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PERSONAL PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

by

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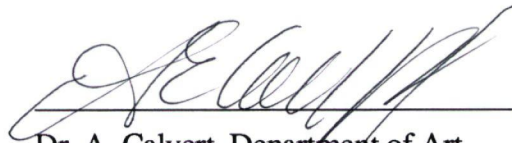
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Personal Practical Knowledge as a Professional Development Experience" submitted by Dawne Eugenia Clark in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a collaborative narrative inquiry into the personal practical knowledge of two elementary teachers in a team teaching situation. The initial intent was to explore, through discussion, reflection, journalling, and cooperative teaching, the images reflected in classroom practice. The study covered a three month period of time in the classroom during the teaching of a Grade Four Social Studies unit.

The researcher acted as a participant-observer in the classroom. Data were collected using observation, discussion, field notes, an interactive journal and interviews. The study revolved around three major processes of reflection, interactive journalling and the development of a metaphor of teaching.

Reflection became a key process and led the study in unexpected directions. Reflection operating as it did within a social context, led the researcher and the participants into uncovering personal practical knowledge, reflecting upon it and then creating new knowledge. This socially constructed knowledge was then internalized and added to existing personal practical knowledge.

Additionally, some knowledge was constructed within the group that remained dependent upon that group for its availability and viability. The knowledge developed under these conditions was tentatively labelled socially dependent knowledge and was explored and defined within the context of the study.

Another unexpected direction of the study was the use of the uncovering of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience. The collaborative nature of the study led to a desire for and accomplishment of mutual benefit for the researcher and the participants.

Finally, collaboration between the researcher and the participants was developed to the point where all three people involved in the study became equal partners as researchers and scholars.

The study provides examples of personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. The processes by which this knowledge came to be uncovered or developed are explored. The promises inherent in collaborative narrative research which resulted in a professional development experience are examined. Cautions when conducting a collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge and implications for further research are offered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This thesis is a qualitative study in the narrative style. Its primary purpose was an exploration of personal practical knowledge and how that knowledge gave meaning to classroom practice. Because it was a collaborative venture—a close cooperative association between two teachers and myself—questions of the personal, social interaction, mutual benefit and professional development came to be important. While the original purpose was to examine how teacher images affect classroom practice, it became a study in which the story of our collaborative professional development became our focus. We moved beyond an exploration of our existing personal images of teaching to the development of socially constructed knowledge which augmented our personal knowledge and allowed us to further grow and develop as teachers. We also discovered that some socially constructed knowledge was available to us only within a social context and this knowledge we came to see as "socially dependent knowledge". ("Socially dependent knowledge" is so labelled within the context of this thesis only and may exist in other bodies of literature under other labels.)

This thesis will, as a result, explore how the discussions of our personal practical knowledge and the construction of socially dependent knowledge, through interaction and reflection, provided a process through which professional development was enhanced.

The Background of the Study

My bachelor degree was in music and French education and I spent much of my teaching career as an elementary specialist in these areas. The last three years as teacher-administrator had allowed me to be a generalist. Many of the pilot programs I became involved with during that time revolved around the creation of a classroom community and I became intrigued with the teacher-student relationships built in a homeroom setting.

Referring to the commonplaces of curriculum—teacher, learner, subject matter and milieu—I could see my concerns moving from one commonplace to another throughout my teaching career. As a beginning teacher and a specialist, I saw my role as passing on knowledge in the areas of music and French; I was concerned with subject matter. As an administrator, I had to focus more on the staff and the school; the community and its societal expectations became important. I had moved from an emphasis on subject matter to an emphasis on teachers and milieu. But several elements—perhaps some of the pilot programs, the chance to be a generalist, but most importantly, I believe, becoming a mother - emphasized the importance of the student, the individual teacher, the persons involved in education. For my second degree, I decided to work in the area of social studies where I felt I could be more involved with the growth of the whole person.

As I began to think about my research project, I considered certain elements—the personal, collaborative work, reflective interaction and professional development. In the classroom, I had been involved in many research studies and, in each case, my class and I were the participants in the study. A researcher visited our classroom, gave pre- and post-tests and left. Seldom were we informed of the results of the study; rarely did the study provide opportunities for the growth or development of either the students or myself. I saw these studies as outside of me and my practice and wished for some element of mutual benefit. As I faced the prospect of conducting a study myself, I remembered these concerns and knew that the personal was important in anything I might do.

Throughout my teaching, I had experienced collaboration on several levels. In my second year, I was invited to join a team with two experienced teachers. The next three years provided diverse learning opportunities and introduced me to ideas of team planning and teaching, family grouping, individual progress and self-reflection. Other collaborative opportunities presented themselves in the following years and I found that, as a formerly independent person, I was beginning to actively seek collaboration. I was involved in collaboratively writing materials for teachers, preparing and presenting teacher workshops, and working on special projects and pilot studies.

Related to collaboration was an interest in reflective interaction; successful collaboration, I believed, depended upon a desire and an ability to interact successfully with others. When considering the structure of the study, while interaction would inevitably occur, the quality of that interaction was important.

The last element considered, that of professional development, took on added significance as the study progressed. Because of my involvement in various pilot projects and the work with teachers that had ensued, I had an interest in exploring dimensions which made professional development experiences more meaningful and successful.

In initial discussions with my advisor, we considered designing a study which would include these elements of the personal, collaborative work, reflective interaction and professional development. I was guided and supported in exploring theories, readings and research practices that included a narrative method of inquiry such as that used by Clandinin and Connelly in their work in the area of personal practical knowledge.

Briefly, narrative research is a qualitative approach which describes and "restories" the narrative structure of an educational experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989). Personal practical knowledge, which explores basic beliefs of teaching, has two elements. Practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983) refers to knowledge in such areas as subject matter, student needs and community expectations within the practical orientation of the teacher. This knowledge is expressed through rules of practice, practical principles and images.

Personal knowledge (Clandinin, 1985) adds to the practical elements by including all knowledge that is derived through experiences, perceptions and interpretations of what a person "knows". It is a fundamental aspect of an individual expressed through basic beliefs or images.

A study of personal practical knowledge using a narrative approach intrigued and excited me. The emphasis on the exploration and further development of the teacher's knowledge fit with what I believed to be important in educational research. The potential for collaborative study and mutual benefits for both the teacher and the researcher helped me to feel comfortable in my role as a researcher. Narrative research offered opportunities for me to pursue my goal of understanding myself and others as teachers. Perhaps most appealing to me was that the area of personal practical knowledge and narrative research was in the process of evolution; I could help to define a new area that offered insights into teachers' self-understandings. I had the opportunity to work with many of the people who were on the leading edge of this area and to read, discuss and understand with them.

I chose to conduct a study using a narrative method of inquiry based around the planning and teaching of an elementary social studies unit. The purpose would be to collaboratively explore and make meaningful the images—the basic beliefs and understandings—which the teacher held and which affected classroom practice. While I would act as a participant-observer in the classroom, the teachers and I would work together to understand ourselves and our beliefs of teaching.

Our Collaborative Approach to the Study

The first task was to find a teacher with whom I could collaborate in this research. Similarity of assumptions and approaches outside and inside the classroom would help to establish compatibility. Negotiation of entry would be crucial (Clandinin, 1986; Hoffman, 1988; Sainsbury, 1989) and it would take time to become comfortable with one another. I would need to understand the limits of the teacher's time and energy and the demands I could make upon the children. Much would need to be explored: roles, responsibilities, time for dialogues and interviews.

Other studies (Enns-Connolly, 1985 and Jensen, 1989) indicated that previous friendships had had an impact on the progression of the study, the type of data that were compiled and the interpretations that were offered. It, therefore, seemed important to work with a teacher with whom I had started a friendship.

I decided to approach Angie Craigie, a teacher whom I had known for five years and for whom I had great respect. (Angie's and Sandy's real names are used throughout the thesis at their request.) I knew Angie spent many extra hours with her students and also had a full personal life; therefore, I was concerned about the commitment I would be asking of her.

I contacted Angie and discussed with her the concepts of personal practical knowledge, the narrative approach and the study that I hoped to carry out. She sounded reluctant initially and explained that she was teaming closely with another teacher, Sandy Wenz, whom, she felt, would need to be included in the study. I was now looking at working with two teachers and forming a relationship with Sandy as well.

We agreed that the three of us should meet to discuss my proposal so I collected brief articles and books that explained concepts of personal practical knowledge and the narrative approach. As I shared these articles and my reasons for wanting to do this study with Sandy and Angie, they talked about possibilities for professional growth in the areas

of curriculum and teaching practices. They saw this potential for professional development as a key to their participation and this triggered their acceptance.

From the beginning, I felt a kindred spirit with Sandy. She was joyful, interested and full of questions. Before our meeting had finished, we had agreed that I would visit their classroom twice a week to be involved in a collaborative narrative study of personal practical knowledge. The school principal was receptive to the study proposal, released Angie and Sandy from some of their noon-hour duties and (for a few weeks) agreed to take their classes for the first half hour each Thursday afternoon.

Sandy, Angie and I agreed that I would come to the school at noon every Tuesday and Thursday to plan with them and then would spend the afternoon helping in their classroom. We had dual purposes as we sketched out our time together. For the study, my time in discussions was for the purpose of exploring and clarifying Angie's and Sandy's personal practical knowledge and my time in the classroom would allow me to see evidence of this knowledge in practice. For Angie and Sandy, the purpose of our discussions was for me to help plan a Social Studies unit while, in the classroom, I was to act as a third teacher and observer of practice. Follow-up discussions would focus on ways to build the effectiveness of the unit and the teaching practices—the elements of professional development desired by Angie and Sandy. It would become necessary to find bridges that would connect the dual purposes and satisfy all of our needs.

This was Sandy's and Angie's first year as a team and as teachers of Grade 4. My initial visit to the school allowed me to see the arrangements that Angie and Sandy had created in their classroom—physical arrangements of furniture and students and educational arrangements of timetabling and scheduling.

Physically, their teaching space was a double portable classroom with a folding door. Both teachers' desks were together on one side of the room allowing for a large gathering space for the students on the rug on the other side of the room.

Educationally, Sandy and Angie viewed themselves as generalists and liked to teach most subjects to their homeroom class. The schedule showed an afternoon blocked off for social studies, community of readers and art. This allowed for flexibility in timetabling and for Sandy and Angie to spend concentrated periods of time on integrated activities.

Angie and Sandy explained to me that the first four months had been spent in a theme study using the SPEDS Program (Craig, 1984) which allowed them to build a desired classroom atmosphere. They planned to study the social studies topic, "4A— Alberta: Its Land and People", from the beginning of January to the middle of February. As it turned out, the unit continued until the spring break at the end of April.

Initially our discussions focussed on the planning of the unit and the teaching of the first lessons. Either Angie or Sandy would keep notes of planning meetings and classes that had occurred since my last visit. We discussed some of the language, ideas and concepts that we were dealing with in relation to personal practical knowledge—our first bridge to connect the dual purposes. Part of each noon hour was filled with discussions of reflective practice, teaching beliefs, personal knowledge and the construction of knowledge, and talk. I had tentatively suggested a journal at our first meeting to help ensure that the study belonged to the three of us. We decided that I would translate my field notes into a journal on the computer and would run two copies, one each for Sandy and Angie. They felt that they would like to respond to the journal entries independently and then have the opportunity to review each other's comments.

As the three months passed, many changes in our routines occurred. Sandy and I took turns fighting the 'flu; I was parent volunteer in my children's classes; Angie presented a workshop. Staff meetings and concert preparations also affected our meeting times. Sometime during the second month, we found that we were not able to have lengthy noon hour discussions because of these commitments. All of us, at different

times, commented on how much we missed our 'round table' discussions in the library as we settled for more hurried conversations in the classroom.

Also, sometime during that second month, we began to realize how much the journal was coming to mean to us. While we were not always regular with the entries, we never missed a full week and I noticed that just as I tended to leaf through the journal responses from Sandy and Angie as soon as they were given to me, they often stole a few seconds away from their responsibilities to do the same.

The culminating activity, a celebration of the unit, was an emotional evening for all of us. The students had a lengthy list of projects: three independent study reports, poetry, response journals, letters to the environment minister, salt clay relief maps, fabric crayon crests of Alberta, four landscape art pictures, a stained glass of an original poem, burlap stitchery projects and special individual projects. The students were involved in planning, organizing and carrying out the celebration. It was a time for the students to share their accomplishments with their parents and for the teachers to invite the parents into the community of learners to forge links between parts of the children's lives. As well, it was the time for my presence in the classroom to finish.

