn this 'skill' is to actually do it." She went around the room assisting the students individually to make sure their information was entered correctly.

Jill found Ms. Mason' had handling of the students' questions about the test to be very effective. Ms. Mason reassured the students that the test would affect neither their grades nor their upcoming move to fourth grade, and she encouraged them to do their best despite the fact that the teachers were not allowed to help the students on this particular test. Observing the students "getting right to work" on the test, Jill judged that they were

satisfied with Ms. Mason' answers to their questions. Jill went on to reflect on the general handling of the standardized testing requirement by her school's faculty:

> I think this school (or at least my teacher) does a good job of explaining the importance of the test. There has been very little pressure on the students about the tests, but just enough pressure so they know it is important to practice and try your hardest…the principal even made a friendly visit later to explain how proud and confident she was of the class.

Jill described how difficult the testing situation had been for Daniel, who "paced a little" when the students were beginning the test, started work after the principal's visit, but soon "threw a bit of a tantrum." Frustrated that he could not understand a few of the words in the reading comprehension section and upset that the teachers could not help him, he refused to move on, eventually throwing things, threatening to rip up the test and loudly bouncing a basketball when he was removed from the classroom to the hallway while the rest of the class was taking the test. Jill was disturbed by Daniel's painful experience with the test:

> These are intimidating words, but Daniel would not accept the fact that he did not NEED to understand what they meant because they were pretty irrelevant to the story…I guess Daniel just likes knowing everything in his work, and feeling like he doesn't know something maybe gives him a feeling like he's out of control of the information. Or maybe he is scared of failure?

Eventually, Daniel was allowed to return to the classroom and resume work on his test. After another hour, Ms. Mason attempted to collect Daniel's test, which apparently motivated

him to begin working, and Jill was impressed on how hard he worked on the last sections of the test ("He even flipped back to use text in his essay answer"). Jill was similarly pleased with the rest of the class and the way they appeared to be "very mature," working hard and following directions. She wondered whether the fourth graders would be so hard-working when it was time for their testing ("I have a feeling that the three 'trouble makers' in that class will distract everyone from doing their work").

During week 9 (4-8-03), Jill conducted her second observed lesson, another math lesson, and I interviewed her afterward. This lesson consisted of the introduction by Jill of five different math games focusing on multiplication and the management of the class as they moved from table to table playing each game. After the lesson I conducted a semi-structured interview with Jill. Although the interview was brief because Jill's schedule required her to leave school very close to the end of the school day in order to get to a class on campus and was conducted in the hallway where there was much noise and many distractions, it still yielded some substantial reflections by Jill about her lesson.

Jill thought the lesson had gone much better than she had expected and better than the first math lesson she had been observed teaching. She had worried that the students might become frustrated and discouraged with the games at some point, but she felt they had enjoyed the lesson and was pleased to see them engaging in friendly competition with their classmates and attempting to use their mathematical knowledge to identify strategies for winning the games. Jill had also been concerned about what the students' behavior might be like, especially given the abundance of manipulatives used for each game ("I thought the dice were going to be all over the room. Those things bounce around on tables like this, and with these kids I thought they were going to be rolling on the floor").

However, other than Daniel, who "threw a fit," and another student who did not comply with Jill's directions and was difficult to manage, Jill was also pleasantly surprised that the class in general did not seem to get out of control during this very movement-oriented, hands-on, collaborative activity.

Jill discussed some instructional decisions she had made in the planning of her lesson, such as the use of a modified game for practicing addition, based on her assessment of the students' needs:

The original [game] is for addition, but they have like a way you can change it for multiplication. So I did that. And I just cut it down to three dice b/c really a lot of them are just on the basic multiplication right now.

Jill also discussed how some of the games, such as the "Rectangle Game" which approached multiplication in terms of dimensions of rectangles, "might have been a larger influence" if they had each been the focus of more directed math lessons to introduce students to the concepts involved. However, as one of the class's ongoing activities was "karate math," designed to help students meet the goal of learning their computation facts and answering math problems quickly without having to stop and work them out, Jill felt the lesson was an appropriate exercise to help them achieve that goal: "I think this was more just to practice and kind of build on what they already know, rather than starting something completely new."

Jill briefly touched on her feelings about Daniel's experience in the game, which reminded her of a time when his behavior had been so extreme Ms. Mason had had to put him in the hallway, where he had bounced a basketball and made so much noise that another teacher had had to leave her room to come ask him to be quieter. Jill was not sure

whether this type of action was especially productive in terms of improving Daniel's behavior, and she wished that his behavior issues did not have to take so much time and attention away from his academic potential, which Jill felt was actually quite high:

> I don't know. I don't know. I don't think that's working, it's not…you can't just throw a kid out in the hallway and have him do whatever he wants, it disturbs everybody else, not just your class. And he's…I don't know…it's tough. I mean he, whatever they've been doing over the years, I guess works enough to you know, he's learning and he's moving on, I think, next year…if you get him working, and really trying and really into something, he can do it. He's good at math.

In her journal entry for week 9 (4-8-03), Jill reflected further about the observed math lesson she had taught, which she believed had gone much more smoothly than the first observed lesson. Jill noted how she had initially worried somewhat that the students might become frustrated and discouraged playing the games, but she still felt this had not been the case; she had found the students to be enthusiastic, interested in the strategies for winning the games, and engaged in enjoyable competition with one another. In addition to this, as was also the case with her first lesson, Jill had a limited amount of time to introduce and explain the lesson. She did not find this to be a significant problem during the lesson itself:

> I only briefly explained the activities because we were short on time and I knew that no matter how much time I spent talking about it, the class would need me to come around and model the games for them. I didn't have a problem with this – that's what teachers are for.

However, she did eventually express the wish that she had been able to present and

explain the games more thoroughly, perhaps by introducing each game on a different day rather than all at once: "That way, I could have spent more time explaining the mathematics behind each…and I could have made sure each student was getting the most out of the activity, and not just 'going with the flow.'"

Jill discussed which games she thought had been the most challenging for the students and why she thought this might have been. One game, for example, called on the students to relate the concept of multiplication to dimensions of rectangles, a concept with which they seemed unfamiliar, and Jill did not mind that the strategy of winning the game seemed to be "getting lost somewhere," as she felt it was still important for the students to explore this mathematical concept. Another game that challenged the students was one requiring them to multiply three different factors together, and Jill assisted as best she could:

> They often came to me when they couldn't figure out a problem – I am not sure if they know how to figure out multiplication as standard algorithms. They didn't get through many rounds because so much time was spent on doing the math, but at least they were doing math!

Jill wrote in this journal that the standardized testing session she had been expecting to observe that day was cancelled due to snow, so she had a great deal of time to devote to her regular reading group, which she appreciated because she had several tasks assigned from her Language Arts methods course to complete with them. Having had an entire week to plan her reading group lesson this time, Jill was prepared with an activity expanding on the topic of finding the main idea and supporting details within a text, a concept to which the students had recently been introduced. She was pleased that the three

girls in her group seemed engaged and enthusiastic, even though one of the activities on

the worksheets she had provided seemed difficult for them.

Group dilemma discussion #3 was also held this week (4-8-03), but Jill did not

attend.

Jill's journal entry for week 10 (4-15-03) describes how her last day at her

placement school was a little sad but started out "like any other," but after Jill started

working with her reading group Ms. Mason informed her that the school was out of paper.

The teachers had no more paper to make copies for the rest of the school year

(approximately two more months) and would have to buy their own paper if they wanted

it. Jill was stunned and outraged at the school's lack of resources for what she considered

a basic necessity:

> I can't believe that. Apparently the teachers have to buy their own paper, which
>
> works, but it is totally unfair that it has to come out of their own pockets. Teachers
>
> don't get paid enough for them to be required to buy their own paper. You don't
>
> see doctors paying for their own examination tools or hospital beds. Needless to
>
> say, this whole budget thing makes me so mad. You'd think that by now this
>
> country would realize how important education is and how much money it takes to
>
> properly and effectively educate our children. Thousands of athletes make millions
>
> a year and our school doesn't have enough money to buy paper…so wrong.

Jill went on to relate two "disasters" involving Daniel, who first climbed onto a

high cement wall when the class took their trip to the university for P.E. and threatened

several times to jump before Ms. Mason was able to get him to come down. When the

class returned to school, Jill observed several teachers dealing with Daniel, who appeared

extremely distraught over something. Daniel would not speak, but eventually disclosed by tracing letters with his fingers that his "father" (his mother's boyfriend) would soon be moving back to his country of origin in Central America, a situation which was clearly upsetting Daniel immensely. Jill was not allowed to observe everything that followed, but she wrote that Daniel had been so upset, throwing scissors, kicking chairs around the room and yelling, that Ms. Mason had nearly had to call the principal to get the police. Eventually Daniel's mother was called in; Jill did not know what happened after that and did not discuss the situation further.

Jill's final journey entry concluded with a description of a small celebration the students put together to honor her last day in their classroom in which they gave her a bouquet of flowers and Daniel handed her a stack of cards, one from each student, to thank her for working with them. Jill found this very touching:

I really almost cried…I could tell they put so much thought into everything and it really meant so much. Some of the comments the kids made were so kind – they knew I was learning to be a teacher and some even said that I'm a good teacher already!

For her final reflective essay (4-27-03), Jill chose the dilemma of whether ensuring "fair and equal treatment" for students meant that teachers should treat and teach all children in the same way regardless of race, ethnicity, linguistic difference or academic ability, or whether it meant giving each student what he or she needed and deserved through pedagogy that was culturally and academically relevant to each individual student.

Jill began by pointing out what she regarded as the difference between "equality" and "fairness." Despite what the Declaration of Independence stated, she wrote, all people

were not created equal (meaning the same), as society is created out of many people who

dress, speak, eat, worship God, and build their value systems in different ways ("There is

not just one way that 'we' the people live our lives"). Instead of calling for the exact same

treatment of individuals, Jill asserted, the philosophy behind the statement in the

Declaration of Independence meant that people should be given equal opportunity to

achieve in a way that respected and supported the many differences among individuals.

Based on this concept, Jill proposed that it was inappropriate for teachers to attempt to

treat and teach all students, who have vastly different backgrounds, needs and issues,

through the exact same pedagogy:

> How does the little girl from France learn to multiply when she does not understand
>
> a word of English? How does the little boy keep up with the classes when he
>
> misses so many days of school because he hasn't eaten in days? How do you
>
> discipline a child who suffers from abuse at home? What about the boy who is
>
> blind and can't see what you're doing? Or the girl who is confined to a wheelchair
>
> and relies on a switch to communicate? How is a single pedagogy going to educate
>
> all these children?

Jill asserted that the true meaning behind the philosophy of "fairness" did not

assume everyone was the same, but rather the opposite, and that teachers must take the

responsibility to ensure that all students have the same opportunity to learn the material

that is taught by making sure he/she is using materials and methods that will best meet

each child's individual needs. If the teacher adjusted his/her methods so they are the best

fit with each student, Jill wrote, "it should not be considered inequality or 'special'

treatment; rather it is a necessity for this student to have access to the same material as

his/her peers," even if this means the teacher does not deal with each student in the same way. This, she wrote, was one of the things that made teaching such a challenging vocation, because any given class could contain students with several different languages, learning styles and developmental levels.

To illustrate this, Jill discussed what she had observed about the needs of the students in her present placement classroom. If the teacher taught all the time at one pace and always through the same method, she wrote, only the 'mainstream' students would benefit:

> But how many students actually make up the 'mainstream?' In most cases, it is not the majority. In the classroom that I am in, for example, not one student would be considered mainstream. Five different languages are represented in the classroom along with several different cultures, family backgrounds, and ability levels.

(Jill did not give a precise definition of what she considered the meaning of the term "mainstream.") She also noted that she had observed students who learned best visually, some by using hands-on experiences and manipulatives, some by listening, and some by reading on their own, so the teacher needed to be able to provide experiences that would accommodate many types of learning styles. If the teacher did not do this, he/she would likely be teaching in a way that would be beneficial to only a small segment of the class:

> Would it be fair?...No. But they would be treated 'equally' and that's what many researchers and teachers call for. I, on the other hand, feel very strongly about teaching students fairly. The only thing that should be equal in the classroom is the opportunity for each and every student to learn. No two students learn the same way, so how can a pedagogy assuming this equality be effective? It cannot.

Jill concluded her essay with a strongly worded, though not always completely clear, statement of her conviction about fair treatment of students. While she agreed with the notion that individuals should not be judged or mistreated based on differences in "race, ethnicity, disability, etc.," she felt those who took this theory to mean that teachers should teach all students through some universal pedagogy were "caught up in the ideal." She reiterated her belief that the theory of equal treatment was actually based on the principle that people's many differences should be respected and embraced, not on the idea that every *person* was the same:

> By adapting the same pedagogy for all students, teachers are not recognizing differences; rather they are ignoring them and enforcing our own beliefs on others. Fairness in education means acknowledging differences, and teaching accordingly so that in the end, each and every student has had the same opportunity to learn, grow, and develop.

Part B: Analysis of Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Jill during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Jill appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Jill's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Jill's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Jill's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Jill's Reflective Judgment Level

   Dilemma 1: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

   Jill's addressed this dilemma in several written and spoken statements throughout the data collection period. In her first journal entry (1-28-03), Jill wrote that her first impression of the students in her new placement class had been that they were a "handful" who "don't listen, do what they want, and get so angry when a teacher tells them to do what they don't want to do," and she was nervous about the prospect of eventually having to take on a role of leadership or authority with them. Jill felt that she was at a disadvantage in building the trust and respect that was necessary between teacher and students if the class was to be managed successfully since she was a new adult in the classroom, but she hoped to build personal relationships with each of her students. Jill noted, however, that this could take some time, and "with some students it never happens."

   Jill continued reflecting on the management issues presented by her placement class in journal 2 (2-5-03). She noted that their morning meeting process was "not a traditional one" because of the tremendous difficulty many students seemed to have in sitting quietly and following directions, but her concern about managing the class soon became more immediate when she was unexpectedly left to supervise the class alone for a short period when her cooperating teacher left the room. Although Jill claimed that "because I wasn't being observed by anyone…I wasn't shy," she found herself having difficulty getting the class to participate in a game she played with them and was distressed when the students did not cooperate. Ultimately Jill felt she had "no choice" but to utilize a system her cooperating teacher had implemented in the classroom in which small groups

of students earned points, which they accumulated to win a prize, for good behavior. Jill was unsure about whether she felt this was the optimal management system for this or any class, but conceded that "sometimes it is the only thing that works." When asked further about her beliefs regarding the use of this type of reinforcement system with students, Jill responded that she found "pros and cons to every kind" of discipline and discussed what she viewed as the strengths and weaknesses of using reward systems as a management technique with the whole class, small groups, and individual students, noting that each of the different types of reward systems was likely to motivate some students more than others.

In her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Jill stated that she had been nervous about teaching her observed lesson, partly because of the behavior issues she had observed in the classroom, but felt that she had been able to successfully handle the management of the class during her lesson for the most part. She felt particularly successful when dealing with Daniel, a student who often presented discipline challenges to his teachers, by ignoring him when he called out that math was "bor-ing" when Jill introduced her lesson and helping facilitate his inclusion in a small group to complete the math task she had assigned when he had seemed intent on wandering from table to table. "That happens a lot," Jill wrote. "Kids act disinterested a lot, but then they see the different cool things that everybody else is doing and they want to join."

Jill made several statements regarding this dilemma at the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), at which the question of how much control a teacher should exert over a class in terms of discipline and management was presented as the topic for discussion. Jill stated that she believed a class should be managed strongly and

consistently, with a focus on respect between students and between students and the teacher. She felt that a teacher did not need to use the same rules and consequences with each student because "people respond differently to rules and expectations than other people around them." A teacher, Jill asserted, could help students understand that "special treatment" of each individual did not mean that some students were receiving more than others, but that everyone was getting what they needed in order to all reach the same goals in a safe, productive classroom environment.

Jill stated that a teacher did not need to be dominant and controlling with students, as the result of this would likely be that the students would simply behave because they were told to do so by the teacher, and this would not benefit the students in terms of personal development:

> …that's not really teaching anything. The students are just learning to obey, not learning to become the people that they're going to have to become…one of the biggest things is that the students themselves are responsible for their own behavior, they shouldn't behave waiting for teachers to…mold and shape them to what they should be. They should do what they're expected to do and control themselves.

Elaborating on this belief, Jill reiterated the sentiment she had articulated in her first journal entry about having trouble getting her students to regard her as an authority, but that this was much easier now that she had gotten to know them better and felt that she and the students respected each other. She now felt that having meaningful relationships with one's students was a much more important factor in successful classroom management than was the teacher's level of authority or control in the classroom.

As the group reflected during this discussion about the experiences that had influenced their beliefs about the dilemma, Jill reflected that she could not rely solely on her own experiences as a student to guide her in the management decisions she made as a teacher, as she had been a specific type of student who tried very hard to behave well and was upset when she got into trouble at school and she realized that not all students were like this. Finally, Jill stated that her college courses had been only minimally helpful to her as she developed a philosophy of management because of their extensive focus on theory and apparent lack of attention to the need to be able to apply a theory, or many theories at once, in the unique, complex, dynamic environment of a classroom:

> Theory can only take you so far, because everything is just so individual and contextual. They can give you fundamental ideas, but I don't think there's any teacher in the world that can say they model their classroom after one specific theory…I just don't think it covers all the basics, and then whatever else the kids have to throw at you.

In her fifth journal entry (3-11-03), Jill revisited her idea that having meaningful relationships with students was a more important factor in successful discipline than exerting strong authority over them, noting that she was happy that many of her students seemed to be "warming up" to her by sharing stories and asking for her help more frequently, even some whom she had perceived as discipline challenges during the early weeks of her placement. Jill felt that this was a beneficial step in her ability to manage the class, as the students now seemed more willing to accept her instruction and redirection; she described this as "very rewarding."

Jill's approach to this dilemma was highly Quasi-Reflective in nature. Although she occasionally demonstrated a few vestiges of a Pre-Reflective perspective, such as confusion and anxiety in facing this uncertain dilemma and an initial tendency to regard being perceived as an authority by the students as an important goal in successfully teaching them, most of her statements reveal reasoning which is much more typical of Quasi-Reflective thinkers. For instance, Jill clearly perceived that the question of how to establish a successful system of classroom management was a complex one to which there was no simple, clear solution. This was evinced when she stated that even though she hoped to develop relationships with her students in order to motivate them to behave well in class, there were some students with whom she might never be able to achieve this goal.

Jill's attitude toward authority also reflected Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Although her initial concern about how to make the class regard her as an authority figure might lead one to conclude that Jill was thinking in a Pre-Reflective manner, since Pre-Reflective thinkers are highly reliant on experts and authority figures as sources of knowledge, soon after she began her field experience Jill began articulating beliefs about authority which were much more sophisticated in terms of reflective judgment. She abandoned her initial tendency to think that students' regarding her as an authority figure would lead to successful management in favor of a philosophy that developing meaningful relationships with them would be more likely to help her achieve that goal, since students would then understand that her purpose was to help them and listen to her out of respect for her as an individual and a classroom leader. Jill's assertion during the first group discussion that a highly authoritative and "dominant" stance by the teacher would ultimately produce only a superficial obedience on the part of students and could actually hinder their ability to learn

to take responsibility for their own behavior also revealed the type of cynicism toward blind acceptance of authority figures that characterizes early Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Jill's statements reflected other Quasi-Reflective assumptions as well. For example, as is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, Jill acknowledged that relying on her own personal experience would be an inadequate way to approach the dilemma since her own perspective might be biased by the fact that she was a certain type of student in school, whereas she could not expect all the students she taught to exhibit the same behavior that she had as a student. She also made statements suggesting Stage 5 thinking. By claiming that teachers needed to realize that different students would respond to their actions in different ways and that no theory would be sufficient to establish a successful management system in the classroom because "everything is just so individual and contextual," Jill was recognizing that a point of view was embedded in a specific context and that individual interpretation was a necessary and legitimate step in the process of resolving a dilemma. Jill also demonstrated the ability to begin exploring the complexity of the dilemma and placing it into a broader context when she extended her discussions of management issues from the context of her placement classroom to wider issues of educational practice; this occurred when she attempted to balance the "pros and cons" of reward systems as a management tool and when she reflected on how her actions as a teacher in terms of discipline might affect students' development of a sense of responsibility and accountability for their own behavior.

Dilemma 2: How can a teacher best accommodate students with widely varied cultural, ethnic, racial and/or linguistic backgrounds?

Jill addressed this dilemma extensively in one particular journal entry, journal 3 (2-11-03). She wrote about how she had been deeply moved by hearing the personal stories of her students. Jill had known before entering her placement classroom that the school was "diverse," but was unprepared for how the students' stories would touch her, especially when she heard about students who had had to move to the United States from their native countries:

> It had never occurred to me until then that these kids really had/have a life over there and that they have been taken away from that. Whether or not their lives here are better, I do not know. I just can't imagine living in America and then having to move and grow up in a completely different culture and speak a different language.

Jill wished that she had known people of more diverse backgrounds when she herself had been a student and stated that as a teacher, she would make it a goal to recognize and celebrate diverse cultures in her own classroom because "without knowledge of the different cultures around us, people become ignorant and prejudiced."

Jill also reflected in this journal entry that people often made assumptions about others' backgrounds based on superficial information and that these assumptions could lead to serious issues of prejudice. She hoped that recognizing that she herself made these types of assumptions would help her to overcome them:

> When making assumptions based on premature or incomplete evidence it is crucial that people know they are just assuming and that they know a lot less than they think. Without this understanding, people just start judging groups of people and forming prejudices. I am always prepared when I make assumptions…in fact I almost always assume my assumptions are wrong!

Finally, in this journal entry, Jill reconsidered her perception of herself as "boring," or being the "norm" or "cultureless" because she was white; she resolved to learn about her own cultural background and show as much pride in it as she saw her students doing.

Jill's approach to this dilemma was also highly Quasi-Reflective in nature, exhibiting mainly characteristics of Stage 4 but some of Stage 5 as well. For example, Jill appeared to recognize the uncertainty inherent in the dilemma when she admitted that she did not know whether students who had had to move to the United States from other countries were better off than they had been before the move or not. She was also able to acknowledge her own bias and advocate the systematic use of evidence that was not "premature or incomplete" to resolve a dilemma when she discussed how she had become more aware of her own assumptions and how operating under assumptions without examining them led to the formation of prejudices (although it may have been overly ambitious of Jill to state that she was *always* conscious and doubtful of her own assumptions, since the very nature of assumptions implies that an individual is not always consciously aware of them). This statement, as well as Jill's resolution to recognize and celebrate cultural diversity in her classroom (in contrast to what she herself had experienced in school) also suggested that Jill was at least outwardly open to re-examination of her beliefs based on new evidence and the experiences of others, as Stage 4 thinkers often profess to be.

Jill sometimes displayed reasoning associated with Stage 5 as she addressed this dilemma. For example, her reflection on what it might be like for students who had had to leave their homes to move to the United States implied that Jill was operating under the assumption that diverse points of view were inherent in the human experience and that a

point of view was embedded in a specific context. She was also able to place the issue of accommodating students with diverse cultural backgrounds into a broader perspective by considering the impact that purposeful recognition and celebration of diverse cultures in a classroom might have on her students as they grew up and became citizens in terms of their views of other cultural groups.

Dilemma 3: What if the dilemma itself is a student? How can a teacher resolve the dilemma of helping a student succeed when that student appears to face many complicated and serious challenges to academic progress and performance at once, or it is not clear which issue is causing him or her difficulty?

Jill dealt extensively with one challenging student, Daniel, through the course of her field experience. She wrote about her first experience with him in her fourth journal entry (2-25-03), in which she described spending a great deal of one-on-one time with him since he had lost the privilege of going to P.E. with the rest of the class due to his behavior. She worked with Daniel on a paragraph he was writing, suggesting he write about his dog because it was a topic of interest to him, and played a math game with him which she felt helped to improve his number skills and allowed the two of them to bond and develop some mutual respect for one another. When reflecting on Daniel's school experience, Jill discussed the issues with which he struggled. She wrote that while he was "well behaved" when alone with a teacher, his attention span was limited when others were around. She found this unfortunate because he was a "bright boy," and she wished he could "get the attention and see how smart he really is."

During her first post-observation interview, Jill described how she had kept a close eye on Daniel so that he would be able to participate fully and succeed in the lesson. She

chose to ignore a brief outburst on his part so that the class would see she was not going to take away from their instructional time to struggle with him, and when he was wandering around the classroom she helped him to work with a small group on the task. "That happens a lot," Jill said. "Kids act disinterested a lot, but then they see the different cool things that everybody else is doing and they want to join."

Jill mentioned Daniel in the first group discussion (3-19-03), saying that she liked how Ms. Mason and Daniel had an "unspoken agreement" that he would participate in his work when he became ready. She did not believe this strategy would be successful with every student, but liked how Ms. Mason had not hesitated to implement a method that seemed to work specifically for Daniel, even if she did not use the same method with the rest of the class. "It's definitely up to the teacher," Jill said, "depending on the kids and what's wr—I don't want to say what's wrong with them but things that might be troubling them, family background, everything like that."

In her eighth journal entry (4-1-03), Jill wrote about Daniel's disruptive behavior during a standardized testing session and the measures Ms. Mason had taken in dealing with him during that situation. After initially pacing around the room and starting to work, Daniel had become frustrated and "threw a bit of a tantrum." Jill understood this to be happening because Daniel did not understand the vocabulary in the comprehension section of his test and felt he could not answer the questions. Since the teachers could not assist him on the test and he felt unable to move on, Daniel stopped working and became agitated, threatening to rip up his test and loudly bouncing a basketball when removed from the classroom to the hallway. Jill was disturbed that Daniel was not able to overcome the obstacle he had encountered and continue with the test. "I guess Daniel just likes

knowing everything in his work, and feeling like he doesn't know something maybe gives him a feeling like he's out of control of the information. Or maybe he is scared of failure?" Jill wondered. When Daniel was finally able to re-enter the classroom and resume work on his test, Jill was impressed by how hard he seemed to work and how he was referring to the text to write his essay.

During her second post-observation interview (4-8-03), Jill continued exploring her thoughts about what had happened to Daniel during the testing session. Jill was frustrated because Daniel's behavioral issues detracted from his academic experience ("if you get him working, and really trying and really into something, he can do it," she said). She also did not feel sure that Ms. Mason had used the most appropriate strategy by moving Daniel to the hallway, where he made noise and disturbed the class until he was finally brought back into the classroom:

> I don't know. I don't know. I don't think that's working, it's not…you can't just throw a kid out in the hallway and have him do whatever he wants, it disturbs everybody else, not just your class. And he's…I don't know…it's tough. I mean he, whatever they've been doing over the years, I guess works enough to…you know, he's learning and he's moving on, I think, next year…

In journal 10 (4-15-03), Jill related two "disasters" that had occurred with Daniel, the first involving his climbing up a wall during P.E., refusing to come down, and threatening to jump, and the second involving a violent episode in the classroom when he had kicked chairs, thrown scissors, and nearly caused Ms. Mason to call the principal to get the police to handle him. Jill heard from Ms. Mason afterward that Daniel had claimed to be upset about issues involving a prominent male figure in his life moving away, but she

was not able to find out the details of the situation and did not comment on what had

happened other than to briefly recount the incidents.

Jill's approach to this dilemma reflected many characteristics of Quasi-Reflective

reasoning, particularly those associated with Stage 4. First of all, Jill was clearly

perceiving that the knowledge about how best to help Daniel was uncertain and that there

was no simple solution for this dilemma and attempting to explore the complexity inherent

in the challenges he faced in school. This was evident when Jill repeatedly discussed how

she was sad to see that Daniel's serious behavior issues detracted from his academic

progress, which she felt was a shame since he appeared to be a very intelligent boy. She

demonstrated a willingness to be open to exploring the complexity of Daniels' situation

and re-examining her beliefs about him when she attempted to ascertain what factors might

be causing his outbursts in class, his difficulty paying attention when not alone with a

teacher, and his inability to overcome the obstacles he encountered when he attempted to

take the standardized test.

As is typical of Stage 4 thinkers, Jill demonstrated a reluctance to judge others'

beliefs and practices as definitively right or wrong, as she did when she conceded that

although she did not feel removing Daniel to the hallway was the most appropriate

response to his behavior, what his teachers had been doing with him up to this point

appeared to "work" well enough. She also showed the tendency to equate her personal

beliefs with evidence, as when she stated that she had been able to integrate Daniel into a

small group because, as she believed students had a tendency to do, he had eventually

wanted to become involved in "the different cool things that everybody else is doing," for

she did not necessarily have substantial evidence to show that this was why Daniel had agreed to work with the group.

Jill's approach to the dilemma also occasionally reflected characteristics of Stage 5 as well. For instance, when she explained Ms. Mason's "arrangement" with Daniel that after a certain period of time he would settle down and begin his work, Jill asserted that even though that strategy might not work with every student, it was definitely the teacher's responsibility to implement whatever strategy promised to be most successful in light of the unique situation and needs of each individual student. In making this assertion, Jill was demonstrating that she believed that one's point of view was embedded in a certain context and that the teacher's individual interpretation was a legitimate and necessary part of the process of accommodating students' needs, both of which represent assumptions associated with Stage 5.

Dilemma 4: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

During her field experience, Jill occasionally found herself confronting dilemmas involving the profession of teaching itself. There were two data sources in which Jill dealt directly with these dilemmas: journal 4 (2-25-03) and journal 10 (4-15-03). In her fourth journal entry (2-25-03), Jill reflected on a professional seminar she had attended on campus, the topic of which was the reality of teaching in an urban school. The seminar was conducted by a panel of teachers who were currently teaching in urban schools, which pleased Jill because she felt it allowed her to hear "the truth, not just what they want us to think." Jill wrote that from this seminar, she had learned that she should not expect to be prepared for every possible situation she would encounter when she began her teaching

career. "First year teachers go in thinking they are prepared to face the world, but they never are," Jill wrote. "But that's ok because no one ever is. The first year is chaotic and discouraging. But experience and practice will eventually help you become the best teacher."

Jill also took from the seminar some thoughts about where she felt she "belonged" most as a teacher. She admired the teachers on the panel who had shared that they felt they should teach not in the environment where the job would be easiest for them, but in a school where their talents and service were most needed (meaning, in general, urban schools with severely limited financial resources). Although Jill felt that she was still "getting there" in terms of internalizing that philosophy for herself, she wrote that she regarded teachers who followed this goal to be "noble."

On her tenth visit to her placement classroom, Jill encountered another dilemma regarding the profession of teaching, that of whether teachers should be required to provide their own materials for teaching, and she wrote about her thoughts in journal 10 (4-15-03). Jill made an extensive statement regarding her feelings about this matter:

I can't believe that. Apparently the teachers have to buy their own paper, which works, but it is totally unfair that it has to come out of their own pockets. Teachers don't get paid enough for them to be required to buy their own paper. You don't see doctors paying for their own examination tools or hospital beds. Needless to say, this whole budget thing makes me so mad. You'd think that by now this country would realize how important education is and how much money it takes to properly and effectively educate our children. Thousands of athletes make millions a year and our school doesn't have enough money to buy paper…so wrong.

Jill's approach to this dilemma again suggested that she was functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level of reflective judgment, with most of her statements suggesting Stage 4 but some also suggesting Stage 5. Her statement, for example, that no one was ever prepared for everything their first year of teaching implied a belief that knowledge about teaching was not a certain entity with which one became completely endowed upon completing a teacher certification program. This acknowledgement of the uncertainty of knowledge is characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers (although Jill's comment that "experience and practice" being the tools which would ultimately help individuals become the best teachers might also be interpreted as revealing the assumption that the knowledge of how best to teach was only temporarily uncertain, a perspective more characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinkers).

As individuals functioning at Stage 4 often do, Jill made a very strong statement of belief about the teachers at her school having to buy paper out of their own pockets being "so wrong." Jill also sometimes demonstrated a cynical attitude towards authority figures or experts as sources of knowledge when she reflected that hearing about urban teaching from teachers actually placed in those schools was more realistic and valuable than hearing what experts such as professors and others might "want us to think" about urban teaching. In addition, Jill demonstrated the Stage 4 characteristics of acknowledging her own bias and professing to be open to re-examining her point of view when she considered the question of where her teaching abilities might be best put to use. She pointed out that while she found the philosophy of teaching where one was most needed to be "noble," she was still "getting there;" though not quite at the point where she could definitively state that she knew where she belonged as a teacher, Jill was attempting to examine the issue

and arrive at a decision that incorporated the philosophy she admired and the course of action which she felt was most appropriate for her.

Finally, Jill also showed signs that she was occasionally functioning at Stage 5 when she placed the issue of teachers having to buy their own paper into a broader context, examining how the current situation in the immediate context of her school reflected the relative value placed on different professions such as education, medicine, and athletics by American society.

Dilemma 5: What is the best way to make pedagogical decisions, both during instructional planning and in the midst of implementing of instruction?

Jill touched on various aspects of this dilemma at several points during the data collection period. First, during her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Jill reflected that her first impression was that the lesson had been an "absolute disaster" and "definitely didn't go as planned. Despite this, she was eventually able to point out some positive aspects of the lesson, such as the enjoyment the students appeared to show in working with the manipulatives, and she conceded in journal 5 (3-11-03) that the lesson had not been "a complete failure" after all. Jill had been disturbed when many of the students appeared to become confused and frustrated, stubbornly insisting that their incorrect answer was the only possible one. Having taken the idea for the lesson, which was leveled at second grade, from her mathematics methods class, Jill had actually been surprised that the students had had so much difficulty with an addition-based lesson which she had actually worried would be "insulting" to them because it was too easy. "I thought maybe it would work because I knew that they were…lower, but I didn't know how low they were," Jill said. "I thought it would be a fun activity building on knowledge they already had, but it

turns out I don't know if they necessarily had that knowledge." Jill ultimately decided that in order to meet her students' needs, her next lesson should be something "more personalized for this class."

Jill wrote about confronting some other issues about making pedagogical decisions in journal 6 (3-20-03). Having been asked to continue a math lesson when Ms. Mason had to leave the room, she found herself having difficulty translating her own understanding of the concept to a means of representing it so that her students could understand. "It was hard not having looked over the lesson before trying to teach it – because it was IMPOSSIBLE to explain," she wrote. "I would start saying one thing, and then I'd backtrack and start over and jump ahead—it was a mess. The poor class was clueless." In the same journal entry, Jill wrote about how she had been uncomfortable having to lead the class's regular read-aloud activity, as she was unfamiliar with the book and uncertain as to how she should conduct the activity and in what tone of voice she should read. "I guess I did all right though…I felt stupid, but that's ok. Practice makes (almost) perfect, so I just have to work on that one a little more," she wrote.

In journal 7 (3-25-03), Jill confronted another aspect of the dilemma of making appropriate pedagogical decisions when she "decided today that I hate not having a lesson planned out." Jill was anxious about the fact that she was required to lead a reading group each week but was never given instructions from Ms. Mason on what the lesson would be until immediately before she led the reading group, although she did not really blame Ms. Mason for leaving this guidance until the last minute. However, it is interesting to note that despite stating this belief that she did not like teaching without a plan, Jill stated the same night at the second group dilemma discussion (3-25-03) that one reason she found

college courses limited in their usefulness in helping her develop a philosophy of instruction or a repertoire of practical classroom strategies was because the educational theory provided in those courses could not necessarily prepare one for the reality of teaching, which involved "thinking on your feet all the time" and dealing with unexpected questions from students for whom seemingly simple concepts were problematic.

  Jill's approach to this dilemma suggested a mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning. First, Jill appeared to have accepted the uncertainty inherent in knowing, which is an important departure from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking. This was evinced, for example, when she described how difficult it had been to implement her lesson, which she had thought might be too easy for the class, when students appeared not to understand the concept and to insist that their answers were correct even when they were not. Jill's description of the difficulty she had in picking up the math lesson that Ms. Mason had begun also demonstrated that she realized that there was a great deal of uncertainty involved in how best to represent a concept so students would understand, even if it was a concept which seemed obvious or which the teacher understood thoroughly. Her statements about needing to think on one's feet as a teacher and to expect "to feel stupid" sometimes when one attempted a new task such as leading read-aloud time also indicated that Jill realized that knowledge about how to teach could be very uncertain. (While Jill also sometimes exhibited the Pre-Reflective tendency to regard this knowledge as only temporarily uncertain or to be confused and overwhelmed by the uncertainty involved in teaching math concepts to a group of students, engaging in a read-aloud activity with little direction, or teaching a reading group without having much time

to prepare, the fact that she was beginning to accept that uncertainty was inherent in the process of knowing was an important characteristic of her thinking.)

Jill showed other characteristics of Quasi-Reflective reasoning as well. For example, when she conceded that she had not correctly assessed the students' level of understanding of specific math concepts and that her next lesson needed to be more "personalized for this class," Jill was showing that she was open to re-examining her point of view about the class's ability level and needs, which is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4. Her statement that the educational theory provided by her teacher preparation courses could not prepare one for the realities of the classroom in which one had to engage in continuous "thinking on your feet" also showed that Jill was not as reliant on authority figures or experts such as professors and theorists as sources of knowledge as an individual functioning at the Pre-Reflective level might be.

Finally, Jill made a few statements that indicated that she might also be operating under assumptions associated with Stage 5. When Jill said that her next lesson needed to be more "personalized" for her particular group of students, for example, this could have indicated a belief that her point of view as a teacher about what type of instruction was most appropriate was embedded in the unique context of the class in which she was teaching and that individual interpretation on the part of the teacher about what the class needed was a necessary step in resolving the dilemma of how to provide successful educational experiences for them.

Dilemma 6: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction?

Jill first touched on this dilemma in her first post-observation interview (3-11-03) when she speculated that one of the reasons she felt the students might have had difficulty completing the task given to them in their math lesson was that it required the use of manipulatives and incorporated the constructivist and discovery-oriented philosophy of instruction which Jill had learned in most of her teacher preparation courses. Although Jill had not observed them doing math before, she believed that these students had been learning math through a much more teacher-directed and memorization-oriented program, and Jill felt that this was one reason that they had not been prepared to successfully engaged in a more constructivist and student-centered activity. "They're doing a lot of memorizing, like multiplication facts….not seeing it as anything but symbolic numbers…It's kind of not really matching up," Jill said. "We are taught to teach number sense through exploration and self-discovery, and had this class been learning in this style, they would have understood the activity more."

Jill continued exploring this issue as she reflected on her lesson in journal 5 (3-11-03). Even though several of the students had not found the correct answer to the problem she had given them by the time the lesson ended, Jill believed that due to the constructivist and process-oriented nature of the lesson, the students had still benefited from exploring the concept. "It is the process, not the product that is important. If every answer by every student is incorrect, that is ok at this point," Jill wrote. "But what is important is that I got students thinking in a new way, and hopefully this can help them as they develop their number sense and math skills."

In group dilemma discussion 2 (3-25-03), at which this dilemma was posed as the topic for discussion, Jill stated that she thought student-centered instruction was

"wonderful" because it motivated students, gave them a sense of ownership over their own learning, and accommodated different learning styles. She noted that although she recalled having been taught by primarily teacher-directed methods in school and experiencing a high level of academic success through these methods, she realized that teachers needed to implement instruction that would accommodate students with different needs and learning styles, and not just students who could successfully learn through teacher-directed instruction.

Jill also stated that she felt a certain amount of instruction might by necessity have to be teacher-directed because "there is only so much they can do on their own" and because there would be some "boring" concepts or skills which students might not be interested in learning but which were necessary to prepare them for future classes or adult citizenship. However, even when this was the case, Jill asserted, the teacher should present those concepts and skills in as student-centered a way as possible, stimulating self-motivation, exploration, and discovery on the part of the students. "I don't necessarily think that a teacher should be the expert, the one authoritative person in the classroom, but kind of just a coach."

Jill's approach to this dilemma suggested a highly Quasi-Reflective pattern of reasoning. First, the most striking aspect of her approach to the dilemma was the rejection of the idea that one should accept knowledge provided by an authority figure based strictly on that individual's authoritative or expert status. This was evinced when Jill commented that the teacher should be "kind of a coach" rather than "the one authoritative person in the classroom" and when she advocated the use of instruction based on students' interests, unique needs, and learning styles rather than rigid teacher-directed presentation of

material. Even when she conceded that there might be instances in which a teacher was required to structure educational experiences to teach concepts or skills which students might not choose to study, Jill pointed out that this should be done in as student-centered a manner as possible. This comment also suggested that Jill believed that a teacher might need to modify a given curriculum in order to help students successfully learn, which reflects the Stage 5 assumption that individual interpretation (in this case, by the teacher of the curriculum or the students' needs) was a legitimate and necessary part of resolving the dilemma of how to teach.

Furthermore, although Jill may have been equating her personal beliefs with evidence when she concluded that the reason her students had had difficulty with her lesson was because they were not at all accustomed to constructivist methods of instruction (since she admitted that she had never seen them do math before, this might not have been an accurate conclusion), which is typical of Stage 4 thinkers, this comment also showed that she was placing the issues she faced in a broader context, another characteristic of Stage 5 reasoning. By considering the impact of methods of instruction based on vastly different philosophies on students' development as learners and by pointing out the disconnect she noticed between what she was being taught in her teacher preparation program and the reality of the math instruction she observed in her placement classroom, Jill showed that she was able to look at the dilemma from a perspective that took into account its complexity and its implications for the field of education (and teacher education) in general.

Dilemma 7: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

Jill confronted this dilemma at various points during her field experience. In her first journal entry (1-28-03), Jill wrote that she had been glad to meet Ms. Mason and find that she was young, enthusiastic, and welcoming, having feared that her cooperating teacher might be "a strict, old lady who was set in her ways…then I would be shy and afraid to do anything." Jill also wrote in this journal entry about how she was nervous at the idea of trying to get the students to regard her as an authority figure so she could successfully teach them on her own, hoping that she would be able to develop positive relationships with them and build a sense of respect between herself and the students. Later, in journal 5 (3-11-03), Jill would report that she felt she was actually beginning to develop meaningful, respectful relationships with her students and that this was having a positive effect on her ability to teach and manage the class.

During her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Jill considered the question of how to fulfill her role as a student teacher when the methods she was being taught in her college teacher preparation program did not appear to "match" the ways in which the students in her placement classroom were accustomed to learning. As discussed in the previous dilemma about teacher-directed and student-centered instruction, Jill felt that the disparity between the manner in which she was being taught to teach and the reality of her students' school experience put both her and the students at a disadvantage as she tried to help them understand new concepts. Jill believed that the students would have understood the task she assigned them more clearly if they had been more familiar with discovery-

oriented methods of learning, but did eventually concede that although many of them had not arrived at the correct solution for the problem she assigned them, "what is most important is that I got students thinking in a new way, and hopefully this can help them as they develop their number sense and math skills."