The morning of the celebration, I had given Sandy and Angie a copy of the last regular journal entry. I talked about how much the journal had come to mean as a part of the study and I reviewed the time we had spent together. On the morning after the celebration, Sandy phoned to suggest another journal entry about the celebration. As a result, we continued to exchange journals even though my presence in the classroom had ended. We tried to meet regularly and to pass professional articles and journal entries back and forth. They continued to bring me examples of what the children were doing at school. As this study was collaborative, every chapter that I wrote was read and confirmed by Angie and Sandy. It was difficult to think of our time together coming to an end and we looked for ways to continue this relationship.

Collection of Data

To be as objective as possible, this study has incorporated a triangulation of data acquisition—daily field notes, an interactive journal and interviews. In addition, we occasionally exchanged letters or written reflections separate from those included in the journal. In reporting or quoting from these data sources, the letters in brackets following each quote will indicate the following:

A. - Angie

S. - Sandy

N. - field notes

J. - journal

I. - interview

L. - letter

R. - reflections

The numbers will indicate the date on which the notes or journals were written or the interviews were taped.

For the first phase of data acquisition, I kept a daily log of notes which were basically key words, thoughts or phrases that seemed to have been emphasized during the discussions. For example, I would write down an outline of the unit plans that we were making:

- met with librarian

- sorted out available resources

- ordered some new supplies

- met with last year's grade 4 teacher

ideas for unit

    - 4 regions

        - mountains—all together

        - other 3 areas—circulate through three teachers

    - related art

        - "creating art that they can talk to"   (Sandy)

        - getting a "feel" (Sandy)

        - salt clay map

    - science

        - renewable and non-renewable resources

        - SEEDS—incorporated into Social Studies

    - research on resources

                        (N. Jan.18/90)

I would also write down phrases or thoughts that I felt expressed Angie's and Sandy's

beliefs or images of teaching:

> "We can plan the experiences but we can't plan the learning." (S. N. Jan.18/90)
>
> - belief in planning general outline of unit but that each lesson must grow from the previous one; therefore, final planning not done until after the previous lesson is over (N. Jan.18/90)
>
> "Sandy is so good at having something to go on to!" (A. N. Jan.21/90)
>
> "This talking back and forth is a clever way of learning!" (S. N. Feb.27/90)

The second phase of data acquisition involved an interactive journal. After each

visit, I would compile my field notes into a journal entry to which Angie and Sandy

responded separately. I would make copies of the responses so that all three of us had a complete set of all journals and responses. This step was an important one for determining and controlling the personal qualities that were operating as it allowed Sandy and Angie to respond to my reflections with their own understandings of the situation. For example, when I commented in the initial journal, "You are both so open and full of stories, the separate responses were:

> "Is it we share the appreciation for openness? Openness is the gift others give to me and I admire it, appreciate it, value it. The gift of oneself—your thinking, your stories, where you've been—the openness, the sharing helps me make sense. I'll enjoy and find it a gift to share my stories. In sharing my stories I continue to make sense—reflect—and renew my joy in the story." (S. J. Jan.18/90)

> "I sometimes feel I don't or can't express some of my gut beliefs as well as Sandy in regards to learning and children. I wonder if its because I have come from a more traditional teaching background and have only in the past couple of years broken away from the 'basal' reader and more teacher structured lessons. I feel that the people we work with can have a powerful influence over us .... Now that I'm involved in a child centred classroom, I love teaching again." (A. J. Jan.18/90)

Throughout the journal, my observations, reflections and interpretations were scrutinized and "re-storied" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989) separately by Angie and Sandy as our stories were told and re-told. Interesting debates often arose at our meetings when we discussed how differently each of us had responded to the same situation. I felt comfortable knowing that any observations and interpretations that I had made were corroborated by Sandy and Angie.

In addition to the journal, Angie and Sandy frequently gave me copies of their own notes of a discussion or of days when I was not present in the classroom. On a few occasions, Sandy wrote me letters to explain some of the stories that were going through her mind as a result of the reflective process we were involved in. Frequently these were

"4:00 in the morning" letters! Examples of children's work were also added to the journal.

An interesting side effect of the journal was a sharing of articles and readings. I remembered how difficult it was when I was teaching full time to read professional articles and papers; therefore, I tried to share at least one article or paper in most of the journal entries. Sandy and Angie responded by sharing some of the articles that they had discovered from their leadership groups and language arts interest groups with me. This moved even further when another staff member started sharing articles with the three of us!

The third phase of data collection involved separate interviews with Angie and Sandy. We attempted to explore some of the questions which had been building up throughout the time of the study and which were not discussed during our regular meetings. At the beginning of the study, I had come to our discussions with questions that had arisen from the journals. However, most times, Angie and Sandy would come to the discussions full of the day's happenings and plans for the class to come. We found it more productive and to our liking to discuss the things that they had brought with them than what I had brought for discussion. Consequently, the items I was interested in were stored away for the future interviews. We decided to hold the interviews individually because, although we recognized the importance of the teaming aspect on what we were examining, it was also vital to give each teacher space to nurture her own voice.

Through this triangulation of data acquisition—field notes, an interactive journal and individual interviews—I have attempted to ensure that the observations and the interpretations of those observations were given using Angie's and Sandy's voices. As final confirmation of the validity of all interpretations and meanings made during the study, Sandy and Angie read separately and met with me to discuss each chapter during the initial write-up stage.

A Change in Orientation of the Study

This thesis originally intended to discuss the processes undertaken to explore the personal practical knowledge of the teachers through their images and the effect of these images on their practice. However, the orientation gradually shifted and, after re-examining the data, it was felt that a discussion of the images of personal practical knowledge was no longer the appropriate matrix for this study. It appeared that the process of uncovering the personal practical knowledge by each teacher had become a catalyst for professional development. Initially as a group, and then individually, our exploration allowed us to construct new knowledge and new understandings which provided for professional growth in the areas of curriculum and teaching practices. As a result, our personal practical knowledge was not only more fully understood and valued, it was expanded and developed.

It became necessary to consider what had caused the shift in orientation from a study of images held by each teacher to a process of using this exploration to increase the understanding of existing knowledge and to stimulate the construction of new knowledge. The exploration of personal practical knowledge became a vehicle through which the teachers came to understand themselves better and then to use this understanding to mutually construct new personal practical knowledge.

Questions needed to be asked about how the exploration of personal practical knowledge had been used as a professional development vehicle—the processes involved and their perceived effectiveness. Questions of how this professional development vehicle had been viewed by staff—both participants and non-participants in the study—also needed to be considered. Questions of follow-up, of how the teachers would continue the process of growth beyond the limits of the study, were important. Finally, it needed to be acknowledged that lack of time and experience hindered a more full and comprehensive exploration of the personal practical knowledge of the two teachers.

It was noted that during the exploration of personal practical knowledge, social interaction among the two teachers and the researcher played a major role. Through discussion and writing, we worked to further develop and understand our beliefs of teaching, to explore the knowledge we held personally within us. It seemed that a cycle was being created. The knowledge that we held personally was being discussed and developed within a social framework and new knowledge was being constructed. Some of this socially constructed knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) was then internalized and added to our original store of personal practical knowledge. Thus, knowledge moved from within ourselves (externalized) to the social domain for development (objectivated) and returned within as new personal practical knowledge (internalized).

In addition to personal practical knowledge and socially constructed knowledge, a third kind of knowledge appeared to be operating—socially dependent knowledge, as defined in this study. Individually, we were involved in a reflection of our personal practical knowledge. The collaborative nature of our activity encouraged us to build socially constructed knowledge, some of which we were able to internalize to add to our personal practical knowledge. However, some of this knowledge did not seem to become internalized. It remained available to us only within the social context of the three of us working, discussing or writing together. When the three of us were apart, some aspects of the socially constructed knowledge were difficult to articulate and explain. They had not become a part of our personal practical knowledge initially. It appeared that, as we continued to discuss these certain aspects, some became more a part of us individually and thus part of our personal practical knowledge. Some aspects never did become easy to articulate individually and, therefore, did not become part of our personal practical knowledge. I would like to tentatively label this socially constructed knowledge, that was only available as a result of collaborative activity and that did not become a part of the personal practical knowledge of some or all of us, as socially dependent knowledge.

Thus this thesis becomes an exploration of personal practical knowledge as currently understood and the development, through interaction, of socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. Examples of personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge will be offered. In additional, certain activities such as reflection, the keeping of an interactive journal and the construction of metaphors, that were found to be useful processes through which to pursue professional development will be examined. Finally, some cautions and questions raised by the study, related to the exploration of personal practical knowledge, the development of socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge and the use of these for the purpose of professional development will be reviewed.

The results of this study surprised Angie, Sandy and myself; the effects took us further than we could have imagined. We became close friends and looked forward to continuing our growth and fulfillment process in new directions beyond the framework of the study. None of us emerged from the study unchanged.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This thesis combined a number of elements—a fairly recent research method within the qualitative paradigm (collaborative, narrative inquiry), used to explore a newly described area of teacher knowledge (personal practical knowledge), within a specific curricular subject area (elementary social studies). The purpose of this chapter is to review the research literature in the field of social studies primarily at the elementary school level with a view to discussing the current trends which were included in this study.

The chapter will be divided into four sections: a brief examination of the types of questions being explored in social studies; an overview of the problems encountered with traditional research methods in the field of social studies; current themes in social studies research with attention being paid to the specific elements included in this study— collaborative research, narrative inquiry and personal practical knowledge; and a summary. The intention is to show that research methods in education in general and in the social studies area in particular are undergoing major changes in methodology, purpose and focus over the past few years.

Types of Questions Being Explored in the Social Studies

In the field of education, social studies is a relatively recent subject addition to the core curricula. Tomkins (1986) traces the appearance of social studies, defined as history, civics and geography, to the western provinces in the elementary schools about 1920. After 1937, social studies was introduced into the secondary schools in those provinces and into

the elementary schools in the rest of the country. However, the eastern provinces continue to separate the specific disciplines at the secondary level.

While the subject continues to grow and be adapted, a range of opinions regarding the scope and sequence of the subject, regarding, indeed, the very definition of the subject area exist. A 1979-80 survey by a Council of Ministers indicated that the major goal of social studies is, "to provide students with the knowledge, skills, values and thought processes which will enable them to participate effectively and responsibly in the ever-changing environment of their community, their country and their world." (as quoted in Tomkins, 1986, p. 399). Tomkins also states that the term "social studies" has everywhere in Canada come to denote any subjects, provincial courses of study or programs which are focussed on man and society (1985). As well, since 1970, social studies has become the vehicle for Canadian studies, multicultural education and values education (Tomkins, 1986). As stated by Armento (1986) the major issues in the debate surrounding the definition of the subject include "the definition of the goals, the nature and role of knowledge, the scope and focus of the field, the role of the social sciences and of social issues, the appropriateness of alternative instructional methodologies, and the definition of most of the key constructs, including citizenship, decision-making, reflective inquiry, and problem solving". (p. 943)

Within the last ten years, the dominant pattern of research in the social studies area has continued to be empirical-analytical. Research from the empirical-analytical perspective tends to focus on the description of causal or correlational relationships between selected techniques or teacher behaviours and desired student outcomes. An example of such research is Kickbush, Everhart (1985). This study was a portrait of two classrooms in the same school where the teachers employed different teaching styles. The purpose of the study was to discover how the students, identified as either conformist or non-conformist, responded to the two teaching styles described as traditional and humanist. Another example is the study conducted by McKinney, Peddicord, Ford and Larkins (1984). This

study randomly assigned Grade Six students to one of three experimental treatment groups with two social studies topics, arable land and tertiary production, as the topics of the lessons. Adler, 1984; McDougall, 1985 and Taylor and Beach, 1984 are further examples of this type of research.

Problems with Traditional Research Focus

Within the past few years, it has become apparent that research undertaken in the name of improving instruction in the social studies has fallen short of that goal (Osborne, 1987; Shulman, 1986). Despite the large number of studies done and the creation of innovative social studies materials, some social studies classrooms appear little different today from those of twenty years ago (Armento, 1986; Osborne, 1987). The traditional lecture format and reliance on textbooks are common in many classrooms while the open discussion of current and societal issues are often given token attention (Armento, 1986). It appears that teachers have little knowledge of the findings of educational research and therefore make little use of it. What teachers are aware of is often regarded skeptically and considered irrelevant (Osborne, 1987).

As previously mentioned, the majority of social studies research focusses on causal and correlational relationships covering an array of topics. It is the topics of such research which occasions the most criticism. Armento (1986) reports that two major criticisms of the above research are: (a) that the majority of topics focus on unimportant or irrelevant relationships rather than on major issues or directions of social studies and (b) that this narrow focus ignores the holistic nature of the field and thus omits many relevant factors that might help to define the teaching and learning. She continues to say that part of the problem is that the field itself has not been defined to the satisfaction of all involved. Studies which respond to the traditional definition of social studies which involves specific

items of knowledge such as facts, concepts and generalizations fall short of the expectations of those who define the subject as an understanding of social phenomenon and a network of conceptual relationships.

Current Themes in Social Studies Research

More studies being conducted today actively involve the teachers in the study and fall into the category of qualitative rather than quantitative research (Burgess, 1986; Popkewitz and Tabachnick, 1981). These qualitative studies are seen by some researchers and social studies teachers as more meaningful to the teacher and to the practice in the classroom because of the involvement of the teacher (Burgess, 1986; Carr and Kemis, 1986; Shulman, 1988). Qualitative studies change the focus from a traditional causal and correlational relationship question, "How do teachers and instruction cause learning to occur?" to questions of, "How can teachers help students to inquire about social issues? to make use of knowledge to discover new knowledge? to learn to make decisions and solve problems?"

Three major themes noticeable in this qualitative research which have played an important role in this study are collaborative research, narrative inquiry and personal practical knowledge.

Collaborative Research

The first theme is collaborative research where the teacher is directly involved in the research process. In this type of study the teacher is an active participant and expects that involvement will provide some professional development and growth (Shulman, 1990; Skau, 1987; Smith, 1988).

"Collaborative research—inquiry mutually framed and carried out by practitioners and researchers—offers an important way of furthering our theoretical understanding of educational practice" (Skau, 1987, p. 14). Collaborative research is becoming more popular as teachers, who play an active role in the study by helping to formulate the research question, carry out the research, analyze the findings and have a sense of ownership. This ownership encourages the teachers to make active use of the findings of the study in their practice. Knowing the process, having worked on the project throughout, and understanding the results from a personal perspective all allow the teachers to see research as inherently "informing" practice (Clandinin, 1985) and not as something alienated from practice.

Narrative Approach to Inquiry

The second major theme is a narrative approach to inquiry. Narrative belongs in the qualitative realm of research primarily because of its focus on experience and the qualities of life and education. Narrative requires that the researcher and the participants establish a relationship which will allow stories to be told and retold in a trusting atmosphere.

> If we accept that one of the basic human forms of experience of the world is a story . . . and if, further, we take the view that the storied quality of experience is both unconsciously restoried in life, and consciously restoried, retold, and relived through processes of reflection, then the rudiments of method are born in the phenomenon of narrative. . . . Narrative method is the description of and restorying of the narrative structure of educational experience. A researcher's narrative account of an educational event may constitute a restorying of that event and to that extent is on a continuum with the processes of reflective restorying that goes on in each of our educational lives. (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989, p. 2)

In what may be one of the first attempts to discuss narrative inquiry in education, Connelly and Clandinin (1989) make the distinction that a story is the phenomenon and a narrative is the inquiry.

Clandinin and Connelly (1988) initially discussed negotiation of entry as an important element to the success of narrative inquiry but have since found that even though the negotiations and application of principles were successful, the study itself was not always fruitful. Narrative inquiry involves the building of a professional relationship which implies more than mere contact or acquaintanceship. As the researcher and participant are joined through this relationship, the stories of each become entwined. The result is a narrative unity as the stories are told and retold together. In this way, the researcher cannot stay outside of the narrative but becomes an integral part of it (Hogan, 1988).

This relationship can, given time, become an empowering one. The research process holds value for both the researcher and the teacher as each are equal participants. Hogan (1988) highlights several important elements in a narrative inquiry process: equality among participants, the caring situation and the feelings of connectedness. Both Hogan and Noddings (1986) highlight the importance of time, relationship, space and voice in establishing a relationship. Britzman (in press) defines voice as the "meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community. . . . The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else." (p.2)

Narrative involves a number of different methods of data collection which includes a range of storied and unstoried data found in field notes, journal records, interview transcripts, others' observations, story telling, letter writing, autobiographical writing and documents such as lesson plans and class newsletters. By using varied data sources, the sense of the wholeness of the narrative is built.

In keeping with the collaborative nature of narrative, it is important that the researcher either works with the participants throughout the creation of the narrative or

brings the completed narrative to the participants for final discussions. Thus, all involved work in tandem throughout the research, interpretation and writing phases.

Personal Practical Knowledge

The third theme is the current interest in studying the personal practical knowledge of the teacher (Clandinin, 1985; Clark and Lampert, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Eisner, 1988; Enns-Connolly,1985). This approach acknowledges the teacher's fundamental role in the classroom and explores, through collaboration between teachers and researchers, the basic understandings, values and beliefs that affect practice in the classroom.

The concept of personal knowledge was used by Polanyi (1958) but the notion of the personal can be traced further back in the literature to Dewey and others. Personal knowledge refers to the idea that a person being educated already has an educational history. Learning something new is often a matter of relearning or reforming existing knowledge. This prior knowledge cannot be wished away and may act either as a prison (Britzman, 1986) or as a liberating force (Clandinin, 1989). A person is a dialectic blend of the individual and the social (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Clandinin and Connelly (1989, p.5) explain the basis of the personal: "The relationship is a dynamic one in which the social is reconstructed for a personal life story and in which the larger social structures themselves are influenced by personal action. . . . The primary language of the personal needs to be simultaneously individual, social, cultural and personally historical as in biography."

Elbaz (1983) first began to use the term practical knowledge and defined it in this way:

> In carrying out this work, the teacher exhibits wide-ranging knowledge which grows as experience increases. This knowledge encompasses firsthand experiences of students' learning styles, interests, needs, strengths and difficulties, and a repertoire of instructional techniques and classroom management skills. The teacher knows the social

structure of the school and what it requires, of teacher and student, for survival and success; she knows the community of which the school is a part, and has a sense of what it will and will not accept. This experiential knowledge is informed by the teacher's theoretical knowledge of subject matter, and of areas such as child development, learning and social theory. All of these kinds of knowledge, as integrated by the individual teacher in terms of personal values and beliefs and as oriented to her practical situation, will be referred to here as 'practical knowledge'. (p. 5)

Elbaz goes onto discuss the ways in which knowledge is held. She sees knowledge as three levels building one upon the other—rules of practice, practical principles and images.

Rules of practice are specific directives. They are brief, clear formula statements of what or how to do in a particular situation frequently encountered in practice. Thus they are guidelines. These rules of practice build into practical principles which become general directives followed in practice. Practical principles are more inclusive and less specific than rules of practice whose main purpose is to bring past experience into present practice. Images build upon the previous two levels and are seen as broad, metaphoric statements which guide practice. This is the least explicit and most inclusive level of knowledge which makes a statement about how a teacher knows teaching. An image is something one responds to intuitively. The three levels are interrelated, are not always discrete and serve one another. The rules of practice and practical principles most often express instructional knowledge while images order all of a teacher's practical knowledge.

Clandinin (1985) puts the three words together, "personal practical knowledge". To Elbaz's concept of practical knowledge, Clandinin adds personal knowledge explaining it as follows:

The "personal" is that knowledge which participates in, and is imbued with, all that goes to make up an individual. The personal aspect of the knowledge includes the experiences and knowledge each teacher holds which has arisen from the circumstances, actions, reactions, perceptions and interpretations that the person "knows". This personal knowledge can be discovered in both the actions of the person and under some circumstances, by conversation. (p. 362)

Clandinin (1986) furthers develops the idea of an image. In her work with Aileen and Stephanie, Clandinin explores four dimensions of an image—an emotional and moral dimension which are derived in part from the experiences from which the image originates and a personal private and educational professional dimension. Images, in a sense of personal philosophy, are not the stated theory of oneself but theory in action. Elbaz felt that images were verbal statements about practice; however, Clandinin found that Stephanie and Aileen expressed their images through their personal and private actions and their teaching practices before they expressed them verbally. Thus Clandinin suggests that images can be expressed in practice and/or verbally. These images exist tangibly day to day and can become a philosophy through interactional articulation. These images compose the personal practical knowledge of a teacher in the sense that personal practical knowledge emerges from the stories of experience, as embodied within a person and expressed through practice and action.

Enns-Connolly (1985), in her work with the translation of German stories, saw images as being moral, emotional or aesthetic. The moral dimension of an image is where a teacher would say that a particular action was right or wrong. The emotional dimension of an image guides the feelings attached to an act—a teaching act or result could make a teacher feel glad, sad, distressed. However, the aesthetic dimension of an image cannot be as easily defined or classified. It occurs in a situation where a teacher feels instinctively, without explanation or rationalization, that an action is the right one for that particular moment. It is not judged on the basis of being right or wrong morally or in emotive terms of how it will make the teacher feel. It is an immediate, instinctive reaction to a situation as in seeing two houses side by side and immediately feeling that one house feels like home. An aesthetic act, upon reflection, may be deemed a good act morally or emotionally and later repeated or it may be deemed unsuitable and thus rejected.

Summary

It would appear from a brief literature search, that much of the research being conducted in the area of social studies today is still predominantly empirical-analytical. However, several researchers have acknowledged the problems associated with this type of research in an area that deals largely with societal issues, attitudes and citizenship. Methodology is now beginning to approach research in the qualitative mode rather than only in the quantitative mode and to involve teachers in all aspects of research. The focus is also tending away from behaviouristic models and moving towards an understanding of the role of the teacher in practice.

The use of multiple paradigms is essential to help develop a body of literature that encompasses the field. In this respect, it is to be hoped that the increased use of some of the current trends in social studies discussed above will become more acceptable as valid ways of researching and working in the area.

With the above background in mind, this study focussed on an exploration of the personal practical knowledge of two teachers of elementary social studies using a collaborative, narrative approach to inquiry. Clandinin (1986) states that "the conception of personal practical knowledge is of knowledge as experiential, value-laden, purposeful and oriented to practice. Personal practical knowledge is viewed as tentative, subject to change and transient rather than something fixed, objective and unchanging." (p. 20) This definition formed the underpinnings of the study.

Subsequent chapters will discuss the biographies of the three persons involved in the study, the evolution of the intent and direction of the study, examples of personal practical and socially dependent knowledge, the use of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience and, finally, questions raised throughout the study.

CHAPTER THREE: PERSONAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This thesis, being a collaborative, narrative study in the qualitative paradigm, rests on certain basic assumptions. Being a collaborative study, the researcher and the participants are assumed to be equal partners working together to explore personal practical knowledge. The narrative dimension assumes that all three partners will tell and retell their stories and that each will appear in each other's 'retold' stories. By placing the study in the qualitative paradigm, an assumption of some subjectivity in data collection and interpretation is made.

Upon accepting these assumptions and thus the involvement of the researcher and the participants in this study in a personal way, it becomes important to understand the background of the three people involved. As participants, brief biographies of the two teachers, Angie and Sandy, provide a necessary foundation upon which to build the exploration and understanding of their personal practical knowledge. As the researcher, I became more a part of the mutual story as the study progressed and my biography also becomes an essential part of the foundation of our teacher-selves.

Initially, I was perceived by Angie and Sandy as the sole researcher, but as the collaborative nature of the study took hold more strongly, we began to see all three of us as joint researchers. We became aware that our personal qualities were responsible for the kinds of ideas which we discussed, explored and developed. Understanding and admitting the subjectivity operating in the study, it became important to explore the personal qualities of our researcher-selves.

Peshkin (1988) argues that researchers should systematically search out their personal qualities before and during the research rather than after it. This allows them to be aware of how these qualities are shaping, skewing, filtering, blocking and transforming

observations and interpretations and to fairly warn the reader. Peshkin summarizes his argument by stating, "By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined. I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. I do, rather, enable myself to manage it—to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome—as I progress through collecting, organizing, and writing up my data" (p.20).

Therefore, this chapter will present brief biographies of Angie, Sandy and myself as background to our teacher-selves and will then explore the subjective "I's" (Peshkin, 1985) which likely framed our researcher-selves.

Biographies—Our Teacher-Selves

Angie Craigie

Angie grew up as an only child in Edmonton where she was keenly interested in sports and socially-oriented activities. During an interview (Mar. 27/90) she revealed that she had wanted to become a physical education teacher because of the influence of a favourite teacher during junior and senior high school. This teacher was professional and career oriented. Angie characterized her as always attractive in manner and dress, effectively prepared to teach and sincerely interested in the welfare of her students. "She was really interested in us as people as well ... she really liked us all. We ... felt close to her" (A.I. Mar.27/90).

A summer job during high school as a playground instructor encouraged Angie to complete a Bachelor of Arts and Recreation Administration Degree at the University of Alberta which led to a job as girls' director at the Renfrew Boys' and Girls' Club in Calgary. A year later, Angie and her husband started their family and she spent the next ten years coordinating adult education programs and volunteering at her children's schools.