Jill wrote in journal 7 (3-25-03) about yet another difficulty she was having in fulfilling her role as a student teacher and working productively with her cooperating teacher, which was her anxiety about having to lead a reading group each week with very little time to prepare. She wished that Ms. Mason would give her more guidance about what she would be teaching the group. "I never know what I'm doing until the last minute…if I could I'd plan a lesson to bring on Tuesdays, but Ms. Mason never tells me anything," Jill wrote. "I don't even think she knows what I'm going to be doing until Monday or so." Even though this lack of preparation to teach caused Jill some distress, she did not blame Ms. Mason for not giving her more notice of what was expected of her when she taught the reading group, because "she has so much stuff going on in her room, I'm just glad that she gave me my own reading group to work with."

Finally, in group discussion 2 (3-25-03), Jill articulated her thoughts about trying to meet the needs of the students in her placement classroom when she also had to fulfill extensive university requirements for her pre-practicum. Although Jill believed that "all education is valuable, to some extent," she also feared that she simply did not have the time to get to know the students' needs well enough for the lessons she taught them to be truly valuable elements of their experience in that classroom. "It's hard at this level to really read into a class like that and get really involved as far as the skills that I really think

the class needs," Jill said. "I don't know the class well enough to teach them what they need…I'm teaching them what I need for my classes."

Jill's approach to this dilemma showed some Pre-Reflective, but mostly Quasi-Reflective, characteristics. Jill appeared to show slight Pre-Reflective tendencies when she felt confused and overwhelmed at the uncertainty involved in teaching a reading group without knowing ahead of time what she would be teaching, implementing instruction for students about whose individual needs her knowledge was very limited, and managing a class of students with whom she had not yet built up positive, respectful relationships and whom she could not expect to regard her as an authority figure. However, for the most part, Jill appeared to be functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level, for she showed signs of accepting this uncertainty and confusion as an inherent part of the processes of knowing and teaching. Jill also appeared to recognize that the dilemma of how to teach students in her placement classroom was not a problem with a simple resolution, for even when she followed the guidance provided her by her teacher preparation program by planning and implementing a highly constructivist math lesson, she found that the students might not have been prepared by their previous experiences to succeed through this type of instruction.

Jill's statement about fearing that her cooperating teacher might be "a strict old lady set in her ways" who might make Jill afraid to try new things indicated that she could have had a cynical or mistrustful attitude toward those whose direction she was expected to accept based on their status as authority figures or experts. This is a characteristic of Stage 4, as is acknowledging one's personal biases, which Jill also might have been doing by admitting how she might have responded to that type of cooperating teacher. Jill

exhibited another reasoning pattern characteristic of Stage 4 thinkers, who are hesitant to openly judge the beliefs or practices of others as definitively "right" or "wrong," when she did not "blame" Ms. Mason for failing to give her more guidance about what she would be teaching in her reading group sessions even though this lack of direction made Jill very uncomfortable. Finally, as stated earlier, Jill's comments about the differences she observed between the instructional methods being advocated in her teacher preparation program and the methods she observed in practice in her placement classroom might have also indicated that she was engaging in the ability associated with Stage 5 thinkers to place issues in a broader context.

Dilemma 8: What does "fair and equal treatment" of students mean? Does it mean teaching all students in exactly the same way, or does it mean following pedagogy that is designed to be culturally and academically relevant to each individual students' needs?

Jill addressed this dilemma in her final essay (4-27-03). In her essay, Jill first pointed out the importance of recognizing the fact that people live in many different ways with many different customs and values ("there is not just one way that 'we' the people live our lives," she wrote). She then went on to discuss some of the myriad factors in addition to cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic background that she believed made every student's life and school experience unique, such as the effects of socioeconomic level, the child's family and home life, physical disadvantages or disabilities faced by the child, learning style, academic aptitude, and developmental level. If so many varying factors made an impact on the way any individual student learned and developed in and out of school, Jill argued, then "how is a single pedagogy going to educate all these children?"

Jill contended that the true meaning of a philosophy of "fairness" assumed that all students were different and that therefore the teacher would need to take different steps with different students in order to ensure that they all received the same opportunity to learn.

Jill maintained that if a single pedagogy were followed for all students, then only the "mainstream" students would benefit, but in many classrooms no students were what might be considered "mainstream." Jill did not offer a definition of what she believed the term "mainstream" meant, but she used her current placement classroom as an example of a class wherein most students would probably not fit into that category. "In the classroom that I am in…not one student would be considered mainstream," Jill wrote. "Five different languages are represented in the classroom along with several different cultures, family backgrounds, and ability levels." Jill speculated that there probably were "many researchers and teachers" who would advocate teaching all students in the same way, but she felt that this would only benefit a small percentage of the student population:

> I, on the other hand, feel very strongly abut teaching students fairly. The only thing that should be equal in the classroom is the opportunity for every student to learn. No two students learn the same way, so how can a pedagogy assuming this equality be effective? It cannot.

Jill concluded her essay by stating that some professionals might engage in implementing a single pedagogy or all students in an attempt to avoid mistreating any particular group based on differences in "race, ethnicity, disability, etc.," these professionals were missing the point of the philosophy of fairness and were "caught up in the ideal." Jill posited instead that "fairness in education means acknowledging

differences" and that all types of differences between students should be respected and embraced.

Jill's approach to this dilemma appeared to be characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinking. For instance, her perspective that no single pedagogy could possibly effectively educate all students given their unique backgrounds and needs clearly reflected the assumption that there are dilemmas for which there is no clear, simple solution, an assumption under which individuals first begin to operate in Stage 4. In addition to this, Jill's strong belief statements and attempts to use evidence to justify her position, although she sometimes included personal belief statements in the process of doing so, also suggested that Jill was engaging in the type of reasoning associated with Stage 4. Jill appeared to exhibit a somewhat cynical attitude toward authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge about this dilemma when she proposed that "teachers and researchers" who interpreted a philosophy of educational fairness to mean that every student should be taught in the same way were "caught up in the ideal," which is also a Quasi-Reflective characteristic.

Although Jill's use of evidence to justify her point of view was not extremely sophisticated and therefore suggested she was primarily functioning at about Stage 4 of the Reflective Judgment Model, she also showed signs of the type of reasoning that is associated with Stage 5. For instance, one of the most striking aspects of Jill's essay was her strong conviction that individual differences were an intrinsic part of our world and should be respected and embraced, which suggested the belief that diverse points of view were an inherent part of the human experience. Furthermore, Jill's assertion that all students needed to be taught in a manner specifically designed to them reach their highest

potentials given their unique lives and needs indicated that she believed that one's point of view (in this case, a teacher's point of view about teaching and learning) was embedded in a certain context (such as within an individual classroom, or in the context of a relationship with a unique student) and that interpretation was a legitimate and necessary step toward resolving the dilemma of how to treat each student "fairly."

Summary of Jill's Reflective Judgment Level

During the data collection period, Jill appeared to be transitioning from the Pre-Reflective level on the RJM to the Quasi-Reflective level, with most of her statements being representative of the Quasi-Reflective level. While Jill still seemed to experience discomfort and confusion when she was faced with uncertain situations or complex, ill-defined dilemmas of practice, she was showing signs of becoming more able to assimilate the idea of uncertainty into her conception of the nature of knowledge. She was not yet able to deal with that uncertainty by justifying her decisions through systematic use of evidence and reasoned inquiry, often employing evidence inconsistently or equating her personal beliefs with evidence when justifying her point of view. However, she did appear to be increasing her understanding of the role of personal interpretation in the decision-making process, becoming more sophisticated in the way she explored complexity of dilemmas, considering dilemmas through various perspectives and in terms of broader contexts, and beginning to search for ways of resolving uncertain dilemmas without sacrificing objectivity, personal conviction, or respect for alternate points of view.

A few of the specific points in Jill's data suggesting a particular RJM stage could be associated with Stage 3, the last stage of the Pre-Reflective level, and several points suggesting Stage 5 thinking also appeared in Jill's comments. However, most of Jill's data

suggested she was functioning primarily within Stage 4, the earlier of the two Quasi-Reflective stages. The reflective judgment level suggested by Jill's data is therefore consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

In order to ascertain what types of processes might be illuminating to teacher educators about preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels and the methods that might be employed in teacher education program to strengthen and facilitate preservice teachers' reflection on their experiences, each participant's engagement in the reflective process utilized in this study will be examined. Jill participated in all four aspects of the reflective process utilized: dialogue journal writing, group dilemma discussions, post-observation interviews and the final essay. Jill participated in these to a greater extent than several of the participants, but less so than others; though she submitted ten initial journal entries (she was the only participant who did so), she responded to prompts in second iterations for only three of them, and she was absent during one of the three group dilemma discussions. Jill appeared to engage in the most substantive reflection on the dilemmas she encountered in her practice in responses to journal entries and group dilemma discussions. While she seemed willing to reflect on her beliefs in most contexts, many of her statements in initial journals and post-observation interviews tended to focus on the technical aspects of her practice rather than her beliefs about teaching, learning, knowledge, or the manner in which she approached ill-defined dilemmas.

Many of Jill's initial journal entries contained a great deal of recounting of incidents that had occurred in her classroom, descriptions of the instructional methods she had utilized when working with her students, general reports of how the class's behavior had been, and technical reflections about what she had observed and done. She responded only sporadically to prompts, submitting second journal iterations for journals 2 (2-5-03), 3 (2-11-03), and 5 (3-11-03). In journal 2 (2-5-03), for example, much of Jill's initial entry described the class's Tuesday routine, morning meeting procedure, the teaching of the reading groups, a lesson on phonics, and the students' P.E. class. Much of her initial entries for journals 6 (3-20-03), 7 (3-25-03, which Jill described as "just like any other Tuesday), and 9 (4-8-03) involved descriptions of the procedures she had followed in teaching a reading group, and a great deal of journal 8 (4-1-03) was devoted to a description of the way Ms. Mason and the school principal prepared the students to take the state-mandated standardized tests, and often these descriptions were offered without extensive comments by Jill about how the events had stimulated reflection about her beliefs.

However, even while she devoted a great deal of her writing in initial entries to description, these initial entries also occasionally included spontaneous explorations of her beliefs based on her observations and experiences in the classroom. For example, in journal 3 (2-11-03), Jill made several statements that revealed her beliefs about the importance of recognizing and celebrating diverse cultures, she reflected on her own previous experience dealing with diverse cultures (which she considered, unfortunately, to have been minimal), and she engaged in insightful recognition of the assumptions she had made about an individual student. In journal 4 (2-25-03), Jill integrated her observations

of the day's events with reflections about a seminar she had attended on teaching in urban schools and offered some very candid statements about her beliefs concerning what her experience might be like if she chose to teach in an urban school, particularly during her first year. In journal 8 (4-1-03), although she devoted considerable time to describing the preparations for the standardized test, Jill also continued her ongoing reflections about the challenges Daniel both faced as a student and presented to his teachers.

When Jill did respond to prompts, she tended to delve into her beliefs in a more in-depth manner that she had in her original entries. In journal 2 (2-5-03), for example, Jill's original comment about the class's morning meeting was simply that it was "not a traditional one" because of the students' many behavior issues, but when questioned further, she elaborated on her beliefs about the purpose of morning meeting as an organizational and instructional strategy. In the same entry, Jill described her use of the reward system as a management method and basically indicated that she was unsure of its value but used it because it was the only thing she felt would successfully help her manage the class; when responding to prompts, however, she offered much more thoughtful reflections about the pros and cons of this type of management tool and her beliefs about how they might affect individual students and groups of students. In journal 3 (2-11-03), responding to prompts led to Jill's articulation of her beliefs about how assumptions can impact an individual's view of other people and how people might become more aware of the assumptions they made, and to her realization that her perception of herself as "the norm" or "cultureless" because she was white was a misconception. In journal 5 (3-11-03), Jill offered an elaboration in response to prompts about why she had felt, looking

back, that her observed math lesson had not been a "total failure" because ultimately it was the process involved in the lesson, not the product or correct answer, which was important.

Group dilemma discussions appeared to provide a productive environment for Jill to explore and express her beliefs, although she was only able to attend two out of the three discussions. Her comments were consistently exploratory and reflective rather than mere technical descriptions about what she had observed in the classroom, although she did sometimes refer to what she observed to illustrate or elaborate on her point of view. In the first discussion (3-19-03), Jill offered what appeared to be considered and thoughtful statements about the need to remember that people responded to situations in different ways, the importance of respect and trust in successfully managing a classroom, the reasons why she believed students should learn to choose and show accountability for their actions rather than simply "obeying" the teacher, and her belief that she could not rely solely on her own experience or a single theory to guide her in making management decisions. (It is also interesting to note that during this discussion, Jill expressed an appreciation for the process of the group discussions and a wish to be able to meet regularly in small groups of her peers during field experiences so that they could share experiences and discuss issues such as the ones presented in the group dilemma discussions.) In the second discussion (3-25-03), Jill was similarly willing to express and explore her beliefs about the benefits of student-centered learning, the reasons why some instruction might necessarily be more teacher-directed but should accommodate students' interests and learning styles as much as possible, and the necessity for one to "think one one's feet" as a teacher and be prepared to answer unexpected questions and clear up confusing misunderstandings on the part of one's students.

In both of Jill's post-observation interviews (3-11-03 and 4-8-03), she made more technical comments about her observed lessons than statements about her beliefs. Her interview responses were generally brief. For the most part, Jill discussed the procedural details of her lessons, the management issues she had anticipated or encountered, and the ways and reasons her lessons had appeared to either meet or not meet the academic needs of the students. She did occasionally discuss her beliefs with regard to the impact the constructivist nature of her lessons had had on the students' ability to succeed at the tasks she assigned them since they appeared to have been learning math through memorization and drill, and during the second interview she reflected about the appropriateness with which she felt Ms. Mason had handled Daniel's disruptive behavior (although this was a reflection on an earlier incident and not one that had taken place during the lesson).

Jill's final essay (4-27-03) was detailed and contained many strongly worded statements about her beliefs concerning "fair and equal treatment" of students. She appeared to have considered the question thoughtfully and attempted to express her point of view in a justified and persuasive way, and the essay yielded many insights about Jill's reflective judgment level at the time of the data collection period.

In conclusion, it appeared that Jill was willing and able to participate in all aspects of the reflective process, but she appeared to engage in the most substantive reflection about her field experience through the dialogue journaling process and group dilemma discussions. In her initial journal entries and post-observation interviews, Jill's reflections tended to be more technical, simple recollections of what she had observed in the classroom or the actions she had taken in her teaching, although she did spontaneously engage in more reflective exploration of her experiences at times. However, during group

dilemma discussions, responses to prompts through the dialogue journaling process (though she did not always respond to these), and her final essay, Jill often made statements that appeared much more in-depth and examined, discussing the possible reasons for her beliefs and considering alternate points of view. This could indicate that Jill's reflective judgment might have been facilitated by having direct questions about her beliefs consistently posed to her, by having sufficient time and direction to examine her beliefs, or through guided interaction within the context of a supportive group of her peers. Finally, it should be noted that Jill expressed an appreciation for group discussions as a means for sharing experiences and exploring beliefs about dilemmas of practice.

Case Study 7: Melissa

Part A: Description of Case

Melissa is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a college junior at the time of this study. Before attending the university, she had spent her entire life in the same house in an upper middle class suburb in a northeastern state. She feels that she was fortunate in the happy childhood she had with a loving family and many friends – "I do not have one bad memory from childhood," she wrote in her autobiographical statement. However, in the three years prior to this study, Melissa's "luck changed," and she lost several members of her family. Melissa stated that these losses had been terribly hard for her and her family and that she had had to "grow up very fast," although she was happy for the time she did get to spend with her family and is trying to accept the losses because "they have become part of who I am."

Melissa wrote in her autobiographical statement that because of the loss of many of her family members, she was "forced to take a look at my life and question what I want to do with it," which was to share the kind of love she had received as a child and to help people. As she had always loved children and comes from "a long line of teachers," Melissa felt that the best way to achieve these goals was to become an educator. Melissa stated that she is "realistic about who I am – I am not the brightest, but I do feel my determination and desire to make a difference will make me a good teacher." *(All biographical information provided by Melissa via personal e-mail correspondence, 6-8-03.)*

Melissa was placed in a second grade classroom in School B. The record of Melissa's field experience began with her journal for week 1 (2-4-03). Melissa described

her class of second graders as "excited" that both Melissa and a full practicum student teacher were in their classroom. Melissa observed how her cooperating teacher, Ms. Price, had led the students in a morning meeting which included the taking of attendance, exchanging of personal "hellos" between Ms. Price and each student ("I think this is such a pleasant way to reach out to the children letting them know that you care, for many do not even get as much at home," Melissa wrote), the writing of the date, and the checking of the day's weather. "I like the fact that time was spent on this activity," Melissa wrote about her class's work in morning meeting on the weather. "I believe that very often teachers just assume the children know how to do such an activity. While the task may seem remedial, many children still have trouble with it."

Melissa then observed Ms. Price's technique of reading a book aloud to the students and asking them frequent comprehension questions, which Melissa thought was a valuable practice:

This again is very important, especially at this age. Children have the fundamentals to pronounce and read text but now their comprehension needs to be worked on. By reading interesting stories aloud to the class and drilling them on the content they are unknowingly learning the art of reading comprehension.

Melissa concluded her journal entry by noting that the majority of time the rest of the day was spent on math, silent reading, group reading, writing and grammar with no time allotted for art, science or any other subject area. "I would have thought that this would be more challenging to the children," she wrote, "but I think I was more tired than they were!" She also reported that she was "impressed" with the class and Ms. Price and was excited about the rest of her field experience in the classroom.

Melissa did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts for this or any of her journal entries. She also did not submit a journal entry for her second week in the field experience, but she did turn in a journal entry for week 3 (2-25-03). During this week, Melissa brought in some materials to share with the class to supplement their ongoing study of national landmarks in the United States. She read aloud a book on national symbols to the class and noted that:

> I really enjoyed reading to the children. As a child I was always read to, and I believe that is the reason why I love to read now. If a teacher is able to share such enthusiasm with his/her students they too will probably learn to appreciate books. Now with such emphasis being placed on the usage of real literature to teach children to read and write, this is even more important.

I observed Melissa conducting this lesson, but she was not available for an interview that day. I made seven subsequent attempts to reschedule the interview, and each time Melissa was either unavailable or did not respond to the request.

Melissa went on to describe how the day had progressed "exactly as it had the Tuesday prior to this." Melissa admired the way Ms. Price was able to keep the students to a regular schedule and a typical routine and hoped to do this in her own class in order to help students succeed at their lessons and to prevent interruptions which would distract them:

> I really think there is something to be said for continuity in the structure of the school day. If activities are constantly changing the kids will be unsure of where they should go or what they should be doing. By maintaining a typical schedule the kids know what they should be doing at all times. They also anticipate lessons

and adjust accordingly. I also believe that this will limit the amount of behavior problems that teachers encounter in the transitional moments of their day.

Melissa took some time during the day to browse through a teacher's supply magazine, which she thought was going to be "a major source of economical problems for me," since she considered herself an artistic person and knew she would want to purchase many different types of art supplies for her classroom. This led her to reflect on a common problem faced by teachers who tried to obtain new materials for their classrooms:

Especially with such funding shortages in schools I am sure I will be purchasing most of this stuff on my own. I was talking to another teacher at this school about this and she said that in the past five years she has spent about seven thousand dollars on materials – YIKES! Despite economical squeezes I may find myself in I am still excited to do this. Teaching is such an amazing job, and to pick materials that will help maximize my effectiveness as a teacher is worth spending what little money I have.

Melissa concluded her journal entry with the comment that she was becoming more and more anxious to have a classroom of her own. "I feel like I have had sooo much practice and now I just want to do it…I cannot wait to plan lessons around the frameworks for my given age group and decide what materials to use."

Melissa did not submit a journal entry for her fourth week in the classroom; her next journal entry submitted was for week 5 (3-18-03). On her fifth day in the classroom, Melissa and Emma, the full practicum student teacher also placed in the classroom, were given the responsibility by Ms. Price for running the greater part of the class' instructional routine for the day. Following closely the procedures she had observed Ms. Price

implementing, Melissa got the children settled in the morning, led the morning meeting, did read-aloud time, and guided the students through several math problems which they worked out as a group. Melissa appreciated how Ms. Price encouraged the students to regard Melissa and Emma as "their teachers" for the day rather than simply student teachers or visitors to the classroom. "In many of my friends' experiences the supervising teacher does not recognize the students as teachers and the children therefore do not take them seriously," Melissa wrote. "It is really nice that Ms. Price makes us feel at home in the classroom."

At the end of the day, Melissa assisted students in the "publishing" phase of their Writer's Workshop by helping them edit and type their papers to place in a class book filled with students' stories and illustrations. Melissa was glad to note that the children appeared to enjoy sharing their stories in this manner and stated that she believed that publishing one's writing was beneficial for the students because "it gives the children ownership of their work and urges them to do their best since it will be in a class book."

On 3-19-03, Melissa participated in the first group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was a dilemma about what degree of control a teacher should exert over a class in terms of discipline and management. Melissa first stated that she felt the "middle ground" was best in this question. She believed that each teacher must decide what rules and expectations he or she finds appropriate and acceptable in the classroom, but that this would be influenced by the students' personalities and needs:

> …on the other hand, I think that the class and the children in it is going to decide
>
> partly what is acceptable to the teacher. Because some problems that may arise
>
> with one class won't arise with another. So I think there should be a set list of rules

and consequences and how to handle situations that the teacher should know in their mind, but it can be changed to complement the class.

Melissa elaborated on this belief about management by relating it to her instructional philosophy. When teaching, Melissa believed, a teacher had to decide what type of strategy would be "fair" and acceptable in each case because "there are different learners and there are children who can do different things and can't do different things." Similarly, Melissa pointed out, there would be some students who might be more able to follow certain rules and procedures than others and that the teacher needed to accommodate their individual needs in terms of management just as with instruction. Melissa used the example of students with ADHD.

Melissa discussed how she had seen Ms. Price handle disciplinary issues by documenting students' misbehavior, looking for recurring problems, looking for the reasons behind the misbehavior and involving the students' parents in the process. Melissa believed this was "a really good way" to handle management and discipline. Melissa also appreciated how Ms. Price had immediately regarded both her and the full practicum students as *teachers* and communicated this attitude to the students. For instance, once Ms. Price had stepped out of the room and Melissa was called on to make a decision about the students' center time. When Melissa chose to implement a procedure for center time that was different from the students' usual routine, the students pointed this out, but Ms. Price supported Melissa's decision when she returned to the classroom. "It was nice that she came in and sort of reinforced what I did," Melissa said, "instead of being like, 'well, she didn't know what to do,' or something like that. She was very solid in making sure the kids knew that I was an authority figure as well."

Melissa continued reflecting about the action she had seen Ms. Price taking in disciplining the class. At the beginning of the semester, Melissa had felt that Ms. Price was "kind of harsh," "yells a lot," and was sometimes too sarcastic with the children. However, her view of Ms. Price's behaviors had become more tolerant with time:

She projects her voice, and she's very sarcastic. But what I didn't realize, and what the kids realize, is that's just the way she is…seeing her act the way she does and watching the kids react has been interesting, because I thought she was doing it in a way that I wouldn't. But it works for the kids…they enjoy it, and they enjoy her sarcasm, and they do it back. And no one crosses the line, ever, and it's very contained.

In her sixth journal entry (3-20-03), Melissa first described the students' reaction to the United States having declared war with Iraq, which had occurred since the last time she had seen them. She was surprised that the students did not appear worried about it or talk about the war at all, and Ms. Price did not bring up the subject. Melissa felt she probably would have done the same thing but would have tried to make sure the students knew that the classroom was a safe place for them to bring up their concerns about the issue and to be prepared to discuss the war if the students brought it up. If the students did bring the topic up, Melissa wrote, she would "be very careful to state only the facts…and prevent any controversial situations." Melissa also thought it would be a good idea to inform parents of this policy and to let them know that "I would only discuss the facts, censored to be age appropriate, and that it was not my duty to persuade the children to think a certain way, but instead educate them."

Melissa then wrote in her journal about an incident she had observed during the students' Writers' Workshop time. When an African-American boy was coloring his family in a picture with a peach-colored crayon, Ms. Price saw this and told him to use brown instead. She took the crayons from the boy and helped him find a crayon that matched the color of his skin. Melissa thought the way Ms. Price had handled the situation was "great":

> When it comes to race issues, I am very unsure of what to do. Had I been the teacher I may have allowed him to leave his family peach although it is not right…I am very glad that I was there to witness this situation because it really made me evaluate how I would have dealt with the child, and clearly my way was not the best. I really admired the way Ms. Price gracefully handled the situation.

On 3-25-03, I observed Melissa conducting a math lesson and interviewed her afterward. The lesson consisted of the introduction of a game in which players moved pieces on a "hundred chart" according to cards which directed them to add or subtract a certain amount from the number under their game pieces; the goal was to reach 100 before one's opponent. Many of Melissa's responses during the interview were brief and not extremely detailed, simply answering "Yes" or "Thank you" to my questions and comments, for example – but she did make several interesting statements about her lesson. Melissa felt the lesson had gone well. Ms. Price had suggested this game, which seemed "perfect" to Melissa; she had been slightly nervous before the lesson but had attempted to assuage this by practicing her lesson and becoming familiar with the game. Melissa commented that she had changed her lesson plan slightly; she had intended to have the students write down number sentences to represent each move they made on the hundred

chart, but then decided to allow them some time to play the game before requiring this step. "I think they needed to experiment a little more with the game before actually having to write down where they were going with it," she said.

Some of the students had had difficulty playing the game and understanding the structure of the hundred chart, which Melissa felt was because the chart could be confusing to them but also because "I think a lot of them just have number concept problems." Melissa thought she might be able to help the students understand the game better if she taught it again by spending more time in the beginning of the lesson to introduce and explain the game, not only to improve their comprehension of the mathematical processes involved but to get them excited about the lesson as well:

I like to in most instances…just with my experiences in other schools, kids are so easy to get excited about the activity. So I wish I had a little more time to just be like, 'this is a really great game…it's challenging, but you can do it.' Because I think that if you pump them up…they can enjoy anything.

When asked how teaching this lesson might have helped her develop as a teacher, Melissa reflected that she felt more confident about keeping control of the class than she had during earlier teaching experiences, even though the nature of the game called for a certain degree of noise and activity in the classroom. During previous experiences, Melissa had felt that she was "so nervous," " a little meek," and "not necessarily forceful;" she was uncomfortable redirecting students' behavior and did not know "how to keep them in control." However, she said that she had become slightly less nervous and more comfortable with the fact that:

…you need to do that, you need to be able to tell them if they need to be quiet, and be forceful…I can see a difference too, just as far as getting up and being okay up there…I sort have been a pushover in the past. I think now I'm comfortable enough to say, 'stop.' That's going to be when I have my own class, a huge thing. You know? Being able to control them.

On the same day, 3-25-03, Melissa attended the second group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was whether teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction were more beneficial to student learning. Melissa made few comments during the discussion but did go into some detail about her beliefs when she did speak. She made her first statement when the discussion had turned to the question of whether focusing on the importance of preparing students for standardized tests detracted from teachers' ability to implement meaningful instruction. Melissa recounted how "just from what I've heard of the teachers talking," she felt that teachers were forced to place enormous importance on eliciting high performance on these tests from their students and that this had drawbacks for classroom instruction:

> As far as being student-centered…I feel like the [state mandated standardized test] takes away from that…because it's very specific learning, you know, that the children have to go through, so it limits your ability to make it more interesting, I guess, and make it child-centered, because there's just not much room to do that…I don't really know, it's just what I've seen.

Melissa also participated when the group began discussing the question of whether it was really possible to implement only student-centered methods of instruction. Melissa felt that there were certain things that "kids just kind of need to know" such as "the basics

of life skills," and that the teacher needed to present this material and these concepts directly to the students because they were not likely to enjoy learning them or choose to work on them unless directed to do so:

Growing up I always really enjoyed school, but I think there's a side of school that you go in knowing it's not that fun and you kind of just gotta do it…so I think there are just certain things that aren't going to be fun and that you need to do. And growing up I kind of knew that, and even know I still have a hard time accepting it all the time, like why am I doing certain things? But you just gotta get through certain stuff.

Although Melissa had experienced primarily teacher-directed instruction and liked it when she was growing up, she did think it was a good idea to know how to incorporate constructivist or student-centered ideas as well. "I'm a little afraid that I won't know how to do this, actually," Melissa admitted, and stated that she thought there should be a mix of different types of instruction in the classroom, which was not at all what she'd experienced growing up:

I feel, reflecting back on my schooling, even though it wasn't that long ago, I feel like it was ages ago…just as far as like learning about today's ideas and then I think of my teacher with her ruler, smacking it on the board to get our attention…it's very interesting. It makes me feel old.

In her journal entry for week 7 (also written on 3-25-03), Melissa incorporated ideas from the group dilemma discussion with her reflection's about the lesson she had taught that day. The lesson she had taught had been taken from a math program that was very constructivist in nature and geared toward discovery learning on the part of the

students. This was Melissa's first experience teaching from that particular program, and she wrote that "overall I really liked what I saw." She was impressed with how clear the program's lessons were and how it assisted children in exploration of math concepts, and felt it would be an excellent tool "for teachers who may not have had an extensive math background in their own schooling."

Melissa felt that she would not rely solely on this program for teaching math. "I am a strong advocate of teacher-directed lessons and would use such to teach the majority of my lessons," Melissa wrote, which would preclude the exclusive use of such a discovery-oriented program, and she believed that "if a teacher teaches exclusively from the manufactured materials I think that the students will miss out on many important lessons." However, she thought that a constructivist math program such as the one from which she had taken her lesson would be a helpful addition to her teacher-directed methods. "I think a teacher needs to be flexible with his/her lessons in order to target the needs of his/her students," she wrote.

As she continued reflecting on her lesson, Melissa wrote that she thought the game the students had played had been more challenging than she had originally expected and that she had been unsure of how well the students would grasp the concept. However, she felt that the students had "handled it well" and that she could improve the lesson in the future if she took more time to give the students directions, checked for understanding, and explained the game in light of the ideas that had been difficult for the students to understand. Melissa believed that she her skills at introducing and explaining a new concept or process in a way that students could easily understand would improve as she gained more teaching experience:

This is something that I think I will improve on with practice…Now that I know

the various ideas the students had a hard time understanding I would be more able

to explain the game the next time. This idea makes me nervous to be a first year

teacher since all of the activities will be new to me – but I guess it will come with

time.

Melissa's eighth visit to her placement classroom took place on April Fools Day (4-

1-03). When she arrived in her classroom the students she was immediately confronted by

students telling her silly things and attempting to "fool" her. Melissa wrote that these

jokes seemed lighthearted and good-natured, but when Ms. Price entered the room, things

changed. Ms. Price "announced her hatred for April Fools Day. She very "matter of

factly" announced to the children that there would be no April Fools jokes played in her

classroom." Melissa expected the children to have difficulty staying calm and resisting the

urge to indulge in making April Fools jokes "on such a crazy, very 'elementary' holiday,"

but this did not occur:

> I was very surprised to see the children obey the teacher's wishes so earnestly.
>
> This goes to show you how important it is for one to clearly voice their
>
> opinion…Ms. Price stated her point and left no room for discussion and the
>
> students happily obeyed her wishes.

Melissa felt that she had learned "an important lesson for all new teachers to learn,"

which was that if one must make one's expectations very clear as a teacher. "And chances

are if you have a respectful class like Ms. Price's, this will be the only statement you will

have to make regarding a particular issue."

When Melissa arrived at her classroom for her ninth visit (4-3-03), she was met at the door by a substitute teacher who appeared convinced that Melissa was in the wrong place and that she was not supposed to be in Ms. Price's room. Melissa explained her pre-practicum to the substitute, who eventually let her in but was "rather condescending and not very nice" to Melissa for the rest of the time she was in the classroom. Melissa was frustrated at the incident. "It would be one thing if the teacher was being precautious," Melissa wrote, "but based upon her attitude as the morning went on I highly doubt that was her intention." Melissa wrote that this was the first time she had encountered someone who behaved in this manner in any of her field experiences, and she expressed wonder that "such a short tempered, aggressive individual" would choose to become a teacher. "Working with children requires a lot of patience, as well as an appreciation for people," Melissa asserted. "Such a person will more than likely damage a child's desire to be educated and should be kept away from the schools."

Melissa also wrote in this journal entry of an "unnerving encounter" she had had that day with "my first violent student." As the class were lining up to go to computer class, Melissa saw a boy in line bump into the girl next to him. The girl struck the boy back angrily, even going so far as to remove her boot, apparently with the intention of hitting the boy with it. Melissa took the boot away from the little girl, who was "still visibly disturbed," kept her behind from computers to talk to her, and asked what was wrong and what had happened. The girl told Melissa her version of what had happened in line, which was not the same incident Melissa recalled seeing, and told Melissa "that her mother told her it was ok to hit someone if need be."

Melissa was "unsure of exactly how to approach such a comment." Finally she told the girl it was never all right to hit someone and that if this type of incident occurred again, the girl should tell the teacher or another adult. When the girl did not respond, "I decided to let her sit by herself for a while." After ten minutes, the girl approached Melissa, hugged her, said she was sorry, and promised to tell a teacher if she found herself in a similar situation in the future. Melissa was pleased with the outcome of the incident. "I was so proud of her change in thinking and allowed her to go upstairs and join her classmates in computer class," she wrote. "As the day went on she was perfectly behaved."

Group dilemma discussion was held on 4-8-03, but Melissa did not attend.

For her final reflective essay (4-27-03), Melissa chose the question of whether "fair and equal treatment" meant treating and teaching all students in the same way or implementing instruction that was culturally and academically relevant based on the students' backgrounds and needs. Melissa first pointed out that "each child is different" in terms of and that a teacher must treat each one according to what he or she believes to be the child's needs. She believed that "in order to truly help a child, I believe it is quite obvious that different treatment is necessary," and expressed the sentiment that those who disagreed with this position were misguided:

> Each child is different. Although this statement appears to be quite obvious this is
> not the consensus among many researchers…anyone who feels that all children
> should be treated exactly the same, clearly does not have the student's best interest
> in mind.

Melissa drew on her own past experience to illustrate and justify her point of view. "In my experiences, I have had teachers who treated each child the same, but they were the ones who I believed didn't care…in my book, this is not the mark of an effective teacher," Melissa wrote. She recalled that these kinds of teachers had appeared to her to let students fail without making any attempt to motivate them and make learning meaningful for them, or moved on to new concepts even when the students still did not understand what had just been taught. The best teachers Melissa remembered having were "the ones who did care," who took time out to help students individually and modified the curriculum in order to meet the students' needs. Melissa stated that when she was a teacher, she hoped to understand each child and treat them appropriately. She concluded her essay with this justification of her beliefs:

> One might ask what makes me, a novice right, and these experienced researchers wrong. Well, I have been in a classroom. I have seen students struggling to keep up with the rest of the class, and I have seen students daze off in boredom. I have experienced first hand what I believe these idealistic, one dimensional researchers have not – namely children with different needs. In order to help these children stay at grade level and interested, the teacher must provide them with different amounts of support.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Melissa during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Melissa appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements

or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Melissa's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Melissa's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Melissa's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Melissa's Reflective Judgment Level

Note: As will be discussed in the final section of this analysis, Melissa's participation in the reflective processes of this study was rather limited in comparison to that of some of the other participants. This applies in particular to the dialogue journal process (by far the most intensive of the processes of reflection utilized in this study, since it required weekly participation for the entire field experience), which was limited to very brief initial entries only and no second iterations despite my encouragement that Melissa submit them. In addition, her initial entries were brief (often a page or less, whereas the suggested length for the initial entries was two to three pages) and frequently contained primarily simple descriptions of her observations, very general statements about the instructional methods she observed and implemented, and comments about her personal feelings. Often her statements did not appear to address any particular ill-defined dilemma, and since she did not respond to the prompts with which I attempted to probe her deeper beliefs about teaching and learning and the epistemological assumptions which influenced her thinking, it was often difficult to interpret her statements in terms of the Reflective Judgment Model.

I took this fact into account during the analysis, knowing that simply reporting the many highly brief and technical statements Melissa usually made, or trying to "force" an

interpretation about her reflective judgment where none could justifiably be made, might

suggest an incomplete or inaccurate representation of her reflective judgment level.

Therefore, I took great care when interpreting Melissa's data (1) not to assume that she was

operating at a less sophisticated level of reflective judgment than she might actually be

simply because she did not make more statements articulating and exploring her beliefs,

and (2) to attach interpretations about her reflective judgment only to statements which

appeared to suggest a reflective judgment level as strongly as the statements by other

participants to which I attached such interpretations. (Naturally this was true with all the

case studies, but it seemed especially important to remember those points when dealing

with participants for whom I had substantially less data than I did for others.) I do believe

that Melissa made several statements over the course of the semester that could provide

substantial illumination about her reflective judgment, and my analysis of these is

presented below. However, the reader should be cautioned that due to the amount and

nature of Melissa's data, this portrait of her reflective judgment level might not be as

incisive as it could have been had she responded more fully to questions probing her

beliefs and assumptions.

Dilemma 1: What is the importance, and the most effective and beneficial way, of

implementing reading instruction with elementary students?

Melissa discussed this dilemma in journals 1 (2-4-03), 3 (2-25-03), and 5 (3-18-03).

In her first journal entry (2-4-03), Melissa commended Ms. Price for having a regular read-

aloud time in her classroom, during which she regularly stopped reading and asked

students questions to ascertain and facilitate their comprehension of the text. Melissa felt

that this was a beneficial practice, saying that "children have the fundamentals to

pronounce and read text but now their comprehension needs to be worked on. By reading

interesting stories aloud to the class and drilling them on the content they are uknowingly

learning the art of reading comprehension." Melissa revisited the idea of reading aloud to

students as a way of improving their reading and language skills in journal 3 (2-25-03),

although this time she pointed out the value of this practice in terms of fostering

appreciation of literature in students. "As a child I was always read to, and I believe that is

the reason why I love to read now," Melissa wrote. "If a teacher is able to share such

enthusiasm with his/her students they too will probably learn to appreciate books."

Finally, in her fifth journal entry (3-18-03), Melissa stated that she thought Ms. Price's

practice of having the students "publish" their work together in a class book was a

beneficial one because "it gives the children ownership of their work and urges them to do

their best since it will be in a class book."

Obviously Melissa addressed this dilemma rather sporadically and infrequently,

and her statements about the practices which she found most promising in the teaching of

reading therefore offered limited insight into her reflective judgment level. Had she

responded to prompts more frequently, perhaps it might have been more possible to

ascertain what assumptions about knowledge and learning were underlying her philosophy

of reading instruction. Melissa's belief about the value of reading to children based on her

own personal experience might be interpreted as basically Pre-Reflective in nature; she

also might appear to have been engaging in Pre-Reflective reasoning because she did not

seem to grasp the complexity of the challenge of teaching students to read. Melissa also

appeared to be equating her personal beliefs about the value of asking comprehension

questions during read-aloud time, the probable effects of reading to students frequently,

and the motivational effect of publishing students' writing with actual evidence to support those practices, which is a characteristic of Stage 4 or early Quasi-Reflective thinking. Therefore, in general, this dilemma could not provide a complete picture of Melissa's reflective judgment level because she did not go into extensive exploration of her beliefs. If any reflective judgment level were to be associated with Melissa's statements on this dilemma, it would probably be that of late Pre-Reflective or early Quasi-Reflective thinking, although her reluctance to engage thoroughly in reflecting on the dilemma might suggest a lower level of reflective judgment as well.

Dilemma 2: What is the importance, and the most effective and beneficial way, of implementing mathematics instruction with elementary students?

Melissa discussed this dilemma briefly during her post-observation interview (3-25-03) and the journal entry she submitted immediately afterward, journal 7 (3-25-03). During her interview (3-25-03), Melissa stated that she had modified her lesson plan somewhat during the course of the lesson; she had intended to have the students write number sentences representing each move they made in the game they played, but she determined that the students were so challenged at first by the game that they were not yet ready to take that extra step. "I think they needed to experiment a little more with the game before actually having to write down where they were going with it," Melissa stated during the interview. She also explained that she thought the students had had some difficulty with the game partly because they were confused by the structure of the "one hundred chart," but also because "I think a lot of them just have number concept problems." Melissa also stated during the interview that she wished she had more time to introduce the lesson, not just because she believed the students would have benefited from

further explanation of the game, but in order to motivate them to participate and learn. "I wish I had a little more time to just be like, 'this is a really great game…it's challenging, but you can do it.' Because I think that if you pump them up…they can enjoy anything."

When she reflected on the lesson in journal 7 (3-25-03), Melissa wrote that if she were to do the lesson again, she would have a better idea of how to introduce and explain the game because she was now aware of the aspects of the game which had been difficult for her students. "This is something that I think I will improve on with practice," Melissa wrote. "This idea makes me nervous to be a first year teacher since all of the activities will be new to me – but I guess it will come with time."

Again, though Melissa's approach to this dilemma was not detailed or complete in her data, some of her statements suggested reflective judgment levels around 3 (Pre-Reflective) and 4 (Quasi-Reflective). Melissa's decision to change her lesson plan might have reflected a Pre-Reflective tendency to engage in tentative decision-making according to what felt right at the time, but it could also have suggested the Quasi-Reflective characteristic of attempting to be open to changing one's point of view (in this case, about how the lesson should proceed) in light of new information (in this case, how the class was responding to the game). Melissa seemed not to recognize the complexity of this dilemma when she assumed quickly that the students who had trouble with the game "just have number concept problems" and when she expressed certainty that she could motivate her students to "enjoy anything," and she was clearly uncomfortable and anxious with the uncertainty of having to present lessons with which she had had no experience. These are Pre-Reflective characteristics, as is the perspective that some knowledge is only temporarily uncertain, an assumption under which Melissa might have been operating

when she concluded that she would be able to handle this better with time and practice. As was the case with Dilemma 1, a reflective judgment level around Stage 3 might be tentatively associated with Melissa's approach to this dilemma, although because of the small number and the nature of the statements she made, this dilemma should not be used as a definitive indicator of Melissa's reflective judgment level.

Dilemma 3: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Melissa dealt in much greater detail with this dilemma than with Dilemmas 1 and 2. First, in journal 3 (2-25-03), Melissa wrote that she liked how Ms. Price used a regular routine in the classroom as a means for keeping the class running smoothly and preventing discipline problems:

> I really think there is something to be said for continuity in the structure of the school day…by maintaining a typical schedule the kids know what they should be doing at all times. they also anticipate lessons and adjust accordingly. I also believe that this will limit the amount of behavior problems that teachers encounter in the transitional moments of their day.

In group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over a class in order to successfully manage the class was presented for discussion. Melissa advocated a "middle ground" approach to this dilemma, saying that the teacher needed to decide what rules and behavior were appropriate in the classroom but that this would be influenced by the particular personalities and needs of the students "because some problems that may arise with one class won't arise with another." Just as the teacher needed to keep in mind when planning instruction that "there are

different learners," Melissa stated, she also needed to recognize that "there are children who can do different things and can't do different things" in terms of their behavior. Melissa admired the way Ms. Price handled discipline issues by documenting incidents, attempting to find out the reasons for students' misbehavior and being prepared to communicate with the students' parents about disciplinary issues.

Melissa went on to discuss another aspect of Ms. Price's personality and management style which she admired, although this was a change from the way she had felt at the beginning of her field experience. When she had first entered the classroom, Melissa stated, she had felt that Ms. Price was too harsh with the students, yelled too much, and was too sarcastic in her communication with them. However, her perspective on this had changed as the semester went on:

> …but what I didn't realize, is that's just the way she is…seeing her act the way she does and watching the kids react has been interesting, because I thought she was doing it in a way that I wouldn't. But it works for the kids…they enjoy it, and they enjoy her sarcasm, and they do it back. And no one ever crosses the line.

Melissa gave a great deal of attention to the question of how to keep the class in order and under control when she taught. In journal 5 (3-18-03), Melissa wrote that she was glad that Ms. Price had encouraged the students to regard her as one of their teachers, rather than a student learning how to become a teacher. "It was nice that she came in and reinforced what I did," she wrote. "She was very solid in making sure the kids knew that I was an authority figure as well." During Melissa's post-observation interview (3-25-03), she discussed how she had been "so nervous" before conducting the lesson about "how to keep them in control." She described herself as having been "a little meek," "not

necessarily forceful," and "a pushover" in the past in terms of asserting her authority over students and ensuring that her lessons did not get out of control. Melissa said that teaching this lesson had made her feel more confident about her ability to do this:

> …you need to do that, you need to be able to tell them if they need to be quiet, and be forceful...I think now I'm comfortable enough to say, 'stop.' That's going to be when I have my own class, a huge thing. You know? Being able to control them.

> Melissa explored her beliefs about management and discipline further in her eighth

journal entry (4-1-03), when she described how Ms. Price had "matter of factly" announced that she hated April Fools jokes and that none were to be played in her classroom that day. All the students followed Ms. Price's direction without question, and Melissa was impressed with how Ms. Price had assertively stated her expectations and the class had obeyed:

> This goes to show how important it is for one to clearly voice their opinion…Ms. Price stated her point and left no room for discussion and the students happily obeyed her wishes…and chances are if you have a respectful class like Ms. Price's, this will be the only statement you have to make regarding a particular issue.

> In journal 9 (4-3-03), Melissa related how she had dealt with a disciplinary incident

with a little girl who responded to being bumped in line by attempting to strike the boy who had bumped her with her boot. Melissa removed the student from line, spoke to her about the incident and said the little girl should tell a teacher or another adult in those situations rather than hitting, and had her sit by herself. The child soon approached Melissa to apologize for her behavior and promised to tell a teacher in the future if she

encountered a similar situation. Melissa was proud of the little girl and happy with the result of her intervention in the incident.

Melissa's approach to this dilemma appeared to be generally Pre-Reflective (suggesting about Stage 3) in nature and seemed especially influenced by her perspective toward accepting the knowledge of authority figures, with the exception of the student's mother – is it possible that Melissa did not see her as an expert in this situation? Melissa appeared to rely heavily on the importance of authority in managing a class and disciplining students. Her belief, for example, that telling students precisely where they were to be and what they were to do in order to prevent behavior problems might seem like a sensible attitude, but when considered through the perspective of reflective judgment revealed that Melissa was placing a strong value on the place of the authority figure in dictating what went on in the classroom. Melissa demonstrated this perspective about authority further in her post-observation interview (3-25-03), when she was clearly pleased that she was no longer a "pushover" and more able to achieve the goal of "being able to control them," and when she directed the student whom she had pulled aside for hitting another student always to approach a teacher or adult as the primary means of resolving a conflict.

This tendency to rely highly on the knowledge of authority figures was again demonstrated again in Melissa's reaction to Ms. Price's handling of April Fools Day (journal 8, 4-1-03). While it is of course possible Ms. Price may have made her decision about not allowing students to participate in April Fools jokes in order to prevent students' feelings being hurt at the hands of those who played practical jokes, and not simply to exert her authority over the class, Melissa makes no mention of this or any other reason

Ms. Price gave for what sounded like a rather unilateral and controlling directive. Melissa did not delve into the complexity of the issue to explore, for example, what effect April Fools jokes might have on children or what could have been done if the students did not all "happily obey" this rule; she appeared instead to have merely been impressed with the way Ms. Price laid down the law and elicited unquestioning obedience from her students.

Melissa's acceptance of the practices of the main authority figure in her classroom, Ms. Price, even went so far as to counteract her initial instincts about Ms. Price's behavior. After first perceiving Ms. Price as a harsh teacher who yelled too much and was too sarcastic, Melissa later conceded that "that's just the way she is" and concluded that the students did not suffer any ill effects from Ms. Price's style of interacting with them. This also suggested a Pre-Reflective level of reflective judgment, as Melissa did not appear to be recognizing the complexity of the question of how a teacher's sarcasm or harsh words might impact students' behavior, feelings, and development, and she expressed the sentiment that people behave in different ways because of idiosyncratic differences in "style," a belief associated with individuals beginning to transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4.

One comment that Melissa made did suggest that she might be able at times to operate under more Quasi-Reflective assumptions about knowledge and justifying her point of view. In the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), Melissa stated that she believed a "middle ground" philosophy was best in managing a classroom and that the teacher needed to remember that there would always be variations between individual students and classes in terms of personality and needs that would affect the type of management and discipline the teacher would need to implement. This could indicate that Melissa had begun to acknowledge that this dilemma was one with no clear, simple

solution that could be applied in any teaching context and that she was at least outwardly willing to re-examine her point of view in light of new information and the beliefs of others, both of which are beliefs associated with Stage 4.

Dilemma 4: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

Melissa made statements regarding finding one's place in the profession of teaching in journals 3 (2-25-03) and 9 (4-3-03). In journal 3 (2-25-03), Melissa wrote about how she was sure she would end up spending a great deal of money out of her own pocket on art supplies for her classroom, as she loved art and "especially with such funding shortages in schools I am sure I will be purchasing most of this stuff on my own." She wrote that although this would probably be "a major source of economical problems," she felt she would still be excited to provide these materials for her classroom because "teaching is such an amazing job, and to pick materials that will help maximize my effectiveness as a teacher is worth spending what little money I have."

In journal 9 (4-3-03), Melissa made another comment about the place of certain individuals in the profession of teaching when she had an unpleasant encounter with a substitute teacher who seemed unaware of Melissa's purpose in the classroom and determined not to let her in. Melissa was frustrated at the substitute, whom she found to be "rather condescending and not very nice." Melissa wondered why "such a short tempered, aggressive individual" would choose to enter the profession of teaching, claiming that "working with children requires a lot of patience, as well as an appreciation for people…such a person will more than likely damage a child's desire to be educated and should be kept from the schools."

Melissa's few statements about this dilemma appeared to reveal mainly Pre-Reflective reasoning with an occasional possible glimpse into Quasi-Reflective thinking. When Melissa considered the question of teachers' having to purchase their own materials, for example, she did not examine the complexity of the issue in terms of the effect this might have on individual teachers, students, and schools, the disparity that might result when some teachers were more financially equipped to purchase extensive materials than others, the impact this situation might have on those who were deciding whether or not to enter the profession, or the implications of this for the field of teaching in general. (It is interesting to note that Jill, another participant in School B, discussed a similar dilemma about teachers having to purchase their own paper when the school ran out and took a very different perspective on this dilemma. Jill explored it in terms of broader issues, comparing the financial situation of teachers to that of other professionals and examining what this dilemma revealed about the value the United States in general placed on educating children. Melissa, on the other hand, seemed simply to have concluded that she would probably purchase her own materials anyway because she liked the idea of having those materials in her own classroom.)

While Melissa's remarks about the substitute teacher who did not wish to let her enter the classroom might have been founded more in her emotional reaction to the confrontation than her epistemological assumptions, they did appear to show a similar lack of attention to the complexity of the issue of which individuals "should" enter the profession of teaching, which suggested a Pre-Reflective perspective. Melissa simply assumed that this teacher was not simply "being precautious" but was actually "short tempered and aggressive." In stating her belief about the impact of such individuals in

schools, Melissa made very strong belief statements which could be interpreted as "stubborn" and not objective, as well as justifications for her point of view in which her personal beliefs about certain individuals "damaging a child's desire to learn" appeared to be presented as evidence; these are characteristics of Stage 4.

While, again, Melissa's comments about this dilemma were too infrequent to warrant their use as a definitive indicators of her reflective judgment, when viewed as part of her data as a whole they support an assessment of reflective judgment level as mainly Pre-Reflective (Stage 3) but possibly beginning the transition to Quasi-Reflective (Stage 4).

Dilemma 5: How should a teacher deal in the classroom with sensitive political or societal issues which affect the students' lives, but which might frighten them or which they might not fully understand?

Melissa addressed this dilemma in her sixth journal entry (3-20-03). When she visited the classroom that day, Melissa was surprised that the students did not seem to be affected by the United States just having declared war on Iraq. Ms. Price did not bring up the issue with the children, and Melissa speculated that she probably would have done the same thing, but would have taken steps to ensure that the students were aware that the classroom was a safe place to bring up any concerns or questions they had about the situation. Melissa wrote that she would "be very careful to state only the facts" on the matter and would write a letter home to her students' parents to let them know of her plan for addressing the issue of the war should the students appear to need help understanding and dealing with it. She wrote that she would be sure to inform the parents "that I would

only discuss the facts, censored to be age appropriate, and that it was not my duty to persuade the children to think a certain way, but to educate them."

Although, as was the case with other dilemmas, Melissa did not speak at length about this issue, her remarks about this complex issue bear examination in the context of this representation of her reflective judgment as a whole. The most relevant point about Melissa's approach to this dilemma was that her determination to speak only of "the facts" appeared to suggest a highly certain view of knowledge in relation to the matter of the war. Melissa did not indicate that she was grasping the fact that the information made available to the public about the war could quite possibly be biased, subjective, or influenced by individuals with specific political interests; neither did she appear to recognize the complexity of the question of ascertaining exactly what "the facts" were, the impact the war might be having on the students' lives, or the implications of her decisions as a teacher about how to help students deal with the war. This suggested a Pre-Reflective perspective about knowledge. Again, while it would not be prudent to attempt to assess Melissa's reflective judgment level based solely on her brief comments about this issue, her comments provided a glimpse into her reasoning and assumptions about knowledge, and the interpretation that she was operating under an assumption of the certainty of knowledge is consistent with the findings of this analysis in general.

Dilemma 6: How can a teacher best accommodate the needs of students with widely varied cultural, ethnic, or racial backgrounds?

As was the case with Dilemma 5, Melissa addressed this question in one journal entry only but her statements bear examination in the context of the analysis as a whole. In journal 6 (3-20-03), Melissa wrote of an incident involving an African-American student

who was coloring the figures in a drawing of his family with a peach crayon. Ms. Price noticed this, advised the little boy that this was not appropriate, and helped him match crayons to his skin until he found a shade that would best represent his skin color in the picture. After observing Ms. Price's actions, Melissa wrote that she believed Ms. Price had handled the situation appropriately and successfully:

> When it comes to race issues, I am very unsure of what to do. Had I been the teacher I might have allowed him to leave his family peach although it is not right…I am very glad that I was there to witness this situation because it really made me evaluate how I would have dealt with the child, and clearly my way was not the best.   I really admired the way Ms. Price gracefully handled the situation.

While Melissa's comments about this situation were too limited to provide a complete understanding of her reflective judgment level, there are again a few points which stand out in her statements and which bear examination. Her statements about the incident suggested both Pre-Reflective and early Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Melissa's approach to the dilemma appeared Pre-Reflective because she did not appear to recognize the complexity of "race issues" in general or the situation at hand. For example, while it is of course quite possible that Ms. Price's handling of the situation was successful and that it had a positive impact on the little boy, no mention was made of any attempt on Melissa's part to question why the little boy had chosen this color, why Melissa's first instinct might have been to allow him to color his drawing any way he wanted, why Melissa felt that Ms. Price had been correct in directing his attention to choosing a hue that would closely match his skin tone, or how the boy had reacted to having his drawing regarded this way. Melissa seemed to accept without question Ms. Price's decision about how to handle the situation,

which also suggested the kind of strong reliance on authority figures or experts as sources of knowledge which is characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinking.

However, Melissa's statements also revealed a hint of Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Her admission, for example, that she was "very unsure" of appropriate ways to handle issues of race in the classroom might have suggested that she was beginning to accept the fact that this was a dilemma with no clear solution and that there was inherent uncertainty in gaining knowledge about the dilemma. In addition, while Melissa's willingness to re-evaluate the way she imagined she would have handled the situation herself could simply have been interpreted as an abandonment of her own ideas in favor of those of an authority figure, it could also have indicated that she was professing to be open to re-examination of her point of view, a characteristic of early Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 7: Which are more effective or beneficial for students: teacher-directed or student-centered methods of instruction?

Melissa made several statements about this dilemma during the second group dilemma discussion (3-25-03) and revisited the issue in journal 7, written shortly thereafter (3-25-03). In the second group discussion (3-25-03), Melissa's first comment was to remark on a question brought up by the group, that of whether the need to prepare students to perform well on standardized tests had an impact on the type of instruction teachers implemented in classrooms. Melissa said that based on "just from what I've heard from teachers talking," pressure on teachers to elicit high performances from students on mandated standardized tests made it difficult for them to implement student-centered instructional strategies. Melissa said this was because these types of tests required "very

specific learning" and that it "limits your ability to make it more interesting." She concluded by qualifying her comment with "I don't really know, it's just what I've seen."

Melissa also stated that she thought some teacher-directed instruction was an unavoidable necessity simply due to the nature of some of the information and skills students needed to obtain, which "you go in knowing it's not that fun and you kind of just gotta do it." Melissa commented that she herself found this as challenging and frustrating in her college education as young students probably did, saying "I have a hard time accepting it all the time, like why am I doing certain things? But you just gotta get through certain stuff." Melissa's last statement during the group discussion was to say that she believed a teacher needed to implement a mix of different types of instruction and reflected that "today's ideas" about education were very different from the philosophy and practices on which her own elementary education was based.

In journal 7 (3-25-03), Melissa revisited this dilemma when she evaluated the use of the highly constructivist and discovery-oriented mathematics curriculum used in School B. Melissa believed that she might utilize certain elements of this type of program in order to supplement her math teaching but that it would not be sufficient as the sole means of instructing students in math because of its philosophy of learning by discovery and exploration. "I am a strong advocate of teacher-directed lessons and would use such to teach the majority of my lessons," Melissa wrote, although she also stated that she would supplement her program with the kinds of activities suggested by other programs because "a teacher needs to be flexible with his/her lessons in order to target the needs of his/her students."

Melissa's approach to this dilemma appeared to be grounded mainly in Pre-Reflective reasoning, but demonstrated enough hints of Quasi-Reflective thinking to suggest that she might have been beginning the transition from one level to the next. Melissa's reliance on her personal experience, what she had "seen" and heard teachers talking about, in order to formulate her point of view on the issue of how standardized testing affected the type of instruction implemented in schools suggested Pre-Reflective thinking (while she might very well have been correct in her claim about this, it is her justification of her point of view through what she had seen and heard rather than through systematic inquiry and gathering of evidence which points to a certain level of reflective judgment). When she commented about how "you just gotta get through certain stuff," Melissa appeared to be demonstrating a view of knowledge as a certain entity to be transmitted from one person to another and an unquestioning attitude towards the authority figures or experts who had determined exactly what concepts and skills students should "just get through," and she did not appear to grasp the complexity of the dilemma about whether it was important for a learner to have a purpose in learning something; both of these also suggested Pre-Reflective thinking.

Melissa did show some characteristics of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking, in her comments as well, however. Her statement about "today's ideas" about education being quite different from those under which she herself had been educated indicated that she might have been acknowledging her own bias about the dilemma of teacher-directed vs. student-centered instruction, which is a pattern of reasoning associated with Stage 4. In addition, this comment, as well as her remark about the need for a teacher to have flexibility in implementing lessons that were appropriate to students' needs, could

also have suggested that she was at least outwardly open to re-examining her point of view based on new information and experiences, another early Quasi-Reflective trait.

Dilemma 8: What does "fair and equal treatment" of students mean? Does it mean teaching all students in exactly the same way, or does it mean following pedagogy that is designed to be culturally and academically relevant to each individual students' needs?

Melissa addressed this dilemma in her final reflective essay (4-27-03). In discussing this question, Melissa first pointed out that each child was different. Although Melissa characterized this statement is "obvious," she bemoaned the fact that "this is not the consensus among many researchers…anyone who feels that all children should be treated the same, clearly does not have the student's best interest in mind." Melissa believed that since all children were different, a teacher needed to adjust treatment of children so that all their needs would be met. She justified her point of view by discussing her own experience with teachers as an elementary student, pointing out that she perceived teachers who treated her and her classmates all the same to be "the ones who I believed didn't care…this is not the mark of an effective teacher." Melissa felt that these teachers had no interest in motivating students, ensuring that they all understood what was taught to them, or teaching them in a way that was meaningful to them. In contrast, the teachers "who did care" in Melissa's view were the ones who addressed students' learning needs on an individualized basis and made modifications to the curriculum when it was necessary to successfully teach all students. She concluded her essay by further justifying her point of view by stating that she knew that she, "a novice," was right, "and these experienced researchers wrong" because she had herself witnessed classrooms full of children with

different needs and had observed the results of teachers' failure to educate all of the students.

Melissa's response to this dilemma appeared to suggest that she was transitioning between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Melissa's justification of her point of view on the grounds that it was "obvious" and on what she herself had observed and experienced suggested the Pre-Reflective inability to gather, evaluate and use evidence logically and consistently in justifying one's beliefs. She also did not appear to be able to address the complexity of the dilemma or acknowledge any reason why researchers or practitioners would take an alternate point of view from her own, stating simply that anyone who did so "clearly does not have the student's best interest in mind," which also suggested Pre-Reflective thinking. However, Melissa's strong statements of her beliefs about this dilemma reflect the type of "stubborn" belief statements often made by individuals functioning at Stage 4. In addition, her outright rejection of the opinion of "experts" such as researchers who did not share her point of view could also imply that she was beginning to question the validity of accepting the knowledge of authority figures and experts without examination or question.

Summary of Melissa's Reflective Judgment Level

In analyzing Melissa's reflective judgment, we must recognize the brevity and infrequency of her statements regarding several dilemmas and take care neither to place too much importance on her approach to any specific dilemma as an indicator of her reflective judgment level, nor to interpret them narrowly as indicators of a less sophisticated stage of reflective judgment (although this might indicate that Melissa is an individual who might not have been as disposed to be reflective as some others). Research

on the processes through which educators might stimulate more sophisticated epistemological reasoning in students has suggested that engaging individuals in discussion and probative questioning about their beliefs might elicit examples of reflective judgment at the higher end of their functional range or stimulate that kind of examination of one's beliefs that leads to growth in reflective judgment (Kitchener et al, 1998; Thompson, 1995; Kronholm, 1994; Cicala, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that had Melissa participated more fully in the reflective process – by submitting second iterations for dialogue journal entries, for example – her statements might have suggested a different assessment of her reflective judgment level than the one presented here. However, this analysis must use only the data submitted by Melissa in attempting to understand her reflective judgment level and not engage in too much speculation about what she might have said if she had responded to prompts more fully.

Most of Melissa's data suggested that she was functioning at around Stage 3, or the latest stage of Pre-Reflective thinking, although she did show occasional indications that she was ready to begin making the transition to Quasi-Reflective thinking. Many of Melissa's beliefs appeared to be founded on Pre-Reflective assumptions about knowledge. In most of her statements, for example, Melissa seemed to have the perspective that knowledge was highly certain or only temporarily uncertain, and she did not appear to recognize the subtleties and complexity of many of the dilemmas she encountered. In addition, Melissa seemed to rely heavily on the knowledge provided by authority figures or experts, particularly her cooperating teacher, when making decisions about dilemmas, even to the point where she appeared sometimes to abandon her initial view about an issue and adopt Ms. Price's without questioning it or exploring why she had changed her point of

view. This occurred in the case of the little boy who was coloring the drawing of his family or the instance in which Melissa changed her view about Ms. Price's yelling and sarcasm in the classroom. Melissa also sometimes expressed the view that individuals had different beliefs of practices because of intrinsic, idiosyncratic differences between them, as when she indicated that she no longer objected to Ms. Price's "harsh" manner with the students because "that's just the way she is." Melissa also relied primarily in many instances on her own direct observation of classrooms and her personal experience as a student to inform her decisions about ill-defined dilemmas of practice, such as when she supported her point of view about fair treatment of students by asserting that "I have experienced firsthand what these idealistic, one dimensional researchers have not."

In some cases, however, Melissa did begin showing the beginnings of Quasi-Reflective thinking. She was able to admit, for example, that she was unsure of how to handle some dilemmas such as "race issues," which indicated that she was on her way to recognizing the inherent uncertainty of some types of knowledge. She occasionally also appeared to be starting to recognize that there existed questions to which there were no clear, simple solutions (when she stated that disciplinary practices had to vary from class to class because the students would have different personalities and needs, for example), to acknowledge her own bias and interpretations concerning dilemmas or practice (such as when she reflected on how "today's ideas" of education were different than the ideas that had influenced education when she was younger), and to profess to be willing to be flexible and re-examine her point of view (such as when she expressed how Ms. Price's actions had influenced her own thinking or advocated teachers' modification of curriculum to meet individual students' needs).

Those hints of early Quasi-Reflective reasoning notwithstanding, Melissa still relied heavily on authority figures and personal observation and experience to justify her point of view, and she was not yet able to present evidence consistently and logically to support her beliefs. She also appeared not yet to be able to recognize the complexity of most of the dilemmas of practice she encountered, to be able to place them in a broader context, or to thoughtfully consider perspectives on them that were alternate to her own. This all suggested that Melissa was functioning primarily at the Pre-Reflective level and that if she was transitioning to Quasi-Reflective thinking, it was likely that she was just beginning the transition. Melissa's data is consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

As noted earlier, Melissa's participation in the reflective process was somewhat limited. She submitted initial journal entries for seven of the nine weeks of her pre-practicum, but did not respond to probative questions in second iterations for any of them, despite encouragement and reminders. Her journal entries, particularly those written earlier in the semester, frequently consisted mainly of descriptions of the procedural details of the class and the instructional and management techniques employed by Ms. Price, such as: morning meeting (journal 1, 2-4-03); read-aloud time (journal 1, 2-4-03; journal 3, 2-25-03); the daily routine (journal 3, 2-25-03); Writer's Workshop (journal 5, 3-18-03); and the math program used in the classroom (journal 7, 3-25-03). Melissa's journal entries

also often included statements of her endorsement of Ms. Price's practices (journal 1, 2-4-03; journal 3, 2-25-03; journal 5, 3-18-03; journal 6, 3-20-03; journal 8, 4-1-03).

In Melissa's later entries, she did appear to examine some more complex dilemmas of practice rather than simply reporting her observations of the procedural details and instructional strategies of the classroom, but she usually did so briefly, in only a few sentences, and did not explore her beliefs in any extensive manner. In journal 6 (3-20-03), for example, she touched on sensitive issues such as how to help students deal with the reality of the country having declared war and how to deal with racial issues that arose in the classroom. While Melissa seemed to realize that these were more complex issues, but in both cases she focused on reporting what action Ms. Price had taken and stating that she would probably follow Ms. Price's example. In journal 8 (4-1-03), Melissa discussed how Ms. Price had dealt with the prospect of students playing practical jokes on one another, but she did not closely examine the effects that this might have on the students or any alternate ways Ms. Price might have used to address the problem. In journal 9 (4-3-03), Melissa proposed that individuals with certain personality attributes should not be allowed to pursue a career in the field of education but did not explore the ramifications of such a generalization, and her discussion of the incident with the child who had hit another was limited to a description of her actions and the expression that she was satisfied with the outcome. The statements Melissa made in her final reflective essay (4-27-03) were very similar to her journal entries in content, tone, and in the type of epistemological assumptions which seemed to be influencing her beliefs.

Melissa might have failed to respond to probative questions in her journals because of time constraints of her academic schedule, because she was not developmentally ready

or intellectually disposed (Friedman, 1995, 2004) to engage in this process, or for some other reason unknown to the researcher. Although it is impossible to know what type of statements Melissa might have made had she responded to further questioning about her beliefs in second journal iterations, we might cautiously speculate, in light of the research on reflective judgment and the analyses of other participants' engagement in the reflective process, that had Melissa responded to prompts this analysis of her reflective judgment might be somewhat different. It is feasible that by responding to probative questions, Melissa might have made statements that revealed more sophisticated assumptions about knowledge than implied by her original statements, either because further and clearer articulation of her beliefs might have provided more specific and illuminating insight into the assumptions under which she was operating, or perhaps even because the process of engaging in self-examination could have stimulated the processes by which her reflective judgment was evolving and actually resulted in development in that area.

This speculation is supported by the research mentioned earlier which suggests that engaging young adults in purposeful discussion and reflection can have a positive impact on their reflective judgment development (Kitchener et al, 1998; Thompson, 1995; Kronholm, 1994; Cicala, 1997). However, this is of course only speculation based on the aforementioned research and the patterns shown by some of the other participants in this study for whom responding to journal prompts appeared to stimulate further examination of their beliefs, and it could also be the case that even if Melissa had responded more fully to the dialogue journal prompts, she might not have done so in a way that revealed her reflective judgment to be different than what was suggested by her original data.

Melissa's participation in the interview process was also limited; she participated in only one interview rather than two due to scheduling problems or other reasons she gave for not being able to meet for an interview. During the one interview in which she did participate (3-25-03), Melissa often gave brief responses to questions and offered some insight into her beliefs about knowledge, teaching, and learning, but these did not appear substantially different from the comments she made in her journals. She attended two of the three group dilemma discussions but did not speak at length, speaking five times during group discussion 1 (3-19-03) and three times in group discussion 2 (3-25-03), and the nature of her statements in those discussions did not appear to be different from statements made in her journals in terms of her limited acknowledgement of uncertainty, recognition of the complexity of dilemmas, justification of her beliefs, or openness to examining her beliefs and alternate points of view.

It should be noted that time may have played a role in Melissa's inability to engage fully in the reflective process. At one point, Melissa taught an observed lesson, participated in an interview, attended a group dilemma discussion and turned in a journal entry all in one day (3-25-03). This was a situation unique to Melissa's field experience which did not arise with any other participants and was simply the result of coincidences in scheduling, but having so many reflective processes occurring on the same day might have affected her ability to participate intensively in one or more of them. In two cases, Melissa also turned in two journal entries within two days of each other – journals 5 (3-18-03) and 6 (3-20-03), and journals 8 (4-1-03) and 9 (4-3-03). This was either due to Melissa's not submitting the first journal entry of the pair until immediately prior to her next visit in the classroom, or because she rescheduled her visits so that two occurred in one week (a

practice not encouraged by the researcher but permitted if the participant made a special request due to personal circumstances). Having so many of the reflective events "bunched" together into a small period of time might have had an effect on Melissa's ability to engage reflectively in each context because she might not have had time to focus and concentrate sufficiently on the issues about which she wrote in each journal entry.

In conclusion, Melissa's participation in the reflective process was more limited than that of some of the other participants, and the reasons and effects of this can only be speculated on here. Melissa's limited participation could have been due to time constraints, her developmental level, her intellectual disposition, or unknown factors. Although this cannot be concluded definitively, we should consider two possibilities as a result of this: (1) that the level of Melissa's participation in the reflective process could have had influenced this representation of her reflective judgment level to be less complete or accurate than it might have been if she had engaged regularly in responding to probative questions about her beliefs and assumptions; (2) that the act of engaging more fully in this process might in itself have influenced her reflective judgment development; and (3) that Melissa's limited engagement in the reflective process could have been a manifestation or expression of her individual intellectual nature and disposition toward reflection.

Case Study 8: Leslie

Part A: Description of Case

Leslie is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a college junior at the time of this study. She was majoring in Elementary Education and Philosophy with a minor in Special Needs Education. She is from the northeastern United States. In her free time, she enjoys volunteering, skiing, running, and spending time with her family and friends. *(All biographical information provided by Leslie via personal e-mail correspondence, 5-29-03.*)

Leslie was placed in a Special Education classroom for students in grades 1-3 in School B. She did not submit a journal entry for her first week in the classroom; the record of her field experience began with her journal for week 2 (2-11-03). Leslie began her journal entry by noting that her classroom, and School B as a whole, was very focused on literacy, and she was glad that she would be able to observe the type of instruction in phonics and early reading development on which her college reading methods course was also focusing at the time. Most of the morning was spent working on phonics and decoding, "which is definitely beneficial to most of these students," Leslie wrote. "They are fairly low performing students, who have made it to the third grade without much knowledge of phonics and phonetic structuring." Leslie also pointed out that the students had Writer's Workshop, which she felt was "lost on most of these children" because they could not yet write and did not have a working sight word vocabulary.

Leslie wrote that being placed in a Special Education classroom had led her to reflect that she would probably be comfortable teaching in that type of setting, and she went on to discuss her professional development in general. She hoped to take a great deal

of initiative and do a lot of teaching in her placement classroom and to use this experience to evaluate and improve her teaching, although she realized that this was more challenging than it might sound:

> Evaluating your own growth and development as a teacher is something that I have found very hard to do. I feel that it is not something that I can just see and notice at any time, but there are times when I will react to a situation or watch another person react and realize that I have grown and developed into a better teacher…I have grown as a teacher, from an observer to a leader.

Leslie did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts for this or any of her other journal entries. She also did not submit a journal entry for week 3 of her field experience. During her visit to the classroom on week 4 (3-11-03), Leslie conducted a lesson which I observed, and I interviewed her afterward.

Leslie felt the lesson could have been smoother but in general had gone well. The lesson Leslie taught was an introduction of the phoneme /n/ based on the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory approach. She followed the three-step drill for reviewing consonant sounds the students had already learned, as outlined by the program, and led the children in a multi-sensory activity involving the use of necklaces to represent the phoneme /n/, but she wondered whether following that procedure had made the lesson too long for the students, who "have a hard time with doing something for so long…I felt like it was almost too much. I feel like I could have integrated the two steps together instead of doing it the way they suggest in the book."

Leslie remarked that she had not found the task of managing the class overly difficult, which she attributed to the successful and effective management style

implemented by her cooperating teacher, Ms. Taylor – a management philosophy "very similar to how I feel":

> She doesn't allow chaos, and she does what she needs to do. She doesn't yell, but she's not easy on any of them. Which I feel is different than last semester, because she was easy on the kids she felt had special needs…Ms. Taylor is almost harder on them and expects more from them because she knows they're capable of it.

The previous semester, Leslie had had a difficult field experience in a classroom where she felt the discipline was severely lacking, where the students were "out of control," and where the cooperating teacher took little action to redirect the students' behavior in more positive and productive directions or to assist Leslie in finding ways to do so when she taught them. Leslie had left her last classroom feeling "really turned off" to the idea of teaching in an inner city public school because "I really thought that's what they were like, just out of control," but upon seeing Ms. Taylor's classroom in School B, she realized that not all inner city public school classrooms were like the last one she had observed. "I am definitely not so against working with kids in an inner city as I was when I left there…I enjoy coming here, which is totally not what I expected," she stated.

Leslie vastly preferred Ms. Taylor's management system to that of her previous cooperating teacher and felt a great deal of the difference she perceived between the two classrooms could be attributed to Ms. Taylor's management methods Reflecting that the populations of her previous school and School B were demographically similar, Leslie did wonder now whether "because of the teacher I judged the students unfairly?" She contrasted the ways the two cooperating teachers had handled their classrooms and how they had integrated her as a student teacher into the classroom community:

Even when you gave support to those kids, they didn't act differently. I don't know why. But these kids, it's like, they're different when you show them you care, they completely change. They didn't do that to me last semester at all…I never felt part of anything there. If I walked in, I don't even think the kids would know who I was…I felt like I was treated almost as just some outsider who came, every time I went there.

Leslie reflected that she also had noticed much more collaboration among teachers at School B than she had at her previous placement school, and wondered whether this had an impact on the school environment as a whole and therefore affected the students' behavior. "I never met another teacher [at her previous school]. Everyone's closer here…there's interaction between everyone," she commented. "I don't know if that changes things with the students, or the way the teachers are friendly, I don't know if the students notice that and that makes it a different environment, but it's totally different here."

Leslie discussed the way she had dealt with one particular student during the lesson and wondered whether she had done so appropriately. Leslie asked me if I had noticed Arthur, "the little guy in the back who wasn't participating," and described how he had had difficulty engaging in the lesson, sat by himself, and finally responded hesitantly at the end of her lesson to her request that he participate in the necklace activity. She questioned whether he had been quiet simply out of shyness or because he did not understand the lesson and whether she had done enough to encourage him to participate more in the lesson. "With most of these kids, I've learned that I can't really push them because when they want to be a part of it, they'll be a part of it, and when they don't, they won't," she

remarked. "Should I have left him there like I did?" She reflected that perhaps the reason

Arthur had not wanted to participate was because, being "below where everyone else is,"

he had not wanted to be a part of the lesson because it was hard for him:

> I think he does that sometimes. When I went over to him at first he was doing a
>
> word search. And I asked him if he could put that away, and he didn't want to put
>
> it away, and I don't know if that's because…I think that's one of the things he can
>
> do, and it's hard because he can't do a lot of the other things that everyone else
>
> does.

Leslie concluded the interview by reflecting on how her field experiences, and

teaching her observed lessons in particular, had influenced her professional growth and

development as a teacher. She felt that teaching lessons to students was more helpful in

her professional growth than simply taking courses in college because it was more

beneficial to see educational theories put into practice in a classroom than simply to learn

the theory. It was Leslie's belief that some of her college professors tried to give students

the impression that simply knowing an educational theory was sufficient to be able to put it

into practice effectively, and that the theory taught in her college courses was very far

removed from the reality of most classrooms. The reason for this, Leslie believed, was

that many of her professors had either not taught in an elementary classroom for many

years or had never even done so at all:

> You may not be able to walk into your classroom and pull out the Guided Reading
>
> book and just start teaching from it, and I think they like to pretend that's what you
>
> can do. Like, a lot is ideal. I feel that the professors at [the university] haven't
>
> been in a classroom in so many years…they are so far removed from teaching, that

they can't even relate to what's going on. It would help a lot of the professors to supervise a student teacher or two, just to see how things actually are in schools, compared to what they think.

Leslie submitted her journal entry for week 4 on the same day (3-11-03). In this journal entry, Leslie continued reflecting on the lesson she had taught. Although it had not gone "exactly as I planned," Leslie felt positive about her lesson, especially about the fact that she had established a good rapport with the students "and that they respect my authority as much as I respect their place in this classroom as a student." Leslie remarked that her comfort level in this classroom was quite high due to the fact that she was continually gaining experience teaching on her own and because of the classroom environment, in which the students felt they were equals, were free to share ideas, and felt comfortable asking questions when they needed to do so. "There is a good balance of respect and friendship between the teacher and the students," Leslie wrote. Leslie also appreciated how Ms. Taylor had welcomed and integrated her into the procedures and experiences of the classroom:

This is probably the first cooperating teacher who has taken an interest in me as a person instead of someone who sits in their classroom each week and helps with random tasks. She has actually made me an important part of the class.

Leslie's journal entry for week 5 (3-18-03), contained a discussion of the management and discipline practices which she observed Ms. Taylor implementing. On the whole Leslie was very impressed with Ms. Taylor's management and discipline strategies, which "differ strongly from those I have observed in my other pre-practicum placements." Leslie described how Ms. Taylor effectively managed the class "without the

use of a point system or strict rules" by building personal relationships with the students, and helping them create an classroom community based on respect. She reminded students to respect her and each other, made a point of reinforcing good behavior rather than calling attention to students' mistakes, and when necessary, disciplined them in private, never publicly. Leslie believed that the system of mutual respect Ms. Taylor had established in the classroom was particularly evident because of the respect with which the students treated Leslie and all adults who entered the classroom.

There were no set rules of behavior as such in the classroom, Leslie noted, just a system "which covers all the basic rules that would be in place in another classroom. The rules are not stated, but understood and expected of the students." Leslie wrote that Ms. Taylor had informed her that the students had no input in coming up with rules of the classroom and that "she knows where these students come from, and that many of them have trouble with respect and authority" so Ms. Taylor tried to be a friend with them, establish respect, and "treat these students as equals, and they treat her the same way."

On 3-19-03, Leslie participated in the first group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order to effectively manage a classroom. Leslie's first comment was to respond to another participant, who had remarked that she appreciated how her cooperating teacher communicated to the students that she was indeed a teacher and should be respected, as this made it much easier to manage the class. Leslie agreed, saying that in her current placement, unlike her previous one, her cooperating teacher treated her "like an equal." Ms. Taylor welcomed Leslie's ideas and initiative, and if Leslie made a decision in the classroom, even if Ms. Taylor did not agree with it, she did not contradict Leslie in front of

the students. "It makes it a lot easier being in a placement where you actually feel respected and supported by your teacher, and not just like their little follower."

Leslie went on to describe Ms. Taylor's system of classroom management as she had done in her previous journal entry. Leslie was particularly impressed with Ms. Taylor's practice of communicating to the students that they were all equals, even though they might do different work in the classroom and receive different types of support:

My teacher doesn't pretend that things are fair, because she knows that everyone's different, everyone needs different things…and everyone just accepts that things are not the same for everyone…the kids don't question why things are one way for them and different for another student.

When the participants were asked what experiences or ideas had influenced their philosophies of management and discipline, Leslie stated that one of the most important factors in this process for her was her realization of certain personality traits which would affect the way she needed to run her classroom, specifically that of needing to feel in control:

I like to know I'm in control of things, and I couldn't be in a classroom where things were out of control. I know I like things that are structured, just to make sure there's some order to things. And that's how I will run a classroom, because I know that that's how I have to, and I know that there are kids who need order in their day and order in their discipline.

When the discussion moved to the question of how their teacher education courses in college had influenced their beliefs about management and discipline, Leslie stated that she felt her college was "so liberal" that she often did not agree with what her professors

told her and walked out of classes feeling that what they taught her "would not necessarily work, like with my views and like in the real world and not in the fake classroom that they're creating for you." An exception to this for Leslie was an Educational Strategies class in which the professor taught the students many educational theories but also focused on their application to real classrooms:

> …which is a lot more helpful than like having me memorize the theory, write a paper on it, and think I'm going to know how to use it. Because I don't…knowing how to use a theory is more helpful than knowing a theory.

In her journal for week 6 (3-25-03), Leslie wrote about her experiences working with Walter, a student with whom she was conducting an individual child study as required by one of her methods courses. Leslie conducted "several analyses" of Walter's literacy skills and concluded that most of his problems involved high frequency words, as he appeared to have "an excellent level of phonemic awareness" but struggled with words that could not be decoded. Therefore Leslie decided to focus her series of lessons with Walter on the concept of high frequency words. She based her lessons on a book on spiders, a topic of interest to Walter, and it was immediately "evident" to her that he struggled to recognize high frequency words that could not be decoded easily, such as "have" and "come." Leslie implemented a strategy based on the work of Fountas and Pinnell in which she and Walter chose words, wrote them on cards, built them with magnetic letters, mixed them up, and unscrambled the words both with and without the cards as a reference.

Leslie reported that this activity had gone "extremely well" and that Ms. Taylor planned on making this activity part of Walter's daily routine, which led to another comment by Leslie about how much she appreciated the way Ms. Taylor integrated her

presence usefully and meaningfully into the classroom. Ms. Taylor often asked Leslie for suggestions about ideas and strategies to use with her students; Leslie felt this boosted her confidence in her teaching abilities and made her feel "like a real teacher in her eyes, which not all cooperating teachers do."

The second group dilemma discussion was also held on 3-25-03, but Leslie did not attend.

Leslie did not submit a journal entry for her seventh week in the classroom. In her journal entry for week 8 (4-1-03), Leslie wrote about another lesson she had done with Walter, a "memory" type game with high frequency words. She included both new words and words with which Walter was familiar in order to avoid discouraging him, and felt that the lesson had been successful, as Walter appeared to enjoy the game. Leslie hoped that the repeated exposure to high frequency words and practice pronouncing them verbally would benefit Walter.

This journal entry included another commentary by Leslie on Ms. Taylor's classroom management system, one which was "not a formal and extremely structured system" and did not include behavior management strategies such as putting students' names on the board if they misbehaved. Instead, Leslie wrote, "the students are basically in charge of themselves and know the correct and expected behaviors of the classroom." Leslie reiterated how Ms. Taylor managed the students effectively through building strong personal relationships with them, refusing to tolerate inappropriate behavior, and reinforcing positive behavior.

Leslie also wrote that she was impressed with Ms. Taylor's ability to meet the academic needs of her students, which were widely varied. Students ranged from first to

third grade; some worked on phonics, some on word study; some could write, others could not; some could only print and others wrote in cursive; some struggled with math, while others left the room during math time to be in a regular classroom of their own grade. Therefore, Ms. Taylor had to "modify all her activities to meet the needs of each student," and Leslie admired her ability to do so.

However, Leslie noted that the diverse academic levels and needs of this group of students also made it difficult to implement certain instructional strategies. Leslie concluded her journal entry with a comment about Writer's Workshop, a new activity in many classrooms in the school that academic year. Ms. Taylor had been struggling with the implementation of this process, since some students still needed to focus on phonics and word study, some could sketch out simple stories, and some were working on developing their writing in a more sophisticated way. "This is definitely a dilemma that needs to be worked on," Leslie wrote, "but it seems that overall, the classroom runs effectively and efficiently."

On 4-8-03, Leslie attended the third group dilemma discussion, the topic of which was the question of how teachers could maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Leslie stated first that although she had seen classrooms where there was no physical contact between the teacher and students; she also shared a story about her aunt, a teacher who had strict rules about how physically close she would be to students, restricting her touching to the top of the students' heads only. However, Leslie reported, Ms. Taylor was "really friendly" with her students, giving them hugs, having them sit in her lap when she read to them, and generally being "totally loving with them." Leslie was not sure why Ms. Taylor chose this practice, whether it was a wise decision on Ms. Taylor's part for her own

sake, and whether she could ever behave in exactly the same way as Ms. Taylor when she

had her own classroom:

> I don't know if it's because of the situation that they're in the public school and
> they don't get, like, hugged a lot at home, and they're not spoken to nicely, and
> treated like they are cared about. And I don't know if it's a good thing, or if she
> could like be putting herself at risk, when she's not doing anything wrong, she's
> just caring about the students. And I just never know if I should be in that position,
> because they hug me, and it's something I'm not comfortable with, but it's just the
> way it is in the classroom.

At one point during the discussion, the participants began sharing stories about
experiences they had had as students wherein teachers did not maintain appropriate
boundaries with students. Leslie shared the story of her high school track coaches, a
husband and wife who also taught math in her school. These two coaches were "very
devoted" to the track team, often purchasing uniforms and equipment for the students out
of their own money, let the students "hang out" at their house, drove them to all their
meets, etc. Leslie felt that these coaches wanted the team to succeed at their sport, but the
fact that they were academic teachers as well this made having a clear and comfortable
relationship with them difficult:

> The whole relationship with everyone and the coaches was so blurry…your whole
> life was affected, because they were like a surrogate parents, your coach and your
> teacher. So there were no lines at all…you wouldn't be one of his favorites in
> class, if you weren't on the team…class ended up being like a big track meeting.
> Things were just weird…it was a really weird situation.