When her younger child entered kindergarten, Angie returned to university to take the seven education courses required for a teaching certificate. Upon graduation in 1980, she was hired by the Calgary Board of Education.

Angie's first position was in an east area school where she taught on one side of an auxiliary gym. While Angie admitted that in that first year, she "wasn't a very good teacher!" (A.I. Mar 27/90) she found a teacher on staff who integrated art and language arts in his program and emphasized the processes of learning. Angie found herself appreciating his approach to teaching and began looking for opportunities to develop a similar approach for her own classroom.

After that first year, Angie requested a transfer to the same north-west school where she was at the time of the study. While at this school, she had been involved in teaming situations which had become increasingly more collaborative. (Little, 1989, suggests at least four types of relationships ranked along a continuum from independence to interdependence. These were demonstrated in Angie's descriptions of her experiences.) Initially, the teaming only involved planning where the two teachers shared some ideas and beliefs. Angie's teaming situation with Sandy at the time of the study was in a double classroom with a folding door which could be shut to work in small, relatively quiet, groups. All of the planning and most of the teaching were done as a team and Angie and Sandy identified this as being important to their teaching.

Professional development was significant for Angie. She was a member of a Teachers as Leaders Group which focussed on teachers becoming effective leaders within their classrooms and their staffs. She was a member of a language arts interest group which met regularly on a volunteer basis to discuss issues of concern. Angie enrolled in workshops, inservices, credit courses offered through the university, and professional development days to continue to develop her vision of a child-centred classroom.

In addition to her professional activities, Angie was involved in curling, golf and her church, actively participating and sitting on boards and executives. She and her husband also maintained a full family life raising their two children.

Angie enjoyed being busy. The dynamic atmosphere of her classroom focussed on involving the children in many experiences both within and beyond the classroom. Angie appeared to love teaching and being with her students; this was reflected in her warm personality and her joy for life both at home and at school.

Sandy Wenz

Sandy is an independent, confident person who grew up in the small town of Gull Lake, Saskatchewan. Sandy's account of her high school life (S.I. Mar.20/90) revealed that her enthusiasm and love of organizing involved her as a community leader. Her initial intentions upon high school graduation were to take nurse's training. However, her community involvements won her a $500 community scholarship which Sandy decided to use for a summer course at the University of Saskatchewan. She found that she enjoyed being with a mixed male/female student body and questioned whether she would be comfortable with the structured, female-oriented training and career of nursing. Instead, Sandy enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan for her education degree. She felt that her assertive, organized personality and her love of working with people made a career in education a "natural"; yet, she felt that if life offered her the time, she would still like to become a nurse.

Sandy's memories of her own schooling were strong and she was conscious that they affected her teaching practices. She remembered classes where she struggled to do and be her best and other classes where uncomfortable feelings caused her to misbehave. She talked about trying to understand, as a teacher, why some class situations were positive

while others were not. These reflections encouraged her to spend time listening to the children in her classes believing that "comfort" had considerable impact on their learning.

While student teaching at her home town high school, Sandy spoke with a favourite teacher who had what she termed "a positive style". While in his classes as a student, Sandy remembered feeling accepted and equal. The worth of each student was never based on intelligence but rather on participation and work. This teacher talked to Sandy about having a response to the students that encouraged them to reflect. She taught for this teacher in return for his feedback and felt that he impacted her current thinking and beliefs in the areas of student comfort, communication and classroom cohesiveness.

In her 21 years of teaching, Sandy had taught in rural, inner city and middle class urban settings. Work with other teachers had played an important role in her growth and development. Sandy loved to talk with other teachers and created linkages which provided a productive network for learning.

Sandy, like Angie, was conscious of being a life-long learner. She was involved in a Teachers as Leaders group for the second year and a language arts interest group. She was on the board of the International Reading Association, was involved with the Calgary Writers' Project and had presented workshops on the writing process. Workshops, inservice courses and conferences were seen by Sandy as important avenues for furthering her growth as a teacher. Sandy was honoured in 1989 with the Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sandy was married while at university and within a few months of her marriage found herself raising her husband's 8 year old brother. She and her husband later had two sons of their own; thus, she had spent all of her teaching career as a working mother. Sandy has a joyful personality and is willing to share and give of herself to others.

My Biography

For as long as I can remember, I have thought of myself as a teacher. I can recall only two times when I have questioned my decision and both occasions concerned evolving perceptions of myself as a teacher. Once was during my second year of university when I was having difficulty equating what I was learning with what I perceived to be the fundamentals of teaching. The second time was during my fifth year of teaching when I perceived a lack of commitment among my colleagues and a lack of interest in learning among the students and their parents. The year caused a great deal of introspection and reflection on my part. Why was I involved in the teaching profession? What had I hoped to accomplish for myself and others when I chose to become a teacher? What did "teaching" mean to me? What responsibilities did I have to those who were entrusted to my care? What could I do to change the situation I found myself in?

The year was a lonely one for me. I had no one on the staff with whom I felt close enough to talk. I was confused by the tension caused by the discrepancies between what I believed teaching could and should be and what was happening to me in the classroom.

In an attempt to save my self-definition as a teacher, I applied for an administrative position in another school. The interviewer's questions forced me to articulate some of my beliefs about teaching and some of my fundamental understandings of what it meant to work with children. By the end of the interview, I knew that I really did believe in my decision to become a teacher. I was given a different administrative appointment and with it, opportunities to explore new ways of working with students and teachers. I became involved with several pilot programs—some within the classroom dealing with curriculum and classroom management strategies; some with special programs involving students, staff and the community.

When I left full-time teaching to start raising our family, I sought part-time teaching opportunities. I helped establish a pre-school in the small rural community where we lived and taught a weekly program to three-, four- and five-year olds for four years. I began

conducting workshops and inservice courses for teachers in intercultural education. I found that I enjoyed teaching adults and re-discovered that the eagerness to learn and the curiosity about life did not end when one grew older.

I was gradually becoming aware of how I was building my own unique pictures of the world, as were my colleagues, parents and students. Each of us had our own understandings of the world and of education. My past experiences in the classroom—the children, the staff, the curriculum and the perceived tensions—had caused me to experiment with reflection and to probe into my understandings and beliefs of teaching. I was coming to realize that there was no single reality of classrooms; that each person viewed the classroom differently based upon their past experiences and understandings. My struggle to understand myself as a teacher was not unique; every teacher faced the same struggle within the context of an individual life story. My goal came to be the understanding of my own world of principles and the awareness of individually created worlds around me. Five years after leaving the full-time classroom, this goal led me to start work on my master's program.

My first stay at the university had been focussed—I wanted to become a teacher as quickly as possible. This time I wanted to move more slowly, to experience more of what the university had to offer in the way of courses not directly required, in spending time with my fellow students and in coming to know my professors.

As I have found before, life seems to chart its own course no matter how I plan and organize. While I spent five years as an unclassified student, the majority of my program was completed in the period of one highly compressed, focussed, concentrated year; yet my original purposes and desires for this return to the university were not compromised.

Subjective "I's"—Our Researcher-Selves

Introduction

Subjective "I's" (Peshkin, 1985) refers to the personal qualities which a researcher brings to a study, admitting that both a personal self and a researcher self are operating. As our researcher roles emerged in the study, it became apparent that our researcher selves were influencing the study.

My role in this collaborative, narrative study was that of a participant-observer. I offered Angie and Sandy help in their planning and teaching to compensate for time taken in our discussions, interviews and journals. I acted as a third teacher in the classroom, working with small groups and individuals correcting work, signing completed projects, editing, assisting in the location of resource materials and other daily classroom activities. Albeit difficult, I did try to keep thorough field notes. While in the classroom, I attempted to record, in my field notes, examples of teaching beliefs in practice. For example, I noted interactions with students, language used and organization and follow-up of lessons taught. However, my observations were selective and sometimes fragmented—dependent upon my being within hearing range. Therefore, to augment my observations, Angie, Sandy and I would briefly meet during the class to discuss student activity or the completion of a lesson. Often, we met to celebrate the work of an individual or a group; to compliment one another on a lesson taught or to react to a situation. I reflected upon these discussions at the time in my field notes. Thus, field notes were taken quickly during class, often while I was involved with students. I, therefore, relied on Sandy's and Angie's comments about certain situations.

One of the criticisms of qualitative research is that a participant-observer cannot be objective in observations and interpretations. The data which I gathered and interpreted as a participant-observer was minded by my own images, philosophy, values and beliefs. It was also influenced by Angie's and Sandy's comments and contributions to our

discussions. It soon became clear that all three of us were involved in the observation and interpretation of data and that I couldn't play the role of an objective participant-observer; that I had become embedded in the study. It is, therefore, important to identify the personal qualities that influenced these observations and interpretations and to examine how they might have affected this study.

Personal Qualities

Peshkin (1985) addresses this situation in terms of multiple subjective "I's". Each participant-observer brings dual "I's" of personal self and researcher self and behind this duality are many qualities—class, status, gender and value orientations. Peshkin claims that subjectivity need not blind the observer to other perspectives but that these other perspectives do fail to gain the same attention because they are not reinforced by personal qualities. However, Peshkin claims that this is not a failure since every story cannot be told nor every perspective fully exploited within the limitations of one study. In light of our experience within the classroom, the observations which I recorded in my field notes were those which succeeded in gaining my attention—likely because they were what I was looking to see, had hoped to see, or believed I would see and, in some cases, was disappointed to see.

The first three personal qualities which Peshkin identifies—class, status and gender—were identified and dealt with early in the study. Class was the first consideration; my choice of school was determined by my desire to work with Angie and by the school's convenient location. While I was comfortable with the cultural expectations inherent in the community, I would have wanted to work with Angie had she been teaching in a different neighbourhood.

Initially, status seemed a problem to me. So that my position as a graduate student and a researcher not appear threatening to Angie, Sandy and the rest of the staff, I was careful to suggest a situation where we each would contribute and benefit within an

egalitarian, collaborative context. Each of us would bring different meaning to the study—I did not 'know' the students and the classroom as did Sandy and Angie; they did not 'know' all that I had come to know about personal practical knowledge before I came to their classroom. Our's would be a mutual sharing of knowing, a sharing through the telling and retelling of our stories.

Gender was an influence which we acknowledged freely. We were women, wives and mothers. This not only guided our discussions but determined when they would be held. We frequently found ourselves discussing our children, our roles as working mothers, our difficulties pursuing further education around the schedules of our families. We discussed how the experience of bearing and raising children likely affected our views of the classroom as a family or a closely related community. We felt that our attitudes towards children and their treatment within the classroom could have been largely attributable to our role as mothers. Because of our shared motherhood, none of us felt guilty when we had to leave a meeting early. Similarly, I felt no qualms when I had to bring my young children to after-school meetings. We felt that our experiences as working mothers created an immediate bond among us and helped us to establish a warm, trusting relationship. Clearly, gender played a major role in this study.

Peshkin's fourth personal quality of value orientations also was an important factor in the study. My beliefs and values regarding teaching led me to seek out Angie for this study which likely placed boundaries or limits on the study. The fact that Sandy also expressed similar values and beliefs reinforced the importance of this fourth quality to our study.

One belief I held was the importance of a comfortable classroom atmosphere. I was conscious of the importance of building a classroom atmosphere that was safe, warm, trusting and, therefore, conducive to learning. Learning how to learn, loving to learn and being willing and able to pursue learning throughout life were goals I strove towards with my students. I believed that a classroom could be most effective when based on mutual

respect between the students and the teacher and among the students themselves; that children could feel more comfortable within a classroom where they held a positive, reasoned, realistic picture of themselves and their abilities and weaknesses. Angie's and Sandy's classroom mirrored many of these concerns.

Secondly, my interest in social studies determined that the study be carried out during a social studies class. I admired the independent study process that Angie and Sandy had been involved in developing and I wanted to see the process carried out within the classroom.

In addition, I wanted to explore the connections between home and school that Sandy and Angie felt strongly about. Over the years, I had been invited to several celebrations Angie's classes had given for parents and knew that we agreed on the value of these connections.

Finally, my initial goal had been to understand myself and others as teachers. It was important for me to work with a teacher who seemed to share my love and commitment to teaching and who was interested in self-understanding.

When I approached Angie to work with me, I didn't know Sandy, but she became a special gift. The three of us shared many common values and beliefs about teaching which allowed us to trust and reveal more than might otherwise have been possible. While our subjective "I's" likely focussed the direction of the study, I was comfortable that they did not rule the study. By not having to compromise or ignore our value orientations throughout this study, I believe that the interpretations and the meanings that we explored were in-depth and valuable.