On 4-15-03, Leslie conducted her second observed lesson and I interviewed her afterward. The lesson consisted of Leslie reading a selection of *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* by Dr. Seuss, and then leading students in a sensory activity. She distributed quantities of "oobleck" to all the students (a green, sticky, doughy, moldable substance concocted from cornstarch and other household ingredients), had students explore it with their five senses, and then asked them to make observations about the physical aspects of the substance; Leslie recorded their observations on a chart. Leslie stated that the activity had gone well, that it had been messy but that the children had appeared to enjoy it. She had expected the students to have less trouble coming up with observations about the substance than they did, finding that they appeared to be holding back from sharing unless they could come up with a very complicated observation (rather than using simple descriptive sentences to state how they thought it looked, felt, smelled, etc.). Leslie felt proud to have provided what she thought was a meaningful science experience for the students since they rarely had any science at all; other than a weekly visit to a science specialist which Leslie felt was not the most educative experience for them:

I haven't heard great things about it. I think he shows a lot of movies, and things that are not really hands-on. Which is kind of sad, especially for this group of kids. Like, I could even see when we were doing the observations, some of them struggling through it, because they can't sit still that long, like to do a group observation.

Leslie felt that the students had all gotten something from her lesson, especially in light of the lack of science activities in their classroom. "Even if they just like explored it, and thought things in their head and didn't say them out loud, that's kind of all I wanted,"

she stated. "Even if they just at least at this point think science might be fun, that's all I was kind of going for, because they don't do much." Leslie reflected on the possible reasons that the students were exposed to so little science and how these factors also decreased students' experiences in other subject areas as well:

There's such a huge focus on literacy and how low the scores are and that's all they focus on. Like the literacy block is hours and hours. I don't understand…I don't even know if I totally agree with the way they do it here. But it's such a focus here, like we don't have time for anything else. Like even art, we very rarely do art, and it's not even real art, it's drawing pictures. So I think everything gets pushed aside for the reading, so they can pass the third grade reading tests.

Leslie continued reflecting on the school's heavy focus on literacy, wondering if the steps that were being taken to strengthen students' literacy skills were even successful. She had observed both Writer's Workshop and Guided Reading in Ms. Taylor's classroom, but because the students were all at such different levels of reading and writing ability, she did not feel assured that the students were receiving the benefit of those processes:

I just think that it's not really working in here…not that I know that something else would work, and maybe it works in other classrooms here, but I don't think it works much here. She has to do that, but I don't see [Writer's Workshop and Guided Reading] working. And I don't see any connection between any of the literacy programs here. Like, I don't see a connection between Writer's Workshop and their reading…they're not getting anywhere in writing, really…So I don't even know what could be done about it.

Leslie submitted her final reflective essay on 5-29-03. She chose to write about the dilemma of whether standardized tests were a valuable way of measuring and improving teacher performance and student learning or a simplistic measure that limited the way students were evaluated and perceived and might lead to "teaching to the test."

"This statement [of the dilemma question] expresses very thoroughly the struggle that I feel concerning standardized testing," Leslie began. She wrote that while she was aware of the complaints many teachers had about the restrictions placed on them as a result of the use of standardized tests, "I believe that mandated standardized testing is something that is important for both teachers and students." Leslie believed that standardized tests were a legitimate method for assuring a quality education for all students and a fair way "for teachers to be judged against their peers," and that they allowed states and schools to compare teaching successes in the classroom "and adjust the learning situations as necessary."

The use of standardized testing, Leslie stated, allowed for an accurate and unbiased way to assess which schools or districts might need assistance and to check that mandated material was taught appropriately. It provided a method for teachers to see how their students understood the material they taught "as well as requiring the teachers to teach the information in such a way that it can be synthesized and used in solving many different problems." The teacher had the responsibility not only for making sure the students learned the necessary material but also for providing different types of learning experiences in preparing students for the tests: "Teachers can use the constructivist ideas they are excited about while also being given the opportunity to learn in various ways, which can benefit many different students' learning styles." Leslie also believed that

standardized testing benefited the educational system as a whole because it ensured that teachers were held accountable for successfully fostering student learning, which would provide an impetus for teachers to teach to the very best of their ability.

Leslie concluded her essay by expressing her disagreement with the idea that standardized testing would necessarily limit the way students were perceived and treated in schools:

> I feel that standardized testing does not limit the way the child is perceived in anyone's eyes but those of the state. The state does not necessarily need to see the student as a whole person, because the testing is not supposed to be a direct reflection on the student, but one on the teacher and the teacher's ability to teach all children the material that is necessary. A good teacher can teach the necessary materials in ways that are engaging and challenging through his or her knowledge of the student and of constructivist ideals.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Leslie during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Leslie appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Leslie's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Leslie's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Leslie's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Note: As was the case with Melissa, Leslie's data sources were fewer than those of some other participants (she submitted only five journal entries with no second iterations, for example), so I attempted once again to be vigilant about refraining from "forcing" an interpretation on her statements with regard to reflective judgment simply because there were fewer statements to interpret. However, even though her data sources were fewer than some other participants' data, Leslie seemed more inclined to reflect on her beliefs in her data than simply to report observations and make technical reflections about practice, so several her statements still had considerable value in an exploration of her reflective judgment.

Dilemmas of Practice and Leslie's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: What is the best way to teach reading to a special education class of first through third graders?

Leslie addressed this dilemma in several of her journal entries and one of her post-observation interviews. In her journal for week 2 (2-11-03), Leslie reported that her class spent a great deal of time on phonics and word study, which she thought was "definitely beneficial" to this group of "fairly low performing students," many of whom appeared to have serious difficulty with phonemic awareness and decoding words. In the same journal entry, Leslie stated that she had also observed Ms. Taylor implementing Writer's Workshop as a means for strengthening the students' reading and writing skills but that this process was "lost" on many of the children because their sight word vocabularies were too limited to permit them to compose text without frustration and because the diverse academic needs of the class made it difficult for Ms. Taylor to have enough time to personalize this process by working with each individual student.

Later, in journal 8 (4-1-03), Leslie revisited the topic of Writer's Workshop, commenting that although she admired Ms. Taylor's attempts to implement it as required by the school's administration, doing so was obviously a challenging task, the results of which were not clearly successful. Since some of the students were working on basic phonics and word study, others were beginning to integrate their decoding knowledge and phonemic awareness with an understanding of story structure, and still others were able to produce several pages of writing with ease, Leslie felt that the vast diversity of the students' academic abilities and needs hindered the potential of the process in this classroom.

In journal 4 (3-11-03), Leslie discussed the lesson she had done introducing the phoneme /n/ to the students using the Orton-Gillingham program. Leslie had implemented both the three-step drill and multi-sensory activities suggested by the program's manual, but she wondered whether the students might have been better served by an integration of the two procedures, sensing that the length of the lesson was too long or overwhelming for the students. "They have a hard time with doing something for so long…I felt like it was almost too much," she wrote.

Leslie continued reflecting on the processes by which her students were learning to read and write in her second post-observation interview (4-15-03). Despite the school's strong focus on the "literacy block," Leslie commented, it did not appear that the strategies implemented for teaching reading to her class were as successful as one might hope:

I just think that it's not really working in here…not that I know that something else would work, and maybe it works in other classrooms, here, but I don't think it works much here. She has to do that, but I don't see [Writer's Workshop and

Guided Reading] working. And I don't see any connection between any of the literacy programs here. Like, I don't see a connection between Writer's Workshop and their reading…they're not getting anywhere in writing, really.

Leslie did not address this dilemma at length, so it would not be advisable to base an assessment of her reflective judgment level solely on her response to this dilemma, but she made several statements that could provide insight into her reflective judgment level. The statements Leslie made about this dilemma suggested a Quasi-Reflective level of reflective judgment on the whole. For example, Leslie seemed quite aware that the challenge of teaching this diverse group of students to read and write was a complex dilemma with no simple solution and that knowledge about how to resolve the dilemma was far from certain. This was evident in the way she communicated her confusion and uncertainty about the dilemma ("…not that I think that something else would work, and maybe it works in other classrooms here, but I don't see it working here…I don't even know what could be done about it"). Leslie appeared to be acknowledging the uncertainty of the situation and, though she was perplexed by the dilemma, she did not seem to be experiencing as much of the confusion and anxiety that are experienced by Pre-Reflective thinkers in the face of uncertainty. It is also interesting to note that Leslie used the term "dilemma" to describe the problem she saw in the implementation of Writer's Workshop; her use of this language was another possible indicator that she understood that complex problems existed to which there were no simple solutions.

Quasi-Reflective reasoning was also demonstrated by Leslie in her rejection of the idea of a rigid application of an instructional method developed by "experts" (Orton-Gillingham) in favor of one that took into account the unique needs of individual students,

the class as a whole, and the context in which she was teaching. This suggested that she

was not willing to accept the knowledge provided by authorities and experts at face value

(a reasoning pattern characteristic of at least Stage 4) and that she viewed the context as an

important influence on her beliefs about which instructional strategies should be

implemented and how this should be done (which is more typical of Stage 5).

Dilemma 2: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in

professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

Leslie considered several aspects of her own professional development through the

course of her field experience. First, in journal 2 (2-11-03), Leslie wrote of her resolve to

use her field experience as a means for evaluating and improving her teaching practice.

She believed that she had grown as a professional since her first field experience in terms

of confidence and knowledge of successful teaching strategies, but she suggested that

engaging in professional development would be a subtle, complex, and ongoing process:

> Evaluating your own growth and development as a teacher is something that I have
>
> found very hard to do. I feel that it is not something that I can just see and notice at
>
> any time, but there are times when I will react to a situation or watch another
>
> person react and realize that I have grown and developed into a better teacher…I
>
> have grown as a teacher, from an observer to a leader.

When asked during her first post-observation interview (3-11-03) how her field

experiences had influenced her professional development, Leslie stated that she found field

experiences valuable because they taught her how to implement the educational theories

she had learned in her college courses in a practical way. Leslie expressed some

dissatisfaction with the way her college professors sometimes presented material about

teaching as though the theory were the most important part of learning to teach and as though and that theory could be implemented easily and successfully in the same way with any group of students; she also suggested that spending more time in elementary classrooms would give professors a more realistic view of the instructional strategies they advocated:

> You may not be able to walk into your classroom and pull out the Guided Reading bok and just start teaching from it, and I think they like to pretend that's what you can do. Like, a lot is ideal. I feel that the professors haven't been in a classroom in so many years…they are so far removed from teaching, that they can't even relate to what's going on. It would help a lot of the professors to supervise a student teacher or two, just to see how things actually are in schools, compared to what they think.

In group dilemma discussion 3 (4-8-03), a question related to this dilemma was posed to the group, that of how a teacher could maintain healthy and productive professional boundaries. Leslie related stories she had heard about teachers who made it a rule to have only extremely limited physical contact, or none at all, with their students in order to keep boundaries firm, prevent potentially dangerous situations from arising, and protect themselves legally. However, Leslie found that Ms. Taylor did the opposite of this, behaving in a "very friendly" and "totally loving" manner with her students, giving them hugs, holding their hands, and allowing them to sit in her lap at reading time. Leslie felt she might be able to understand why Ms. Taylor perceived that the students needed this type of attention, but she was uncomfortable with engaging in this type of practice herself and wondered whether this choice of behavior was wise on Ms. Taylor's part:

I don't know if it's because of the situation that they're in the public school and they don't get, like, hugged a lot at home, and they're not spoken to nicely, and treated like they are not cared about. And I don't know if it's a good thing, or if she could like be putting herself at risk, when she's not doing anything wrong, because she's just caring about the students. And I just never know if I should be in that position, because they hug me, and it's something I'm not comfortable with, but it's just the way it is in the classroom.

Leslie's approach to this dilemma revealed many signs of Quasi-Reflective thinking. First, Leslie appeared to be much more attuned to the complexity of the dilemmas she encountered and the uncertainty of knowledge surrounding those dilemmas than an individual operating at the Pre-Reflective level would be, although she appeared not yet to have the more sophisticated resources to find resolutions to those dilemmas that she considered justifiable. This was apparent when Leslie discussed the complexity of assessing one's own professional growth, as well as when she admitted her discomfort at the professional boundaries set in her classroom by Ms. Taylor but acknowledged that there might be meaningful factors influencing Ms. Taylor's behavior (although, as Quasi-Reflective thinkers also tend to do, Leslie might also have been equating her own beliefs about the affective needs of public school students with actual evidence about the dilemma). Leslie's statements in those two areas also suggested that she was at least outwardly open to re-examining and refining her practices and point of view in light of new information and experiences and to consider alternate points of view, another Quasi-Reflective characteristic.

Finally, Leslie's perspective about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the material she learned from her college professors in terms of facilitating her professional development indicated that she was probably functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level by suggesting that she did not believe that the knowledge provided by authority figures or experts should be accepted without question.

Dilemma 3: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Leslie addressed this dilemma in several different contexts over the course of the data collection period. In her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Leslie first described Ms. Taylor's system of management and discipline, which Leslie admired and found "very similar to how I feel." Leslie liked the way Ms. Taylor "doesn't allow chaos, but she does what she needs to do. She doesn't yell, but she's not easy on any of them." Leslie believed that in contrast to her previous cooperating teacher, who appeared to be easy on students with special needs, Ms. Taylor was actually "harder on [students with special needs] because she knows they're capable."

Leslie went on discussing what she perceived as the weaknesses of her previous cooperating teacher in this area, saying that the kids in that classroom (first graders in another public inner city school) were "out of control" and that the teacher did little about it. Leslie had had found this previous experience extremely uncomfortable and stressful, and she said that she had left that experience "turned off" to the idea of teaching in a public school but that she realized upon seeing Ms. Taylor's class that not all public school classrooms were like the one she had seen. Upon seeing the differences between her earlier placement and Ms. Taylor's class, Leslie wondered whether "because of the teacher

I judged the students unfairly?" and expressed that "I am definitely not so against working with kids in an inner city as I was when I left there. I enjoy coming here, which is totally not what I expected."

In journal 4 (3-11-03), Leslie reflected about the part that discipline and management had played in her ability to conduct a lesson successfully. Leslie felt that the rapport she had begun to build with the class had contributed to the lesson having run smoothly. Leslie found that "they respect my authority as much a I respect their place in the classroom as a student," and felt this was due in large part to Ms. Taylor having created a positive classroom environment with a "good balance of respect and friendship between the teacher and the students." Leslie continued reflecting about Ms. Taylor's management system in journal 5 (3-18-03), writing that she found Ms. Taylor's style very different from what she had seen in previous placements. In Ms. Taylor's class, there were no behavior modification procedures such point/reward systems or writing students' names on the board and there were no strict rules; the rules by which the students were directed to govern their behavior were unspoken but understood. Ms. Taylor managed the class by promoting an atmosphere of constant respect between students and between students and the teacher. "She knows where these students come from, and that many have trouble with respect and authority," Leslie wrote; therefore, Ms. Taylor managed the class by being the students' friend and treating them as equals. Leslie reiterated her views about Ms. Taylor's management system in journal 8 (4-1-03), stating that she found this system, which was based on positive personal relationships, respect, and accountability for one's behavior, to be more effective than a "formal and extremely structure" behavior management system.

"The students are basically in charge of themselves and know the correct and expected behaviors of the classroom."

Leslie made several comments about this dilemma during group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), at which the question of how much control a teacher needed to exert over students in order to manage a classroom successfully was presented as the topic for discussion. Leslie once again cited Ms. Taylor's management and discipline procedures as a productive example to follow because it focused on making sure individual students' needs were met, even if these needs varied widely from student to student:

> She doesn't pretend that things are fair, because she knows that everyone's
> different, everyone needs different things…and everyone just accepts that things
> are not the same for everyone…the kids don't question why things are one way for
> them and different for another student.

When the participants were asked what experiences or beliefs had influenced their points of view about discipline and management, Leslie noted that she was very aware that a certain personality trait of hers might have considerable influence on the way she managed a classroom. "I like to know I'm in control of things," Leslie stated, "and I know that there are kids who need order in their day and order in their discipline." Because of this, Leslie knew that she would need to run a classroom in a very organized, structured way. Leslie also commented again that the material she learned in her college courses about management was of only marginal usefulness because the philosophy of her teacher education program seemed "so liberal" to her that she had difficulty integrating it with her personal views, and because of the lack of attention paid to the decisions the teacher must make in applying a theory of management to a specific group of students in a real

classroom. Leslie remarked that learning how to use a theory was more helpful than memorizing it and writing a paper on it and that many of the things she was taught in her courses about management did not work "with my views and in the real world and not in the fake classroom that they're creating for you."

Leslie's approach to this dilemma revealed mainly Quasi-Reflective patterns of reasoning. First, she appeared cognizant of the complexity and uncertainty involved with this dilemma, a perspective characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinking, when she compared the management styles of two different cooperating teachers, reflected on the ways the two teachers' choices about management might have affected the students, and advocated the use of a system which recognized that a teacher might have to take different types of action when dealing with different students. When Leslie reflected that she might have judged the nature of inner city students unfairly or inaccurately based on the weak management practices of the teacher and reconsidered the prospect of teaching in an inner city public school upon realizing that not all such classrooms were the same, Leslie showed that she was open to re-evaluating her beliefs based on new information and experiences (characteristic of at least Stage 4). This also showed that Leslie was considering the issue of whether or not she approved of her former cooperating teacher's management practices in the broader context of how a teacher's management decisions might perpetuate stereotypes about the behavior of inner city public school students (characteristic of Stage 5).

Leslie's perspective about the knowledge provided by authority figures and experts suggested a more skeptical and discerning attitude than that usually found in Pre-Reflective thinkers, as she rejected the model of management and discipline provided by a

previous cooperating teacher and the knowledge supplied by some of her college professors. In addition, although she steadfastly clung to Ms. Taylor as a model of behavior and management, she appeared to do so because she truly agreed with the principles behind Ms. Taylor's practices and not simply because she was an authority figure to Leslie. Furthermore, although she admitted that her personality was one which demanded a sense of structure, order, and control, Leslie did not advocate management practices based on the theory that the teacher should have sole control and authority of the classroom, favoring instead the philosophy that successful classroom management was built on positive personal relationships, fair and equal treatment of individuals, and above all, respect. This also indicated that Leslie had probably moved beyond the Pre-Reflective level in which a great deal of emphasis is placed on authority figures as a source of knowledge and direction for one's actions.

Leslie's willingness to acknowledge the biases and personal interpretations that affected her beliefs about management and discipline, such as her personal need to feel "in control" of situations and her belief that some of the educational strategies presented by her university professors were too "liberal" for her, was typical of an individual operating at the Quasi-Reflective level (at least Stage 4). Finally, Leslie's agreement with Ms. Taylor's management practices based on the philosophy that each student had different needs and that therefore the teacher needed to make individualized decisions about how to help each student, and her rejection of the notion of learning management strategies based on an "ideal" or "fake" classroom suggested that she was also operating under the Quasi-Reflective (Stage 5) assumptions that one's point of view is influenced by the context in

which one functions and that individual interpretation is a necessary and legitimate part of the process of resolving a dilemma.

   Dilemma 4: How can a student teacher negotiate and fulfill her role in the classroom, both in terms of participating in student learning and cultivating a positive relationship with her cooperating teacher?

   Leslie made a few statements regarding her beliefs about this dilemma. In her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Leslie remarked that one of the reasons she felt she was successful in conducting her lesson was that Ms. Taylor had made Leslie an integral part of the classroom since her first visit by giving her appropriate responsibilities and encouraging her to take initiative in the classroom, discussing teaching strategies with her, and communicating to the students that Leslie was a teacher and that they should treat her with respect. This was in sharp contrast, Leslie said, to the way her previous cooperating teacher had treated her, which Leslie felt had been a strong factor in her having had a frustrating and dissatisfying experience in her last placement.. "I never felt part of anything there," Leslie said. "If I walked in, I don't even think the kids knew who I was. I felt like I was treated almost as just some outsider who came, every time I went there." Leslie reiterated this belief in journal 4 (3-11-03), stating that Ms. Taylor's treatment of her had inspired confidence in her own ability which had had a positive impact on her teaching her lesson:

   This is probably the first cooperating teacher who has taken an interest in me as a person instead of someone who sits in their classroom each week and helps with random tasks. She has actually made me an important part of the class.

This theme continued to be prevalent in Leslie's reflections about her cooperating teacher and her role in her placement classroom. In group dilemma discussion 1 (3-19-03), Leslie again expressed her appreciation of the way Ms. Taylor had treated her like a professional colleague and integrated her into the classroom. "It makes it a lot easier being in a placement where you actually feel respected and supported by your teacher, and not just like their little follower." Finally, in journal 6 (3-25-03), Leslie wrote that she felt gratified that Ms. Taylor intended to use the word study strategies Leslie had implemented with Walter on a continuing basis, both with Walter and other students. Having Ms. Taylor accept her ideas and incorporate them into the regular operation of the classroom made Leslie feel much more confident, "like a real teacher in her eyes, which not all cooperating teachers do."

While Leslie's statements regarding this dilemma were not in-depth or frequent enough to provide the basis for a comprehensive assessment of her reflective judgment, her approach to the dilemma did show signs that Leslie was operating at the Quasi-Reflective level, which does not contradict the findings of this analysis as a whole. This is primarily based on the assumptions about authority figures as sources of knowledge implied by Leslie's statements. First, Leslie clearly did not agree with her previous cooperating teacher's behavior toward her, showing that she definitely did not accept the knowledge provided by authority figures and experts without question as an individual functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level might be prone to do. Leslie's comments also suggested that she did not regard anyone's status as an authority figure or expert to be the primary means through which her own role in her placement classroom should be negotiated. This was clear from her gratification at playing a meaningful and significant role in fostering student

learning and her desire to be treated "as a person" and "like a real teacher" rather than "just their little follower."

Dilemma 5: How can educators successfully collaborate with each other in a school, and what effect does teacher collaboration have on the school environment and on student learning?

Leslie made only one reference to this dilemma, but this statement appeared to support an overall assessment of her reflective judgment level as Quasi-Reflective. In her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Leslie discussed the differences she had observed between her previous placement school and School B. One of these differences was that she perceived the level of collaboration among teachers at School B to be much more extensive than what she had observed in her previous placement, where she rarely observed teachers planning or meeting together and had never met a teacher other than her cooperating teacher. She wondered whether the collaboration that occurred between teachers had an affect on the environment of the school as a whole and therefore on the students' achievement and behavior. "There's interaction between everyone [at School B]," Leslie stated. "I don't know if that changes things with the students, or the way the teachers are friendly, I don't know if the students notice that and that makes a different environment, but it's totally different here. Although Leslie did not delve further into her beliefs about this question, her statement suggested that she was considering the complexity of the dilemma and acknowledging the uncertainty inherent in resolving the dilemma more fully than an individual operating at the Pre-Reflective level would be likely to do.

Dilemma 6: What if the dilemma itself is a student? How can a teacher resolve the dilemma of helping a student succeed when that student appears to face many complicated and serious challenges to academic progress and performance at once, or it is not clear which issue is causing him or her difficulty?

Leslie addressed this dilemma as she considered the needs of two individual students in her class. In post-observation interview 1 (3-11-03), Leslie discussed how during her lesson, she had mentally debated what steps she should take with Arthur, a student who stayed in the back of the room, was silent through most of the lesson, and did not participate at all until Leslie was finally coax him to take a necklace and engage in the multi-sensory aspect of the lesson. Leslie had many questions about how she had approached Arthur and what other choices she might have made, as well as about the possible reasons for his difficulty in participating: Was he quiet because of shyness, or because, being "below where everyone else is," he did not understand the task? Did he not want to participate because the concept was too difficult for him and he preferred to work on something at which he felt confident and could be successful, such as his word search? Should Leslie have encouraged him more or insisted he participate? Although Leslie was not able to answer these questions definitively, she was quite engaged in the process of generating them during her interview.

In journal 6 (3-25-03), Leslie wrote about the experience she had working with another student, Walter, with whom she was conducting the individual student study required by one of her methods courses. After conducting "several analyses" of Walter's reading and writing ability, Leslie determined that although Walter had a strong sense of phonemic awareness and adequate decoding skills, he had difficulty with comprehension

and writing because he was unable to read high frequency words that he could not decode phonetically. Leslie structured a series of experiences designed to strengthen Walter's recognition of high frequency words; basing the lesson on a book about a topic of interest to Walter, Leslie attempted to engage him in meaningful study of these words. Upon implementing these strategies with Walter, Leslie reported that it had been "evident" that these types of experiences were needed and was proud when Ms. Taylor expressed her intention to implement the strategies Leslie had devised with Walter on an ongoing basis and with other students in the future. In journal 8 (4-1-03), Leslie further described the efforts she had made to help strengthen Walter's skills at recognizing high frequency words, attempting to make the activities she presented to him challenging but not discouraging to him; she reported that he seemed to enjoy the lessons she did with him and appeared to be making progress.

Because of the brevity and infrequency of Leslie's statements regarding this dilemma, they should not be used as the sole or primary indicator of her reflective judgment level. However, some of Leslie's statements revealed probable assumptions about knowledge which support the overall analysis of her reflective judgment level represented by her data. This can be primarily attributed to her reflections and questions about Arthur during her post-observation interview. In these statements, Leslie appeared to show substantial awareness of the complexity of the dilemma of helping a unique student to learn in a classroom environment, recognition of the uncertainty inherent in obtaining knowledge about the dilemma and using it to justify a particular course of action, a highly questioning attitude about Arthur's situation as a whole and her own actions, and a willingness to re-evaluate her actions and beliefs in light of new information and

experiences. These are all characteristics associated with Quasi-Reflective reasoning (at least Stage 4).

Dilemma 7: What is the importance, and the most effective and beneficial way, of implementing science instruction with elementary students?

Leslie addressed this dilemma mainly in her second post-observation interview (4-15-03), in which she discussed a science lesson she had taught. After reading aloud a selection of Dr. Seuss' *Bartholomew and the Oobleck,* Leslie had distributed to each student a paper plate full of a sticky, doughy, green substance and had them make observations, which she recorded, about the substance. The students had had more difficulty than Leslie had expected in coming up with observations to contribute, which surprised and somewhat distressed her, but she believed that any experience in science that she provided the students was probably beneficial:

> …even if they just like explored it, and thought things in their head and didn't say them out loud, that's kind of all I wanted…even if they just at least at this point think science might be fun, that's all I was kind of going for, because they don't do much [science].

The science experiences to which her students were exposed, Leslie continued, were far from regular or intensive. They saw a science specialist once a week who, according to Leslie, tended to show a lot of movies and did very little hands-on science exploration with the students, and Leslie felt that as a result of this, the students' knowledge and understanding of science and their ability to engage in the scientific process was severely lacking. "Which is kind of sad, especially for this group of kids," Leslie reflected. "Like, I could even see when we were doing the observations, some of

them were struggling through it." Leslie speculated that one of the reasons the students' science education was so limited was that the school placed such a strong emphasis on literacy and preparing students to pass the state-mandated standardized test that little time was left for any other pursuits:

> There's such a focus here on literacy and how low the scores are and that's all they focus on. Like the literacy block is hours and hours. I don't understand…I don't even know if I totally agree with the way they do it here. But it's such a focus here, like we don't have time for anything else. Like even art, we very rarely do art, and it's not even real art, it's drawing pictures. So I think everything gets pushed aside for the reading, so they can pass the third grade reading tests.

Leslie's statements about this dilemma did not provide enough information about her beliefs to warrant reliance on them as the main indicator of her reflective judgment level, but it did appear that she was manifesting some Quasi-Reflective tendencies in her approach to the dilemma. When Leslie proposed, for example, that her lesson could be considered successful because her students were engaged in exploration of a science concept in a hands-on way, even though they were not able to produce a long list of observations about the substance, she could have been indicating that she believed that there was uncertainty inherent in the process of attaining knowledge and therefore advocating that her students be given opportunities to take an active and participatory role in formulating scientific knowledge and assimilating this new knowledge into their understandings of science as a whole.

Leslie's statements hinted at a skeptical, typically Quasi-Reflective belief about authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge; this occurred when she expressed

disagreement with the science curriculum implemented by School B, the emphasis on literacy to the exclusion of other subjects which she perceived in School B, and with the science specialist's instructional methods. Leslie's assumption that her students had had difficulty with her lesson because of their lack of exposure to science education also suggested that she was equating her personal beliefs on the matter with evidence to support her point of view about the science curriculum, a reasoning style characteristic of Stage 4. Finally, Leslie's reference to School B's emphasis on the literacy block as a means for improving students' reading scores on the state-mandated standardized test could have suggested that she was able to examine the dilemma in a broader context, relating it to the impact of standardized testing on the field of education as a whole.

Dilemma 8: Are high-stakes and/or standardized tests a valuable instrument for assessing and improving student learning, or do they limit what teachers teach and negatively affect the ways in which students develop and demonstrate understanding of academic material?

Leslie addressed this dilemma in her final reflective essay (5-29-03). She first commented that this question "expresses very thoroughly the struggle that I feel concerning standardized testing." Leslie believed that standardized testing was a highly useful means of ensuring that every student received a quality education, that the "necessary material" was taught appropriately, and that action could be taken to make changes when students did not learn the necessary material successfully. Leslie also believed that standardized testing was a positive influence on teachers' practice because it provided a means for them to be "judged against their peers," which would cause them to be held accountable for student learning and motivate them to do their very best to ensure

that each student learned. This did not prevent teachers from teaching in a meaningful way, Leslie asserted, because "a good teacher can teach the necessary materials in ways that are engaging and challenging through his or her knowledge of the student and of constructivist ideals."

Leslie concluded her essay with the claim that standardized testing only limited the way a child was perceived "in the eyes of the state;" she felt this was not a drawback to their use when one considered their purpose, which was to ascertain in which schools or classrooms successful teaching was not occurring and to implement changes to improve those situations. "The state does not need to see the student as a whole person, because the testing is not supposed to be a direct reflection on the student, but one on the teacher and the teacher's ability to teach all the children the material that is necessary," Leslie wrote.

On the whole, Leslie's approach to this dilemma appeared to represent early Quasi-Reflective reasoning. While Leslie tended in this case to display a rather unquestioning (and apparently Pre-Reflective) attitude toward the authority and expertise of those who designed standardized tests, analyzed their results, and made recommendations for action to be taken based on their interpretation of the tests, most of her other statements were typical of individuals functioning at about Stage 4, or the earlier stage of the Quasi-Reflective level. For example, Leslie's comment about the "struggle" she experienced facing this dilemma indicated that she was showing an awareness of the complexity and uncertainty inherent in the dilemma, which escapes Pre-Reflective thinkers. This could also indicate that Leslie might have been experiencing the difficulty individuals at Stage 4 tend to experience in taking up a strong position on a dilemma (sometimes appearing to go "back and forth" about their views).

Leslie did not rely primarily on direct observation, personal experience, or authority figures to justify her point of view as Pre-Reflective thinkers tend to do; instead, she attempted to justify her beliefs about standardized testing by presenting arguments based on evidence. Although this suggested that Leslie had moved beyond the Pre-Reflective level, she was not yet able to do use evidence to support her beliefs in a sophisticated, logical, and consistent manner, and her reasoning appeared more typical of Stage 4 (early Quasi-Reflective) than Stage 5 (late Quasi-Reflective). For example, Leslie often equated her personal beliefs for evidence; this occurred when she made assertions about what a "good teacher" should be able to do in teaching necessary materials even in the context of being pressured to elicit high performance on standardized tests, proposed that the prospect of having their teaching performance "judged against their peers" would have the effect of motivating teachers, and insisted that it was not detrimental for "the state" to base decisions about educational policy and improvement on the narrow representation of individual students' learning provided by standardized tests.

Furthermore, the consistency in general of Leslie's justification of her point of view on this dilemma was slightly questionable. It is interesting to note that in her essay, Leslie put forth the position that high-stakes standardized tests were useful and not inherently harmful to student learning or the educational process. However, in her eighth journal entry (4-1-03) just two weeks earlier, Leslie had made the assertion that School B's strong emphasis on the literacy block (primarily as a means for improving students' test scores) was having the injurious effect of severely limiting the time spent on other subject areas, implying that this could prevent students from receiving a well-rounded education. (It was not clear whether Leslie actually held different beliefs about standardized testing when she

wrote those two pieces of data, or whether she perhaps believed that although standardized testing was useful and beneficial, School B was simply not approaching the testing process in an appropriate manner and that this was the cause of the problem she observed concerning the exclusion of science and art from students' school experience.) This type of reasoning, in which an individual attempts to incorporate evidence into the justification of a point of view but is not yet sophisticated enough to gather, evaluate, and utilize evidence in a logical and consistent manner, is typical of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective reasoning.

Summary of Leslie's Reflective Judgment Level

Although Leslie did not submit as much data as did some of the other participants of this study, the statements that she made with regard to dilemmas of practice she encountered in her field experience still provided considerable insight into her level of reflective judgment. The majority of Leslie's data pointed to Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective, as the level of reflective judgment at which she was predominantly operating during her field experience. Occasionally, she appeared to be operating at a slightly more sophisticated stage (Stage 5, late Quasi-Reflective) and, very infrequently, she exhibited some characteristics of Stage 3 (late Pre-Reflective).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Leslie's data was her willingness to acknowledge and explore uncertainty regarding dilemmas of practice. She often said "I don't know…" when discussing her beliefs about specific issues, questioned what she observed and believed, and seemed to recognize that there would be no simple solutions for the dilemmas she faced and that alternate points of view to her own existed and should be explored in the process of deciding on a course of action regarding a dilemma. This is a

significant step in an individual's progression through the reflective judgment levels which separates Quasi-Reflective thinking from Pre-Reflective, in which knowledge is generally considered right or wrong and little gray area is believed to exist between them. Acknowledging uncertainty is an important step in an individual's becoming more able to understand the complexity of ill-defined dilemmas and learning to justify one's beliefs in light of the subtleties of the dilemma itself and the evidence that exists to support different points of view.

Leslie's attitude toward authority figures and experts was generally characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers as well. Unlike Pre-Reflective thinkers, who tend to regard the knowledge provided by authorities as right simply because of someone's status as an authority figure or consider some authorities good sources of knowledge and some bad, Quasi-Reflective thinkers have begun to recognize that it is the nature and quality of the knowledge provided, not the fact that it comes from an "expert" or authority figure, which determines the correctness and validity of the knowledge in the mind of the knower, and they are skeptical about accepting what is told to them by authority figures at face value. Leslie exhibited this characteristic frequently when she rejected many of the teaching practices of her former cooperating teacher and pointed out the dissonance she perceived between the "ideal" classroom described by her college professors in their teaching and the "reality" she witnessed of life in a classroom. Leslie did hold steadfastly to her view that Ms. Taylor, an authority figure/expert in the context of Leslie's field experience, was an excellent example on which to model her own practice, but she usually supported her views about Ms. Taylor's teaching practices by describing the effect she saw those

practices having on the students and on her own professional development rather than by simply being, as Leslie said, a "little follower."

Rather than base her decisions on what was told to her by authority figures, Leslie acknowledged many of her own biases and interpretations of dilemmas (such as when she admitted her personal need to feel "in control" of a classroom) and attempted to use evidence to support her point of view. However, as is often characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 4, Leslie's evaluation and use of evidence was not always completely consistent, and she sometimes equated her personal beliefs with actual evidence to justify her position (such as in her final essay when she presented beliefs about the effects of standardized testing as evidence to support her point of view).

Leslie also sometimes showed that she was probably close to being capable of functioning at Stage 5, the later stage of Quasi-Reflective thinking when she took into account the context in which she made decisions about ill-defined dilemmas of practice, such as when she discussed the relative success of strategies such as Writer's Workshop in the context of her classroom as compared to other classrooms. Leslie also showed glimpses of Stage 5 reasoning when she expressed the belief that individual interpretation was a legitimate and necessary part of the process of finding a justifiable resolution to a dilemma (for example, when she expressed the belief that a teacher needed to meet students' academic and affective needs on an individualized basis rather than following a rigid universal procedure for teaching and managing a class). In general, Leslie's data strongly suggested that her primary operational level of reflective judgment was Stage 4 during the data collection period. Leslie's data are consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given

time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

We can only speculate on the possible differences between Leslie's data as it was submitted and the data that might exist had she submitted more journal iterations and taken part more fully in group discussions. Had she done so, the data might have provided a more thorough understanding of Leslie's reflective judgment, or it is possible that the process could even have stimulated her reflective judgment development, as will be discussed in the following section (although this is only conjecture).

Notes on the Reflective Process

Leslie participated in all four aspects of the reflective process employed in this study: dialogue journal entries, post-observation interviews, group dilemma discussions, and the final reflective essay. However, she participated in varying degrees in each element of the process, the most striking example of this being the somewhat limited manner in which she participated in the dialogue journal process. Leslie submitted only five initial entries and no second iterations despite reminders and encouragement. However, although she missed one of the group discussions, she did participate more fully in these discussions and in her post-observation interviews, during which she seemed willing to take time and make effort to reflect thoughtfully about her experiences and beliefs about knowledge, teaching, and learning. In addition, her final essay appeared to be a candid and considered expression of her beliefs on the dilemma of standardized testing and revealed several of the epistemic assumptions under which she was likely operating.

Leslie's engagement in the dialogue journal process was rather intriguing compared to that of many of the other participants. She submitted fewer entries than any other participant and never responded to prompts and probative questions about her beliefs, whereas eight of the other nine participants submitted at least eight initial entries and at least two second iterations. Her journal entries were also often brief, a page to a page and a half, and sometimes focused primarily on reporting of occurrences she witnessed and technical discussions of specific teaching strategies (which characterized to a great extent many of the other participants' initial entries). However, despite this, Leslie's initial entries did occasionally reveal deeper reflections about her observations and how they influenced her beliefs and professional development. Leslie's journal entry for week 2 (2-11-03), for example, contained an insightful comment about the difficulty of assessing and understanding one's own professional development, especially over a lengthy period of time. Her journal for week 4 (3-11-03) was mainly a reiteration of points she had made in her first post-observation interview which had also been that day, but she also wrote about how meaningful it was to her to be an integral and productive member contributing to the overall functioning of the classroom and her students' learning, a theme which she reiterated in journal 6 (3-25-03). In her journal entry for week 8 (4-1-03), Leslie gave a detailed description of Ms. Taylor's management practices and discussed *why* she felt they were so beneficial to the class, and she engaged in questioning and reflection about the implementation and relative success of Writer's Workshop in her classroom, a "dilemma that needs to be worked on."

It would have been interesting to see how much further Leslie might have taken her ability to engage in serious inquiry and deep reflection about issues and beliefs such as

these if she had written more in her journal entries and responded to probative questions and prompts, especially since the nature of many of her statements suggested that she was developmentally ready to engage intensively in this process. In the cases of some other participants, doing so appeared to stimulate further reflection and examination of beliefs and assumptions. However, it is of course impossible to know with any certainty precisely what effects might have resulted from further engagement in the dialogue journal process by Leslie.

In group dilemma discussions, Leslie made several comments that revealed her assumptions about knowledge and her stance toward re-examining her beliefs. In the first discussion (3-19-03), Leslie spoke to the group about her admiration for Ms. Taylor's management system and the reasons why she believed it worked so well, contrasted the management styles of Ms. Taylor and her previous cooperating teacher, expressed her gratification that Ms. Taylor treated her like an "equal" and integrated her into the students' learning experiences in a meaningful way, and discussed the reasons why she felt that some of her courses at the university prepared her for an idealized classroom and not one grounded in the reality of modern schools. All of these remarks seemed to show that Leslie was prepared to question and evaluate what she observed and experienced and that she was at least beginning to acknowledge the uncertainty and complexity inherent in dilemmas of practice. Leslie missed the second group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), but participated in the third, wherein the most striking statements she made concerned the conflict she felt about having physical contact and expressing affection with young students. Leslie described the "friendly" and "loving" manner in which Ms. Taylor interacted with her students and acknowledged that although she herself was not

comfortable behaving in this manner, she understood some reasons why Ms. Taylor might have a different philosophy from hers. This indicated that Leslie was at a stage of reflective judgment wherein she was capable of admitting that she was uncertain about how to resolve a dilemma and of examining alternate points of view to her own.

Post-observation interviews provided a similarly productive context for Leslie to articulate and explore her beliefs. In her first post-observation interview (3-11-03), Leslie made some insightful remarks about how being placed in Ms. Taylor's classroom had caused her to re-evaluate and ultimately change her beliefs about what it was like to teach in an inner city public school, beliefs which Leslie recognized had been heavily influenced by her previous placement but which she realized did not hold true in every inner city public school context. During this interview Leslie was also willing to question the action she had taken to help an individual student participate in her lesson, and she discussed the possible reasons why she believed some of her professors might focus much on theory in their classrooms and did not give their students an accurate sense of how that theory could be applied in practice. In her second post-observation interview (4-15-03), Leslie reflected not only on the technical aspects of the instructional strategies she had chosen, but also on the impact that limited science education might be having on her students, how the school's heavy emphasis on the literacy block might be contributing to this situation, and how successful the school's literacy program in general appeared to be with her students. When she made these statements, Leslie often acknowledged that she was not sure whether the position she took was the correct one, but showed a propensity to ask questions about dilemmas even when she could not answer them and to consider as many aspects of the

dilemma as possible, indicating again that she was open to re-examining her views and beginning to be cognizant of the uncertainty and complexity of the dilemmas.

Leslie's statements in her final essay (4-29-03) were similar in content and structure to those she made in other contexts, although despite her initial comment about the "struggle" she experienced regarding the question, she took a firmer position on the dilemma of standardized testing than she did when discussing other dilemmas and did not seem as apt to acknowledge the uncertainty of knowledge related to the dilemma. This still provided insight into Leslie's reflective judgment level because of the way in which she supported her position; she attempted to incorporate evidence to support her point of view, but was not yet able to do so completely consistently and sometimes used personal beliefs as "evidence" to support her position.

In conclusion, Leslie engaged in all aspects of the reflective process utilized here to different extents, and her statements in all reflective contexts provided insight into the level of reflective judgment at which she seemed to be functioning. Leslie's engagement in the dialogue journal process was quite limited compared to that of the other participants, and based on the observation that responding to prompts provided other participants with a means for extending and deepening their reflections about their observations and experiences, doing so might also have stimulated Leslie's reflection or even the development of her reflective judgment. However, there is no way to be certain either that this would have been the case or why she participated in such a limited manner in the dialogue journal process. In addition, Leslie appeared most able to acknowledge uncertainty, pose questions and explore the complexity of dilemmas of practice, and examine alternate points of view in post-observation interviews and group dilemma

discussions. This suggests that the element of social interaction or having time set aside specifically for reflection on dilemmas might have been a positive factor in her engagement in the process of reflecting on her beliefs. Therefore, based on Leslie's data, teacher educators should note that it might be a challenging task to elicit an ongoing dialogue process with some students through journaling, and that discussion of beliefs in a supportive, interactive context might be a valuable element of stimulating the process of reflection on one's beliefs in some individuals.

Case Study 9: Debbie

Part A: Description of Case

Debbie is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a junior in college majoring in Elementary Education at the time of this study. She grew up in the northeastern United States with her parents and three older sisters. In her spare time, she enjoys many different sports activities such as soccer, track, tennis and golf, playing the piano and violin, and doing arts and crafts. (Debbie was placed in a kindergarten classroom in School C. Debbie received a somewhat unusual placement in that she was paired up with another student teacher, Carol (also a participant in this study), in her placement classroom. Both student teachers attended the classroom on the same days and co-taught their observed lessons. (*All biographical information provided by Katie via personal e-mail correspondence, 4-19-03*)

In Debbie's first journal entry (2-3-03), she reported that she felt her first day in the new classroom had "proved that I have both grown and developed as a teacher." She believed that she had gained insight into the methods she wished to adopt in her teaching "through my observations of my cooperating teachers and other pre-practicum and full-practicum students." One aspect of her teaching in particular which Debbie believed she had developed was her philosophy of discipline and management. She believed that she was "much more of a disciplinarian" now than she had been when she participated in her first early field experience.   When asked why she felt she had come to embrace this philosophy, Debbie wrote that in her first pre-practicum experience, she had observed the students "walking all over" the teacher; she remarked that if the students were not listening

to their teacher, they "obviously weren't learning." She continued elaborating on her beliefs:

> I never realized how crucial it is that teachers play the role of the leader and make sure that students respect you and treat others appropriately…if students don't obey, it will be extremely difficult to progress and grow as a class…There needs to be discipline and structure in a classroom in order for it to function.

Debbie's first impression of Mr. Leary, her new cooperating teacher, was that he was "a great role model" and she was looking forward to working with him for the rest of the semester. However, she did notice that the students seemed "extremely misbehaved" for most of the day, throwing things, hitting each other, using "inappropriate language," and leaving the classroom without permission when they became upset. Debbie reported that students sometimes responded and corrected their behavior when Mr. Leary raised his voice with them, but not always. One of the problems with Mr. Leary's method of dealing with inappropriate behavior, in Debbie's opinion, was the lack of meaningful consequences "that will force them to do the right thing." For instance, when students misbehaved, Mr. Leary often threatened to call their parents, but the students often appeared not to care, and Debbie wondered whether there might be more effective ways to motivate students to make wise and respectful decisions about their conduct:

> When the child doesn't care, it is difficult to manage the classroom. I would like to find ways to make them care. For instance, force them to want to do better just in terms of being a better person…I think my goal is keep the students in line as best I can…if this means taking away recesses every Monday, I will!

In her journal entry for week 2 (2-10-03), Debbie wrote that the day "went great" and that Mr. Leary was "very supportive" of her in the classroom, but she revisited several issues about the behavior of the students in her classroom and Mr. Leary's management of the class. Debbie admired the way in which Mr. Leary appeared to keep the day fun for the students and give encouragement to both her and Carol, but said that her "only complaint" about him was his frequent habit of yelling at the students in order to correct inappropriate behavior. Debbie noted that this was just one of many controversial legal and ethical issues which teachers faced; though it might not be illegal for a teacher to yell at a child, she pointed out, "this does not abide with my own ethical beliefs." When asked about the factors that had influenced her beliefs about this question, Debbie responded:

> I think that my belief has a lot to do w/growing up and never being yelled at. When
> I would go into other households where the children were screamed at, I was
> extremely frightened and uncomfortable…I believe there are other ways to
> discipline students w/out raising your voice! They should never feel threatened or
> frightened in school. This should always be their safety zone.

Although Debbie had observed behavior in her students that was "always slightly above horrendous," she did not believe that Mr. Leary's choice to yell at students was a defensible one. She believed instead that there might be other more effective methods of drawing students' attention to their mistakes and helping them to improve their behavior, such as stern facial expressions, giving praise only to students who chose to behave properly, and setting certain students apart "to be an example of how not to behave." Debbie also believed that calling students' parents might be an effective disciplinary strategy but realized that "some parents don't care as much as others. If they aren't

intimidated by punishment from the parents, I would simply have to send them to the principal. Hopefully the principal will take strict disciplinary action toward the child."

Another aspect of Mr. Leary's practice of yelling at students which Debbie considered was that perhaps he chose to implement this strategy because "a lot of those children come from very poor backgrounds and are used to being yelled at." When questioned about her beliefs concerning the possible relationship between a family's socioeconomic level and the tendency of parents to yell at children to discipline them, she wrote:

> I must say I do think they are related based on my experiences…if I compare the different schools I have taught at, I have found that there are many more instances of yelling from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds…this is also not to say that other parents think yelling is bad or wrong. Some parents, whether rich or poor, think yelling is a good disciplinary action. I do not, however.

In addition to questions of how to discipline the students in her classroom, Debbie wrote about "another dilemma I face," which was "getting close to a child." Since Debbie regarded emotional caregiving as an important part of a teacher's role, especially with young children, and believed that "every child needs affection and care from the people close to them," she wished she could hold a child to comfort him or her when she felt it was needed "and not worry about getting in trouble for it." However, having been warned by her mother (an elementary teacher) that any physical contact with a child could be misconstrued, Debbie realized that a physically friendly relationship between teacher and student presented many difficult legal issues. "I feel this is very unfortunate," Debbie wrote. When asked how she might deal with a situation in which a child truly appeared to

need physical comfort or contact, she responded, "I think this is a really tough call to be honest…I think I would decide if physical contact is appropriate based on students' responses or behaviors. I would play it safe though!"

Debbie elaborated on her beliefs about this issue by pointing out that her beliefs about wanting to be able to take such small physical actions such as providing emotional support to a young child by holding his or her hand might differ from the beliefs of other teachers, but that this would not necessarily dissuade her from taking action she felt was appropriate. "I feel that every teacher has their own beliefs and should follow and teach with those beliefs," she explained. When questioned further about this perspective and about whether she would still adhere to this position if there were teachers whose "beliefs" led them to harmful or detrimental practices (treating boys and girls or students of different racial backgrounds in different ways, for example, because the teacher believed this was appropriate), Debbie responded:

> That's a really interesting question…I don't think that every teacher's set of beliefs is equally beneficial…I see it as vital for a teacher to be fair and treat everybody equally. If they don't, it's not good instruction at all. Children are very receptive and aware of their surroundings…They will realize if a teacher doesn't, for instance, believe in them or are less favored or encouraged compared to others. It's just an extremely negative moral belief to come into teaching with, and I deem as extremely wrong. However, everyone has their own beliefs for whatever reason. Who am I to try to change someone's values?

In journal 3 (2-25-03), Debbie reported that the day had been "successful" and that she had had "a really great time" taking a more active role in the classroom. She read a

story to the students and asked them questions to aid their comprehension, and she and

Carol led the students in an activity with flash cards designed to strengthen their phonemic

awareness. Although she worried that the students' competitiveness hindered the success

of the game somewhat, as many students put more effort into trying to answer quickly and

"beat" each other than into answering correctly, Debbie felt this had been a beneficial

activity for them.

Debbie described an incident that took place in the classroom wherein two students

had been suspended for threatening each other and then leaving the classroom without

permission. Debbie still felt surprised to observe what she regarded as a severe degree of

behavior problems in the classroom, and when questioned about the factors which might

be causing this, she responded:

I really think that many of these children's problems stem from their family life.

Many times when a child is acting out, I notice that he has a story about what is

going on at home, or what went wrong the day or night before. Overall I think

kindergartners are happy, depending on what their home life is like. I know these

kids have a lot of problems that I know I could never understand.

Debbie also felt that some of the students' behavior issues might be prevented or

lessened by having more physical space in the classroom, so that they would not be in each

other's space and there would be a way to separate students who had conflicts with each

other, and by having them take a nap ("The kids get significantly tired by the end of the

day; I notice this every single time I come here").

Debbie continued reflecting in this journal entry on Mr. Leary's manner of

interacting with the students. Although Debbie noticed that Mr. Leary generally

communicated with the students "in a respectful, energetic tone" and used humor and enthusiasm in his interactions with them, "when one misbehaves, the tone gets louder and deeper. He makes it quite clear when he is angry!" This led Debbie to reiterate her point of view about yelling in order to discipline students. Debbie still felt that she did not agree with this technique. "Rather, I find it effective to pause or take firm action," she wrote. "The children can still see from a teacher's response that he/she is acting inappropriately just by a simple stare or silence." When asked how she might go about communicating and justifying her beliefs to a teacher who frequently yelled at students, Debbie responded:

> This would be tough, but I would explain to them how I believe it makes the children feel. I wouldn't scold them, but just give a different point of view and see if they agreed or not. I would just leave it as a pointer, if they want to take it and use my suggestion is up to them.

Debbie began her fourth journal entry (3-11-03) with a discussion of the technology she observed in her placement classroom. "I have to say there isn't much – just some computers and games," she wrote first, noting that the students tended not to use these at all and to prefer materials such as blocks during their free choice time. When prompted about whether she felt there should be more technology used in the classroom and how it should be utilized to improve students' educational experiences, Debbie responded:

> Children should be acclimated to using a computer and technological strategies to excel! I think if we use old-fashioned techniques, theses students will struggle and be negatively affected. New technology is so great because it's the latest ways to gain and utilize knowledge and skills!

Despite this belief that children might benefit from being exposed to more varied types of instructional technology, Debbie still commented that "I think it's important to use technology, but coming from someone who is NOT technologically advanced, I don't think it's a negative thing that there isn't a lot found in this particular classroom." When asked to elaborate about this belief, Debbie wrote that even without a great deal of technology, Mr. Leary was able to engage students effectively in their learning by using other materials, keeping the lessons interesting, and keeping transitions "smooth and continuous."

Debbie then discussed the amount and nature of collaborative learning she witnessed in Mr. Leary's classroom. She liked how the students had "ample opportunities" to work collaboratively and how Mr. Leary insisted that they reach a consensus on their answers when working within a group because "this forces children to truly listen to one another and produce a solution" with an "intellectual" discussion. When asked how Mr. Leary or any other teacher might be able to combine collaborative learning activities with opportunities for students to construct knowledge for themselves individually, she responded that she might switch his rules slightly. "For instance, maybe there had to be a consensus to a solution, but have to come up with two or three ways of finding that solution," Debbie suggested. "This way the students are not only using their own methods, but trying to find alternative ways of figuring out a problem."

Although Debbie admired the collaborative work she saw Mr. Leary implementing, she did note that she saw certain problems with relying too heavily on this method of instruction. She pointed out, for instance, that some behavioral issues were more likely to occur during group work than individual work in this class because "they are always in

competition," even over "meaningless" problems such as not having the same number of crayons as their peers. Debbie also remarked that "the children seem to learn more when they do tasks on their own" and "not all projects can be done together." However, in her second iteration, Debbie ultimately concluded that teaching students to work collaboratively was a valuable goal for teachers:

> It is always important for students to use social skills in the classroom. I believe the best learning happens when they gain insight from another student, not just the teacher constantly…also, it is a way for them to practice their social skills and cooperating, sharing, working together, learning compromise, etc…all skills they will need during their lives!

Debbie concluded her journal entry by reflecting further on Mr. Leary's attributes as a teacher. She felt that Mr. Leary did a good job fostering understanding of the concepts he taught the students, followed up on homework activities well, "does a great job" of assessing students' learning and development, and was "enthusiastic about their work and accomplishments, so the children want to work harder and get more praise." When asked how she thought her own teaching philosophy and practices were similar to or different from Mr. Leary's, Debbie responded by again contrasting her point of view about disciplining students through yelling with Mr. Leary's behavior:

> I think that we are very similar, in that we don't think any child should be allowed to misbehave. I see myself as possibly a little more sympathetic to their background and situations. For instance, I may not use such severe punishments as much as he does. I know I would definitely not yell like he does!

Debbie did not attend the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03).

In Debbie's fifth journal entry (3-21-03), she discussed at length the topic of how a teacher could set appropriate learning expectations for the students and foster students' potential for reaching the teacher's expectations. She commented that she thought the school's learning expectations in general were "extraordinary" but was not sure how to assess whether those expectations were reflected in the students' progress. Debbie wondered whether this was because in contrast to Mr. Leary's students, the kindergartners with whom she had worked at her last placement school (a suburban public elementary) were "much more advanced. I think a lot has to do with the children's backgrounds and capabilities." When questioned further about this belief, Debbie responded:

I think that because a lot of children come from stressful homes, the children don't just worry about school work but other factors as well. Also, I think that they aren't learning as much as they could be, due to the fact that the children say their parents don't ever read to them or help them w/assignments. This is detrimental to their learning, b/c they not only need support, but motivation and assistance!

In her present placement classroom, Debbie found that there was a wide gap in students' academic ability levels – some were not yet writing letters or words at all, for example, while others were exploring letter-sound relationships and still others were able to write and decode words with ease. "It makes it difficult to find a medium with such extremes!" Debbie commented. In general, however, Debbie's impression was that the children were not being pushed to achieve at high levels and that a major reason for this was the level of disruptive behavior in the classroom. She believed that if this were her own class, she would have higher expectations for the children and would not tolerate children being "unproductive." "School is definitely a place where they need to challenge

themselves and progress," Debbie wrote. "If this means cutting back on recess time if I don't think they are working hard enough to meet my expectations, I will do that." When asked what factors had influenced this belief, Debbie responded that her own experience as an elementary student had had a great deal to do with her development of this philosophy:

> Well, I have found that when children are misbehaving, it really bothers and interrupts the students who are behaving. This is completely unfair to put the good kids at a disadvantage because of a misbehaved child. Children need to understand that recess and other activities are privileges. They aren't just given to anyone, regardless of how one acts and treats others. I found that when I was growing up, I was always the child who couldn't hear because Joey in the back was talking or throwing paper at the backs of people's heads. When I didn't understand something, it was annoying to have to ask the teacher to repeat themselves. It also put me in an uncomfortable position, where I didn't want to be a big dork and tell him to stop, but I did want to listen and not be a tattle-tale. It's the teacher's job to keep everyone in line so that everyone has a fair shot at learning.

While she admired many aspects of Mr. Leary's instructional practices, Debbie reiterated that she felt it would be beneficial to provide the students with more activities which would foster their academic growth in a more substantive way. She used the concept of learning centers as an example, noting that the students appeared to love using the blocks, which benefited the students because they are given choices and freedom. "However," Debbie wrote, "they can be improved by making them more educational! For instance, one center might not just be blocks, but have the students try to complete a certain task with the blocks."

Debbie did not attend the second group dilemma discussion on 3-25-03.

Debbie began her sixth journal entry (3-27-03) with another discussion of the management strategies she observed in Mr. Leary's classroom. She noted that management of a classroom was affected not only by the teacher's philosophy of management and discipline but by "the classroom itself." She felt that although Mr. Leary's group of students appeared able to "handle" some of the disciplinary strategies Mr. Leary chose (such as yelling), other groups she had observed might not respond to them. This led Debbie to continue reflecting on how the students' home life and socioeconomic backgrounds might be influencing their behavior and the disciplinary strategies which adults such as parents and teachers used with them:

> Sadly, it seems like the children to respond do this type of management and discipline. Also, because of their backgrounds, it seems like the students know about "jail" and other things that other children (hopefully most children) wouldn't be familiar with. I heard the librarian, for instance, threaten the children that if they don't pay attention in school, they may end up in jail. It was scary to think that someone could actually say this to a kindergartner!

Debbie reiterated an earlier idea that Mr. Leary did an effective job of setting classroom rules for behavior, following them, and administering consequences such as sending students to the principal when rules were broken. However, in Debbie's opinion:

> The problem is the students often aren't threatened by these punishments…many children don't care, making it extremely difficult to keep them under control. If a student isn't affected by any sort of discipline or threat, it is virtually impossible to keep them in line!

Debbie admired the way in which Mr. Leary attempted to set goals that would be meaningful to the students, such as encouraging them to listen so they could learn, and to learn so that they could be successful ("if you're not successful, it will not be a good life," Debbie paraphrased one of Mr. Leary's philosophies). Debbie felt this gave the students incentive to try hard in school and affected the students positively because these students did not have adult role models who taught them appropriate behavior. "I hear children constantly saying swear words, threats, watching R movies with killing, sexual orientation, etc.," Debbie wrote. "Whoever is showing these students this and surrounding them with these inappropriate things at their age is extremely detrimental to them." When questioned further about her beliefs on the ways in which students' home lives and backgrounds influenced discipline issues that arose in the classroom, Debbie responded:

I found that I know what's going on in their homes from Mr. L or the counselor told me a bit. I strongly believe that what goes on at home affects their behavior in school…it just seems like if a child isn't getting enough love or attention at home, they act out and yearn for it in school. This is not to say that all children do this, because some children who do get enough love and affection at home act out too! I think extreme cases, though, really affect children's behavior in school.

In her seventh journal entry (3-31-03), Debbie continued reflecting on the management practices she observed in Mr. Leary's classroom. Her first comment was to state that Mr. Leary made the rules in the classroom and kept to them fairly firmly, but that he showed understanding when it came to different situations with students. When asked whether this sometimes led to different treatment of different children, Debbie described how she considered this an effective practice:

For the most part Mr. Leary doesn't make exceptions to the rules often at all.

However, depending upon the different students' background, they tend to get

different treatment. For instance, a child he knows is being abused at home, and the

child is acting out, he acts less harshly. I don't think that he treats anyone

drastically different by any means, but if he did, I do believe that would be entirely

unfair. It would cause a lot of problems!

Debbie also reported that Mr. Leary used very structured systems for letting

students know when their behavior was appropriate or not appropriate, as each student's

name was written on the board and Mr. Leary placed check marks or x's by their names to

indicate positive or negative behavior. When asked to elaborate further on her beliefs

about this procedure, Debbie wrote that she admired the way Mr. Leary used this system to

ensure that students were striving to meet his expectations:

I don't think that's too much pressure at all, because it is an expectation for these

students to behave appropriately. If it is a stress to them, I think that it is a positive

thing. They need to learn and be taught that there are repercussions for negative

behavior, as well positive results when one does act well.

Debbie went on to describe how this system of checks and x's had been a positive

influence on the children's behavior that day, when a substitute had taken over the class in

Mr. Leary's absence, because Mr. Leary had promised a treat to the three students with the

most check marks by their names at the end of the day. Debbie wrote that although this

strategy "did help the sub manage the classroom," it seemed a bit like "bribery" to her.

When prompted about her beliefs about the practice of giving children tangible rewards for

appropriate or exemplary behavior, Debbie wrote:

I am not one to condone giving treats all the time. I think it appears to be a lot like bribery. Once in a blue moon is fine, bb/c it doesn't become an expectation from the students, however, just a once in a while treat. If this was to occur everyday, and one day the teacher didn't give a treat, there would be negative responses. It cannot turn into a daily event.

Finally, Debbie wrote about the school's counselor/psychologist, to whom Mr. Leary and other teachers often sent individual children when their behavior issues became out of control in the classroom. Debbie noted that when students returned from time with the counselor (or with the principal or vice-principal, to whom the children were also sometimes sent), they were "seemingly happy," acted "much more appropriately," and this "benefited the whole classroom dynamic." Upon prompting Debbie elaborated on the "fabulous idea" of sending students to spend time with the counselor:

So many of them need this woman! I do feel like if it was during math or science, etc. it wouldn't be good b/c it would be taking away from their education. However, they normally go when the children are just coloring or during choice time. By going to the counselor, students are changing their behavior, making them much more manageable and easier to teach! It's extremely positive in my opinion.

On 4-7-03, Debbie and her partner student teacher Carol taught an observed lesson and I interviewed them together afterward. The lesson was one designed to help the kindergartners understand what types of experiences made them feel different emotions. The two student teachers designed a lesson involving the reading aloud of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst and then led the students

in filling out a handout. The handout showed happy and sad faces at the top of the page and each had space underneath for students to draw or write about what made them feel happy or sad.

Debbie spoke infrequently during the interview, usually responding with "Right" or "Yes" to my questions and concurring briefly with Carol's lengthier statements. Although Debbie believed that the students "really paid attention, compared with how they normally are," she discussed several disciplinary situations that had occurred during the lesson ("I feel like I'm always disciplining," she remarked). She had been unsure of how she would have dealt with a specific child in the class who had pushed someone and was in the hallway waiting for the therapist to come and work with him individually, noting that the child had been abused at home, had language barriers and did not speak fluent English, talked frequently in class and generally aggravated his classmates. Debbie was also perplexed about the best way to interact with a student who had designated "when my father left" as a source of sad feelings for her; Debbie tried to accept and reinforce the girl's feelings and appreciated that the girl, who was usually very quiet and usually "will just stare at you" had opened up to her.

In the rest of the interview, Debbie made comments about how she felt frustrated that the students were not challenged enough either academically or in terms of showing appropriate behavior in the classroom. The lack of a routine was one factor which had led to this problem, in Debbie's opinion; she saw virtually no routine in the kindergartners' school week with the exception of some specials classes such as music and library which they attended regularly – and even those classes, Debbie believed, did not always provide students with meaningful learning experiences. Debbie sensed that the school librarian,

whose English Debbie did not characterize as fluent and whose vocabulary Debbie felt was

often too advanced for the kindergartners, who were "just totally not motivated to learn."

Debbie felt that the students needed more practice in writing, recalling the phonics flash

card activities she had seen a previous cooperating teacher implement with a kindergarten

class in one of her previous placements and wishing that Mr. Leary implemented similar

activities more regularly; she was also appalled by the students' lack of understanding of

basic concepts such as the calendar. Debbie's final comment during the interview was to

state that she found paired teaching interesting because "I'm used to doing it by myself."

In Debbie's eighth journal entry (4-7-03), she again revisited the topic of Mr.

Leary's management methods, but this time she expressed an interesting change of beliefs

regarding the manner in which he disciplined students. She wrote that it had appeared to

her that Mr. Leary had always seemed to be too harsh on the students when they were

misbehaving, but that she now realized that "in order for these children to learn, you must

be strict and keep them in line." When prompted further about why she believed that type

of philosophy was necessary for this group of students and whether she would employ the

same philosophy with other groups of students, Debbie responded:

> I feel like a lot of them will walk all over anyone who gives them an inch! I feel
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> this isn't just with this particular group, but many children! They need to know
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> what the rules are, and they definitely need to be enforced!

For this reason, although Debbie still maintained that "I don't agree with yelling, as

I've mentioned many times," and that yelling would not always correct all disciplinary

issues, she felt she understood more clearly why Mr. Leary often resorted to yelling as a

disciplinary practice. She admitted that "I feel like I have raised my voice a few times

after different attempts such as time out, speaking to them privately, taking away privileges, etc. are tried…raising my voice is the next in line."

Debbie also felt that teachers often resorted to yelling because systems like putting check marks by students' names and offering them treats as rewards "can only work so much" because students realized that they wouldn't always get the treats and therefore had little incentive to behave well. Debbie viewed this reward system as akin to bribery and believed "I shouldn't have to tally up who is good or bad, but it should be expected that they act appropriately." When questioned about how she had developed this belief, Debbie responded that she based her beliefs on what she had experienced working with children in classrooms and babysitting, noting that "I have found that the more treats and gifts I give the children, the less of a 'treat' it truly is."

Debbie concluded her journal with a statement about how frustrated she was becoming that "nothing seems to work" with the students in her class and that she was "running out of ideas." She described how discouraged she was finding the task of eliciting positive behavior from students when, in her opinion, many of the children's home lives and backgrounds were having an extremely negative effect on their behavior in school:

> I don't think that there is necessarily something lacking in this classroom as much
> as at home. It seems like these children come with a lot of emotional stress at
> home, causing them to act the way they do. They need the support of a family or
> parent! It is disgusting what these children have to go through, and I don't blame
> them for man of the behaviors and responses they have. It's almost like they are so
> hurt that they have a lot of built up anger or sadness…I guess I blame a lot on the

attention by that sort of behavior, but you can't just let someone sit there and cry…but he, I mean, ALL the time he cries…we wonder about a lot of them.

Debbie went into great detail about her frustration that this class did not appear to be as academically advanced as other classes she had observed, specifically a kindergarten classroom in a suburban public elementary, wherein the students were writing their names, sounding out words, and engaging in other academic activities which Debbie felt were not focused on in Mr. Leary's classroom. Debbie felt that the kindergarten students in both those schools were very similar and "had the same capabilities," but that the students in Mr. Leary's class were not challenged to achieve at a high level. Debbie wished that Mr. Leary would "raise the bar" and felt she would probably do things differently than Mr. Leary did if she were teaching this class:

> It just doesn't seem like they do stuff here that's like, substantive. They're always coloring, you know. And I was really skeptical about doing this, because I really didn't think they'd know anything about stars. I had no idea, and I was impressed, that they do, so like I'd want to challenge them more and push them more to do more things, like…make it a requirement that they can spell their names at this point. And if that means, like coming after school, I mean, I don't know…

In addition to focusing more on reading, language arts, and math skills, Debbie believed Mr. Leary should be concentrating more on providing structured opportunities and lessons designed to help these young children understand their feelings and resolve interpersonal conflicts more compassionately and effectively, because "these kids…it just seems like they're not sympathetic to one another, they don't respect one another, they don't care…I just think they can do a lot more than they are."

Despite her concern over Mr. Leary's apparent lack of high academic expectations for his students and the need she saw for him to "do more, educationally," and despite her frequently articulated position against his practice of yelling at students, Debbie did concede again at this point that she had come to regard Mr. Leary's methods of disciplining the class as effective, at least in comparison to her own:

> Like at first I was like, oh my gosh, like this is too intense, like he's yelling, it's too much. I mean, I don't agree with yelling either, but you know, I think for the most part that he does have control over them, much more than I do, definitely. Like I don't know what I'm doing, like, I think I look more like a pushover to them, I don't know why, but if Mr. Leary says stop, then they're much more likely to stop.

In Debbie's journal entry for week 9 (4-17-03), her last entry, she discussed various reflections on her experiences and development over the semester. Debbie was glad to have gained more experience teaching, as she believed that "teachers can foster their own professional growth and development by practice and experience." Looking back, Debbie believed that based on what she knew at this point, she might have changed some of her practices in her first field placement, and realized as well that "there are some things that I just don't know at this point that, let's say for example, a 15-year veteran would." Although Debbie felt more clear now about her instructional and management philosophies than she had felt during earlier field experiences, Debbie also conceded that there had still been many times during the semester when she had felt uncertain about the most appropriate way to address an issue of teaching practice or management:

> I have been in many situations where I have really felt that I didn't know what to do….For instance, when Joseph goes running out of the classroom I am unsure as

to what my role is at that point…should I go and chase him and leave the class alone? That doesn't seem appropriate. Mr. Leary does different things such as go after and leave us there for a minute or just let him go. It just seems like a difficult situation.

Debbie reflected that she had also changed in terms of what to expect academically of young students. "The first day I went to a kindergarten sophomore year, I figured these children were so young and little, that they wouldn't know how to read at all!" she wrote. "Now, I realize that they are very capable of many more things than I would have originally thought." In light of this realization, Debbie reiterated her concern that Mr. Leary's students had not made sufficient academic progress to prepare them to go on to first grade. She felt that the students did not know certain things they should know at this point, such as the alphabet, simple words, how to spell their names, and she believed that they should spend less time coloring and more time engaged in "substantive writing lessons, math games, anything!" Debbie went on:

> These poor children won't be ready for first grade! They are at a disadvantage not being challenged and motivated to succeed. It's extremely frustrating and upsetting to see that these students aren't being challenged enough during the day. I have so many ideas as to what lessons I would like to use, and different activities I would share with them.

Interestingly, however, despite this strong statement of her beliefs about this issue, Debbie then qualified her position by admitting that "I realize, however, that this is not my classroom! Mr. Leary uses his own techniques and strategies, so I respect that."

In fact, following this, Debbie described the many positive qualities she saw in Mr. Leary, whom she characterized as "absolutely amazing" for his abilities to control and have fun with the students, who seemed both to respect him and enjoy his company. Debbie described Mr. Leary as a "great artist" and noted that she especially "loved the way he would read to them and truly get into the story…it was like the children couldn't wait to be read to." In addition to these positive attributes, Debbie believed that Mr. Leary had also been a helpful and supportive cooperating teacher and a positive influence on her motivation to become a teacher:

> After the first two ones, I really questioned my wanting to go into the field. The teachers didn't seem to have fun with the children and didn't care to direct me or help me in any way. Mr. Leary asks us to do things and gives us suggestions. This is something very worthwhile and beneficial to me. I need to know what I should change in order to develop. It also showed that he cared! Also, he made me feel like I was a real teacher. He would discuss different issues he was looking at and told us the backgrounds of the children. It was like he was trying to train us before we became real teachers. I thought that was so great.

Debbie's final comment in her last journal entry was to remark that she had somewhat mixed feelings about having been placed in a pair with Carol in her placement classroom. Debbie liked Carol personally and found the experience of co-teaching with another teacher beneficial and enlightening in the way it provided her with an opportunity to be exposed to another preservice teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning and another person to offer her support during her field placement, and she had chosen to co-teach her observed lessons with Carol despite being given the option of conducting

observed lessons on her own. However, Debbie felt she might have preferred to be placed

in a situation where she were the only student teacher in the classroom:

> It is awesome to teach with another teacher/student, but I think I would have liked
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> to try something on my own. I think that I would like to see what I could have done
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> on my own. Also, I believe that Carol and I have different techniques and
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> strategies/ideas about teaching. It would have been nice not to have to compromise
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> my techniques during the lesson.

Debbie did not submit a second journal iteration for this entry, and did not submit a

final reflective essay.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of

three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by

Debbie during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which

Debbie appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or

actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Debbie's

epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely

operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level

suggested by Debbie's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Debbie's

engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Debbie's Reflective Judgment Level

Dilemma 1: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in

professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

Debbie addressed this dilemma in three journal entries. In her first journal entry (2-3-03), Debbie wrote that her first day in her new classroom placement had "proved that I have both grown and developed as a teacher." She believed that she had progressed in her understanding of teaching and learning primarily "though my observations of my cooperating teacher and other pre-practicum and full-practicum students." In her ninth and final journal entry (4-17-03), Debbie revisited the topic of her own professional development by commenting that she felt she had made progress in this area during her pre-practicum semester. Because she believed that "teachers can foster their own growth and development by practice and experience," Debbie felt that her teaching abilities were developed to a greater extent than they had been in earlier placements, but that she still had a lot to learn, as "there are some things that I just don't know at this point that, let's say, a 15-year veteran would." Debbie also acknowledged in this journal entry that "I have been in situations where I have really felt that I didn't know what to do."

Debbie also addressed this dilemma in terms of the question of how a teacher could maintain appropriate professional boundaries, particularly in terms of the amount and type of physical contact they should have with students. Debbie discussed this issue in one journal entry only, but her statements provided substantial insight into her reflective judgment level. In journal 2 (2-10-03), Debbie remarked that "another dilemma I face" was the question of whether it was appropriate for a teacher to have any physical contact with students. Debbie felt that it was "unfortunate" that so much legal and ethical controversy surrounded this question because she believed that "every child needs affection and care from the people close to them." When questioned about how she would decide about what physical contact might be appropriate in her classroom, she responded,

"I think this is a really tough call to be honest…I think I would decide if physical contact is appropriate based on students' responses or behaviors. I would play it safe though!"

Debbie went on to state that other teachers might feel differently about this issue than she did, and that each teacher should make his or her own decision about the question. "I feel that every teacher has their own beliefs and should follow and teach with those beliefs," she wrote. This led to my probing this belief further with Debbie, asking her whether she thought that every teacher's beliefs were equally valid and justifiable (giving the example of a hypothetical teacher who believed that students of different racial backgrounds should be taught differently or be held to different types of expectations), to which she responded:

> I don't think that every teacher's set of beliefs is equally beneficial…it's just an extremely negative moral belief to come into teaching with, and I deem as extremely wrong…however, everyone has their own beliefs for whatever reason. Who am I to try to change someone's values?

Debbie's statements regarding this dilemma appeared to reflect a transitional reflective judgment level between Stages 3 (late Pre-Reflective) and 4 (early Quasi-Reflective). Debbie's emphasis on personal experience and practice as the primary means through which she expected to acquire knowledge about teaching and learning, as shown in her comments about how her experience in placement classrooms had influenced her professional development and about her speculation that someone who had been teaching for many years would know more than she did, for example, indicated that she was relying heavily on personal observation and experience as the means for acquiring knowledge and that she might have regarded knowledge about teaching and learning as simply temporarily

inaccessible or uncertain and something she would acquire with more practice and experience. This is a Pre-Reflective characteristic. However, Debbie's comments might also have suggested that rather than simply having the point of view that knowledge would come with time and experience, she might have actually begun to regard knowledge as more uncertain or evolving, which is more characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers. Debbie's last comment about being unsure of what to do in certain teaching situations, in addition, appeared to suggest strongly that she was beginning to operate under the assumption that knowledge was uncertain, an important departure from Pre-Reflective reasoning.

Debbie's statements regarding the issue of professional boundaries and physical contact with students also strongly suggested that she was transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning. It is noteworthy, for instance, that Debbie used the term "dilemma" when discussing the issue, indicating that she was perhaps beginning to recognize the complex nature of the problem. She also made strong belief statements about the necessity to provide "affection and care" to all students and the "extremely wrong" beliefs which some teachers might potentially have about students; she also appeared to acknowledge the uncertainty inherent in deciding when to engage in physical contact with students and how to do so. Both of these are typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4. However, it was Debbie's discussion about the concept of individual teachers working according to their personal beliefs which revealed the most about Debbie's reflective judgment level. When she stated that teachers should all "follow and teach" their beliefs and that "everyone has their own beliefs for whatever reason," Debbie exhibited a pattern of reasoning extremely characteristic of individuals beginning

to function at Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking, who are beginning to be able to acknowledge that people espouse different points of view but who tend to attribute those differences in beliefs to idiosyncratic differences between people in terms of background, experience, or attitude. In particular, Debbie's comment, "Who am I to try to change someone's values?" was a strong indicator that she was viewing justification of beliefs as a highly individualized and idiosyncratic process and not necessarily the result of logical, consistent, reasoned inquiry into complex dilemmas and the gathering and evaluation of evidence supporting various beliefs or practices.

Dilemma 2: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Debbie dealt almost exclusively with this dilemma in several of her data sources and continually reiterated her beliefs about various aspects of classroom management. She made statements regarding both general discipline and management issues and also the question of whether raising one's voice at students was an acceptable method of discipline. (Debbie also considered the question of how students' socioeconomic backgrounds influenced their behavior, but this will be considered below as Dilemma 3.)

In her first journal entry (2-3-03), Debbie wrote that she had found herself to be "much more of a disciplinarian" than she used to be; one factor influencing this was that she had seen a previous cooperating teacher manage her class in what Debbie considered an ineffective manner, since the students were "walking all over" the teacher and "obviously weren't learning." Seeing that the students in her new placement classroom were "extremely misbehaved" apparently strengthened Debbie's view that it was "crucial" for teachers to make sure that students behaved appropriately. "If students don't obey, it

will be extremely difficult to grow and progress as a class," she wrote. In her second journal entry (2-10-03), Debbie reiterated this belief, stating that her goal was "to keep the students in line as best I can…if this means taking away recesses every Monday, I will!" She also noted that Mr. Leary's disciplinary strategies did not seem very effective because the consequences for breaking rules were not meaningful to the students. Debbie felt that a better way to motivate students to behave than giving consequences that did not seem to faze them was to "force them to want to do better just in terms of being a better person." In journal 6 (3-27-03), Debbie restated this belief that students needed meaningful consequences for misbehavior, asserting that Mr. Leary's punishments were not successful because the students were "not threatened" by them. "If a student isn't affected by any sort of discipline or threat, it is virtually impossible to keep them in line," she wrote.

Debbie made statements about other aspects of management philosophy in other journal entries. In journal 7 (3-31-03), for instance, Debbie reflected on Mr. Leary's practice of promising treats to the three students who earned the most check marks for good behavior next to their names on the chalkboard. While she conceded that having this practice in place for the day had seemed to help a substitute manage the class, she considered it to be too much like "bribery." "It cannot turn into a daily event," wrote Debbie, who believed that if students began to expect to get treats and then did not get them every day, there would be "negative consequences." She revisited this topic in journal 8 (4-7-03), commenting that giving students treats for good behavior "can only work so much" because if they did not receive or like the treat, they would have no motivation to behave appropriately; Debbie felt that their motivation should be more intrinsic and that "I shouldn't have to tally up who is good or bad, but it should be

expected that they act appropriately." In addition, based on her personal experiences working with children in classroom and babysitting contexts, Debbie believed that the more treats one gave children, the less meaningful they eventually became as motivators for good behavior.

In journal 7 (3-31-03), Debbie also remarked on the practice of having students leave the classroom to spend time with a counselor/psychologist when their behavior became out of control. Debbie thought this was an "extremely positive" practice (as long as children were not removed from class during academic work time), as when the children returned from spending time with the counselor they always seemed "much more manageable and easy to teach."

The question of whether a teacher should raise his or her voice with students was an issue with which Debbie dealt continually through the data collection period. In her second journal entry (2-10-03), Debbie stated that although it was not illegal for a teacher to yell at students, it "does not abide with my own ethical beliefs" and that she did not believe that doing so was acceptable teaching practice. She attributed this belief to her previous experiences, as she had not been yelled at in her own household and was "extremely frightened and uncomfortable" seeing this occur in other places. "Children should never feel threatened or frightened in school," she stated.

In journal 3 (2-25-03), Debbie made several positive comments about Mr. Leary as a teacher, praising his generally enthusiastic and respectful manner of interacting with the children, but remarked that she still did not agree with his practice of yelling at students, writing that she would be more apt to express her disapproval of inappropriate behavior through facial expressions or other methods. When asked how she might explain and

justify her position to someone who felt that yelling at students was acceptable, Debbie responded that "this would be tough" but that she would attempt to explain how she thought yelling made children feel, and that she would "just give a different point of view and see if they agreed or not. I would just leave it as a pointer, if they want to take it and use my suggestion it is up to them." In journal 4 (3-11-03), Debbie contrasted her teaching and management style with Mr. Leary's, stating that she saw herself as "more sympathetic" to the children's situations and that she "would definitely not yell like he does!"

Interestingly, however, Debbie's statements about the yelling question showed a possible change in beliefs by the end of the data collection period. In journal 8 (4-7-03), Debbie wrote that although she still did not believe in yelling, she could understand why Mr. Leary might use this practice and saw herself doing so in certain situations as well. She felt frustrated, helpless, and like a "pushover" in trying to elicit appropriate behavior from this group of students, and eventually stated that "in order for these children to learn, you must be strict and keep them in line…I feel like a lot of them will walk all over anyone who gives them an inch!...They need to know what the rules are, and they definitely need to be enforced." In her second post-observation interview, Debbie also appeared to have somewhat altered her beliefs about yelling, noting that Mr. Leary did appear to be able to manage the class successfully using this method:

> Like at first I was like, oh my gosh, like this is too intense, like he's yelling, it's too much. I mean, I don't agree with yelling either, but you know, I think for the most part that he does have control over them, much more than I do, definitely.

Debbie's approach to this dilemma generally suggested a mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective characteristics and therefore a transitional period between those two reflective judgment levels. Debbie was displaying reasoning characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinkers, for example, when she based her beliefs and decisions primarily on her previous personal experience; this occurred when she used her experience in babysitting and previous placements to inform her beliefs about the drawbacks of using treats to motivate young children to use appropriate behavior, and when she cited her experience growing up in her own household and spending time in others as a strong influence on her beliefs about yelling at children as a disciplinary technique. Debbie's statements about discipline also contained a strong emphasis on authority, which might suggest the Pre-Reflective perspective that knowledge (in this case, about how to behave as a child in a classroom) is best obtained from authority figures (the classroom teacher). She made many strong statements, for example, about the need for students to "obey" so that the class could progress, her goal of keeping students "in line" even if it meant taking away recess, and the need to have consequences for misbehavior which made students feel intimidated.

Another Pre-Reflective characteristic which appeared in Debbie's statements was difficulty understanding the complexity of the dilemmas she faced. Debbie did not, for example, question the possible sociological ramifications of having teachers train students to "obey" them without question in order to keep classrooms manageable; she did not consider that eliminating recess from young children's time at school might actually have the effect of increasing their misbehavior since their need for an outlet for physical energy and social play would not be fulfilled; and she did not find out what techniques the

counselors used to make students "much more manageable" when they returned to the classroom or how to provide students with access to the counselor if behavior problems occurred during reading or math time, which Debbie did not believe students should miss in order to spend time with the counselor. Finally, Debbie showed the Pre-Reflective trait of using rather inconsistent logic to justify her point of view; while in some cases, she justified her belief that teachers should not yell at students because children "should never feel threatened or frightened in school," in other cases she appeared to espouse the belief that consequences and punishments for misbehavior would only be effective if they were sufficiently intimidating to students. ("If they aren't intimidated by the parents, I would simply have to send them to the principal. Hopefully the principal will take strict disciplinary action toward the child," she wrote.)

Despite her emphasis on previous experience as a means for attaining knowledge and justifying beliefs, her strict adherence to the importance of the authority, and her tendency to overlook the complexities of the dilemmas she encountered, Debbie's statements about this dilemma also included several conceptions characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Debbie made strong belief statements such as "they should never feel threatened or frightened in school," which is typical of Stage 4 thinkers, as is the tendency to equate personal belief with evidence justifying one's position, which Debbie did when she asserted that students in a previous placement classroom "obviously weren't learning" because they were not managed effectively enough. Although many of her statements appeared to suggest that Debbie placed a high value on authority, she made many comments rejecting the authority and expertise of Mr. Leary when she objected to his practice of yelling at students. This is

more characteristic of Quasi-Reflective thinkers than Pre-Reflective ones, as is the

tendency to state one's beliefs strongly but refuse to make outright judgments about others'

beliefs and practices as "right" or "wrong;" even while Debbie rejected Mr. Leary's

practice of yelling and criticized the consequences he gave students for misbehavior, she

made several positive comments about his teaching and management practices as well.

It is interesting to note that Debbie's belief about Mr. Leary yelling at students

seemed to change during the last weeks of her placement and to consider what this might

mean in terms of her reflective judgment development. Whereas she had steadfastly

refused to accept this practice and made strong statements about her feeling that yelling at

students was against her "ethical beliefs," during the last two weeks of the placement,

Debbie began conceding that perhaps Mr. Leary was only yelling because it was the only

effective way to manage the class, and that she no longer regarded his management as "too

intense" but instead admired his ability to "keep control over them." It is not clear exactly

what caused this change in Debbie's beliefs. It is possible that she had not moved

completely into Quasi-Reflective thinking and so was more likely to accept Mr. Leary's

expertise and authority about this question when she found herself feeling frustrated and

helpless about managing the students, and that her Pre-Reflective tendency to rely on

authority overtook her resistance to what she had earlier deemed an unjustifiable practice.