A final point needs to be discussed. If the researcher is not aware, subjectivity can degenerate into subjectivism—a view that attaches importance to the subjective elements of an experience. In order to avoid this, Peshkin (1985) suggests that interpretations be made within a team that will allow the researcher to test what is known as a result of subjective observation against the knowledge of others. Angie's, Sandy's and my mutual reflections,

the telling and retelling of our stories, was one of the benefits of our team approach to this study and will be more fully explored in later sections.

Summary

Before the study began, Angie, Sandy and I saw our roles clearly defined as either participants or researcher. However, as we became more aware of and comfortable with the assumptions underlying collaborative, narrative research, our roles became blended. We came to see ourselves as a cohesive group with a dual nature. Our teacher-selves were the parts we wished to come to know and understand more fully. Our researcher-selves were the parts which helped us in this exploration. It was no longer my role to learn about Angie and Sandy; it had become our roles to learn about ourselves.

This chapter has attempted to explore the duality of our teacher-selves and our researcher-selves. By providing brief biographies as a background to our teacher-selves and by examining the subjective "I's" which likely focussed our researcher-selves, it is hoped that the reader is now more able to interpret the stories told in the following chapters and thus to better understand the study.

Chapter Four will discuss the evolution of the design and the processes of exploration used throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROCESSES OF EXPLORATION

Introduction

Chapters One and Two outlined how this study was originally conceived and initiated. Chapter Three presented the biographies and the subjective "I's" of the study team. This chapter will begin to discuss the processes of exploration that came to be used and which may have resulted in the evolution of the design of the study and how one of those processes, reflection, became a key to growth.

The intention and direction of the study evolved first, from a search for the personal practical knowledge of two teachers; second, to an exploration of the socially constructed knowledge and the socially dependent knowledge of two teachers and a researcher; and third, to an investigation of the research experience from the perspective of professional development. Accordingly, an examination was made of the symbiotic relationships of kinds of knowledge held by three persons and the investigation moved beyond an exploration of personal practical knowledge per se.

In addition to the data collection methods—daily field notes, a journal and interviews—described in Chapter One, the study revolved around three major processes—a reflective practicum, an interactive journal and the development of a metaphor of teaching. Creating the atmosphere of a reflective practicum (Schon, 1987) encouraged the use of reflection as an exploratory process. Largely because of this, the journals, which were initially intended to extend and interpret the observations recorded in the daily field notes, took on added significance. They became interactive conversations and provided a forum for continuous, responsive reflection. The creation of a metaphor of teaching happened spontaneously; it was not planned. It seemed to be a direct result of the reflective practicum and of the enhanced function of the interactive journals.

This chapter will discuss how these processes of exploration grew and developed throughout the study leading the three of us beyond an exploration of our personal practical knowledge to the development of socially constructed knowledge and of socially dependent knowledge and thus to a change in the original orientation of the study.

Evolution of the Design of the Study

The researcher's intentions were to collaborate with two elementary teachers in the planning and teaching of a social studies topic and to engage in collaborative narrative research to explore images central to the personal practical knowledge of two teaching partners. Further, this investigation sought to examine the implications of these findings for personal practical knowledge and for narrative research. To facilitate these goals and to help ensure the success of the study, the teachers and I considered it necessary for me to become an integral part of the planning and teaching team and an active participant in an ongoing process of professionally oriented self-evaluation, self-understanding and self-improvement.

However, the research experience evolved in a direction that took us beyond an investigation of the images of personal practical knowledge held by each teacher uniquely and as a team. As the study progressed, it became increasingly evident that significant aspects of the personal practical knowledge of the teaching team were evolving as a result of the collaborative experience.

An exploration was made not only of the knowledge that the teachers held at the inception of the study but also of the ways in which they expanded and used this knowledge. Clearly, the teachers and the researcher had influenced one another and had made mutual meaning from their explorations. A process of cooperative teaching and of one-to-one explorations of the teachers' individual images had evolved into a process of

individual and mutual reflection. Inter-personal relationships were leading the study towards the use of personal practical knowledge as a catalyst for professional development.

Perhaps it was not surprising that professional development had been a goal for the teachers in the study. In negotiating entry, we had agreed that each of us would experience benefit from participation. I saw my benefits coming from conducting a collaborative, narrative study in the area of personal practical knowledge as the basis for a thesis. My knowledge and experience bases as a graduate student and researcher would be expanded. While learning more about themselves was an initial promise, the teachers saw the possibility of using this increased knowledge to provide better learning experiences for their students. The processes involved in the study also promised growth in self-knowledge, in curriculum understandings and in exploration of teaching methods. This type of growth relates to Elbaz's (1983) understandings of the development of practical knowledge. The potential for growth was recognized by the teachers from the outset. Angie wrote: "We discussed how we could grow and learn and do some reflection on ourselves at the same time." (A. J. Jan.18/90). This desire for growth was a lure for Angie and Sandy to participate in the study. This lure also attracted me and was added to my initial hopes for benefit. As a result, the focus of our explorations came to be on the growth that Sandy, Angie and I experienced in knowledge of self, curriculum and teaching strategies.

Processes of Exploration

We found three processes to be useful in our exploration—reflection, an interactive journal and the development of a metaphor of teaching. Reflection occurred at many levels, privately and with others, but seemed most effective when two or more were involved. The journal was designed for interaction first between two of us and then among all of us. The

development of a metaphor of teaching was a process used primarily when we were all together.

These processes encouraged us to bring our personal practical knowledge into the public domain. Berger and Luckmann (1966) talk about three dialectical moments in social reality: externalizing what is known, objectivating it within the social context and then internalizing it as an altered state of social reality and knowing. Through the different mediums of social interaction, we examined and reconstructed existing knowledge and constructed new knowledge collectively. Each individual then took the responsibility of making meaning of our discoveries and internalizing what was personally relevant. As a result, our personal practical knowledge was enhanced and professional growth occurred. This cycle of exploring and enhancing personal practical knowledge in a social context was seen to be an effective model for individual professional development.

Designing a Reflective Practicum

Narrative-based research has tended to use interactions between researchers and teacher/collaborators (discussions, shared journals and interviews, for example) as stimuli for reflection. In turn, descriptive accounts of reflective explorations have provided an important part of the evidence for personal practical knowledge. Sandy, Angie and I agreed that one of the primary tools to be used in the exploration of our images of teaching was reflection—both individual and mutual. We read and discussed several works relating to professional reflection (Aoki, 1989; Atwell, 1989; Nias, 1987; and Schon, 1983, 1987 among others). Using these readings, we developed more fully the collaborative study design which I had suggested.

Schon (1983) discusses reflection as occurring only when a usual action results in something unexpected. When action becomes too spontaneous, reflection does not happen, vision is narrowed and "burn-out" occurs. Knowing-in-action refers to spontaneous actions, recognitions and judgments. While being unaware of having learned the action a

person is sometimes unaware of the understanding and is almost always unable to describe the knowing. Reflection-in-action refers to the person reflecting, during action, based on unexpected results to these spontaneous actions or judgments. Schon states that knowing about something is richer than the description given of the knowing; the intuitive "feel for" knowing is incongruent with what is required for a description of the knowing. Schon cautions that the opposite is often true; that what is described as beliefs for practice may not be what actually occurs.

So that teachers might become more comfortable with reflection-in-action and to test and apply their developing understandings, Schon suggests collaborative, reflective research practices. He believes that the teacher's isolation in the classroom tends to work against reflection-in-action but that this can be balanced with deliberate partnerships to facilitate reflection.

Schon (1987) further develops his ideas by introducing the concept of a reflective practicum where the participants learn by doing with the help of a coach. Schon argues that much of our knowledge is tacit and thus we can't give a verbal description of certain activities such as riding a bike or disciplining a class. A reflective practicum is designed to encourage active reflection of these certain activities with a coach for the purpose of becoming aware of and being better able to articulate the beliefs and resulting responses. A reflective practicum assumes the teacher's knowledge does not fit every situation and that there is not always a 'right answer'. Therefore, intuition and reactive responses are not always sufficient for every situation. Reflection with a coach can help to build a larger and more adequate bank of knowledge and response.

In the concept of a reflective practicum, success depends upon reflective dialogue between the coach and the student. Schon considers three coaching strategies: Follow Me!—requiring the participants to follow the examples of the coach, to trust, to walk and talk like the coach and to reflect on the experience; Joint Experimentation—requiring working together to explore, to experiment and to improve; and the Hall of Mirrors—

requiring viewing and doing through reflection. The role of a coach did not fit with my role as participant observer nor had I entered the collaboration with a view to passing on my ideas and beliefs to improve Angie's and Sandy's instruction. Therefore, the 'Follow Me!' strategy, was not suitable. Further, our purpose was not to simply improve instruction as implied in the 'Joint Experimentation' strategy. Certainly, we worked together through a unit which none of us had previously taught with a view to creating the best possible experience for the students but we hoped for a deeper understanding of our personal knowledge of instruction.

What became important in the study was the meaning that Angie and Sandy made of their reflections by using a third person as a mirror and a lens, similar to the 'Hall of Mirrors'. Because they had read my journal entries and interpretations of what we had discussed and written, I became a mirror which reflected their practices and beliefs. From this mirror, they were able to gain a different perspective, a slightly new and perhaps more revealing angle of themselves. Through my contributions to the discussions and responses in the journal, I was a lens through which they could view their knowledge. This view of knowledge was affected by who I was as a person and by my interpretations. Unlike a true mirror, I could not simply reflect back the same image but, true to the purpose of a lens, I could alter the view. By adding my words, understandings, and attempts at making meaning, I affected their own personal views.

In designing the study, we attempted to provide different opportunities for reflection: planning sessions, in-class cooperation, after class reflection and interactive journals. We hoped to be involved in a reflective research process which would benefit all three of us. By aligning this study with Schon's concept of a reflective practicum, we set the stage for participation in a professional development activity.

Interactive Journals

From the beginning of the study, interactive journals were integral. Background reading that I had done on a narrative style of research, (reviewed in Chapter Two), indicated that journals were an important method of communication between the researcher and the participant. While planning the study, we decided that we would set aside time for discussion, keep field notes of these discussions and the class observations, and maintain a journal. Through the use of a regular journal, I would write out my field notes and include interpretations of what I had heard and seen. Angie and Sandy felt that it was important that each have their own copy of the journal in which to reflect.

Each time we met, I would give Angie and Sandy copies of my latest entry and they would return their reflections to me. I would duplicate the entries so that each of us had a complete set.

The first entry was difficult to start. I admire people who keep a regular diary and mourn the small things that happen in my life every day that I so soon forget. However, I have never been able to mount the discipline required to keep such a document. Previous experience with journals had been as a teacher requiring my students to keep regular entries of thoughts and understandings of class activities. I enjoyed responding to my students and found that many of us would start private conversations which continued for our time together. Through these conversations, I knew many of my students in a more meaningful way. I also knew of journals as a student where they were required by certain of my professors. In some instances, the responses led me to think more deeply or clearly about a particular wondering I was having and allowed me to carry on personal explorations with the guidance of another.

As I composed this first entry, I knew that I was more comfortable writing about certain things than I was talking about them.

The return of the first responses indicated that the journal would be successful. Some thoughts were clarified with further examples. Some quotes were commented on and

in some cases, altered slightly. Words were circled, checked, underlined. Question marks
or explanation marks indicated topics for further discussion. It was clear that Sandy and
Angie had spent a considerable amount of time reading, thinking and responding.

The journal started with reflections of discussions and class observations based
primarily on my field notes. After the first entry, I was also responding to Angie's and
Sandy's reflections from the previous entries. On several occasions, one of us would
write, "Let's talk about this," and I would make note for the next time we met. However, it
soon became clear that the discussions were taking on a life of their own and did not
necessarily wish to follow our lead. It became more important to discuss what had
happened during Sandy's and Angie's day rather than to attend to a pre-planned agenda.
Following Angie's and Sandy's lead to discussing the day offered the benefits of clearing
their minds leaving room and energy to reflect further. As well, I needed to remember that
we were equal partners in this inquiry and had equal control over its direction. At first, I
wondered if these discussions were pulling us away from our task of exploring images but
I began to realize that these discussions were glimpses of the images we were searching
for.

While this insight into our discussions was meaningful, it still meant that much of
what we noted in the journal was not being talked about. The journal began to take up this
role as well and we were able to explore some of our understandings and beliefs in writing.
Sandy shared that she had been excited to read the first entry but was even more excited
with the second where I had responded to her comments.