It is also possible that the stress of the situation of having to "control" a class of

kindergartners was simply too wearing for Debbie and that she began accepting Mr.

Leary's practices because she was unable to think of another effective way to elicit

appropriate behavior from the students; this shift in thinking also could have occurred for

some other unknown reason. The fact that Debbie seemed to change with regard to this

belief could possibly have indicated either that she was lapsing into more Pre-Reflective reasoning, relying on others' authority and expertise to resolve the dilemma, or that she was going "back and forth" about her beliefs as Stage 4 thinkers tend to do. In any case, it was noteworthy because it represented a change from a belief to which Debbie had appeared to adhere very strictly up until the last two weeks of her placement.

Dilemma 3: How does students' socioeconomic background influence their academic progress, behavior, and general school experience? How can teachers help students if this factor appears to have a negative impact on their school experience?

Debbie addressed this dilemma frequently, often as a result of examining other issues she encountered in her placement classroom concerning the academic progress of her students and especially the disciplinary strategies she observed. In her second journal entry (2-10-03), for example, Debbie speculated that perhaps Mr. Leary yelled at his students often as a disciplinary measure because "a lot of those children come from very poor backgrounds and are used to being yelled at." When asked to elaborate further on this belief, Debbie responded that based on her experiences in various placement classrooms, she believed that students' socioeconomic background did influence the type of discipline to which they were accustomed and to which they would respond. She qualified this statement by saying that despite this belief, she felt that some parents, "whether rich or poor, think yelling is a good disciplinary action. I do not, however." In her third journal entry (2-25-03), Debbie continued reflecting on this question when considering what she regarded as the frequently unacceptable behavior she witnessed in Mr. Leary's class. She wrote that "I really think that many of these children's problems stem from their family life," noting that students often reported having experienced something unpleasant at home

on days when their behavior was inappropriate in class and reflecting that "I know these kids have a lot of problems that I know I could never understand."

Debbie reiterated her beliefs on this issue in several journal entries to follow. In journal 6 (3-27-03), Debbie stated again that though she did not believe that yelling at students was an appropriate disciplinary strategy, she believed that Mr. Leary's class were able to "handle" the yelling better than some other groups of students might, which she attributed again to the students' socioeconomic backgrounds. "Sadly, it seems like the children do respond to this type of management and discipline," she wrote. "Also, because of their backgrounds, it seems like the students know about 'jail' and other things that other children (hopefully most children) wouldn't be familiar with." Debbie speculated that a great deal of the children's misbehavior could be attributed to a lack of good adult role models, stating that "whoever is showing these students this and surrounding them with [profane language, movies with violent or adult content, etc.] at their age is extremely detrimental to them." She further commented that "I strongly believe that what goes on at home affects their behavior in school…it just seems like if a child isn't getting enough love or attention at home, they act out and year for it in school." In journal 7 (3-31-03), Debbie noted that she had observed Mr. Leary treating students "less harshly" when he disciplined them if he knew that they had problems at home. Finally, in journal 8 (4-7-03), Debbie again stated her beliefs that "emotional stress at home" was a major cause of students' misbehavior in school and that she felt the behavior problems in Mr. Leary's class were the result of something "lacking" at home rather than in the classroom.

Debbie also associated what she perceived as unimpressive academic progress to the students' socioeconomic backgrounds and home lives. In journal 5 (3-21-03), she

wrote that Mr. Leary's kindergartners were not as academically advanced as those in another kindergarten in which she had been placed. She believed this was because the children came from "stressful homes" and therefore "just don't worry about school work," and that "the parents don't ever read to them or help them with assignments. This is detrimental to their learning, because they not only need support, but motivation and assistance!"

Debbie approached this dilemma with a mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective modes of reasoning. First of all, she appeared in general not to grasp the complexity of the dilemma, which is characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinkers. Few individuals working within the field of education would likely argue against the practice of teachers taking students' home lives into account in order to understand them as individuals, develop positive relationships with them, and protect them from abusive situations. However, Debbie seemed to regard the impact of students' backgrounds in an oversimplified manner; she assumed rather quickly that most of the problems she observed were a result of the students' "poor" backgrounds and "stressful" home lives, relied on this assumption to explain behavior problems, slow academic progress, and Mr. Leary's disciplinary methods, and did not appear to question this assumption with regard to individual students or different circumstances. Debbie seemed to simply and automatically equate students' "poor" and "stressful" backgrounds with poor behavior, the necessity for strict disciplinary strategies, and unsatisfactory academic achievement, and she did not consider other possible causes for those problems. Furthermore, she did not seem able to consider the dilemma through a broader perspective and reflect on issues such as the implications of this belief in terms of her own professional development or the way she related to her

students, the problem of inequitable education for students of different socioeconomic backgrounds in the United States, or how educators and other individuals might take a proactive or reconstructive stance in order to remedy such a problem. Another characteristic of Pre-Reflective reasoning Debbie appeared to exhibit in her approach to this dilemma was reliance on her previous personal experiences as a basis for her beliefs and decisions, which she demonstrated when she based her beliefs about the impact of socioeconomic background on students' behavior and achievement on her own observations of students in various placement schools.

Debbie also appeared at times to be engaging in the type of reasoning associated with the Quasi-Reflective level. Debbie made the type of strong, "stubborn" belief statements often associated with Stage 4; she was also able at some points to acknowledge points of view different from her own about "rich or poor" parents using yelling as a disciplinary measure but still adhered forcefully to her own position that this was inappropriate. This is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, as is the tendency to equate one's beliefs with evidence to support or justify a point of view, which Debbie did when she surmised that students from certain socioeconomic backgrounds were probably accustomed to being yelled at in their homes as well as in school and that the reason why Mr. Leary's kindergartners appeared to be achieving poorly in their academics was that they were not receiving sufficient support, assistance, and motivation at home. Debbie's comment that her students had "problems I know I could never understand" could also have suggested Quasi-Reflective thinking; she might either have been attributing the quality of individual students' school experiences to idiosyncratic factors at play in their

lives (characteristic of Stage 4) or even acknowledging the diversity of points of view that comprise the human experience (characteristic of Stage 5).

Dilemma 4: How do teachers' expectations influence students' behavior and academic progress? How can a teacher decide to what type of expectations students should be held and how to help them meet those expectations?

Debbie made it clear in many of her data sources that she believed Mr. Leary's students were not being held to high expectations in terms of behavior or academic progress and that this was having a detrimental effect on their educational experience. In journal 5 (3-11-03), Debbie wrote that there appeared to be a wide gap in the classroom in terms of academic skill and ability levels. She felt that the students were not pushed to excel academically and that this was due in large part to the amount of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Debbie believed that the students should be held to higher expectations both in terms of behavior and learning, and commented that when she had her own classroom, she would not tolerate students being so "unproductive." "School is definitely a place where they need to challenge themselves and progress," Debbie wrote. "If this means cutting back on recess time if I don't think they are working hard enough to meet my expectations, I will do that." Debbie cited as a major influence on her development of this belief her personal experience in school, wherein she often found herself unable to concentrate on her learning because of other students' disruptive behavior. In journal 7 (3-27-03) Debbie reiterated her belief that the students should be held to a higher standard of behavior than the one to which Mr. Leary seemed to hold them. When discussing Mr. Leary's practice of putting x's and check marks by students' names to indicate negative or positive behavior, Debbie wrote that she did not think that displaying this assessment of

student conduct publicly was too much pressure on the students and even that "if it is a stress to them, I think that it is a positive thing. They need to learn and be taught that there are repercussions for negative behavior, as well as positive results when one does act well."

Debbie continued to express the belief that Mr. Leary's students were not being challenged enough, either academically or in terms of their behavior in school, throughout her placement. In her first post-observation interview (4-7-03), Debbie remarked about the lack of meaningful educational experiences provided for these students in general, and expressed frustration that an experience like their weekly visit to the school library was not usually a meaningful one for them. The librarian, Debbie believed, often used vocabulary that was too advanced for them to comprehend and spoke English with such a heavy accent that the children often did not understand what she said, and this caused the students to be "just totally not motivated to learn." In her second post-observation interview (4-14-03), Debbie stated that Mr. Leary's students did not seem to do academic work that was "substantive," that they were "always coloring," that she had realized in doing the lesson about constellations that the students knew much more about the stars than she had expected and that this had strengthened her belief that the children should be "pushed" more to learn to do things like spell their names. The need to hold students to higher expectations, Debbie felt, also applied to their behavior, as she perceived that "they are not sympathetic to one another, they don't respect each other, they don't care…I just think they can do a lot more than they are."

Finally, in her ninth and last journal entry (4-17-03), Debbie remarked that "these poor children" were not ready to go on to the first grade and that they had been put at a

"disadvantage not being challenged and motivated to succeed." She found this "frustrating" and "upsetting," but ultimately qualified her statements by commenting that "I realize, however, that this is not my classroom! Mr. Leary uses his own techniques and strategies, so I respect that."

In addressing this dilemma, Debbie again exhibited traits of both Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning. One important Pre-Reflective characteristic demonstrated by Debbie was her apparent inability to grasp the subtleties and complexities of the dilemma. Debbie appeared to assume that the lack of high expectations was the main, or even the only, reason why the students' behavior and academic progress was poor, and she did not consider other possibilities for the circumstances she perceived. This occurred, for example, when Debbie stated that she would be willing to take measures such as eliminating recess if students did not work and achieve to her satisfaction; she did not consider the possible ramifications of eliminating recess from young children's school days in terms of their motivation, socialization, or release of physical energy (taking it away might very well cause them to have more trouble concentrating on academic tasks than they would have otherwise had, in fact). Debbie also did not consider the complexity involved in the question of publicly posting an assessment of students' behavior in the classroom for all to see, ignoring the possible detrimental effects of such a practice in favor of the "pressure" it would put on them to learn to behave properly. Finally, when she discussed the issue of the librarian, it did not occur to Debbie that the librarian's use of advanced vocabulary might be an opportunity to teach students new vocabulary words, or that her use of English as a second language might be an experience to which many of her students could relate or which could offer them an opportunity to develop cultural

tolerance and understanding. (Debbie's statements regarding the librarian might also have been characteristic of the Pre-Reflective inability to reason logically and consistently; on one hand, she advocated rigorous academic standards for students, but on the other, she did not appear ready to allow the librarian's use of advanced vocabulary as a means for teaching the children what those words meant and increase their fluency in spoken language.)

Debbie exhibited some other Pre-Reflective characteristics as well. Her insistence that students should work hard to achieve her academic expectations of them (even missing recess to continue working to meet her expectations if she deemed it appropriate), as well as to earn positive reinforcement in the form or check marks by their names for good behavior, suggested a strong emphasis on authority as the means by which individuals acquire knowledge, which is typical of individuals functioning at the Pre-Reflective level. She also cited her own personal experience as the primary factor influencing the development of her beliefs (about how disruptive behavior hinders students' learning), another typically Pre-Reflective trait.

There were also indications that Debbie was beginning to function at the early Quasi-Reflective level. Her strong belief statements about the need to hold students to high expectations were typical of the "stubborn" belief statements made by individuals functioning at Stage 4, for instance. In addition, it is notable that while Debbie expressed extreme frustration that Mr. Leary appeared not to have prepared his kindergartners sufficiently to succeed in first grade, she qualified her statement by saying that "this is not my classroom!" and that she respected Mr. Leary's strategies (similarly to when she asked in regard to another dilemma, "Who am I to try to change someone's values?"). This

reluctance to judge others' beliefs as definitively "right" or "wrong," even if those beliefs are in complete opposition to one's own, is also typical of individuals at Stage 4.

Miscellaneous statements:

Debbie made brief and isolated statements about some other dilemmas of practice which, although they could not provide a complete and clear understanding of her reflective judgment level, appeared to support this overall analysis of a reflective judgment level of 3-4. For instance, Debbie statements about certain dilemmas often showed the type of inconsistent logical reasoning typical of individuals functioning at late Pre-Reflective or possibly transitioning to the Quasi-Reflective level. This occurred in journal 4 (3-11-03), when Debbie first stated that students needed to learn to use computers and other educational technologies or they would struggle and be negatively affected, and then seemed to change her view by stating, "coming from someone who is NOT technologically advanced, I don't think it's a negative thing that there isn't a lot found in this particular classroom. (This statement might also have indicated that Debbie was relying on her own personal experience as a primary means of justifying her point of view, which is characteristic of Pre-Reflective thinking.) Debbie's logic appeared similarly inconsistent when she discussed collaborative learning; in the same journal entry, she expressed both the belief that "I believe the best learning happens when they gain insight from another student, not just the teacher constantly…also it is a way for them to practice their social skills and cooperating, sharing, working together, learning compromise, etc.," and the belief that "not all projects can be done together…the children seem to learn more when they do tasks on their own."

Summary of Debbie's Reflective Judgment Level

Debbie's data generally supported an assessment of her reflective judgment level as primarily Stage 3, or the last phase of Pre-Reflective thinking, with signs that she was beginning to progress into the transition to Quasi-Reflective thinking. As is typical of Pre-Reflective thinkers, Debbie did not appear to have reached a point at which she was able to acknowledge and deal with the uncertainty inherent in the ill-defined dilemmas of practice she encountered in her field experience or grasp the complexities of many of those dilemmas. She did make strong belief statements about many of the dilemmas she discussed, and sometimes conceded that there were situations in which she felt unsure of the correct course of action, which are characteristic of Stage 4 and could have indicated that she might be beginning the transition to the Quasi-Reflective level. Debbie's data also clearly suggested that she strongly emphasized the concept of authority in the classroom, as she pointed out many times that the teacher needed to keep students "in line" and under control and to demand that they work hard to meet her expectations about their behavior and learning, which could correspond to the Pre-Reflective judgment level, in which individuals place great importance on accepting the knowledge provided by authority figures and experts. In a few instances, however, Debbie appeared to be rejecting the authority of Mr. Leary, such as when she expressed her disapproval of his practice at yelling at the students as a disciplinary strategy, which might also indicate impending readiness to transition to the Quasi-Reflective level, in which individuals tend to be more cynical and not always accepting of the knowledge provided by authority figures.

Debbie's approach to justifying her point of view also suggested a reflective judgment level of 3-4. She relied heavily on direct observation and personal experience to

justify her positions on dilemmas, which is a Pre-Reflective trait. Although she did sometimes attempt to incorporate the use of evidence into her process for justifying her point of view, Debbie's reasoning was frequently inconsistent and she often equated her personal beliefs with evidence This is characteristic of individuals at the transitional stage between Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective reasoning, who have begun to try to justify their positions using evidence but have not yet developed sophisticated means of gathering, evaluating, and utilizing that evidence. The reflective judgment level suggested by Debbie's data is consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

It is possible that Debbie's data could not provide as complete and accurate a representation of her reflective judgment level as it could have, as Debbie did not participate in all aspects of the reflective process. While she submitted journal entries for nine weeks and responded to prompts in second journal iterations eight of these, and participated in two post-observation interviews, she did not attend any of the three group dilemma discussions or submit her final reflective essay despite reminders and encouragement. Debbie's data did provide some insight into her reflective judgment level, as discussed above, but it might have been enlightening to consider how other data sources would have contributed to an understanding of her reflective judgment. It would have been interesting to see, for example, whether group dilemma discussions could have provided a meaningful and productive context for Debbie to articulate and explore her

beliefs about the dilemmas of practice she encountered, as the topics of all three discussions were dilemmas or themes on which Debbie had touched in her journal entries. Additionally, having a final reflective essay from Debbie might have added to the overall picture of her reflective judgment level during the data collection period by providing a means for assessing her development from the beginning of the data collection period to the end, or an opportunity for her to articulate her beliefs about a different dilemma than the ones on which she concentrated in her journal entries.

The element of the reflective process in which Debbie engaged most extensively was the dialogue journal process. She submitted nine initial entries and eight second iterations, and her journal submissions were generally spread evenly through the data collection period rather than clustered during any brief time periods, as was the case with some other participants. As was true with several of the other study participants, Debbie's responses to prompts in her second iterations often included more extensive and elaborate articulation of her beliefs and the reasons why she held those beliefs, which provided insight into the way she viewed knowledge and justified her beliefs about dilemmas of practice. Responding to prompts in her second journal iterations led Debbie to: articulate further her beliefs about discipline and management, which shed light on assumptions about authority under which she was operating (Journal 1, 2-3-03; Journal 6, 3-27-03; Journal 7, 3-31-03; Journal 8, 4-7-03); express her beliefs about how she regarded alternate points of view and whether she regarded all beliefs as equally justifiable (Journal 2, 2-10-03; Journal 3, 2-25-03); share the ways in which her personal experiences had heavily influenced the development of her beliefs (Journal 1, 2-3-03; Journal 2, 2-10-03; Journal 5,

3-21-03, Journal 8, 4-7-03); and begin to articulate her acknowledgement of the uncertainty inherent in some of the dilemmas she encountered.

Debbie's participated to a moderate degree in her post-observation interviews. Her situation regarding these interviews was somewhat unusual in that she was placed with a peer student teacher in her classroom (also a participant in this study); since they co-planned and co-taught their observed lessons together, it was decided that the post-observation interview should be a joint one so that they could interact with each other in formulating and developing thoughtful responses to the interview questions and so that the flow of their collaboration would remain undisturbed. (Each participant was, however, privately offered the opportunity to interview alone; each declined.) Debbie responded frequently with one-word answers to the researcher's comments and questions, general comments about the technical aspects of implementing the lesson, statements about her observations in the classroom and her emotional reactions to what she had observed. For example, many of Debbie's lengthier comments in both post-observation interviews dealt with her frustrations about the students' behavior and the fact that Mr. Leary's kindergarten students did not seem to be achieving at a high academic level or being challenged and motivated through substantive, meaningful learning experiences. (While this did not suggest a great deal about Debbie's reflective judgment, it was still useful in illuminating the issues and dilemmas she found most compelling.)

In conclusion, Debbie's engagement in the reflective process as a whole was limited in comparison to that of some of the other participants. She did not participate in any group dilemma discussions or submit a final reflective essay, and her post-observation interviews were more useful as a means of illuminating some of the issues which Debbie

found most pressing in her placement and an outlet for her emotional responses to those issues than for shedding light on her reflective judgment level. It is not possible to know with any certainty whether further participation in the reflective process would have provided a different representation of Debbie's reflective judgment level or to know why her participation was so limited, and teacher educators wishing to engage preservice teachers in this type of reflection should consider this variation in participation. However, what was suggested by the data was that the key element for Debbie, in which she participated most fully, appeared to be the dialogue journals, which frequently provided insight into her reflective judgment level and the assumptions about knowledge and justification of one's point of view which informed Debbie's approach to dilemmas of practice, particularly when she responded to probative questions by the researcher.

Case Study 10: Carol

Part A: Description of Case

Carol is a Caucasian female who was twenty years old and a college junior

majoring in Elementary Education and Human Development at the time of this study. She

stated that her career goal was to become a middle school counselor so that she could try to

help teenagers "through those angst ridden years of adolescence." She grew up in the

northeastern United States and has three brothers; she enjoys summer and listening to

music. *(All biographical information provided by Carol via personal e-mail*

correspondence, 5-4-03.)

Carol's placement was somewhat unusual in that she was paired with another

student teacher with whom she planned and co-taught her observed lessons and with whom

she collaborated closely in planning and implementing informal learning activities with the

students. (See Case Study 9: Debbie.) Carol and Debbie co-taught in a kindergarten

classroom in School C. In her first journal entry (2-22-03), Carol wrote that she was

pleased to be placed in a collaborative pair, as she had realized during an earlier field

experience "how important collaboration is for a good teaching experience." When asked

what factors had influenced her belief that this was important, Carol elaborated that she

had seen all of the third grade teachers in her previous placement school collaborate

closely and that it had made them much more comfortable and confident with their

teaching.

"They were able to give each other constructive criticism without hurting each

other's feelings or tearing a person down," Carol wrote. "I think that just being surrounded

by positive people will be such an important piece to teaching." Carol believed that the

most useful learning experiences for her during her previous field experiences had involved collaboration with her cooperating teacher and other student teachers; she cited the frequent exchange of ideas and strategies with her colleagues as an important factor in her professional development. "Getting a bunch of different opinions helps me get a better angle on a situation," Carol wrote. "So I think I have changed as a teacher by being more accepting of other people's opinions and thoughts."

When asked how collaborative dialogue with colleagues had influenced her point of view about issues of teaching and learning, Carol cited two examples from her previous placement experiences. In one placement, Carol had noticed that her cooperating teacher treated students differently in terms of discipline. When dealing with one child, a "difficult" girl who "had a hard background and was bused from the city," the teacher tended to raise her voice to get the student's attention and corrected her behavior in front of other students. With another, a "good child" who only misbehaved occasionally, the teacher used a softer tone of voice and corrected her privately – because, as she explained to Carol, she knew this child's mother would not tolerate a teacher yelling at her child. Carol reflected on the possible causes and implications of this teacher's decision to treat her students so differently:

> I know when I am typing this now, it seems so unfair but in a way I know what she
> means. I don't know if I agree with it completely but I can see her position. It's
> like she has such a mixed classroom with students with very different backgrounds.
> I don't think it is justified to treat students differently like that and to work with one
> student on that certain understanding level than another. However, I know that S.
> could be very frustrating as a student who didn't listen and she had worked with her

all year. So I don't think I agreed with my CT but I understood where she was

coming from and I tried to put myself in her place.

Carol also noted in response to these prompts that a previous cooperating teacher

had changed her mind about an issue regarding bilingual education. In her first field

placement, Carol had observed students who spoke English as a second language

struggling academically when they were integrated fully into a solely English-speaking

classroom, and based on this, she had developed the opinion that "children should not be

forced to be integrated." However, in her second placement, she had discussed the issue

with her cooperating teacher, Ms. Carlisle, who had given her "a lot of good reasons and

positives about integrating." She elaborated:

Ms. Carlisle's classroom was over half ESL students who blended in with the class

fine. They were just about even with the other students in the class academically.

So even though it is a struggle, she discussed how important it is to integrate ESL

students because down the road their achievement will be higher. I think I agree

with her now if the school has the capabilities to assist the teachers. It should not

be a responsibility that rests solely on the children because they don't have enough

time or speak the language enough to do everything. The teacher needs resources

available to them.

Carol concluded her journal entry by reflecting on the idea that there was always

something to learn through collaboration with one's colleagues, even if one did not agree

with all of those colleagues' beliefs and practices:

The teacher in my first preprac experience wasn't a teacher I had a strong

connection with and I would not necessarily want to emulate everything she did in

the classroom just because she has a different teaching style than me. However, I was still able to learn certain disciplining strategies from her or the importance of a good classroom library. Ms. Carlisle from last semester is a teacher who I saw a lot of myself in her and her interactions with the students. There are so many different types of teachers and every teacher interacts in a particular way with their group of students.

In her second journal entry (2-25-03), Carol discussed the demographic makeup of Mr. Leary's classroom, some issues regarding parental involvement which she had observed, and Mr. Leary's interaction with the students. She noted that the majority of students in the classroom were African American and Hispanic, that most received free lunch and breakfast at school, that "many seem to have attention problems," that several students saw the school counselor/psychologist regularly, and that most "come from lower class families and have younger parents." Carol wrote that as a result of the parents' young age, according to Mr. Leary:

> …the parents are not as involved because they don't know how to be. The parents want what's best for their children and even when you disagree with something they feel or are doing, they are doing it because that's what they think is the best for their child.

Carol believed that "many of the students have had difficult experiences in their lives for being as young as they are," and reported that many students were likely to be retained in kindergarten for another year because they were "developmentally behind" and not prepared for first grade.

Carol then wrote about her impression of Mr. Leary, with whom she was excited to work for the remainder of the semester because "he has a much different personality and way of interacting with the students than I have seen previously in placements" and because she was "interested to see if there were differences between a male taught classroom and a female taught classroom." When asked whether she held any expectations about the latter, Carol responded:

> I just assumed the classroom would be different depending on the gender of the teacher. I wasn't sure how it would be. Every teacher has their own style and while I assumed that the male teacher would be more aggressive or strict about disciplining, I knew that wasn't a complete expectation. I didn't know Mr. Leary would be so caring of the students. We see mothers as the nurturers but I think Mr. Leary does an excellent job of it inside the classroom as a teacher.

In her third journal entry (2-28-03), Carol first wrote about having been able to take charge of the classroom in an active way while Mr. Leary was out of the classroom for a period of time and the substitute allowed Carol and Debbie to run the class while he was gone. Carol felt that it had been exciting to be able to "have control of the class without any pressure…I wanted to see how I would interact with the children without someone watching me." Although she believed Mr. Leary was a caring and effective teacher, Carol wrote that she found herself "to be a different kind of teacher than Mr. Leary."

Carol expressed the belief that Mr. Leary's students would benefit if he provided them with more of a variety of learning activities and did not have to spend so much time disciplining. She wondered whether having more structure and stricter enforcement of rules would prevent discipline issues from being a distraction from learning for the

students, as she had noticed that academic activities were often interrupted because students' behavior became out of control:

> I think that this class especially needs certain rules and expectations to give them some help. However, not only are there no rules sheets posted around the classroom, Mr. Leary doesn't enforce certain rules, like raising one's hand to speak. I just think they need structure…so when I was reading a story by myself with them, I explained certain rules beforehand to them and let them know my expectations. This is something I learned last semester from Ms. Carlisle that worked so well.

In addition to providing more structure and ensuring that students followed rules for behavior, Carol also felt Mr. Leary should be communicating higher expectations for their learning to the students:

> In his class, as long as you are behaving, that is all he is looking for. Don't get me wrong, those social skills are so important and Mr. Leary is a great teacher who engages the students very well, but then it seems like it's over. We don't do follow up activities that enrich it for them. They spend so much time coloring because they don't read and write…I just wish there was as much focus on the academic learning sometimes as there was on getting the proper social skills down.

In order to explore the type of academic learning on which she felt the students should be focusing, Carol made effort when reading a story aloud to them to elicit discussion from the students about the characters, plot, setting, their predictions, and the cause and effect relationships within the story. She hoped that this had made the

experience as "powerful," educative, and cognitively stimulating for the students as possible.

(Carol did not submit a second journal iteration in response to prompts for this or any subsequent journal entries.)

In her fourth journal entry (3-14-03), Carol discussed some social and interpersonal issues with which Mr. Leary's students seemed to have difficulty and again revisited the topic of the challenge of helping the students meet high expectations for academic learning and achievement. First Carol wrote that the students appeared to have issues with space and personal property, and that these difficulties were exacerbated by the close quarters in their classroom and the need for them to share supplies and materials. Carol wished that the "claustrophobic" classroom were larger, as "I think that these kids have issues of personal space and personal property both inside and outside the classroom." Students, Carol had observed, appeared uncomfortable when the small size of their meeting area forced them to rub shoulders constantly with their neighbors when they gathered for a story or a lesson, and seemed to hoard the crayons set out for each table as if they were afraid other students might take them away. Carol reflected on this problem:

> It's something I have spent a lot of time thinking about because every child has this problem. And I hadn't seen it in the other first grade [a previous placement in a suburban public elementary]. These kindergartners need to have something of their own. Their personal space and materials are major in their lives. I don't think that these kids have as much things that are their own at home. So, it makes them have a need for them at school more. I am making this hypothesis because I know that a lot of these kids share rooms with their siblings. They also have much smaller

houses than the other first graders I had where all space wasn't an issue. Also, the students there had their own desks with their pencils and all the items on their school supply list in their desk. They had that ability of ownership. In this classroom, they have to share everything.

The remainder of Carol's journal entry reiterated her belief that Mr. Leary should provide more structured academic learning experiences for his students, especially in reading. One strategy from which she believed students would benefit was for Mr. Leary to have Carol and Debbie work individually with each student on their reading. "Studies always say that when the teacher encourages the child and takes an interest in them and their learning, the student performs better," Carol wrote to support her belief in this strategy. "In our classroom, Mr. Leary gives attention to the misbehaving children." Carol also supported her belief that more one-on-one instruction should take place in Mr. Leary's classroom with the assertion that the students needed him as a role model:

I think that these children just need the attention of an adult and especially a male in their lives since I know a good number of students don't have it at home. We have children of single mothers and children in foster homes with a foster mom. It is not enough to interact with their teacher in the large group.

Carol did not attend the first group dilemma discussion on 3-19-03.

In her fifth journal entry (3-21-03), Carol contrasted the teaching and management styles of Mr. Leary and the music teacher, and discussed a thought-provoking interview she and Debbie had conducted with another teacher at School C as a requirement for their field experience. When Carol accompanied the kindergartners to music, she made note of the music teacher's style of interacting with the students. She first noted that the music

teacher was an African American woman and wrote that she had wondered what role racial background played in the interaction between teacher and students:

> For instance, should African Americans be teaching African Americans and Caucasians be teaching Caucasians? I have heard this before from a teacher who I met who said that children need a diverse teacher, someone who looks like them to teach them. I don't agree with this for many reasons. First, I think the more diverse the class the better. So no class has all African American children or Hispanic children or Asian children. The same is true about gender – by going with this woman's rule, girls should be separated and have female teachers.

Carol went on to compare the different disciplinary styles of Mr. Leary and the music teacher who, according to Carol, "almost acts like a mother to them," "acts real to them," made herself "the boss," and did not tolerate any disrespect from students towards her or each other. Carol believed that the students responded better to the music teacher's discipline than Mr. Leary's, and she explored possible reasons for this:

> The kids respond to her threats and whatnot much better than Mr. Leary's, and I don't know if it's her personality or the fact that they see her as more like their mother than as a teacher. I think part of it is cultural, and it might have to do with the act that Mr. Leary is a man too. Either way, both of those teachers are great role models for the students, and I am glad that I am exposed to so many styles of teaching.

Carol concluded her journal entry with a discussion of an interview she and Debbie had conducted (in fulfillment of a university field experience requirement) with another teacher at School C, a twenty-year veteran teacher, parent, and evaluation expert. Carol

found herself disheartened after the interview because in addition to giving Carol and

Debbie much insight and perspective about the teaching profession, she had made the

"depressing" recommendation that Carol and Debbie not enter the profession at all. Carol

described the woman as "nice," and wrote that although the teacher had said she enjoyed

her years in education, she appeared to have grown extremely cynical, calling teaching an

"impossible, exhausting, thankless job" and saying that children entered school with more

and more problems every year and that teachers did not have the necessary support to solve

those problems. Carol found this attitude sobering and thought-provoking:

> This was sort of disappointing for me for someone to give me such negative
>
> feedback. However, that is an issue with new teachers entering the field and
>
> meeting negative feedback. Our new teachers need to meet positive feedback or
>
> how can we expect them to stay and teach our children? They need support and I
>
> was just taken aback that someone still in the education system would be that
>
> pessimistic. I saw what she was saying about it being exhausting – I am exhausted
>
> every time I go, more emotionally than anything else by the kids and their heavy
>
> heavy issues. However, I see the benefit from helping them and giving them a
>
> place to go away from the problems.

Carol did not attend the second group dilemma discussion on 3-25-03.

On 4-7-03, Carol and Debbie conducted an observed lesson and I interviewed them

afterward. The lesson involved reading aloud Judith Viorst's *Alexander and the Terrible,*

Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day and leading the students in completing a worksheet on

which they drew or wrote about things that made them feel happy or sad. Carol felt that

the lesson had generally gone well, although the children had seemed "antsy" and she had

difficulty getting them to listen closely to the story, particularly when they were eager to share that they had heard or read the story before. Carol and Debbie spent a great deal of time discussing the fact that the class in general was difficult to manage and they attributed this in general to the serious issues many individual children faced in their home lives. Carol articulated the confusion and frustration she felt when dealing with one boy who had gotten particularly angry and had had to be removed from the classroom to the hallway:

> When he crosses a line, there's just nothing you can do to refocus him. I mean, there's just nothing…a lot of students, you can, when they're having discipline problems or they're unfocused or have a temper, sometimes you can like leave them alone and they can regroup and work through it, or you can talk through it…but he's one of the kids where when it's crossed the line…we're trying to figure him out.

> In addition, like Debbie, Carol had found it difficult to know how to respond when one little girl used the occasion of "when my dad left" to illustrate something that made her sad. "I felt bad, I really didn't know what to say to her," Carol said. "I just said, 'That's a good start…'"

The topic of the discussion eventually turned to Carol's and Debbie's perception that the students in Mr. Leary's class desperately needed more academic challenge and motivation. Carol expressed the belief that the students' decoding and writing skills seemed weak and that Mr. Leary should be doing more practice with the students to strengthen their understanding of letter-sound relationships, and she agreed with Debbie that the students' understanding of the daily calendar work was unsatisfactory. When Debbie mentioned how inadequate she had perceived the students' weekly library time to

be, Carol concurred, citing in particular the librarian's practice of simply setting books and

magazines out for the students to look at on their own when the words in those books were

much too advanced for the kindergartners to read:

> I don't know if we don't have wordless books in the library, or she just doesn't put
>
> them out, where there's maybe like a word a page or something…she would put a
>
> longer book out and the kids flip through the pages really fast and then shout 'I'm
>
> done!' She just puts books out, or she puts magazines out. And then it'll be like,
>
> they'll just argue about the pictures the whole time…you know, she doesn't really
>
> put out the appropriate materials.

Carol did not attend the third group dilemma discussion on 4-8-03.

On 4-14-03, Carol and Debbie conducted their second observed lesson and I

interviewed them afterward. The lesson involved reading the students a picture book about

stars and constellations and then leading them in a connect-the-dots activity. During the

interview, many of the same topics from our first interview were revisited. In general,

Carol felt the lesson had gone well, despite the fact that some students did not understand

the instructions and had trouble connecting the dots with their rulers, which Carol did not

expect to be so difficult for them. She found reading the book aloud challenging:

> It's always hard to read to them, because I feel like it's hard to keep it fluent,
>
> because I'm always calling students' names and having to discipline. So some of
>
> them were more interested, it seemed like…some of them could relate the sun to
>
> being hot and airplanes, which they knew.

Carol tried several different techniques to keep the students quiet and attentive

during story time, but found that few of the word plays or chants she had learned really

resulted in the students settling down and listening attentively. She tried counting slowly

to three to send the students the message that she was waiting for them to calm down and

listen, "but even when you do that, it's like, well at three what are we going to do? You

know, like time out? That's why I never get to three, because I don't feel like…they'll end

up missing the directions or something."

The discussion again turned to the extreme behavioral issues of some of the

students in the class; Carol described her frustration in trying to find successful ways to

deal with a little girl who poked and pushed other children frequently, students who

became violently angry when removed from the classroom, and a student who cried many

times a day. This led to a reiteration of Debbie's and Carol's dismay that the students in

Mr. Leary's class did not appear to have progressed academically to the point where they

would be prepared for first grade and suggestions of activities which might benefit the

students, such as learning their birthdays, repeated practice in spelling their names, and

working on a specific letter of the alphabet each day with practiced writing and multi-

sensory activities. Carol also expressed some additional concern with the ways in which

Mr. Leary addressed the serious disciplinary issues which she felt were such a hindrance to

the students' learning:

> I think some things are still frustrating, like I don't know…because sometimes I
>
> just don't feel like, like he doesn't always address some discipline issues. Like
>
> sometimes, a kid would say, 'I hate you' to someone, and sometimes he wouldn't
>
> say anything. He hears it, but he just…and he uses sarcasm a lot, and the kids
>
> don't get it. So sometimes I am frustrated by the way he disciplines…like there are
>
> certain things that I would address more, things that kids say or do, like if they say

something that's really mean to a kid…he just sort of says, 'Don't say that.' And

that's it, you know? I'd have more of a talk about using kinder language, I think.

Carol did not submit journal entries for week 6 or 7; her next journal entry was for

week 8 (4-20-03). This journal entry addressed two instances working with individual

students that had made Carol very uncomfortable. First Carol spent time working

individually with Kevin on letters during the other students' gym time, as he had recently

undergone surgery and therefore could not participate with them. Carol found this hard

work, as Kevin appeared to her to want attention from her all the time. She noticed that

this was a recurring problem with him. When Kevin had the individual attention of a

teacher, he seemed happy and fairly productive, but when there were other students around

him, Carol had observed him becoming distracted and ripping up his paper in order to get

attention from one of the teachers. Carol was unsure and conflicted about how to give

Kevin the attention he needed but not to encourage his engaging in negative behavior in

order to gain that attention, especially when he made it a habit to approach her and

apologize to her after disrupting the class:

> It is difficult because I do have that impulse to give children who act out, my
>
> attention, just like any person would feel…then I feel guilty if I were to go help
>
> him because he got my attention with negative action and now he is with positive
>
> as well. That isn't right because the students that behave and work hard deserve
>
> attention as well.

Carol commented in her journal that she did not feel as "in control" of the class as

Mr. Leary was and that the students did not appear to respect her as much as they did Mr.

Leary. This feeling became stronger as a result of an incident that took place as the

students were lining up to go to lunch. One of the students, Ward, made a motion with his arm as if he were going to hit Carol, did this repeatedly despite her correction, and laughed at her when she attempted to discipline him. Mr. Leary had already left the classroom, leading the line of students to the lunchroom, and Carol did not want to pull Ward from the line and delay the students' arrival at lunch by singling him out and addressing the issue aggressively at that point. Carol continued to feel uneasy and conflicted long after the incident was over:

> I felt threatened and didn't know what to do because I felt out of control in front of the entire class…I just don't think I handled that situation right and I have been continually thinking back about how I could have handled it better. What was the professional thing to do? I think to myself…These are the times, where experience will help me and having taught for longer periods of time.

Carol discussed the incident with Mr. Leary, feeling that he believed she should have taken a more aggressive stance to deal with Ward, but Carol had observed Mr. Leary dealing with Ward before in ways which she did not feel comfortable emulating, such as "dragging him" to the principal's office when he became out of control:

> But I know I wouldn't ever do that. So what am I supposed to do? I see the methods teachers have used with Ward and that is not how I am. So it made me think about being a teacher and not knowing what kind of teacher the child has had before you. How much as a teacher do you really know about what took place in the classroom last year? What will the first grade teacher know about what happened this year? And if Ward has already been exposed to one method either at

school or at home, how am I to deal with that considering I have a different disciplinary method?

In Carol's ninth and final journal entry (4-27-03), she reflected on what she had learned during her field experience and a discussion she had had with Mr. Leary. Carol had talked to Mr. Leary about the state curriculum frameworks and what would be expected of the students when they moved on to first grade in terms of academics. Carol wrote that Mr. Leary had told her he focused more on behavior than on academics so that the students would be prepared to function socially in first grade; Carol agreed that this had been what she had observed, "but I don't feel that the students are any more well-behaved than when I first entered the classroom."

Mr. Leary said that in his opinion, only one student in the class was prepared academically for first grade, which Carol reported that he said made him feel "sad" for the students, but he said that there was little he could do about this since so many of the students were of low academic ability, got no help from home, and were frequently absent because the parents were not required to send them to school every day until the age of six (many of the kindergartners were still five years old). Carol reflected on the attitude she perceived from Mr. Leary regarding the students' backgrounds and family lives:

> Mr. Leary has a lot to say about his experiences with parents who are unsupportive of educational stuff and don't understand what children need from them. Of course, it is not that the parents don't care for their children or want what's best for them. Rather, it is that they don't know how to give them what is best for them. Chances are that their parents never encouraged them in their academics or did those things for them that they needed, and so the cycle continues…

Carol concluded her final journal entry with her overall assessment of Mr. Leary's teaching in this classroom. While she conceded that many of the students faced serious personal and academic issues which made Mr. Leary's job an extremely challenging one and considered him a good teacher in general, she still wished that the students were provided with consistently meaningful, challenging, and motivating learning experiences:

> I agree Mr. Leary is working through so many things and this year has been so difficult for him considering all that he is up against – abuse, special needs, uninvolved parents, and low ability students – but they are smart and I would have liked to have seen them challenged more throughout the year. They needed homework and to practice letters and talk about words. I know that these drills seem boring but there are lots of games to play with the students to excite them. I don't think that Mr. Leary is a bad teacher, I just think he's a little burnt out.

Carol did not submit a final reflective essay.

Part B: Analysis of Dilemmas and Reflective Judgment

As was noted in the Introduction to Chapter IV, this analysis will be comprised of three sections. In the first section, organized by dilemmas of practice encountered by Carol during her field experience, I will discuss each dilemma, explore the ways in which Carol appeared to be approaching the dilemma, and interpret specific statements or actions related to each dilemma which provide enlightenment about Carol's epistemological assumptions and the reflective judgment level at which she was likely operating during her field experience. A summary of the reflective judgment level suggested by Carol's data as a whole will follow, and a discussion of Carol's engagement in the reflective process of the study will conclude the analysis.

Dilemmas of Practice and Carol's Reflective Judgment Level

   Dilemma 1: How can one find one's professional identity as a teacher, engage in professional development, and negotiate one's role within the profession of teaching?

   Carol reflected on this dilemma in two journal entries, in which she addressed specific questions related to the dilemma such as the role of collaboration in professional development and the necessity for novice teachers to receive encouragement to continue in the profession of teaching. In her first journal (2-22-03), Carol wrote that she was pleased to be in a paired placement with Debbie, another student teacher and participant in this study, since she had learned through her earlier field placements "how important collaboration is for a good teaching experience." Carol had observed the teachers at the same grade level in her previous placement school meeting regularly to plan instruction, exchange ideas and strategies, observe each other teaching, and give each other constructive criticism, and she felt that this had made the teachers more comfortable and confident in their teaching. Carol also cited collaboration as an important part of her own professional development up to this point. "Getting a bunch of different opinions helps me get a better angle on a situation," Carol wrote. "So I think that I have changed as a teacher by being more accepting of other people's opinions and thoughts." Carol discussed how sharing ideas with previous cooperating teachers had influenced her beliefs relating to issues such as fair disciplinary treatment of students and bilingual education. Even when she had been placed with cooperating teachers whom she did not necessarily feel she wanted to emulate "just because she has a different teaching style than me," Carol believed that she always had something to learn by observing and exchanging ideas with colleagues.

"There are so many different types of teachers and every teacher interacts in a particular way with their group of students," Carol wrote.

In her fifth journal entry (3-21-03), Carol reflected on another aspect of the professional development of teachers, which was the necessity of providing preservice and novice teachers with encouragement and positive feedback about their decision to enter the teaching profession. After interviewing a veteran teacher at her placement school, Carol was disheartened that the teacher had advised her and Debbie not to go into teaching, saying it was a thankless, exhausting, impossible job for which teachers received little or no support and that more and more children came to classrooms with issues that most teachers could not possibly handle or solve. Carol pointed out that "that is an issue with new teachers entering the field and meeting negative feedback…our new teachers need to meet positive feedback or how can we expect them to stay and teach our children?" While Carol felt that she understood the frustration and exhaustion that might have contributed to this veteran teacher's pessimistic stance, she believed that her own desire to improve the situation within the teaching profession and provide a beneficial environment and experience should have been recognized and fostered by this veteran teacher.

Carol's statements regarding this dilemma generally demonstrated a reflective judgment level that was in transition from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective, with most of her statements placing her reflective judgment level at about Stage 4. For instance, Carol did appear to be basing her belief that collaboration was an important aspect of professional development for teachers to a great extent on her personal observation and experience in previous placement schools, which suggested Pre-Reflective reasoning. She also reflected that many differences in teachers' practices were a result of differences in

personal teaching "style;" this attribution of differences in belief to idiosyncratic factors is typical in individuals transitioning from Stage 3 (late Pre-Reflective) to Stage 4 (early Quasi-Reflective).

However, Carol also explicitly pointed out that she felt it was important to learn about many different perspectives about teaching issues in order to improve her practice, which demonstrated that she was at least outwardly willing to re-examine her point of view in light of new information, experiences, and alternate points of view, which is a Quasi-Reflective characteristic typical of individuals functioning at at least Stage 4. Carol also acknowledged an alternate point of view when she wrote that she understood why the veteran teacher might consider teaching an impossible and thankless job, and she did not judge this teacher's beliefs to be objectively right or wrong, which is also typical of individuals at the Quasi-Reflective level.

Carol attempted to incorporate evidence into the justification of her belief about the value of collaboration, although she did so primarily based on her observations and experiences, which is characteristic of individuals transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective thinking, as they are able to acknowledge the role of evidence in the justification process but are not yet able to utilize and evaluate it in a sophisticated manner. Carol also demonstrated that she was likely transitioning out of the Pre-Reflective level by refusing to accept the point of view of an authority figure or "expert" in her field, a veteran teacher whose perspective on the plight of novice teachers entering the teaching profession Carol felt was limiting, unproductive and misleading to those who wished to contribute to the educational system and provide meaningful educative experiences for students (individuals functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level tend to be cynical or disillusioned

with authority figures as absolute sources of knowledge). Finally, Carol could even have been showing signs that her functional reflective judgment level was progressing toward Stage 5, the later stage of the Quasi-Reflective level, when she reflected on her experience interviewing the veteran teacher in terms of the broader context of the teaching profession and the issue of how new teachers could be encouraged and supported as they begin their teaching careers.

Dilemma 2: What is the most effective and beneficial way for a teacher to manage a class and deal with disciplinary problems or issues that arise?

Carol addressed this dilemma in her journal writings and post-observation interviews at many points during the data collection period. In her first journal entry (2-22-03), when discussing aspects of teaching about which her beliefs had been influenced by collaboration or interaction with colleagues, Carol wrote about a disciplinary practice held by a previous cooperating teacher with which she did not agree. According to Carol, this teacher treated different students in different ways, often, for example, behaving in a way Carol considered harsh with a "difficult" girl from a "hard background" and correcting her publicly when she misbehaved, and dealing much more gently and privately with a "good child" who misbehaved only infrequently. While Carol strongly asserted that she did not find this practice justified, she qualified her statement by saying that she understood the point of view that had led the teacher to behave this way:

> It seems so unfair but in a way I know what she means. I don't know if I agree
>
> with it completely but I can see her position. It's like she has such a mixed
>
> classroom with students with very different backgrounds. I don't think it is
>
> justified to treat students differently like that and to work with one student on that

certain understanding level than another. However, I know that student could be very frustrating as a student who didn't listen and she had worked with her all year. So I don't think I agreed with my CT but I understood where she was coming from and I tried to put myself in her place.

In addition to expressing the beliefs about management and discipline she had developed through previous experiences, Carol often reflected on the discipline practices she observed in Mr. Leary's classroom and the experiences she had working with his class as a group and individual students. In her third journal entry (2-28-03), Carol wrote that she wished Mr. Leary had more explicit rules for behavior for the class and enforced them strongly and consistently, as he seemed to spend the vast majority of his time engaging in disciplinary measures, which in Carol's opinion left inadequate time for instruction. In her second post-observation interview (4-14-03), Carol reiterated this view, bemoaning the fact that she had also been forced to spend more time dealing with behavior issues during her observed lesson than she had wished. Carol also stated at this time that she was uncomfortable with some of Mr. Leary's disciplinary practices, such as using sarcasm with the students and addressing recurring issues only consistently or superficially, when Carol believed they should be dealt with strongly and continually. In addition, Carol mentioned in this interview that she had been at a loss as to how to effectively implement behavior management techniques which might seem simple, such as counting to three to get the students' attention. "Well, at three, what are we going to do?" she asked.

Facing behavioral issues with individual children in Mr. Leary's class also led Carol to reflect on her beliefs about management and discipline. In her eighth journal entry (4-20-03), Carol wrote that she had become frustrated working with Kevin, who

behaved well when alone with her but appeared to be acting out for the teachers' attention when surrounded by his classmates. Carol felt conflicted about giving him attention based on his misbehavior when she knew he was capable of behaving better and there were other students in the room who also needed her assistance:

It is difficult because I do have that impulse to give children who act out, my attention, just like any person would feel…then I feel guilty if I were to go help him because he got my attention with negative action and now he is with positive as well. That isn't right because the students that behave and work hard deserve attention as well.

Carol also reflected in this journal entry about another incident involving Ward, a student who had pretended he was about to hit Carol, laughed and run away when she attempted to correct his behavior. Carol felt flustered and "out of control" in the situation, not knowing what the correct course of action was, and she reflected in her journal about the questions she had concerning her response to the incident:

I just don't think I handled that situation right and I have been continually thinking back about how I could have handled it better. What was the professional thing to do? I think to myself…These are the times, where experience will help me and having taught for longer periods of time.

Carol had discussed the incident concerning Ward with Mr. Leary, but she did not feel she received adequate direction from him regarding what action on her part might have alleviated the situation. Mr. Leary's methods of dealing with Ward, Carol believed, were too harsh and physical, and she wrote that she would never consider treating Ward as Mr. Leary did. This led her to question what other methods she might have used to resolve the

situation, how individual teachers' disciplinary strategies affected students' behavior in

future classrooms, and how to reconcile her beliefs with the reality of Mr. Leary's

classroom (or any school in which she observed practices oppositional to her own beliefs):

> I see the methods teachers have used with Ward and that is not how I am. So it
>
> made me think about being a teacher and not knowing what kind of teacher the
>
> child has had before you. How much as a teacher do you really know about what
>
> took place in the classroom last year? What will the first grade teacher know about
>
> what happened this year? And if Ward has already been exposed to one method
>
> either at school or at home, how am I to deal with that considering I have a
>
> different disciplinary method?

Carol's approach to this dilemma strongly suggested Quasi-Reflective reasoning,

with most of her statements indicating a reflective judgment level of about Stage 4. Carol

made strong belief statements about discipline practices, such as when she asserted that she

would never deal with Ward in the same way Mr. Leary did, but she also appeared to show

acknowledgement of the uncertainty inherent in the dilemma and the absence of simple

resolutions in her statements, such as when she discussed the difficulty in knowing what to

do when she reached "three," how to determine whether one's disciplinary practices were

equitable for all students, and how the disciplinary actions of an individual teacher

influenced a student's development and future relationships with other teachers. These are

reasoning styles typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4, as is the ability to

acknowledge one's own bias (which Carol did when she reflected on how her feelings

influenced her choices with Kevin), acknowledgement of alternate points of view, and the

tendency to hesitate to judge others' beliefs and practices as definitively "right" or

"wrong" (Carol did both of the latter when evaluating her beliefs about her previous cooperating teacher, whose practices Carol did not agree with but whose point of view Carol attempted to see and understand).

Carol also demonstrated Quasi-Reflective thinking when she refused to accept the knowledge provided by authority figures or experts as absolute. She did this when she strongly asserted her disagreement with some of Mr. Leary's discipline practices, such as the lack of consistently enforced rules and the use of sarcasm with his students, and when she stated that while she could understand how her previous cooperating teacher might have felt when interacting in vastly different ways with different students, she did not feel this was an acceptable practice. Also, as is much more characteristic of Quasi-Reflective than Pre-Reflective thinkers, Carol appeared to be very willing to engage in questioning and re-examination not only of others' practices but of her own; she wondered whether she had made the right choices in dealing with Kevin and Ward, for instance, and continued reflecting on how her experiences with those students influenced the development of her overall philosophy of management and discipline.

There were some instances in which Carol's statements suggested reflective judgment levels other than Stage 4. Carol's comment, for example, that she believed she would be more able to deal with disciplinary issues after she had had more experience and more years teaching in the classroom, might have indicated vestiges of the tendency to regard knowledge as only temporarily uncertain, which is more typical of Stage 3. In addition, Carol also might have shown that her reasoning was at times advancing into Stage 5; her remarks about the impact of individual teachers' actions on students' future behavior and relationships with future teachers suggested that she was viewing her

experience with Ward in a broader context and considering larger issues than the basic question of how to elicit appropriate behavior from a specific student. However, for the most part, Carol's statements regarding this dilemma strongly suggested a reflective judgment level of Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 3: How do demographic characteristics of the teacher, such as gender and racial background, influence his or her relationship with students and the students' learning and behavior?

Carol was the only participant in this study to suggest this dilemma, which she addressed in two journal entries. In her second journal entry (2-25-03), Carol wrote that she had been interested to see if Mr. Leary's being a male teacher had any particular influence on the class, noting that what she had observed so far had been slightly different from what she had expected.

I just assumed the classroom would be different depending on the gender of the

teacher… and while I assumed that the male teacher would be more aggressive or

strict about disciplining, I knew that wasn't a complete expectation. I didn't know

Mr. Leary would be so caring of the students. We see mothers as the nurturers but

I think Mr. Leary does an excellent job of it inside the classroom as a teacher.

In her fifth journal entry (3-21-03), Carol accompanied the students to their music class and noticed that the students responded very differently (and more positively, in Carol's perception) to the music teacher, an African American woman, than they did to Mr. Leary, a Caucasian man, and she wondered whether this was the result of differences in their teaching styles or because of issues related to race or gender. Since many of the students in Mr. Leary's class were African American, Carol wondered whether they related

to the music teacher in a more positive way because of shared racial background. She

recalled a previous cooperating teacher who had expressed the belief that "children need a

diverse teacher, someone who looks like them to teach them," but Carol wrote that she did

not agree with this philosophy because in her opinion, "the more diverse the class the

better, so no class has all African American children or Hispanic children or Asian

children." Carol extended her argument justifying this belief to the concept of gender as

well. "By going with this woman's rule," Carol wrote, "girls should be separated and have

female teachers."

Carol concluded her reflection about this issue by writing that she was not sure

which of the many factors at play held the strongest influence on the way the students

responded to their different teachers. "I don't know if it's her personality or the fact that

they see her as more like their mother than their teacher," she wrote. "I think part of it is

cultural, and it might have to do with the fact that Mr. Leary is a man too." Either way,

Carol conceded that both teachers were "great role models" for the students and that she

was glad to be "exposed to so many styles of teaching."

Carol's approach to this dilemma generally suggested a reflective judgment level of

about Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective. First of all, Carol showed signs that she was

beginning to recognize the complexity of this dilemma, which is an important indication of

Quasi-Reflective thinking, although she did not yet appear able to understand all the

complex factors of this dilemma in a sophisticated way, signaling that she was perhaps in

the midst of transitioning to this level. As is typical of individuals functioning at Stage 4,

Carol acknowledged her own bias and interpretations of the dilemma (when she noted that

she had assumed that Mr. Leary would relate differently to his students than a female

teacher would) and also showed a willingness to re-examine her own point of view (when she pointed out that Mr. Leary's manner of dealing with the students was more caring and nurturing than she had expected that of a male teacher to be). Although she did not accept knowledge based simply on the fact that it was provided to her by an authority figure in her field, as when she explained that she did not accept a previous cooperating teacher's belief that students needed to be taught by someone "who looks like them," Carol was reluctant to judge others' beliefs and practices as definitively "right" or "wrong." Despite considering differences in their teaching styles and possible demographic factors that might lead to the differences in the way students responded to them, for example, Carol asserted that both Mr. Leary and the music teacher were "great role models."

The way in which Carol justified her beliefs also indicated early Quasi-Reflective reasoning. She attempted to argue logically against the philosophy that children are best taught by those who "look like them" by positing that this philosophy would also require girls and boys to be taught separately and only by teachers of their own gender, and she tried to reason that students might respond positively to the music teacher's discipline because they saw her as a mother figure. However, Carol's reasoning process was not yet sophisticated; she did not fully explain why she believed it would be detrimental, for example, to teach boys and girls separately and made assumptions about the reasons why students responded to the music teacher in a certain way that were not completely articulated or were based on her own beliefs rather than actual evidence. In addition, Carol ultimately simply concluded that the differences between Mr. Leary and the music teacher could be accounted for by a combination of factors, including not only gender or race but their their teaching "styles;" individuals functioning at Stage 4 tend to attribute differences

in belief or practice to idiosyncratic differences in background, personal choice or "style." Therefore, this dilemma appeared to situate Carol fairly firmly in Stage 4, or early Quasi-Reflective thinking.

Dilemma 4: How do teachers' expectations influence students' behavior and academic progress? How can a teacher decide to what type of academic expectations students should be held and how to help them meet those expectations?

As her partner student teacher Debbie also did, Carol addressed the question of whether Mr. Leary's students were being held to academic expectations that would be beneficial and prepare them for the first grade. In several journal entries, Carol expressed the belief that Mr. Leary should have been focusing more time and attention on basic academic skills with the kindergartners and that the students were at a disadvantage because he had not done so. Her first statement about this dilemma appeared in her third journal entry (2-28-03):

> In his class, as long as you are behaving, that is all he is looking for. Don't get me wrong, those social skills are so important and Mr. Leary is a great teacher who engages the students very well, but then it seems like it's over. We don't do follow up activities that enrich it for them. They spend so much time coloring because they don't read and write…I just wish there was as much focus on the academic learning sometimes as there was on getting the proper social skills down.

In her fourth journal entry (3-14-03), Carol reiterated this belief, stating that she thought Mr. Leary should be spending more time working individually and intensively with each student on basic reading and writing skills because "studies always say that when the teacher encourages the child and takes an interest in them and their learning, the

student performs better." Finally, in her ninth journal entry (4-27-03), Carol assessed Mr.

Leary's general progress in teaching the class and reflected on why she had observed what

she did with regard to his academic expectations of his students:

> I agree Mr. Leary is working through so many things and this year has been so
>
> difficult for him considering all that he is up against – abuse, special needs,
>
> uninvolved parents, and low ability students – but they are smart and I would have
>
> liked to have seen them challenged more throughout the year. They needed
>
> homework and to practice letters and talk about words. I know that these drills
>
> seem boring but there are lots of games to play with the students to excite them. I
>
> don't think that Mr. Leary is a bad teacher, I just think he's a little burnt out.

Carol's approach to this dilemma again suggested a reflective judgment level

primarily at Stage 4, with occasional signs that Carol was still completing the transition

from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Her strong belief statements about

what she felt Mr. Leary should be doing with the students and her refusal to accept his

practices without question simply on the basis of his status as an authority figure or expert

in her field were characteristic of Stage 4, as was her reluctance despite her beliefs to judge

Mr. Leary's practices as "wrong" (she conceded that he had many difficult issues to deal

with in his class, was a "great teacher," and was "a little burnt out" rather than being a poor

teacher). Carol attempted to incorporate evidence into the process of justifying her beliefs

when she stated that "studies always say" that certain teaching practices were most

effective, but her use of this evidence was rather incomplete, as she did not cite any

particular research, indicating that she was not yet able to gather, evaluate and utilize

evidence in a sophisticated manner. This is typical of individuals who are in transition from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective levels of reflective judgment.

Dilemma 5: How does students' socioeconomic background influence their academic progress, behavior, and general school experience? How can teachers help students if this factor appears to have a negative impact on their school experience?

\Carol discussed this dilemma in two journal entries. In journal 4 (3-14-03), Carol wrote that she had observed "every child" in Mr. Leary's class having a problem with issues related to personal space and personal property, noting that this was an issue she had not seen in her previous classroom placement, a suburban public elementary. Based on this contrast, Carol concluded Mr. Leary's students had these issues because "these kindergartners need to have something of their own. Their personal space and materials are major in their lives. I don't think these kids have as much things that are their own at home." Carol based her "hypothesis" on the facts that most students in Mr. Leary's class did not have their own rooms at home and shared school supplies in the classroom, whereas the students in her other placement school had often had their own rooms and their own school supplies. Carol believed that the sense of "ownership" of space and property was lacking in Mr. Leary's kindergartners and that this was a primary source of their issues with sharing space and materials in the classroom. In the same journal entry, Carol explored another possible effect of the students' socioeconomic backgrounds on their school experiences. She remarked that she thought Mr. Leary should make more of an effort to make himself a role model for each individual student; she believed that many of the students in the class did not have positive male adult role models in their lives because many of them lived with single mothers and foster mothers in foster homes.

In her ninth journal entry (4-27-03), Carol reflected on the statements she had heard Mr. Leary make about the way the students' socioeconomic background affected their behavior, learning, and the involvement of their parents in their education. While she agreed that Mr. Leary's students and their parents faced many difficult issues, she believed that coming from a certain type of socioeconomic background did not necessarily mean that parents were unwilling to provide their children with support for their education:

> Mr. Leary has a lot to say about his experiences with parents who are unsupportive of educational stuff and don't understand what children need from them. Of course, it is not that the parents don't care for their children or want what's best for them. Rather, it is that they don't know how to give them what is best for them. Chances are that their parents never encouraged them in their academics or did those things for them that they needed, and so the cycle continues…

Carol's approach to this dilemma showed an interesting mix of Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective characteristics. In some ways, for example, Carol appeared to be on the verge of recognizing the complexity of this dilemma as she explored the many ways in which socioeconomic background might influence students' school experiences, such as in terms of issues with personal space and property, the need for a teacher to play a specific social role in the students' lives, and the possibility of a "cycle" in which children who were not supported in school grew up to be parents who were unprepared to support their own children's education. This would suggest Quasi-Reflective reasoning. However, Carol also appeared to oversimplify these complicated factors somewhat – making assumptions, for instance, about the lack of male role models in students' home lives and the proper course of action for teachers in remedying this, the educational and social

histories of the students' parents, and the need for ownership of space and property she

perceived in her students – which indicated that she was not yet quite able to negotiate the

complexity of the dilemma in a sophisticated manner. This generally suggested that Carol

was transitioning from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning. Carol also made

several statements characteristic of individuals functioning at Stage 4, such as when she

refused to accept without question Mr. Leary's view of the "unsupportive" parents in his

classroom and tried to consider alternate points of view. Therefore, in general, Carol's

approach to the dilemma supports the overall assessment of this analysis that she was

functioning at about Stage 4, early Quasi-Reflective reasoning (with occasional signs that

she had not yet fully completed the transition from Stage 3, or Pre-Reflective thinking, and

even some indications that she might be able in certain cases to reason in the more

reflective manner characteristic of Stage 5).

Miscellaneous statements

There were some instances in which Carol did not explore a particular dilemma at

length but made statements which seemed to provide insight into the epistemic

assumptions and reasoning style on which she based beliefs and decisions about dilemmas

of practice. These statements generally supported the overall assessment of Carol's

reflective judgment level represented in this analysis as a whole. For example, in journal 1

(2-22-03), while discussing issues about which Carol felt collaboration with colleagues had

influenced her beliefs, she made a statement about how her previous cooperating teacher's

practices had had the effect of altering Carol's beliefs about a certain aspect of bilingual

education. Carol wrote that although she had previously believed that students who spoke

English as a second language should not be forced to integrate fully into a solely English-

speaking classroom, she had observed Ms. Carlisle's class, discussed the issue with her, and concluded that the ESL students who were fully integrated into Ms. Carlisle's class were achieving academic progress comparable to that of students whose primary language was English. "So even though it is a struggle, she discussed how important it is to integrate ESL students because down the road their achievement will be higher," Carol wrote. "I think I agree with her now if the school has the capabilities to assist the teachers." This statement showed that Carol was showing a willingness to re-examine her point of view based on new information, experiences, and the beliefs of others, which is typical of individuals functioning at the Quasi-Reflective level.

Similarly, when Carol spoke in her first post-observation interview (4-7-03) about the difficulties she had in understanding and helping specific students ("we're trying to figure him out," she remarked of one boy who had behaved angrily and had to be removed from the classroom during the lesson). This suggested that Carol was at a point in her epistemological development wherein she could acknowledge the uncertainty inherent in the dilemma of teaching and managing a classroom of students and recognize that there were no simple solutions to the dilemma of how to deal with a challenging student; these are also characteristics of early Quasi-Reflective reasoning.

Summary of Carol's Reflective Judgment Level

Carol's data generally indicated that she was functioning at about Stage 4, or the earlier stage of the Quasi-Reflective level, during the data collection period. There were some instances in which Carol made statements reflecting late Pre-Reflective reasoning (such as a tendency to rely on her personal observations and experiences to inform and justify her beliefs and decisions) or statements indicating a transitional level between Pre-

Reflective and Quasi-Reflective thinking (such as statements suggesting a belief that differences in individuals' beliefs and practices could largely be attributed to idiosyncratic factors or issues of personal/professional "style"), most of Carol's statements were strongly indicative of Stage 4.

In general, Carol's data appeared to show that she had developed to the point where she was able to acknowledge the uncertainty inherent in the professional dilemmas she encountered and the complexity of those dilemmas, and although she was not always able to understand fully the factors which interacted to create that complexity; this is an important departure from Pre-Reflective thinking. Carol did sometimes appear uncomfortable or anxious when dealing with situations which were uncertain, but this discomfort did not seem to prevent her from exploring and questioning her beliefs in the face of those situations. Throughout the data collection period, Carol continually reflected on and questioned whether she had made the right decisions concerning dilemmas she faced; she appeared to be genuinely attempting to consider alternate points of view and to re-examine her own beliefs as she negotiated the dilemmas, which also signified that her reasoning had developed beyond the Pre-Reflective level.

Other aspects of Carol's reasoning style appeared to suggest Stage 4 reasoning as well. Carol's attitude toward authority figures and experts as sources of knowledge, for example, was beyond the Pre-Reflective level, in which knowledge provided by authorities and experts is accepted without question or rejected based on the individual's perception of the authority figure as "good" or "bad." Instead, Carol appeared to accept such knowledge at times and reject it at times, based on her own beliefs rather than simply on the individual's status as an authority figure or expert. This is characteristic of early Quasi-

Reflective thinking, as is the tendency to be reluctant to judge others' beliefs as objectively

or definitively "right" or "wrong," which Carol did, for instance, when made statements

objecting to certain practices of Mr. Leary's which she personally found unjustifiable, but

qualified those statements with assertions that she still believed he was a good teacher.

Carol attempted to incorporate evidence into the process of justifying her point of view,

making statements about what "studies always say," for example, but her arguments were

not always complete or consistent, which again situated her reflective judgment level at

about Stage 4.

Carol appeared to have completed or nearly completed the transition from the Pre-

Reflective level to the Quasi-Reflective level, and occasionally her statements suggested

that she was becoming ready to progress into the latter Quasi-Reflective stage, Stage 5.

This occurred when Carol was able to expand her reflections on dilemmas she encountered

in her field placement and examine issues in a broader context, considering larger

educational and societal issues in addition to the questions related to her immediate context

(for example, when she touched on the issue of preservice and novice teachers not

receiving the support they needed when they entered the profession in order to stay

motivated and confident). However, the vast majority of Carol's statements indicated

Stage 4 reasoning. The reflective judgment level suggested by Carol's data is consistent

with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a

range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average

reflective judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4

(Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

Notes on the Reflective Process

Carol participated in two of the four elements of the reflective process utilized in this study: dialogue journal entries and post-observation interviews. She did not attend group dilemma discussions or submit a final reflective essay. Carol wrote seven initial journal entries and submitted second iterations in response to prompts for the first two of these, and she participated in joint interviews with her partner student teacher, Debbie. (As mentioned in case study 9, this was done in order not to disrupt the collaborative context in which the two student teachers were placed. Each participant was privately offered the opportunity to interview separately if she preferred; both declined.)

Carol generally participated only in the elements of the reflective process which were already required by the university for her pre-practicum (initial journal iterations and post-observation interviews). Carol's first three journal entries (journal 1, 2-22-03; journal 2, 2-27-03; journal 3, 2-28-03) were submitted within one week (Carol communicated to me that this was because she had become ill shortly after her placement started and been delayed in getting those first entries written), and she did not respond with second iterations to any journals other than her first two. Her initial journal entries tended to be more questioning and reflective than those of some other participants, as she appeared to be using her experiences in the classroom to examine and inquire into her beliefs about teaching and learning, rather presenting them as simple technical observations as some participants did in their initial entries. Carol's journal entries were composed of discussions not only about how she might go about resolving immediate issues she encountered in the classroom, but about how these experiences influenced the way she regarded the process of teaching and her students' school experiences.   She frequently

expressed her feelings of confusion and uncertainty about dilemmas she encountered, and this could have been a step in her development of the ability to comprehend the complexity of those dilemmas and the process of justifying her point of view. However, it is plausible that responding to prompts with more frequency than she did could have facilitated Carol's exploration of the assumptions and beliefs that inspired the reflection about what she observed. Carol's post-observation interviews contained many detailed observations about the lessons she implemented and about specific students with whom she had working. She also used these interviews as opportunities to express her emotional reactions to her placement and reflect on the practices which she had observed Mr. Leary utilizing in the classroom, particularly those with which she felt uncomfortable or disagreed.

Although I believed that Carol submitted enough data to provide a general representation of her reflective judgment level, one can only speculate as to how that representation might have been different had she submitted more second journal iterations, participated in the group dilemma discussions, and submitted a final reflective essay. It is possible that more extensive participation in the reflective process might have added further insight into her reflective judgment level or even influenced the way in which she approached the dilemmas of practice she encountered; however, there is of course no way to know this with any certainty. It is also not possible to know for certain why Carol's participation was limited in comparison with many of the other participants, but teacher educators wishing to engage preservice teachers in this type of reflection should note that this variation did exist and consider possible reasons why some participants might be likely to engage in the process in a more extensive and thorough manner than others.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Discussion

Teaching is full of uncertain and weighty issues which carry important

consequences for students, families, educators, and communities. It is essential that we

educate preservice teachers to recognize and be comfortable with the inherent uncertainty

and complexity of these ill-defined dilemmas of practice, address those dilemmas

reflectively, and make decisions about what is justifiable based on systematic, thorough

inquiry and evaluation of evidence in light of that inherent uncertainty. The role of teacher

educators in this process cannot be minimized, because the ways in which preservice

teachers develop their beliefs at the stage of their professional development at which they

encounter dilemmas of practice in their early clinical field experiences plays an integral

role in the way they will ultimately choose to resolve those uncertain, weighty issues faced

by every teacher. It is therefore vitally important to ask: How can we understand how

they perceive those dilemmas, and how can we help them learn from them?

Restatement of Problem

The Reflective Judgment Model provides a lens through which to view the

question. According to this model by Kitchener and King (1994), the ways in which

individuals approach the type of ill-defined, complex dilemmas which teachers encounter

in their practice on a daily basis are influenced by their assumptions about knowledge and

the justification of their beliefs. The model also states that those assumptions reflect the

developmental level, on a continuum of stages through which all individuals progress, at

which they are operating. If we view preservice teachers through this model, it means that

we might learn something valuable about how to help them reflect on dilemmas of practice by understanding their reflective judgment levels. It is this idea which the present study was intended to explore.

Ten preservice teachers involved in early field experiences engaged in guided reflection about the dilemmas of practice they encountered in their placements, statements in dialogue journals, discussions, interviews and essays were examined for insights into their reflective judgment levels. I attempted to determine: (1) how, if at all, their statements indicated the reflective judgment level at which they were likely operating; (2) how their reflective judgment level influenced their approaches to the dilemmas of practice they encountered; (3) how the process of engaging in these types of guided reflection might have influenced their ability to approach the dilemmas of practice in an inquiring, reflective manner as they addressed them in practice; and (4) how the process of reflecting on their beliefs utilized in the study might have influenced their ability to engage in the type of inquiry, reflection and introspection about those dilemmas which ultimately leads to growth to more sophisticated reflective judgment.

This chapter is a presentation of some answers to those questions based on analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected. First, I will discuss the evolution of the research questions. Following this, I will present common themes across the case studies in terms of dilemmas encountered, reflective judgment levels, and the reflective process. Implications for teacher educators based on this study and suggestions for further study will then be discussed, and a concluding statement will close the chapter.

Evolution of the Research Questions

The original research questions for this study were:

Primary Research Question

- How do preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels influence the ways in which they inquire into and make decisions about complex dilemmas of practice encountered during an early field experience?

Sub-Questions

- How is the preservice teacher's reflective judgment level demonstrated through activities related to early field experiences such as dialogue journaling, collaborative reflection sessions, post-observation interviews, and essay writing?

- What changes or developments occur in the preservice teacher's approach to making decisions about complex problems encountered in practice through the field experience, if any? How do they perceive these changes, if at all?

- With what specific events, processes, or experiences might changes in RJ during the field placement be associated?

- What implications do the results of the study have for teacher educators attempting to foster the preservice teacher's ability to deal with ill-defined dilemmas encountered in practice?

As data for this study were gathered and analyzed, the focus and purpose of the study became clearer and therefore some of the research questions evolved from their initial form. For example, two of the study's original sub-questions were "What changes or developments occur in the preservice teacher's approach to making decisions about complex problems encountered in practice through the field experience, if any? How do they perceive these changes, if at all?" and "With what specific events, processes, or

experiences might change in reflective judgment during the field placement be associated?" These questions were included to provide the researcher with an opportunity to study changes in reflective judgment occurring in the participants through the data collection period and possible causes for those changes.

However, as the study progressed, it became clear that these two original questions were not as applicable as had been anticipated. This was partially because the intent of the study, to gain and understanding of how reflective judgment development influences the way preservice teachers approach and perceive the dilemmas of practices they encounter in their field experiences and therefore impacts their professional development, emerged more clearly as the study went on. It became obvious that this study was designed more with the purpose of producing an intensive look at the reflective judgment levels during this three-month period than showing specific causes of growth. This also occurred because more intensive review of the research literature on reflective judgment and analysis of the data suggested that the time period of data collection might not be sufficient to definitively show actual growth from one stage of the Reflective Judgment Model to the next. Finally, even if such growth could be detected with any certainty, the research design could not control for factors outside of the study which might have influenced changes in the participants' reflective judgment levels (such as the simple passage of time), which would have been necessary in order to measure accurately whether factors included in the study had an impact on reflective judgment development.

Another change in the research questions occurred because although the data did not suggest that factors included in the study could have caused participants' reflective judgment levels to change over the data collection period, it did suggest that the

participants' engagement in the reflective process might be a factor influencing the manner in which they reflected on the dilemmas they encountered and on their beliefs at or close to the time they encountered those dilemmas. This led to the gradual replacement of the questions about the existence and causes of changes in reflective judgment with the following question:

- How does participation in the reflective processes of dialogue journaling, collaborative reflection sessions, post-observation interviews, and essay writing influence the ways in which preservice teachers articulate and re-examine their beliefs about dilemmas of practice encountered in field experiences?

Conclusions: Common Themes across Cases

The very nature of case studies prohibits wide generalizability, but common themes were found in the data analysis of this sample of ten participants which are relevant to the conclusions and implications of the study. These will be organized and presented as common themes in terms of: (1) dilemmas of practice encountered by participants; (2) reflective judgment levels indicated by participants' data and the ways in which reflective judgment influenced the participants' approaches to ill-defined dilemmas of practice; and (3) participants' engagement in the reflective processes utilized in the study.

Dilemmas of Practice

Table 7 below summarizes the dilemmas encountered by the participants. Dilemmas are organized in descending order according to the number of cases in which they appeared, and participants' general reflective judgment levels are included. The table

presents the number of data sources in which each participant addressed each dilemma. The first number represents instances wherein the dilemma was addressed in an initial journal entry, group discussion, interview, or essay; the number which follows the comma represents times the dilemma was addressed in a separate second journal iteration.

It should be noted that the process of analysis showed that participants sometimes dealt with dilemmas which were "layered" within one another, and this is reflected in both the case study analyses and the following chart. If a participant reflected on how teachers could engage in professional collaboration in a specific school context for the benefit of students' education, for example, and did not connect the question to other issues, the analysis shows that that participant addressed that particular dilemma in that form. If, however, a participant reflected briefly on professional collaboration as part of a multidimensional examination of factors which influenced her professional development, then the analysis and chart shows that participant engaging in reflection about larger issue of professional identity and development. This was sometimes a matter of interpretation on the part of the researcher, and every attempt was made to associate each participant's statements with the dilemma which seemed to represent most appropriately the essence of the main question on which she was reflecting.

The analysis of the dilemmas encountered by the participants clearly showed that preservice teachers participating in field experiences wrestle with many complex and serious dilemmas, the consequences of teachers' decisions about which are weighty. This underscores the importance of learning how preservice teachers make sense of these dilemmas and how they justify their beliefs and the courses of action which they choose to resolve those dilemmas.

Table 7: Summary of Dilemmas Encountered by Participants

	Lisa	Sherry	Katie	Steph.	Andrea	Jill	Melissa	Leslie	Debbie	Carol
Total initial and second-iteration data sources submitted	16, 8	14, 6	15, 4	13, 3	13, 6	15, 3	11, 0	10, 0	11, 8	9, 2
Total data sources submitted	24	20	19	16	19	18	11	10	19	11
Reflective Judgment Level	4-5	trans. 3-4	trans. 3-4	4	trans. 3-4	4; trans. 3-4	3; trans. 3-4	4	3; trans. 3-4	4
Management and discipline (10 cases)	3	2, 1	2	5, 2	2, 1	5, 2	6	4	8, 8	4, 1
Teacher-directed vs. student-centered instruction (7 cases)	4, 1	4	2	7, 2		3, 1	2	1		
Accommodating academic, cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic diversity (7 cases)	7, 3	2, 1	2, 1	3, 1	5, 3	1, 1	1			
Role as student teacher / relationship with cooperating teacher (7 cases)	6, 3	8, 2	3, 2	4, 1	1	5, 1		4		
Professional identity, development, role (6 cases)					5, 2	5, 1	2	3	2, 1	2, 1

Achievement gap / high stakes testing (4 cases)		1	1	1				1		
Dilemma is an individual student (4 cases)		3, 1			1	6		3		
Influence of teacher's expectations on students (3 cases)								2	5, 2	3
Disparity of economic resources in schools (3 cases)	3, 1	4, 1	2							
Pedagogical decision making in planning and during instruction (2 cases)		3, 1				5, 1				
Implementing reading instruction (2 cases)						3	4			
Implementing science instruction (2 cases)						1		1		
Socioeconomic background of students (2 cases)									6, 6	2
What is "fair and equal treatment" of students? (2 cases)						1	1			

Professional collaboration among teachers (2 cases)				1,1				1			
Dealing w/sensitive political /societal issues (2 cases)				2, 1			1				
Implementing math instruction (1 case)							2				
Motivation of students (1 cases)	3, 2										
Impact of teacher's demographic characteristics (1 case)											2, 1
Teacher's strengths and weaknesses in subject matter (1 case)			1								
Public vs. private schools (1 case)					1						
Different levels of parent involvement (1 case)				3, 1							
Different behavior and achievement in similar classes (1case)			1								

It is important to note both that there were many dilemmas that were common across cases and that there were also several dilemmas which only a few of the participants, or only one, articulated. In addition, all participants reflected on at least some dilemmas on a recurring basis throughout the data collection period, although approximately half also appeared to have reflected on at least one dilemma at one point during their field experience only, not revisiting the dilemma again. All participants clearly were addressing more than one dilemma at a time during the greater part of the data collection period.

The dilemma addressed most commonly by the participants was that dealing with issues of management and discipline, with all ten participants encountering the dilemma in some form at some point (and usually continually throughout the data period). Three dilemmas were addressed by seven of the ten participants: (1) the benefits of teacher-directed vs. student-centered instruction (as was the case with the dilemma about management and discipline, this dilemma was posed as a topic at a group dilemma discussion but was also encountered by the participants in their practice); (2) accommodating the needs of culturally, ethnically, racially, linguistically, and academically diverse students, and (3) negotiating one's role as a student teacher and a developing a productive relationship with one's cooperating teacher. The dilemma of negotiating one's professional role, finding one's identity, and participating in professional development as a whole or on an inservice level was addressed by six participants. Dilemmas concerning the "achievement gap" and high stakes testing and the question of helping a student facing multiple and complex challenges to academic progress were addressed by four participants. The rest of the dilemmas were articulated by either one,

two, or three participants. The frequency with which the most common dilemmas appeared supports previous teacher education research concluding that preservice and novice teachers are often deeply concerned about how to deal with issues such as classroom management (Pilarski, 1994; Mastrilli, 1999), fundamental instructional questions (Hamilton, 1999; Moore, 2003), accommodation of diversity in the classroom (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Taylor & Sobel, 2001), and professional identity, relationships, and development (Guillaume & Rudney, 1993; Vacc, 1993). These are issues which present major challenges to preservice and novice teachers.

This range of frequency in terms of how many participants reflected on the various dilemmas suggests two things: (1) that there are certain dilemmas that are commonly encountered by preservice teachers in field experiences; and (2) that despite this, individual preservice teachers are also able and likely to articulate unique dilemmas, based on the specific circumstances of their placements and the people in them, which might not arise for other individuals or which they might perceive differently than do other individuals. Teacher educators must be prepared to discern the types of dilemmas preservice teachers are encountering in their field experiences and assist them in articulating and reflecting on those dilemmas. However, teacher educators cannot provide pertinent and educative guidance to preservice teachers unless they have an understanding of the way in which their students experience those dilemmas. The next question to ask therefore becomes how the epistemic assumptions and reasoning patterns might actually influence the way preservice teachers perceive and make sense of the dilemmas of practice they encounter in field experiences and develop their beliefs about teaching and learning,

The following section, which presents common themes across cases in terms of reflective judgments levels, discusses conclusions based on the researcher's attempt to achieve this goal with the participants by integrating an exploration of their reflective judgment levels with their overall experience in a pre-student teaching field placement.

Reflective Judgment Levels

Situation of Participants on the Reflective Judgment Model

Based on analyses of the statements they made about the dilemmas of practice they faced in their field experiences, the ten participants appeared to be operating at levels of reflective judgment ranging mainly from Stage 3 (late Pre-Reflective) to Stage 4 (early Quasi-Reflective), with occasional glimpses of reasoning associated with Stage 5 (late Quasi-Reflective). Two the participants (Melissa, School B; Debbie, School C) appeared to be functioning largely at Stage 3, with some signs that they might soon also be able to engage in the type of reasoning associated with Stage 4. Three participants (Sherry, School A; Katie, School A; Andrea, School A) appeared to be functioning at a transitional phase between the Pre-Reflective and Quasi-Reflective levels, as their statements suggested reflective judgment levels of Stage 3 and Stage 4 with relatively equal frequency. Five participants (Lisa, School A; Stephanie, School A; Jill, School B; Leslie, School B; Carol, School C) appeared to have generally completed the transition from Pre-Reflective to Quasi-Reflective reasoning, as the vast majority of the statements suggested reasoning primarily characteristic of Stage 4, although these individuals also showed occasional signs of thinking more typical of Stage 3 or Stage 5. This is consistent with research on reflective judgment which states that individuals can function over a range of levels at any given time (King & Kitchener, 1994) and which places the average reflective

judgment level of traditional-age college juniors between Stage 3 and Stage 4 (Lynch, Kitchener, & King, 1994; Wood, 2001).

This analysis of the reflective judgment of the participants (all of whom were college juniors, a typical age and stage of professional development at which preservice teachers typically engage in pre-student teaching field experiences) revealed a relatively consistent pattern of reflective judgment levels ranging mainly from Stage 3 to Stage 4 but with occasional examples of thinking associated with Stage 5. By integrating the results of data analysis with the descriptions of individuals functioning at Stages 3-4 of the Reflective Judgment Model provided by the official scoring manual for the Reflective Judgment Interview (Kitchener & King, 1985/1996), we can construct reliable general conceptualization of the ways in the study participants typically experienced, articulated, and reflected on the ill-defined dilemmas of practice they encountered in their field experiences.

The following discussion of this representation will be broken down into the three categories utilized in the RJI scoring manual: (1) General dimensions, including cognitive complexity, reasoning style, and openness; (2) Views on the nature of knowledge, including view of knowledge, right vs. wrong knowledge, and the legitimacy of differences in viewpoints; and (3) Views on the concept of justification, including the concept of justification, the use of evidence, and the role of authority. For each category, characteristics of various reflective judgment levels demonstrated by study participants will be pointed out.

General Dimensions

Cognitive complexity. This category represents the relative simplicity of an individual's belief system or world view and the degree to which they can recognize complex issues. The preservice teachers in this study were sometimes able and sometimes unable to recognize the complexity of the issues they encountered as they attempted to teach and manage groups and individual students. They sometimes reflected only technically about issues they observed, perhaps reporting which instructional strategies "worked" and which did not or not reflecting on them or not at all (Stage 3). In many cases, they could articulate a complex issue, such as one encompassing systemic factors or broader debates about educational theory, for example, but sometimes became confused when they attempted to separate smaller issues within a complex dilemma or regard the dilemma outside of the immediate sphere of how to make things work in their individual classrooms (Stage 4). However, in certain instances, participants showed signs of moving beyond acknowledging the existence of complexity to actually exploring that complexity, discussing or questioning the factors contributing to a complex dilemma's existence in a way that demonstrated an inquiring perspective toward the dilemma (Stage 5).

Reasoning style. This dimension of reflective judgment represents the manner in which individuals attempt to utilize logic or reason when resolving a dilemma or justifying a point of view. The participants in this study sometimes seemed to recognize the role of evidence in formulating opinions and justifying their decisions, but they did not yet demonstrate that they were practiced in the rules of evidence and sometimes engaged in contradictory logic (Stage 3). Because they were as yet unable to differentiate between the merits of different beliefs or courses of action based on logical reasoning and evaluation and use of evidence, they often took action in their classroom according to "instinct" or

what "felt right," sometimes attributing their or others' decisions to matters of personal teaching "style" (Stages 3 and 4). In certain instances, some participants demonstrated a more explicit and consistent use of logic to explore different sides of an issue (Stage 5).

Openness. This dimension represents the degree to which an individual is open to alternative beliefs and viewpoints and the way in which those alternative points of view are processed and considered. When faced with questions of how to proceed in their classrooms, the participants in this study were not always able to cope well with alternative points of view. They sometimes simply failed to acknowledge multiple points of view or accepted or rejected others' points of view without examination (Stage 3). Because they often had no way to differentiate logically between alternate points of view in terms of justifiability, they sometimes adhered rigidly to certain teaching practices, educational theories, or beliefs about their students, or they sometimes seemed not be able to decide which course of action they found most justifiable (Stage 4). In certain instances, participants expressed views that diversity of views was inherent in the human experience and were willing to accept and to begin examining views alternate to their own (Stage 5).