> In this leadership group they wanted us to write journals—I
> didn't understand, Dawne, until I read this comment and we
> talked at noon how we read—leave—read—think—write—
> think—that print allows us to really reflect more deeply—
> gives that opportunity to organize better. . . . Also perhaps it
> is important to me that I can change my mind—as I know
> that's happened so much to me as I've taught. I love our
> ground rules that I can add to my thoughts, change my
> mind, question you and Angie. (S. J. Jan.30/90)

Angie simply responded, "I am loving this!" (A. J. Jan.30/90) While conversations were often rushed, the journals were leisurely, allowing time to think and to comment.

As promised, I began to comment on outside reading in the journal. Angie and Sandy responded,

> Thank you for Nancie Atwell's article. I loved the term 'thoughtful classroom'. It's perfect! (A. J. Mar.6/90)

> I loved this sharing, Dawne! It was a gift that you'd share your response. I'll reread and understand a bit more. (S. J. Mar.20/90)

> Lots of food for thought in your journal, Dawne. It'll keep my wee brain turning! (A. J. Feb.26/90)

This circle of sharing grew larger as another teacher on staff began to share articles that she was currently reading. Angie saw the possibility of journals as professional development within a staff:

> Perhaps team partners or colleagues on a staff may exchange journals, especially if they are both involved in similar programs. It would force them to think more deeply about what they are doing and why. I think the why is the important part. People would clarify their beliefs to themselves about kids and learning. Writing these journals has certainly helped me to do this—as I've said before! (A. J. Apr.5/90)

On April 5, I made my last regular journal entry. This entry was far more difficult to make than the first one but I was not the only one who felt a sadness. Both Angie and Sandy responded:

> I'm so glad you made that initial phone call. I've enjoyed knowing you better and being involved with you. (A. J. Apr.5/90)

These regular journals have been an important link in our
relationship and work. Angie and I have enjoyed, learned,
been stimulated and reinforced by our . . . words. I am
thrilled that we are continuing to see, find, create and
continue to work together and am surprised that such has
developed when we had planned the beginning and end
when we first started. (S. J. Apr.5/90)

The following day, Sandy requested an entry about the final celebration held in
class the day before. This told me that the journal was a pleasure, an important part of our
relationship. Sandy wrote: "I thought the celebration needed an entry because the journal
has been a record of what we've valued and found important in our work together." (S. J.
Apr.22/90)

The journal played a significant role in helping to set the atmosphere of our
relationship and to build our confidence. It became a part of the way we thought and felt
about one another. Even more than our time together, the journal allowed us to explore one
another's feelings, beliefs and understandings and to develop mutual interpretations. The
intensity of this mutual making-of-meaning became apparent when the three of us began to
make similar comments in the same entry.

The journal fulfilled many functions throughout the study. During the exploration
stage, it allowed us to clarify, extend and validate interpretations and understandings and
helped to identify future topics for discussion. It was a reflective tool that gave us time to
think, rethink and change our mind in a safe, non-challenging atmosphere. Whereas we felt
we had to speak clearly and quickly during discussions, the journal gave us space to
breathe, to make mistakes and correct them, to be sure that we were saying what we meant
to say. The journal was an effective tool for encouraging our professional growth.

The journal also had personal benefits. We discovered the joy of reading and
rereading responses to our thoughts. We felt comfortable sharing thoughts, ideas and
reading that didn't feel comfortable in public conversations. Compliments fit into this
category as did private wonderings and concerns. We came to value the record of our time

together that was recorded in the journal and would be ours to keep. But, perhaps most importantly, the entries were like letters between close friends and it seemed that our friendship grew stronger through them.

The journal entries were essentially private documents that were open, honest and respectful. They allowed us to read, think and respond at leisure. While words in a conversation were lost, the journal was a permanent record of our explorations and required a bond of trust which must not be violated. Professionally and personally, the journal was an effective tool for growth.

Metaphor—It Does Take Time to Become a Butterfly

As the study progressed, we became increasingly aware that we were having effects on the study just as it was having effects on us. Many of these effects were not tangible but were only felt and appreciated. One tangible result, however, was a metaphor of teaching which began to develop. The metaphor became a process through which we focussed our discussions. By searching for appropriate metaphors, we were questioning one another's understandings and beliefs in an attempt to come to a mutual interpretation. We were forced to explain our beliefs and why we held them. Trying to create a complete metaphor meant that our discussions were focussed over a period of time and, as a result, were more indepth.

While we did not have the chance to develop this metaphor as fully as we would have liked, it became meaningful to us. We labelled our metaphor, "It Does Take Time To Become a Butterfly". Tentative discussions about the metaphor became a professional development process which showed promise.

Sandy's and Angie's classroom was decorated with student and teacher work, posters and artifacts but most prominent among the decorations were butterflies. They came in different sizes and forms—pictures, models and magnets. Sandy had a plaque which said, "Just when the caterpillar thinks the world is coming to an end . . . God makes it into

a butterfly." As well, butterflies were part of a Grade Two science unit Sandy had taught for several years.

Because of the prevalence of butterflies in Angie's and Sandy's classroom, I was struck by an article I had read (Aoki, 1989) which used the story of a butterfly to illustrate the struggle of "becoming"—a human struggle which can often be painful. In a journal entry, I repeated the story commenting on the link between butterflies and our discussions of concerns over how to explain specific student problems to parents in the coming parent-teacher interviews.

The story was as follows:

> The butterfly is a beautiful and active creature. In its process of metamorphosis, it emerges from the pupa. It puts up a tremendous struggle to break out of its chitinous shell.
> A nature lover, once noticing this struggle, thought that the creature could be saved the struggle. With great dexterity, he used a scalpel to cut away the shell. Then the butterfly emerged without a struggle.
> But it was lame; it could not fly.

Angie's initial response was, "Does this story relate to letting kids learn and discover some on their own? If we show and tell them everything, they'll be missing out?" (A.J. Mar.8/90). We didn't have time to discuss the story more fully.

Parent-teacher interviews were held later that week, and following them, Sandy and Angie mentioned that they had both told the story to certain parents. Less than a week later, a gift arrived for Sandy; a mother and her daughter had worked together and fashioned a brooch and earring set out of porcelain in the shape of a butterfly. The attached note read, in part, "It does take time to become a butterfly."

Sandy's and Angie's love of butterflies and these interview stories became a mutual story derived from shared experiences. Often a comment about an aspect of teaching would be related to butterflies or to the process of metamorphosis. Gradually, we began to develop our mutual story into a metaphor relating the metamorphosis of butterflies to the

process of life-long learning. Eventually our metaphor came to be understood by me in the following brief form.

A butterfly starts as an egg within which are included all its basic elements. As with a learner, the egg holds the outlines of a character and the promise of growth. While both the egg and the learner will be greatly influenced by the surrounding environment, the essentials for growth and development are in place.

The caterpillar has a voracious appetite as does an avid learner. It can crawl fair distances and experience many different fields. The learner also has an insatiable appetite and is curious about many things, wanting to taste from many different environments. The learner does not learn from just one source but from many different experiences.

At this stage, the caterpillar practices for the time when it will become a chrysalis. Over and over it practices spinning its silk so that when the proper time comes, it will be prepared. Learners also have the need to practice before the real test. Mistakes are made and expected at this time and neither the caterpillar nor the learner are ashamed of them. Mistakes only show that more practice is needed and that practice can be exciting, rewarding and meaningful.

When the practice is complete and the caterpillar has eaten its fill for the time, it becomes a chrysalis. This is a quiet time of tremendous change. As happens during every learning process, a time comes when the learner must sit back, reflect, think and understand. This quiet, slow, internal change is not visible and requires tremendous trust, faith and patience not only on the part of the learner but also on the part of the teacher. This may be the time when strong fundamental beliefs are formed in the privacy of one's thoughts.

Initially, the chrysalis is very dark but, gradually, as the process of change nears completion, the chrysalis becomes lighter until it is translucent. At this point, the colours of the butterfly-to-be become visible. All butterflies are different colours but as caterpillars the

eventual colours cannot be determined. So it is with the learner who will develop in a unique manner that can't be foretold in the initial learning stages.

Finally, the butterfly emerges and finds freedom through flight. It travels widely, pollinating many different flowers, allowing life to grow, reproduce and flourish. So too with learners who travel freely, tasting and touching many sources of knowledge. This touch affects society for without it learning could not continue and knowledge could not grow and develop. The ability to fly not only provides freedom but can also be frightening. Just as a well-meaning child can harm a butterfly by holding its wings too tightly, so too can a teacher harm a learner by wanting to protect or manipulate. The flight of a butterfly implies the freedom to make mistakes but trusts that the learner will be able to learn from those mistakes. Being like a butterfly implies that the learner will eventually fly alone. As Sandy wished for her students, "And if I'm not here tomorrow . . . where will they be? They will fly without me." (S. I. Mar.20/90).

As we talked, we saw some general comparisons between the metamorphosis of a butterfly and teaching, learning and working with children. A caterpillar eats its egg shell because intuitively it knows it is good for it. There are some things that are good for children, that they must learn, such as reading and writing. This learning must be done in context, however; it must make sense and happen within a logical sequence. The teacher is like the keeper of the environment and needs to give the learners freedom to develop at their own rates and speeds. The teacher allows the learners to learn without forcing the feeding all the while knowing that the desire to learn within the child (like the butterfly) may die at any stage. The teacher takes the learners from where they are and hopes that, by providing the best environment, they will grow. At each stage, the learning must be exciting and for inner satisfaction—wanting to do the best because it feels right. If given a chance, the learners will discover mistakes and correct them on their own without being told, "I told you so!".

Although the butterfly becomes a butterfly after a lengthy process, learners never become—they are always becoming. While butterflies can experience metamorphosis only once, learners are able to experience it over and over again. They should never reach an end where they have learned all there is to know. This is strongly reflected in the image that both Angie and Sandy hold of becoming life-long learners. Although they were teachers to their students, they were also learning. Because of this learning, while they may be teachers to the students they now have, they are still only becoming teachers for their next students.

Initially we perceived the metaphor to be an expression of how we viewed ourselves as teachers of others. Gradually, we came to see that it was also an expression of ourselves as learners. It focussed our attention on the study as one of the fields from which we were tasting and growing. It indicated to us how the study had become a professional development process for us.

The metaphor was not included here to be a model of teaching for others but as a way of showing how a metaphor, created out of reflection on personal practical knowledge and mutual stories, can become a means to grow and to provide professional development. The depth of its meaning for us was derived from the mutual experiences which encouraged its development. Reflection allowed us to look inside ourselves using others as mirrors and lenses. The journal allowed us to come to know one another more fully through private conversations. However, the development of the metaphor encouraged us to draw upon what we had come to know about ourselves and others to mutually create new knowledge and understanding. While the first two processes, reflection and the journal, encouraged us to uncover what was already a part of ourselves—our personal practical knowledge—the metaphor asked us to reach beyond ourselves for something not previously understood and to socially construct new knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

While the metaphor was created and held mutually, aspects of it had different meanings for each of us. We understood it according to our personal practical knowledge and would explain it in subtly different ways. Thus, our personal practical knowledge not only affected the direction the metaphor originally took but, also, our personal interpretations of it. The task of the metaphor was to extend us beyond our understandings for new ideas. The goal of the metaphor was to add to our personal practical knowledge.

Reflection As a Key to Growth

While choosing to view three processes of exploration, it was apparent that one process, reflection, was central to the study. Not only did we consciously provide opportunities for reflection through discussions at various times, reflection was prominent in the journals and the development of the metaphor. Because reflection was key to every activity we pursued, it became largely responsible for the growth and professional development which occurred. It became possible to trace many of Angie's and Sandy's personal and growing images through reflective devices. We discovered the difficulties inherent in professional reflection but became strongly convinced of its powers to provide growth and self-fulfillment.

The process of reflection, in this study, was to see what we knew, what we believed, what we looked like on the inside. That was a difficult process. We could do some of that looking deep inside ourselves, privately, by thinking and rethinking, but the process seemed easier and went further when we had someone to reflect with, who could act as an inner mirror. Another person's thoughts, questions, wonderings, often pushed our thinking and moved us beyond what we might have considered by ourselves.

Schon (1983) discusses the importance of reflection in building a solid understanding of our profession and our place in it. It is the way in which we can continue

to learn and grow. It acknowledges that we are not complete, finished practitioners and that we can feel comfortable with portraying this image of learner to the world. But reflection is not always easy.

Britzman (1986) discusses cultural myths that affect teachers and their knowing of practice. One such myth suggests that the classroom is an isolated, private place and that teachers who ask for outside help are showing signs of weakness. Another myth suggests that theory is far removed from the day to day realities of experience and therefore has little to offer the classroom teacher. The myth that everything depends on the teacher tends to equate learning with control. This push to control learning devalues the teacher's power to explore, to be open to new experiences or to take risks. The 'teacher as an expert' myth reduces knowledge to a set of discrete and isolated units that can be acquired. 'Not knowing' is a threat to a teacher's control and suggests that the teacher knows everything and has nothing more to learn. The final myth suggests that teachers are self-made and therefore come to the classroom as completed projects. Teachers must say of themselves that they are teachers rather than that they are becoming teachers (Aoki, 1989). If teachers are self-made, they don't need to talk to other teachers, to share ideas, to explore further education opportunities, or to continue to learn. None of these myths encourage reflection or recognize its value.

Elbaz (1987) further discusses the difficulty of teacher reflection: "Such reflection, we know, is not part of the occupational structure of teaching: there is no time for it, and teachers are seldom trained to reflect on their work" (p. 45).

Nias (1987) talks about reflection as a critical tool for growth but says that "(l)ack of time for discussion and skepticism about its value as a crucial tool in the modification of personal and professional perspectives are particular obstacles to change" (p. 137).

Angie and Sandy knew about the values of reflection and were reflective practitioners before the study. Sandy talked about the joys of working closely with someone providing the opportunity for the talk to flow. Angie talked about consciously

seeking out teachers on staff to learn from and to share ideas. Both Angie and Sandy

pursued opportunities for reflection through outside activities such as the language arts

interest groups and Teachers As Leaders groups.

While Schon (1983, 1987) talks about the reflective practitioner, Atwell (1989)

discusses a thoughtful practitioner—a term she feels suggests complex and desirable

human characteristics.

> When teachers ask questions about students' learning,
> observe in their classrooms, and make sense of their
> observations, schools become more thoughtful places. When
> teachers change in light of their discoveries, when their
> teaching becomes more patient, more responsive, and more
> useful to students, schools become more thoughtful places.
> When teachers invite students to become partners in inquiry,
> to collaborate with them in wondering about what, and how,
> students are learning, schools become more thoughtful
> places. And when teachers act as scholars, closely reading,
> heatedly debating, generously attributing the published work
> in their field, schools become more thoughtful places. In
> short, the most thoughtful practitioner is the teacher who acts
> as researcher. (p. 1)

She continues: "This is one definition of thoughtfulness: the careful way that

teacher-researchers continually examine and analyze their teaching" (p.2).   I was able to

identify Atwell's stages of the thoughtful practitioner in Sandy's and Angie's practice.

After school, at recess, between classes, whenever time could be 'stolen' away, Angie and

Sandy talked about what had happened in class. They celebrated the successes, considered

the things that didn't go as hoped, patted one another on the back, and debated tomorrow.

As Angie said, "That's why teaming is so wonderful. We talk all the time. This talk often

leads us to change or modify our thinking" (A. J. Jan.30/90). Schon would refer to these

discussions as reflection-on-practice—reflection that occurs after the fact with a purpose to

being better prepared for tomorrow. Atwell would consider all types of discussions—the

ones held privately, during class and after class—within the first requirement of a

thoughtful school. Angie and Sandy were asking questions about the students' learning,

they were observing and listening, and they were making meaning of what they had learned.

Atwell's second stage is when teachers change in light of these discoveries. This implies that the teacher is also a learner. Angie's image of the classroom as a family and Sandy's image of the classroom as a community could be summarized as Sandy had said, "Teachers as learners and learners as teachers—a theme we consciously work at and a basic belief!" (S. J. Jan.23/90) Both extended this by holding sub-images of learning as a lifelong activity. Angie and Sandy felt that it was essential that their students see them as learners. When I was introduced to the class, it was partly within the role of facilitating Angie's and Sandy's growth. Often, as a lesson was started, one would comment on how she had read and talked to others in order to prepare. An independent research project was a large part of the social studies unit, and throughout, Angie and Sandy would discuss with the students ways in which they had learned something and techniques they had found useful. When students were asked to share what they had learned, Angie and Sandy would make it clear to the students that the teachers were learning too.

At one point, I was asked by some graduate students about how I could participate in the classroom and make observations and interpretations without being evaluative. I became concerned that Sandy and Angie might see my role as an evaluator as well as a researcher. In the journal, I wrote about my concern. Sandy responded,

> I work hard at telling myself that comments are about my
> work, my beliefs about teaching and not about me, Sandy,
> personally. Only through honest feedback will Sandy grow
> on her journey. (S. J. Feb.8/90)

Later she wrote,

> I want to be a teacher who is good for the kids and if I am
> really thinking of the kids I should expect and receive
> feedback about my planning, organizing, etc. . . . which is
> not personal. . . . I believe that there are effective teaching
> strategies and, yes, I need to be made aware of them. (S. J.
> Mar.6/90)

Angie comforted me by saying,

> When you recognize each other as professionals all trying to
> work together and improve, you don't have to feel you are
> being judged and expected to be wonderful 100% of the
> time. (A. J. Feb.8/90)

When Nias (1987) explored the concept of collegial reflection as an approach to change, the three teachers she worked with all expressed the importance of comfort and trust when discussing basic beliefs. Angie commented on this when she said, "We are much more likely to be open and honest with friends. We don't mind making mistakes and not being 'perfect' when we are with people we trust and enjoy." (A. J. Feb.8/90) Sandy phrased it this way, "I wonder if the friends aspect is the trust—willing to tell it as it is, clearly knowing that well meaning accompanies the comment? Risk taking/ questioning occurs with trust—absence of game playing and superficial smiling and agreeing. (S. J. Feb.8/90) Angie and Sandy were displaying understandings and practices at Atwell's second level.

Atwell defines the most thoughtful practitioner, the third level, as " the teacher who acts as a researcher". While we didn't use the term teacher-as-researcher during our study, that was what we intended. From the beginning, Angie and Sandy saw the possibilities for professional development within the context of the study. Our purpose was to research—to explore and make meaning of—the images which guided their practice, and the primary tool for this exploration was reflection. I was able to introduce a larger reflective group, a

new perspective, a different voice. Angie and Sandy had been involved in reflection as a team since September and had told many of their stories to each other already. This telling of stories allowed them to come to know one another and themselves more fully and to grow together as a team. I provided another audience, a new chance to retell. Sandy understood this when she said, "When we retell (our stories) we comprehend, reinforce.... (I) like to talk to Angie to establish content of stories. Stories reinforce and show our beliefs. (I) (w)ant the kids to tell stories" (S. J. Mar.8/90). Angie said it another way: "It is wonderful having teachers together from different teaching backgrounds. We really learn from each other" (A. J. Jan.18/90).

In the first journal entry, Sandy and Angie wrote about their understanding of this project as professional development.

> I'll enjoy it and find it a gift to share my stories. In sharing my stories, I continue to make sense—reflect—and renew my joy in the story. (S. J. Jan.18/90)

> When you first called, I guess my initial reaction was "one more thing on my plate". But after talking and thinking and pondering the idea, the positive aspects of the project grew and we knew we would be participants. We discussed how we could grow and learn and do some reflection on ourselves at the same time. (A. J. Jan.18/90)

This theme expanded throughout the project. In the last regular journal, both Angie and Sandy commented on their roles within the project.

> I ... believe that through this process, Sandy and I have become an even stronger team. We have stretched ourselves in some areas and through the reflection and discussions have communicated, I'm sure, on more than what we may have done otherwise. (A. J. Apr.5/90)

> We've talked, written, and continued to return to ... I'm smiling at the list, Dawne, and stunned at how much we've linked. So we've researched like the kids and we need to share. (S. J. Apr.5/90)

Atwell's notions of a thoughtful practitioner helped us to understand what we had been doing throughout the study, the direction we were hoping to take. It was already becoming clear to us that while the exploration of our personal practical knowledge was important, the uses we planned to make of this knowledge both personally and professionally were vital.

Summary

Atwell's notion of a thoughtful practitioner being one who is a teacher-researcher became vital in our study and reflection was the primary tool. As we grew in our abilities to reflect with one another, we sought opportunities to tell stories, to interpret and to try to understand ourselves and each other. We set the stage by deliberately creating the atmosphere of a reflective practicum. The journals, which had originally been intended to clarify and interpret the observations recorded in the daily field notes, grew to where they also became forms of reflection. Perhaps this is why they became so meaningful. The reading and responding were likely the most time consuming parts of our work yet we faithfully continued even after the use of field notes and the need for their interpretation had finished. The development of a metaphor of teaching had not been planned as part of the original design of the study. It, too, happened as a result of our increased powers of reflection and provided a unique opportunity for us to try to synthesize what we had been discussing and exploring. While our discussions and written conversations wandered with the flow of the day's happenings, the metaphor remained a constant focus.

As a result of the processes of creating a reflective practicum, writing an interactive journal and the development of a metaphor, our powers of reflection provided the basis and catalyst for growth. We found that not only did I have data to create a thesis, but, that we had all grown personally and professionally. This growth was so significant that it caused the initial orientation of the study to shift and required a re-evaluation of the data. The

exploration of personal practical knowledge had provided growth and professional development.

Chapter Five will continue the discussion with the different kinds of knowledge explored and examples of images—unique and shared images, images that grew during the study and images in the making.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL PRACTICAL AND SOCIALLY DEPENDENT KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

Chapter Four discussed the evolution of the study from an uncovering of personal practical knowledge per se to a use of the resulting understanding of our personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience. The processes of exploration—reflection, the writing of an interactive journal and the development of a metaphor of teaching—and the way in which reflection acted as a catalyst for growth were examined.

Chapter Five will begin a discussion of different kinds of knowledge which became apparent as the study progressed. We became aware of not only personal practical knowledge but also socially constructed knowledge which became internalized as part of our personal practical knowledge and socially dependent knowledge which was initially available to us only within the context of our team. To illustrate these kinds of knowledge, several examples of images will be given—individual images (personal practical knowledge), images that grew both before and during the study as a result of collaboration and interaction (socially constructed knowledge) and images still in the making (socially dependent knowledge).

An Introduction to Kinds of Knowledge

As has been noted previously, our collaborative research was intended to uncover images embedded in Angie's and Sandy's personal practical knowledge. These explorations, as far as such insights were possible, were to be of images held by Angie and Sandy at the time that the study began. The goal was to characterize aspects of their

individual images of teaching in time and place, while also providing an account of my own influences and those of the environment on their images. The latter acknowledged a perspective on knowledge basic to narrative style research.

Knowledge does not exist in a vacuum nor does it arrive in a person's head of its own accord. The knowledge that we carry is a result of many interactions, experiences, reflections and developments (Belenky, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Noddings, 1986). Elbaz (1983) talks of practical knowledge as being experiential knowledge. Clandinin (1985) explains that the personal aspect of knowledge includes experiences, actions and reactions and that personal practical knowledge (1986) is viewed as tentative, subject to change and transient. Through the nature of our interactive journals and conversations, I found that not only was I interacting on a one-to-one basis with each of the participants but also that the three of us together were making meaning. Thus, much of what we discovered about one another was developed and influenced by the fact that three of us were involved.

Upon reflection, it became apparent that there were different kinds of knowledge operating within the context of this study. Personal practical knowledge, within the context of this study, could be characterized as knowledge personally constructed and knowledge socially constructed. In addition, there appeared to be a socially dependent knowledge, as defined in Chapter One, operating.

Each of us, Angie, Sandy and myself, held personal practical knowledge before, during and after the study. The images of teaching that each of us carried into the study were a result of past experiences and understandings—our history and culture. This knowledge existed, often tacitly, before the study began, became more conscious during the study and was certainly expanded and more fully understood as a result of the study.

On the other hand, we were aware of a socially constructed knowledge which had developed as a result of interaction between Angie and Sandy as a team and among the three of us. Within the context of this study, we came to see socially constructed

knowledge as knowledge that developed in a social context, was shared with others and enhanced our personal practical knowledge.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) address the issue of socially constructed knowledge when they discuss the reality of everyday life. They talk about "common-sense knowledge" which is shared with others in the normal, self-evident routines of everyday life. The reality is taken for granted and doesn't need verification. I would suggest that much of our personal practical knowledge falls into the realm of "common-sense knowledge". The reality of everyday life is shared with others, the most important experience of which is face-to-face interaction. Berger and Luckmann explain that we know ourselves better than we know the person with whom we are interacting. Our knowledge of self requires reflection and is not readily available to us. Knowledge of the other in a face-to-face interaction, however, is more readily presented in a continuous and prereflective manner. Reflection about ourselves is occasioned by the attitude another presents to us.

Berger and Luckmann further discuss that while society is a human product, people are social products. Social reality requires that we externalize what we know, objectivate it into reality and then internalize it. These dialectical processes are an essential component of ongoing secondary socialization best accomplished through face-to-face interaction and the use of language.

. In this study, we were concerned with secondary socialization into the sub-world of teaching. Our personal practical knowledge held elements of common-sense knowledge. Reflection and further growth were enabled partially through interactions afforded by collaboration within the school and through this study.