Nature of Knowledge

View of knowledge. This dimension represents the individual's general view about the certainty of knowledge and the manner in which reality can be known. The participants in this study appeared to view reality as knowable in many cases and uncertain in others, if only temporarily uncertain due to the lack of sufficient information (Stage 3). They often appeared to believe that there was a correct resolution for many of the questions they encountered in the classroom, and that in cases when this was unclear, gaining more information by observing veteran teachers or spending more time in the

classroom would lead to finding the resolution (Stage 3). Many, if not all the participants, however, appeared to be at least beginning the important transition to the stage at which individuals begin to realize that knowledge is an uncertain, abstract concept but regard knowledge as affected by too many situational variables to be known with certainty. (Stage 4). They often conceded that they did not know how to resolve an issue but were uncomfortable with attempting to find a course of action in light of that uncertainty (Stage 4). In some cases, participants also expressed the belief that one's knowledge of reality is personal and embedded in interpretation, implying a belief that uncertainty is implicit in the process of understanding the world (Stage 5).

Right vs. wrong knowledge. This dimension represents the way in which an individual categorizes knowledge as "right" or "wrong" and justifies that evaluation. The preservice teachers in this study frequently appeared to believe that there was one "right" solution for at least some problems, and they felt uncomfortable if they are unable to find it. They frequently based decisions on what they had experienced in school, what they had seen cooperating teachers do in placement classrooms, or on their own previous and unexamined assumptions about their students and the process of teaching (Stage 3). In other cases, the participants expressed the belief that they could know what was right for them in terms of educational philosophy and guiding principles, but that they could not judge others' beliefs as right or wrong. They often pointed out, for example, that they would never follow the example of a cooperating teacher or colleague, but then qualified their opinion by stating that their colleague is still a good teacher or that he or she must have a good reason for teaching or behaving in a certain way (Stage 4). In certain

instances, participants found evaluation of complex problems in terms of simple "right" and "wrong" to be inappropriate or impossible (Stage 5).

Legitimacy of differences in viewpoints. This dimension refers to the way in which individuals regard different viewpoints about a particular issue. The preservice teachers in this study frequently appeared to be considering all points of view about uncertain questions to be equally correct or equally biased (Stage 3-4), or they saw discrete differences in points of view but were unable to integrate them into a broader view of the issue (Stage 4). They sometimes chose to implement certain strategies over others without evaluating the reasons and consequences for those choices (Stage 3-4). The participants also reported on various teaching practices they had observed or educational issues they had debated but did not compare and contrast different practices and beliefs qualitatively (Stage 3-4). In certain cases, participants articulated that differences in point of view and practice were the result of different perceptions and interpretations of the world and attempted to examine evidence supporting different views (Stage 5).

Nature of Justification

Concept of justification. This dimension refers to the individual's general perspective about how knowledge, beliefs and decisions can be reasonably justified. The preservice teachers in this study often became confused about how to make judgments about uncertain dilemmas (Stage 3) and often did not differentiate beliefs from reasons beliefs were held (Stage 3). At times they appeared to understand the difference between unconsidered belief and considered judgment, but they were not yet able to use evidence to arrive at a conclusion (Stage 4). Their decisions and beliefs were sometimes justified arbitrarily or defended rigidly with a lack of objectivity, or sometimes took tentative

positions and were easily swayed (Stage 4). Many often justified their beliefs and

decisions based on previous experiences in school, observations of other teachers, or

idiosyncratic factors dealing with teaching style or personal upbringing (Stage 3-4). In

certain cases, participants appeared more able to construct a broader perspective or more

balanced, objective view of a complex dilemma and to follow simple rules of inquiry in

order to justify knowledge and beliefs (Stage 5).

     Use of evidence. This dimension refers to the manner in which an individual

gathers, evaluates, and utilizes evidence in justifying a belief or point of view. The

participants in this study were beginning to acknowledge the existence of evidence and

differentiate facts from opinions, but they frequently did not evaluate or evaluate or use

evidence to reason to conclusions (Stage 3). They often saw personal opinion as

something beyond scrutiny or evaluation and frequently based their opinions or decisions

on unsupported personal belief (Stage 3). Some participants expressed the realization that

opinions are insufficient for supporting an argument and began attempting to apply rules of

evidence in a mechanical, concrete or incomplete way (Stage 3). They also often employed

contradictory logic, equated their personal beliefs with evidence, or suggested that there

would never be enough evidence to know with certainty (Stage 5). In certain cases, the

participants expressed the view that personal interpretation of evidence was a legitimate

and necessary part of justifying beliefs and began attempting to evaluate qualitatively

specific pieces of evidence.

     Role of authority in making judgments. This dimension refers to the emphasis an

individual places on another person's status as an authority figure or expert in justifying a

point of view. The participants in this study often viewed authorities as able to "know"

reality in certain areas, although they might have believed that more time and information are necessary in order for them to do so in more uncertain areas (Stage 3). They often relied heavily on the authority of their cooperating teachers, supervisors, or professors as models of behavior and to guide their beliefs and decision-making processes; they sometimes accepted the mandates of curriculum developers and designers of standardized assessment instruments as unquestionable (Stage 3). However, as they made the transition from the earlier Pre-Reflective stances in which the knowledge of authorities is accepted as absolute to Quasi-Reflective thinking, participants also sometimes became subjectively disillusioned with the knowledge of authority, considering it arbitrary or biased because by authorities' interpretations (Stage 4). At this stage, since they could not yet distinguish qualitatively between points of view or view authorities as actively participating in the process of knowing and interpreting evidence, some participants expressed cynicism toward authority or disillusionment with the knowledge that authorities could provide (Stage 4). They often appeared highly skeptical of the guidance offered them by cooperating teachers, supervisors, or professors, and they questioned the curricula or instructional strategies required of them, based not on objective evaluation of ideas and materials but solely on their point of view that their own opinion was as valid as that of an "expert" (Stage 4). In some instances, participants appeared less likely to either accept or reject authorities' views without question simply due to their authority status and viewed authorities as human beings with their own interpretations (Stage 5).

Since, according to this study's results, the characteristics of reflective judgment vary over the range of stages at which we can likely expect preservice teachers to be functioning, it is important that teacher educators remember that they must be cognizant

not only of what a preservice teacher says about, or how she approaches, a dilemma, but also of the assumptions and developmental level which influence those statements and choices. When following the above composite portrait of a "typical" preservice teacher in an early field experience, it might appear contradictory, for example, to suggest that a preservice teacher in an early field experience might either (1) rely heavily on authority figures for knowledge or (2) express strong skepticism or disappointment toward authority figures as a source of knowledge. However, both of those characteristics are typical of the range of reflective judgment levels at which preservice teachers are likely to function, and they both represent not just behaviors toward authority but a general level of development at which individuals are not able to objectively gather, evaluate and use evidence to qualitatively differentiate between points of view, whether they are held by authorities or not; these two means of dealing with this inability are actually just "opposite sides of the coin." It is therefore vital to remember when using this portrait for insight into the reflective judgment levels of preservice teachers to consider not simply which characteristic or behavior they manifest as they approach dilemmas of practice, but why they are doing so in terms of their epistemic assumptions.

This multiple case study was designed to result in a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences regarding ill-defined dilemmas of practice they encountered in the field rather than to produce widely generalizable results. We must also remember that some preservice teachers enter their teacher preparation programs and therefore take part in early field experiences at non-traditional ages and that variation in reflective judgment levels are likely to exist within groups of and individual preservice teachers. However, it is hoped that this composite "portrait" of the study participants will assist teacher educators

in understanding how preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels are likely to influence

preservice teachers' reflection and decision making on dilemmas of practice, to be

influenced by their experiences in the field, and to develop through the process of

reflecting on their experiences. In light of this interpretation of the ways in which

reflective judgment typically influences many preservice teachers' experiences in early

field placement, the next step for teacher educators is to learn how they might use this

understanding to facilitate preservice teachers' reflection on ill-defined dilemmas of

practice, and hopefully to nurture their reflective judgment development, through various

strategies of guided reflection. The next section offers insights into this question based on

evaluation and interpretation of the participants' engagement in various aspects of the

reflective process through the course of this study.

<div align="center">*Engagement in the Reflective Process*</div>

Common Themes.

Table 8 below summarizes the engagement in the reflective process of all study

participants and the common themes which were suggested by the data.

Table 8 : Common Themes Concerning the Reflective Process

	Lisa	Sherry	Katie	Steph.	Andrea	Jill	Melissa	Leslie	Debbie	Carol
School	A (sub. public)	A	A	A	A	B (urb. public)	B	B	C (urb. public)	C
Grade taught	2	K	1	1	1	3 – 4	2	1-3 SP	K	K
Initial journal entries	9	8	9	8	9	10	7	5	9	7
Second journal iterations	8	6	4	3	6	3	0	0	8	2
Group dilemma discussions	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
Post-observation interviews	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
Final reflective essay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Total data sources	24	20	19	16	19	18	11	10	20	12
General reflective judgment level	4-5	trans. 3-4	trans. 3-4	4	trans. 3-4	trans.; mostly 4	3; trans. 3-4	4	3; trans. 3-4	4
Addresses dilemmas on a recurring basis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Addresses dilemmas once and does not revisit				X		X	X		X	X

Responds to dialogue journal prompts, leading to further articulation and examination of belief		X	X	X		X				X	
Expresses appreciation for group discussions as context for reflection/ discussion		X				X					
Extensive participation/ reflection in group dilemma discussions; focus on beliefs rather than technical comments	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
More extensive acknowledgement of uncertainty/complexity of dilemmas in group discussions than other contexts		X								X	
Interviews stood out as productive context for examining beliefs				X	X			X		X	X
Many data sources submitted in short period of time					X			X			X
Limited participation might affect analysis of engagement in reflective process								X	X	X	X

trans. = transitioning

Varying Levels of Participation

Although all the participants engaged in at least two elements of the reflective process utilized in this study (dialogue journal writing, group dilemma discussions, post-observation interviews, and final essays), there was considerable variation in terms of the extent to which each engaged in these elements. For example, three out of the ten participants (Lisa, Sherry, and Katie) engaged in a way that might be termed "fully" or "intensively" in the process, completing weekly or near weekly initial dialogue journal entries, submitting second iterations for four to eight of these, participating in two post-observation interviews, and completing a final reflective essay. Three other participants (Stephanie, Andrea, and Jill) engaged in a manner which might be termed "moderate," submitting weekly or near weekly initial dialogue journal entries, submitting second iterations for three to six of these, attending one or two group dilemma discussions, participating in one or two post-observation interviews, and submitting a final essay. Four participants engaged in a more limited manner by not participating at all in at least one element of the reflective process: Melissa and Leslie, for example, attended two group dilemma discussions each, participated in (respectively) one and two post-observation interviews, and submitted (respectively) five and seven initial journal entries, but neither completed any second journal iterations in response to prompts. Debbie and Carol both submitted weekly or near weekly initial journal entries, responded to prompts in second iterations for at least two of these, and participated in two post-observation interviews, but neither attended any group dilemma discussions or submitted a final reflective essay.

Every attempt was made to encourage full participation in all aspects of the process. Prompts for second journal iterations were returned to participants within two

days of their submission of initial entries, and participants were given two months

following the conclusion of their field experiences to complete and submit final essays.

Group dilemma discussions were scheduled in consideration of participants' input

concerning their scheduling constraints, and each discussion was scheduled for a date and

time at which all participants said that, to the best of their knowledge at the time of

scheduling, they would be able to attend. Encouragement and reminders about the

expectations of the study were given to participants frequently via email, phone

conversations, and on-site meetings with participants and their cooperating teachers.

However, as stated in Chapter III: Methodology, I recognized that these preservice teachers

had tremendous demands placed on them in terms of academic schedules, field experience

participation, extra-curricular activities, jobs, etc. and that this could have had an impact on

their participation (such as in cases such as Andrea, Melissa, and Jill, for example, who

submitted several data sources in a much shorter period of time than intended by the

research design). Therefore, I attempted to encourage but not pressure the participants to

engage to the fullest of their abilities in the reflective processes, and as their university

supervisor, naturally did not penalize them in terms of grades or official evaluation if they

completed all the university requirements for their pre-practicum.

Those who did not participate to a great extent in all reflective processes were still

included in the study, as I believed that the data which they did contribute was still

valuable in terms of providing insight into the reflective judgment levels of preservice

teachers at this age and stage of professional development. Although I believe there

existed a sufficient number of common themes within the group of case studies to draw

certain tentative conclusions about the way in which the reflective process influenced their

approach to dilemmas and reflective judgment development, the limited engagement of

some participants should be recognized as having a possible impact on this analysis of the

effects of engagement in the reflective process on the way in which they approach

dilemmas of practice, and it should be stated that further research and examination of

samples in which all participants engaged to a more uniform extent might benefit those

seeking to understand this subject. It would also behoove teacher educators seeking to

develop understanding of the question of how the reflective process influences preservice

teachers' approach to ill-defined dilemmas and reflective judgment development to

examine possible reasons why certain participants might engage more fully than others, or

why they might feel more comfortable engaging in certain types of or contexts for

reflection than others, and to develop strategies to elicit the most productive and insightful

participation from each as possible as they reflect on the dilemmas they encounter in their

field experiences. With this in mind, we can examine certain themes which appeared

common in this multiple case study as a whole.

Online Dialogue Journaling

Participation in dialogue journaling, first of all, appeared to be a significant means

for reflection on ill-defined dilemmas of practice and a highly useful means for eliciting

reflection on their beliefs, and the experiences and assumptions influencing those beliefs,

about those dilemmas. In at least six cases (Lisa, Sherry, Katie, Stephanie, Jill, and Debbie

– and again, it was more difficult to ascertain this pattern in the other cases because of

limitations on their participation), responding to prompts appeared to lead participants to

engage in further articulation and examination of their beliefs regarding dilemmas in

second journal iterations than they had done in initial entries, even if they submitted

second iterations for less than half of their initial entries. For instance, frequently (though not always), participants' initial entries consisted of simple reporting of observations, technical reflections on the details of various instructional methods, or simple statements of participants' general feelings regarding situations they faced in their placement classrooms. However, when responding to prompts specifically integrated into my responses in order to elicit self-examination of beliefs based on procedures from the Reflective Judgment Interview, participants often expanded their reflections to cite personal experiences or observations, discuss the influence of certain individuals they viewed as authority figures, present what they might view as "evidence" or logic supporting their beliefs, directly express feelings about the uncertainty and complexity of the dilemmas, or make statement implying their assumptions about alternative points of view and the process through individuals evaluate ill-defined dilemmas and justify their points of view.

Of the other four participants, two (Melissa and Leslie) submitted no second iterations so it was impossible to assess how the supervisor's prompts influenced their reflection on dilemmas; one other (Andrea) appeared to make generally the same types of statements in initial entries and second iterations but showed this pattern occasionally; and one other (Carol) tended to engage in more questioning and reflection about dilemmas than some other participants in her initial entries and only submitted two second iterations, so it was not clear exactly what influence the process of responding to prompts had on her reflection on dilemmas. However, this pattern suggests that responding to probative questions specifically designed to elicit examination of the reasons for preservice teachers' beliefs and the assumptions informing their decisions is a process which could be

extremely useful for teacher educators as they attempt to understand the ways in which preservice teachers make sense of uncertain dilemmas of practice and help them learn to make justifiable decisions about those dilemmas.

There are many possible reasons for the success of online dialogue journaling as a strategy for fostering articulation and examination of beliefs and reflection on practice. For instance, maintaining a dialogue about recurring dilemmas in this form might have provided participants with an effective balance of continual prompting and sufficient time to reflect on their beliefs in private and express those reflections in writing. Online dialogue journaling also could have provided a balance of one-on-one conversation and distance between the conversants which might have assisted the participants in inquiring into their beliefs in a manner that afforded them a certain degree of both interaction and privacy. In general, dialogue journaling appeared to represent an informal yet rigorous process of inquiry into participants' beliefs which capitalized on the benefits of social interaction, the concentrated focus of supervisor and participant on dilemmas of practice encountered in the field, the supportive, trusting relationship between preservice teacher and supervisor, and possibly the participants' desire to succeed in their field placements and teacher preparation programs. The results of this study support previous research suggesting that dialogue journal writing can beneficially stimulate preservice teachers' reflection on their practice (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993) and can lead to the development of more sophisticated epistemological thinking in preservice teachers (Roberts, Busk, & Comerford (2001).

Group Dilemma Discussions

Group dilemma discussions were also an important part of the reflective process. Seven participants (Lisa, Sherry, Katie, Stephanie, Andrea, Jill, and Leslie) appeared to participate extensively and reflect deeply on dilemmas in group discussions, often making statements in response to probative questions about the factors influencing their beliefs rather than simply making mainly technical comments about the act or profession of teaching. At least two participants (Andrea and Leslie) appeared to be more prone to acknowledging the uncertainty and complexity inherent in the dilemmas they encountered in this process than they seemed to be when engaging in reflection through other means such as journal or essay writing or post-observation interviews. It is not clear exactly why this forum proved so productive and thought-provoking for so many of the participants, but we might find some insight into this question by recalling the statements of two participants who explicitly expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on their field experiences in a group context. Several expressed this to the researcher on an informal basis during the course of the semester, but two actually did so in their data. During the first group dilemma discussion (3-19-03), Jill stated:

> You can only learn so much by hearing [professors] talk in class, reading stories, even seeing videos or whatever…a real good way is to learn what other people do and you'll learn different ideas and situations and stuff like that…I wish that prepracs met like two times a week, at least, just to speed up the process of getting comfortable, knowing what your role is, what you might do, what other people are going through.

Another participant, Sherry, made the following comment at the second group dilemma discussion:

The meetings can be so helpful, even if it's just someone confirming what you're seeing or thinking. Or even…it's so much more beneficial than some of the other pre-practicum requirements, because it eases your mind, and it brings up a lot of things that I wouldn't necessarily think about otherwise, and be like, 'oh wow, that's an interesting point, I wonder what people think about this…' And it's informal, and we all feel comfortable enough…I don't think anybody's ever feeling like, 'oh, I can't say what I want because of what other people might think.' I mean I know that I completely trust these people not to have a problem with what I say, and I think the rest of the people feel the same way.

These comments by Jill and Sherry suggest that the process of social contact with peers, in a comfortable setting in which participants felt they could speak freely about important and often sensitive questions and explore their ideas in an environment of support and inquiry rather than judgment or evaluation, facilitated their examination of issues immediately relevant to daily classroom practice, their consideration of alternative points of view, and the process by which they made personal decisions about their own practices.

The results of this study support previous research identifying participation in collaborative discourse about dilemma cases as a promising method for helping preservice teachers clarify and articulate their beliefs about knowledge and teaching, consider multiple perspectives for problematic situations, challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions that guide their practice, and understand more fully the possible consequences

of their actions (Boyce, 1995; Coombe & Newman, 1997; Harrington, 1995; Harrington, Quinn-Leering, & Hodson, 1996; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Mastrilli & Brown, 1999; Meyer & Achinstein, 1998). Furthermore, the success of the group dilemma discussions in this study as an effective and meaningful strategy for fostering inquiry, reflection, and collaboration supports previous teacher education research advocating the establishment and maintenance of "communities of inquiry." According to this research, regular participation in such "communities of inquiry" is an essential process for fostering inquiry and reflection, developing shared leadership, providing support, creating a collaborative atmosphere, and renewing individual and shared commitment to teaching and learning which enormously benefits preservice teachers, inservice professionals, and teacher educators alike (Louis, K.S. & Kruse, S.D, 1995; Lieberman, 1996; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001).

Post-Observation Interviews

In four cases (Stephanie, Andrea, Leslie, and Carol), post-observation interviews appeared to stand out as productive means for reflecting on the beliefs and assumptions that informed participants' practice and acknowledging the uncertainty of dilemmas of practice. It is not clear precisely why this context seemed more facilitative for some participants than others, but several possible reasons bear consideration. First, three of those who appeared to engage intensively in the process of reflection (Stephanie, Andrea, and Leslie) were also individuals for whom group discussions appeared to be a particularly successful context for reflection, so it is possible that the element of social interaction was a significant one for them, especially when it involved continuous questioning and probing about their actions and beliefs. It is also interesting to note that three of these participants

(Stephanie, Leslie, and Carol) submitted few second journal iterations in response to supervisor prompts and the other (Andrea) was one of the few participants for whom dialogue journal writing did not appear to elicit significantly more in-depth reflection on dilemmas, so it is also possible that these individuals were more comfortable expressing and exploring their beliefs verbally than in writing. Finally, it is also possible that exploring one's beliefs about teaching and learning immediately after the act of teaching, when they have just been in the "heat" of the act and experienced the adrenalin flow of a student teacher attempting to conduct a lesson on her own, was a more stressful process for some (especially considering that this interview was a required part of their pre-practicum and involved official paperwork to be submitted for them to "pass" their field experience course) and a more energizing and inspirational one for others.

Final Reflective Essays

Final reflective essays were submitted by eight participants and often were very similar in content and structure to journal entries, the main differences being that participants were specifically instructed to write about a dilemma in terms of reflective judgment prompts and were based on dilemmas posed by the researcher rather than encountered in practice by the participants. They were a useful tool for determining the reflective judgment levels at which participants were functioning, engaging participants in reflection about a dilemma which they might not have considered before, or providing an opportunity for participants to revisit a dilemma they had considered previously and further articulate and explore their beliefs about it, but they did not have the benefit of being an ongoing process such as dialogue journaling or the element of social interaction of group discussions and interviews. Due to the formality of the essay (as opposed to the

personal nature of reflections made in journals and group discussions) and its placement at the end of the semester, it appeared to be an effective means for obtaining a reasonable summative assessment of the participants' reflective judgment levels but it did not contain an interactive element and therefore might have had less potential as a strategy for fostering ongoing consideration of complex dilemmas than other elements of the reflective process.

Conclusions

There are two main tentative conclusions we might draw from this study in terms of common themes concerning participants' engagement in various processes of guided reflection as they learn to negotiate ill-defined dilemmas of practice encountered in field experiences. They are: (1) that there was variation in the participants' level of engagement in the reflective processes in general as well as in the extent and intensity of their participation in the various specific elements of the reflective process, with each element showing some value to certain participants or the understanding constructed by the study as a whole; (2) that the processes of dialogue journaling and group dilemma discussions, both incorporating probative questions and prompts adapted from the Reflective Judgment Interview and focusing on dilemmas which participants actually encountered in practice, proved particularly valuable methods for eliciting further articulation and examination of beliefs about teaching and learning and revealing the epistemic assumptions influencing participants' reasoning and decisions.

With these conclusions drawn, the next question to consider becomes that of how teacher educators might make use of the understanding of preservice teachers' reflective judgment offered by this study. The following section outlines implications of this study

for teacher educators and will present general recommendations and implications based on analyses of dilemmas, reflective judgment levels, and the reflective process.

Implications for Teacher Educators

General Recommendations

First and foremost among the general recommendations suggested by this study is the recommendation that teacher educators recognize that epistemological development and reflective judgment do influence the way preservice teachers perceive, negotiate, and justify their decisions about the uncertain, ill-defined dilemmas they encounter in practice, many of which they first face in an immediate, concrete, action-necessitating manner for the first time in their early field experiences. As preservice teachers learn to negotiate acceptable resolutions to problems that have no clear and simple solutions – problems which abound in the teaching profession – it is not just *what* they think about an issue, but *how* they are thinking about the issue, which has an impact on the way their beliefs about teaching and learning and their professional philosophies ultimately evolve. Teacher educators must be cognizant of this and understand that if epistemological development is not taken into account as a factor influencing the way preservice teachers approach dilemmas of practice, they might incorrectly assess the reasons why preservice teachers make the statements and take the actions they do regarding those dilemmas, and this can only be a detriment to efforts to facilitate preservice teachers' learning to reflect on and justify their beliefs in uncertain situations.

Second, teacher educators must integrate a working understanding of reflective judgment into the way in which they provide guided reflection for preservice teachers going through early field experiences. In order to this, they must first become familiar

with Reflective Judgment Model in general, the types of statements which indicate various levels of reflective judgment, and the probative prompts based on the Reflective Judgment Interview so that these may be utilized as a means for understanding the ways in which preservice teachers perceive and make sense of the dilemmas of practice they find in their field practice. Although the most illuminating statements with regard to assessment of reflective judgment usually arose in this study from responses to prompts specifically designed to explore participants' reflective judgment, the preservice teachers in this study also occasionally made spontaneous statements giving clues to the assumptions informing their beliefs and their developmental level of reflective judgment, so teacher educators should also be "tuned in" when interacting with preservice teachers in any contexts or examining any verbal or written statements to indicators of epistemic assumptions under which those individuals might be functioning.

Third, teacher educators should remember that the Reflective Judgment Model represents a continuum of development and provide guidance which takes into account the developmental level at which they are operating when they engage preservice teachers in inquiry and questioning about their beliefs. (This calls to mind the work of Reiman, 1999, who recommended that teacher educators provide a balance of indirect and direct responses and to preservice teachers' reflective statements, offering appropriate amounts of support and challenge.) However, there appear to be certain common threads on which teacher educators might focus when implementing guided reflection with preservice teachers (these will be elaborated in "Implications Based on Reflective Judgment Levels").

Implications Based on Dilemma Analyses

First, this study suggests that teacher educators should be prepared to help preservice teachers deal with certain dilemmas which appear commonly when they engage in their practice in early field experiences, such as (1) issues relating to management and discipline; (2) decisions regarding the degree to which instruction should be teacher-directed or student-centered; (3) questions of how one might ethically and realistically accommodate academic, ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom, and (4) concerns about negotiating one's role as a teacher, finding one's professional identity, and pursuing professional development. These are dilemmas to which preservice teachers might have been exposed in a theoretical or introductory way through coursework or previous informal experiences in education-related settings, but the early field experiences are often the first time the dilemmas are encountered in a way that is concrete, immediate, "up close and personal," and requiring them to take action or evaluate the action taken by another, such as a cooperating teacher. Teacher educators must be alert to the presence of those dilemmas in preservice teachers' field experiences. They must actively challenge preservice teachers' beliefs about issues that relate to these common dilemmas, such as the power relationship between teacher and students, the reasons why they choose certain instructional styles or strategies over others, the way in which they perceive diversity and relate to students different from themselves, and their conceptions of their own roles as teachers. Finally, they must have a variety of resources and support to provide preservice teachers as they explore their beliefs about these dilemmas.

Second, teacher educators must realize that preservice teachers are dealing with these dilemmas on a recurring basis, usually experiencing more than one at a time, and

should provide assistance to preservice teachers as they attempt to translate simple observations of the occurrences in their placement classrooms to articulations of complex and ill-defined dilemmas. Teacher educators should encourage preservice teachers to revisit dilemmas they have identified and not simply consider them once and forget them, thereby guiding them toward thorough and evolving reflection on their beliefs about the dilemmas and fostering the habit of reflecting continually on their experiences and development.

Third, teacher educators must recognize that not only are preservice teachers addressing several dilemmas simultaneously, the dilemmas most frequently encountered are also often contiguous within the context of the preservice teacher's field experience. For example, a preservice teacher might confuse issues of management and discipline with issues of accommodating diversity if she is inadvertently using different disciplinary techniques with students of different ethnic or racial backgrounds. A preservice teacher might resolve the dilemma about teacher-centered vs. student-centered instruction in a certain way based on her beliefs about the relative importance of managing the classroom with a high degree of control and authority. The manner in which a preservice teacher negotiates an issue of accommodating diversity might influence, or be influenced by, the way she views her personal and professional role in the social system of the school or community. Therefore, teacher educators must help preservice teachers not only to be aware of the many complex dilemmas they face simultaneously and to reflect substantively on those dilemmas individually, but also to understand how their approach to each individual dilemma influences their point of view and manner of reflecting on other dilemmas.

Implications Based on Analyses of Reflective Judgment Levels

The results of this study provided a consistent representation of a preservice teacher of traditional college age, junior year, engaging in an early field experience, as functioning generally at a reflective judgment level of 3-4. As many preservice teachers engage in early field experiences at an age and stage of professional development similar to those of the study participants, teacher educators should therefore be familiar with the characteristics associated with this level of reflective judgment (while recognizing, of course, that it will not universally apply to all preservice teachers at all times, due to age differences or variations in reflective judgment among groups or within individuals).

Uncertainty of Knowledge

One of the most important characteristics of the transitional stage between Stage 3 (the end of the Pre-Reflective level) and Stage 4 (the beginning of the Quasi-Reflective level), a common reflective judgment level for study participants and likely for many preservice teachers in early field experiences, is that it is at this stage when individuals begin recognizing and embracing the concept that knowledge is an uncertain entity, and this realization can be overwhelming and uncomfortable for many individuals. As they engage in guided reflection with preservice teachers about ill-defined dilemmas, therefore, teacher educators need to assure preservice teachers that uncertainty is an inevitable part of teaching and that they are not expected to "know all the answers" but simply to reflect in a considered and inquiring way on their experiences in order to develop beliefs which will guide them toward making what they deem the most justifiable decisions when dealing with uncertain problems. Preservice teachers should be reminded that the uncertainty they perceive in the problems they encounter is not a result of their lack of experience in the

classroom or poor teaching technique, but an inexorable part of the nature of teaching with which they will need to cope even when they are veteran teachers with many years' classroom experience. As this can be an unpleasant or frightening concept for individuals transitioning from Pre-Reflective thinking, teacher educators should also be prepared to provide support to preservice teachers if they experience confusion, anxiety, or cognitive dissonance through the process of facing the uncertainty of dilemmas of practice.

Guided Reflection

This study suggests that engaging preservice teachers in guided reflection based on reflective judgment is a valuable means of facilitating their examination of ill-defined dilemmas and that teacher educators should integrate probative questions adapted from the Reflective Judgment Interview into their written and verbal reflective interactions with preservice teachers, both to gain an understanding of those individuals' reasoning styles and epistemic assumptions and to support their process of examining their own beliefs. This primarily means directing preservice teachers to consider not only their beliefs about dilemmas of practice but also the way in which they are thinking about those dilemmas, so that they become more aware of their own assumptions and learn to justify their decisions through reasoned inquiry and the use of evidence. While the teacher educator's probative questions in the guided reflection process should be adapted to apply in a relevant manner to the specific dilemmas of practice each preservice teacher is addressing and to take into account his or her level of reflective judgment, there are several common themes which teacher educators might use as guidelines as they attempt to understand and support their students' reflective judgment development and facilitate their examination of the factors influencing the evolution of their beliefs.

In general, as they engage preservice teachers in guided reflection about their beliefs concerning dilemmas of practice, teacher educators should ask questions designed to encourage and foster preservice teachers' abilities to:

- re-examine issues they might believe to have a high degree of certainty and clear resolutions, but which might be more complex than they initially recognized;

- become aware of the factors that influence their beliefs such as previous experience and direct observation, and consider how to put those factors in context rather than use them as the sole or primary justification of their beliefs;

- consider the role of authority in the development of their beliefs, become more aware of any tendencies to either accept or reject knowledge based solely on authority or expert status, and develop a clearer understanding of the means to evaluate this and other types of knowledge;

- consider alternative points of view and courses of action, what might account for different points of view, and what factors influence their decisions about what is "right" or "wrong;"

- use reason and logic consistently and evaluate evidence as they justify their points of view; and

- get into the habit of self-examination of beliefs and inquiring into what they "know" and how they "know" it.

As they engage in guided reflection, teacher educators must also model the process of inquiry and self-examination of beliefs so that teacher educators can see and emulate the process, both with their teacher educators in guided settings and throughout their careers.

Authority Figures

Teacher educators should remember that individuals at similar ages and stages of professional development as the study participants may have issues concerning the knowledge they accept from authorities. Since teacher educators such as course professors or clinical supervisors are often viewed as authority figures by preservice teachers, they must be aware that the very guidance they offer preservice teachers might be regarded with cynicism or skepticism simply by virtue of those preservice teachers' developmental assumptions about the role of authority in providing knowledge and justifying one's point of view. Building a trusting, collegial and dialogic relationship with preservice teachers and sharing one's personal and professional experiences with them are ways in which teacher educators may overcome this possible obstacle in providing preservice teachers with substantive guidance as they reflect on dilemmas of practice.

Preservice teachers' epistemic assumptions about authority also might influence them in the direction of accepting knowledge provided by authority figures without question, and it appears that they are particularly prone to following the lead of the cooperating teachers in this case. Therefore, one important implication based on this study is that teacher educators must take great care in the placement of student teachers with cooperating teachers. The cooperating teacher can have an extraordinary amount of influence on the way the preservice teacher will approach the dilemmas of practice they encounter in the classroom they share. In the face of uncertainty, student teachers may be likely to seek the comfort and guidance of this "expert." Even if they disagree with a cooperating teacher's philosophy or actions, they may be unlikely to discuss this with the cooperating teacher or to have an opportunity to explore alternative courses of action

which might have been taken, so they may simply accept their cooperating teachers'

decisions. This can be a dangerous situation if the cooperating teacher is at functioning at

a level of reflective judgment that is no more sophisticated than that of the preservice

teacher or has simply not learned to negotiate complex dilemmas in a reflective way.

Therefore, teacher educators must assist preservice teachers in interpreting their

cooperating teachers' practices, as some may be likely to emulate unexamined practices

without being able to engage unaided in sophisticated reflection about the justifiability of

those practices.

Designers of teacher education programs including field experiences must be very

careful in their selection of cooperating teachers, engaging cooperating teachers who also

approach their practice through a stance of inquiry and self-examination. It would also be

highly beneficial if teacher educators provided support for cooperating teachers by creating

and participating in communities of inquiry which included preservice teachers, inservice

professionals, course professors, and supervisors/clinical faculty alike, and modeled the

process of reflection on complex dilemmas within those communities. If this were done,

all members of the community could engage equally in exploring and practicing strategies

for approaching complex dilemmas in a professional, collaborative, collegial endeavor

toward self-discovery, collaborative reflection, and improvement of practice.

Implications Based on Analyses of the Reflective Process

Previous research has indicated that teacher educators can foster preservice

teachers' propensity to consider ill-defined dilemmas reflectively by helping them

challenge and examine their epistemic assumptions and engage in sophisticated

epistemological and reflective thinking through various process such as discussion,

writing, social role-taking and guided reflection (Brownlee, Purdie, and Boulton-Lewis, 2001; Reiman, 1999; Roberts, Busk, and Comerford, 2001; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000). This study provides some recommendations concerning specific strategies for accomplishing this goal.

Providing a Variety of Contexts for Guided Reflection

Teacher educators should therefore provide a variety of types of guided reflection in order that individuals have the opportunity to engage in reflection on their field experiences in the manner and context which is most beneficial for them. In this study, the processes of dialogue journal writing, group dilemma discussions, and post-observation interviews (all of which included engaging participants in discussion based on reflective judgment prompts) all appeared to have some impact on the depth in which participants reflected on ill-defined dilemmas of practice and therefore are recommended for use by teacher educators attempting to assess and support reflective judgment development with regard to uncertain dilemmas of practice. However, these methods were successful to different degrees with different participants and so might have benefited the participants in different ways. Engaging in responses to dialogue journal prompts, for example, frequently resulted in further articulation and examination of participants' beliefs, but they did not all respond to these reliably or consistently; group discussions appeared to have a significant impact on some participants' ability to recognize and discuss the uncertainty and complexity inherent in the dilemmas they faced and provided what some pointed out as a much-needed opportunity to share and reflect with peers, but not all participants attended all of these; post-observation interviews provided considerable insight into some

participants' beliefs and reflective judgment, but others seemed preoccupied with the evaluatory aspect of this meeting following an observed teaching episode.

Awareness of Factors Influencing Engagement in Reflection

While implementing a variety of strategies for guided reflection, teacher educators should also explore possible reasons why some reflective processes and contexts might be more successful with some preservice teachers than others. They must become more aware of factors that might influence preservice teachers' engagement in or comfort level with each of these reflective processes – time constraints, individual disposition towards reflection (Friedman, 2004), preference for reflection verbally or in writing, preference for reflecting privately or publicly, the relative importance of social interaction in the reflective process, the adrenalin or pressure of reflecting on one's practice immediately after having engaged in the act of teaching, or the presence of continual guided probing in one's beliefs, for example – and provide a balance of contexts for guided reflection so that the time preservice teachers spend reflecting on the dilemmas of practice they encounter in their field experiences is meaningful.

Teacher Educators' Reflective Judgment Levels and Reflective Practices

Teacher educators should also be aware of their own levels of reflective judgment and the ways in which they engage in professional reflection and inquiry. This is necessary so that the teacher educator can understand the factors influencing his or her approach to complex problems as he or she models the process for examining one's beliefs and justifying one's point of view. Teacher educators must engage in continual reflection on their own professional development and complex dilemmas of their own practice in

order to continue growing and developing in their ability to approach their practice reflectively and to be prepared to model this process to preservice teachers.

Cognitive Dissonance

When reflection is truly meaningful to them, or when they embrace uncertainty for the first time, preservice teachers can sometimes experience cognitive dissonance or strong emotional reactions to the dilemmas they face or to the process of articulating and examining their own beliefs (Floden & Buchmann, 1993). This again underscores the importance of teacher educators building trusting, collegial, supportive relationships with the preservice teachers with whom they work, in order to facilitate preservice teachers' willingness to share and examine their beliefs about sensitive dilemmas. While the patterns of this study's data suggest several implications for teacher educators as described above, they also point to new questions about the relationship between reflective judgment development and the professional development of preservice teachers. The following section outlines suggestions for further research which emerged from this study.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study suggests several areas in which further research might be beneficial to teacher educators and others seeking to understand the ways in which preservice teachers learn to negotiate uncertain dilemmas of practice.

First, further research using samples varying more in terms of age, racial/cultural background, and gender might provide clarity to our understanding of how reflective judgment influences preservice teachers' approaches to dilemmas of practice. The sample for this study was rather homogeneous in terms of all three of those factors, and this might have been a benefit for the study in one respect, as it resulted in a fairly consistent

representation of the reflective judgment level of preservice teachers at the stage of professional development at which ill-defined dilemmas are often first encountered in practice in early field experiences. However, studying any influences which age, racial/cultural background, and gender might have on this aspect of reflective judgment would add to the larger picture of the role reflective judgment plays in teachers' preservice and inservice professional development.

Second, it would be enlightening to teacher educators to examine whether certain types of dilemmas of practice elicit more sophisticated levels of reflective judgment and reasoning than others. This would provide teacher educators guidance in the way they assist preservice teachers in discerning and articulating the dilemmas they encounter and focus their probative questioning on specific dilemmas in order to encourage preservice teachers to reflective as substantively as possible on their experiences in the field.

Third, further exploration is needed into the specific strategies which teacher educators might use as they engage preservice teachers in reflection through dialogue journals, group discussions, post-observation interviews, and essay writing. This must be done so that teacher educators are better prepared to foster the development of more sophisticated reflective judgment, and therefore more reasonable and considered approaches to finding justifiable resolutions for uncertain problems of teaching, in preservice teachers.

Fourth, research examining the ways in which preservice teachers perceive their own development and growth as they learn to reflect on ill-defined dilemmas of practice is needed. Teacher educators need to understand how preservice teachers view the manner in which they approach these uncertain problems so that they can guide them not only to

justifiable decisions about specific dilemmas encountered during field experiences, but to an understanding of why they make sense of dilemmas in the ways they do and a commitment to approach ill-defined dilemmas of practice in a reflective, inquiring manner throughout their professional development.

Fifth, an extension of this research into the question of how reflective judgment influences the decision-making processes of inservice teachers would provide insight into how epistemic assumptions evolve and play a role in the professional lives of teachers on a broader scale. Since uncertain dilemmas of practice are encountered by teachers throughout their careers and since reflective judgment development is a continual, lifelong process, it would be educative to study the impact of reflective judgment development on the way inservice teachers, from novices to veterans, approach their practice.

Conclusion

In their early field experiences, preservice teachers begin to encounter and reflect on the type of uncertain, ill-defined, complex, and serious dilemmas that are an intrinsic part of the life of a teacher. They are called on to address these dilemmas, which can be confusing and uncomfortable to handle, in a practical, immediate, and recurring manner. More often than not, they are confronted with more than one dilemma simultaneously, dilemmas that influence each other, or broad dilemmas that subsume other dilemmas. This study suggests that as preservice teachers in early field experiences enter the "real world" of practice, often for the first time, the ways in which they reason, make decisions, and justify their decisions about those uncertain problems are strongly influenced by their developing assumptions about knowledge and justification, a concept operationalized in this study as reflective judgment.

When faced with the need to make justifiable decisions about the uncertain and complex dilemmas they encounter in practice, preservice teachers' reflective judgment levels influence which of many paths they might take. They might, for instance, simply become paralyzed with the uncertainty and initially refuse to reflect on dilemmas at all. They might copy their cooperating teacher's behavior, whether or not they found their beliefs justifiable under further reflection. They might appear to waver widely on their stance to the question, or strongly assert their belief in a certain practice over and over, even though they are truly adhering to that practice because it was the method through which they themselves were taught. They might take action but constantly question their decisions throughout and after doing so, wonder what another teacher might have done, and question how they could know which choice was the right one -- or they might simply act on what "feels right" to them and explain that this was "just me, how I am." They might think about the dilemma over and over and develop their beliefs about it, or they might consider it once and say nothing else about it.

When preservice teachers receive guidance from teacher educators or inservice professionals in understanding the dilemmas, they might be wary of accepting it because they have grown cynical of these "experts," or they might be prone to accept it without question. When they attempt to justify their given course of action, they may be trying to present a logical, reasoned argument but be unaware of inconsistencies in their reasoning of use of evidence, or they may not even be aware of how to integrate evidence into the way they make sense of their experiences. When they explain their reasoning in favor of a particular course of action to resolve a dilemma, it might not be clear precisely what they mean ("I thought my cooperating teacher's approach to the problem was great," for

example, may truly represent the idea, "I'm not sure what to do about this but my cooperating teacher must be right because she knows better.") Each one of these situations makes insightful and considered guidance from teacher educators a vital necessity – guidance based on an understanding not only of the decisions preservice teachers purport to make about dilemmas of practice, but on the subtle developmental factors that play a role in an individual preservice teacher's overall conception of the nature and parameters of the dilemmas and manner of approaching such problems.

Clearly, reflective judgment plays a complex and significant role in the way preservice teachers learn to make sense of and make decisions about uncertain, ill-defined dilemmas of practice. Teacher educators must understand the epistemic assumptions and patterns of reasoning that influence the way preservice teachers approach these dilemmas and integrate this understanding into the guidance they provide them – particularly when preservice teachers are engaged in field experiences, where they must face uncertain dilemmas in a context which requires them to evaluate or take a specific, concrete course of action.

This study, therefore, challenges researchers and teacher educators to: (1) become more aware of how to recognize the reflective judgment levels at which PST's are operating, (2) develop strategies for helping PSTs' become more aware of their own beliefs and re-examining/refining those beliefs in light of actual dilemmas or practice, and (3) facilitate PST's development of abilities which will allow them to continue to explore and refine their beliefs throughout their continued professional development. Only when this has been done will we come closer to a true understanding of the intricate, multifaceted

processes by which individuals learn to view the complex decisions they must make and

act upon when they take on the vital role of the teacher.

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