Angie and Sandy, as intuitively reflective people aware of the potential isolation of the classroom, had created deliberate partnerships which would facilitate such interaction. Working as a teaching team allowed them to discuss and explore their own and each other's images and working with me through the interactive journals and discussions, allowed us to create socially constructed knowledge. While our interactions were certainly not the sole

source of socially constructed knowledge, within the context of this study, they were significant.

This socially constructed knowledge was then added to our stores of personal practical knowledge. We were able to internalize it and to allow it to guide our teaching practices. It appeared that this kind of knowledge was that which seemed to affirm the personal practical knowledge we already held or which had impacted us as a result of strong social influences. It was knowledge that we developed when we were together and that we continued to hold when we were apart. Examples of this knowledge are the beliefs in collaboration and connectedness as discussed later in this chapter.

The third kind of knowledge, socially dependent knowledge, was more difficult to define. While some socially constructed knowledge added to and enhanced our personal practical knowledge; other knowledge that had also been constructed socially, did not. This latter socially dependent knowledge depended upon the social context for its viability and availability. Acknowledgedly hypothetical, socially dependent knowledge appears to be that knowledge which has its full realization when two or more individuals are together providing their own images, attitudes, but, most significantly, their own language (verbal and non-verbal). When the individuals are no longer together, the socially dependent knowledge, by definition, exists only as an awareness of its own potentialities—personal practical knowledge in the making but not yet in actuality.

During and after the study, it became apparent that the intrusions of the study and of myself as participant-observer were having significant effects on Sandy's and Angie's knowledge. From the role of a mirror and a lens, I was moving into a more active role of creating knowledge with Sandy and Angie.

For example, as we were attempting to make meaning of what we were learning about one another, we began to develop a metaphor for teaching, that of a butterfly and its metamorphosis, as discussed in the previous chapter. This metaphor grew out of discussions and experiences that the three of us shared over our three months together and

seemed to summarize much of what the study had come to mean. It appeared that construction of the metaphor was a necessary process which helped us to develop new knowledge. Through these discussions, we constructed and reconstructed our life narratives so that we more fully understood them.

While initially we viewed our explorations and understandings as an extension of collective, socially constructed knowledge, it became obvious after the conclusion of the study that some knowledge, such as that of the metaphor, was dependent upon the three of us continuing to work together. While we were talking or writing together, the understandings articulated by the metaphor played an active role in our teaching practices. However, when we were apart, they seemed less meaningful and less convincing when we attempted to characterize them to others. I became aware that I didn't feel qualified to interpret the metaphor without the social support of Sandy and Angie. I was aware of the potentialities of the metaphor but was unable to articulate them because the knowledge had not become actual.

This observation raised a number of questions. Why was this knowledge so dependent upon the three of us interacting? Why did some of our knowledge developed socially become internalized to form a part of our personal practical knowledge (socially constructed knowledge) while some did not (socially dependent knowledge)? What types of knowledge depended upon the three of us being together in order to function? Would we have been able to internalize more if we had had a longer time to work on the internalization process?

Our socially constructed knowledge seemed primarily to affirm the personal practical knowledge we had tacitly held. While this process was imminently satisfying, it did not seem to encourage further or deeper exploration. It appeared that socially dependent knowledge was the catalyst that kept the study alive. Perhaps this was true because of its dependence on our continued interaction and the potential new understandings which it

offered. While working together, we were exploring dimensions which were only dimly visible when we were working apart.

It would seem that we were unable to internalize some socially dependent knowledge partly because of a lack of time to complete, or at least, more fully explore our metaphor of teaching. While our experience indicated that the socially dependent nature of the exploration was a motivation for professional development, it also raised a number of questions regarding the effectiveness of its use on a short-term basis. If socially dependent knowledge could only operate within the social context, its importance and validity would be in doubt if teachers were unable to continue to operate within that dependent context, at least for the length of time required for some internalization.

Socially dependent knowledge, such as that developed through the metaphor of teaching, became a professional development experience that allowed us to see each other as part of a greater unity, as more than the composite of our separate images.

An Exploration of Personal Practical Knowledge— Individually Held Images

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, three kinds of knowledge became apparent throughout the study—personal practical knowledge as existing at the time of initiation of the study, socially constructed knowledge which was added to our personal practical knowledge as a result of our interactions during the study and socially dependent knowledge which did not become a part of our personal practical knowledge during the time frame covered by the study. This section will explore the images which Angie and Sandy appeared to hold individually as part of their personal practical knowledge at the time the study began.

Angie's Images

As a result of our explorations, Angie and I identified an image of teaching through which she saw the classroom as a family including sub-themes of related classroom management strategies, process-oriented teaching procedures and continued professional development.

When I first suggested this image of the classroom as a family to Angie (J. May1/90), she responded,

> It's funny how I've come to use the word family over the years since I'm an only child. You'd think I'd come from a big family using that word all the time. I guess I see us all living together in the same room for the year and therefore liken it to a family. (A. J. May1/90)

Earlier than this, however, references to the classroom as a family occurred. On January 18/90, Angie wrote, "It's interesting how the children have responded to the larger family of an open area teaming situation. They had only experienced closed classrooms until this year."

Angie's image of the classroom family was connected to the way she preferred to see the classroom operate. "I liken a classroom to a family and getting along as a family.... That you're going to have your differences and they have to be solved" (A. I. Mar.20/90). Angie referred to a closeness to her parents when she was a child and to her hope that she would be able to maintain this closeness with her husband and children.
This desire for a family closeness seemed to be reflected in the way in which Angie structured and maintained her classroom.

The first sub-theme of classroom management was a part of Angie's plan for the children to see her as part of the classroom family.

> It's important to let the children see you personally as well as
> professionally. They then feel free to chat, trust and believe
> in you. I think we try to model that we all make mistakes,
> but that we can learn and grow from these if we choose to.
> We also want the children to feel comfortable taking risks
> with their learning. (A. J. Jan.18/90).

In this classroom family, each member had an important role to play.

> Besides ownership in learning, I also feel children deserve to
> have ownership and decision making in how the classroom
> is run. We talk about being a family at school and often
> include the kids when deciding how an activity is to be
> organized .... They are also included when classroom rules
> are made (i.e., where and how to sit in large group mini-
> lessons. (A. J. Jan.23/90).

This family image was based on mutual respect and trust.

> I guess how we as teachers treat the kids really helps set the
> tone for the year. I believe in mutual respect for one another
> in a 'classroom family' .... Respect is my key word for a
> classroom. It's important to respect one another; each other's
> property; right to learn; right to be ourselves; school
> supplies. (A. J. May1/90).

From this basis of mutual trust and respect, Angie hoped to move forward to the

tangible benefits for the children. By being able to operate as a family, by treating the

children with mutual respect and trust, Angie saw the children developing a positive sense

of self-esteem and confidence which was directly reflected in their learning. "If a person

isn't feeling good about him/herself, the best lesson in the world is lost" (A. J. Jan.23/90).

The family image was connected to the second sub-theme of processes and teaching

strategies which Angie used. Much of Angie's focus on these processes was reflected

through the types of programs, such as the writing process and the individual research project, which she offered. "Process—key word! The content is only the vehicle through which we learn to learn" (A. J. Apr.22/90). Other comments reflected this belief:

> Sometimes feelings are more important than soon-forgotten facts. If you learn through experience and understanding, the facts become meaningful and remembered .... Learning should be relevant and meaningful. (A.J. Jan.18/90).

> I think, too, it's important to find out what the kids already know (this gives them a confidence boost and heightens their interest). When they decide what they want to learn, the discovery of the answers becomes exciting and meaningful. (A. J. Jan .23/90).

The image of the classroom as a family with the children as the centre, directly related to Angie's desire to build and foster a particular atmosphere within the classroom. Angie spent the first four months of the year in a theme project which focussed on human respect and dignity, on appreciating each other as special and unique (Craig, 1984). This first step was important to Angie because she saw it as the foundation upon which all her further learning activities were built.

Lifelong learning through professional development as a way of improving Angie's classroom skills and refining her image of family was the third sub-theme.

> I think that without reading and talking about educational beliefs, one can get caught into too much time wasting. By being involved in one's own professional development one feels to have more purpose. . . . I guess we can become pretty stale in education if we don't work at professional development. Teachers who are keen to read and share find each other. The leadership groups we belong to are one vehicle. Another group I belong to grew from a quarter credit class I took last year .... I guess we look for peers who have the same interests in professional development. (A. J. Mar.6/90).

Angie credited her involvement with professional groups with having given her some of the tools used to reflect more closely upon her own practice.

When asked why she felt a need to belong to such groups, she responded, ". . . having come through the BEd After Program, I've been <u>VERY</u> aware of my shortcomings as far as education classes are concerned. Maybe that's one reason I've been conscious of a continued need to grow" (A. J. May1/90).

Angie commented that well-chosen professional development activities "twigged me into some processes that seemed right for my beliefs and gut feelings." (A. J. Feb20/90). I often heard Angie refer to 'this workshop' or 'this session at a P.D. day'. She talked about being "really glad to get some new ideas and use them and find that they work." (A. I. Mar.27/90).

This desire to learn and grow was a factor in Angie agreeing to work on our project. "We discussed how we could grow and learn and do some reflection on ourselves at the same time" (A. J. Jan.18/90). To Angie, growing and learning would never be finished; it would be a lifelong activity. "(I) am finally feeling comfortable with my beliefs and practices—although I don't think we're ever 'there'. There is <u>always</u> learning and growing to be done" (A. J. Jan.30/90).

Angie's image of the classroom as a family likely had its roots in her own family experience. As an only child, she felt close to her parents and was involved as an integral member in family matters and decisions. Staying home while her children were young enabled Angie to become more involved in the role of a wife and mother. When she began her teaching career, she was still concerned with the raising of her children and seemed to view the new children in her charge as members of an extended family. The study allowed Angie to explore her image of the classroom as a family, and, within that image, related management strategies and teaching processes through continued professional development.

Sandy's Images

The image of the classroom as a community was an image that Sandy had identified early in our time together. Through the image of a classroom community, Sandy was able to use her "bottom line" question of what was best for the children to help ensure that they were successful and fulfilled. Within that image of community, sub-images seemed to operate—images concerning the joy of work and her role as a facilitator.

The image of community started as a basic organizational tool around which Sandy built her classroom. This concept of a classroom community became apparent to Sandy when she student-taught in her home town high school and recognized one teacher there from her own high school days who had built a community concept into his classroom. In an interview, Sandy told me how important it was for her to try to discover how this teacher constructed a community type of classroom so she asked to teach for him in return for his feedback.

> And so he let me know, that the important thing was your
> response to kids and that you needed ways to respond . . .
> that only encouraged them to reflect. And that was what had
> happened to us (in his class). You felt like you were
> accepted and everyone was equal in his classes. It was never
> based on intelligence. It was always based on participation
> and work. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

Sandy was raised in a small community where everyone contributed. She taught Sunday School and piano throughout high school and her many involvements led her to win a scholarship for the most community-minded teen in south-western Saskatchewan. The ideas of equality and the need for everyone to contribute were reflected clearly in Sandy's approach to the classroom.

> And so, therefore, it (the classroom) needs to be a
> community which means everybody is respected and
> everybody has a place and everybody contributes and
> everyone makes mistakes and everyone ... shares in the
> joy and celebrations. Everyone is interconnected and
> interrelated because ... when they teach, I think learning
> really happens .... So I need to build them up to teach and
> you can't teach unless you're an equal member. (S. I.
> Mar.20/90)

> The first relationship I work on is their relationship with one
> another and I introduce myself as a member of their group.
> And this is their room ... and they own it .... With
> ownership comes responsibility and commitment,
> involvement, enjoyment and growth. And then I play the
> only role I think I can play. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

Sandy focussed on how the community of the classroom benefitted, nurtured and developed the students within. The beginning of a new school year was crucial to "building a classroom", the time to sense and to come to know the children. She wanted them to be comfortable, to experience success, to be involved; so, in the first hour of school, she invited the children into the community and asked them to become leaders, to take ownership. This ownership conferred responsibility and the children started to make decisions.

> I guess maybe I can share. I've taught in inner city. I've
> taught in rural. I've taught over in LC3, over in the east area.
> And I've taught in all these schools in the same style. And
> the kids all relate to it because they own a little piece of
> something. It's even better than your own bedroom because
> there are some people in it. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

Many times in discussions, Sandy would talk about "what was best for the kids". When I asked her directly about this, in the interview and later in a journal, she responded,

> I do use this as my guide for decision-making on my job. I'll
> ask, "What does this mean for kids?"; "How does this affect
> them?". I need to have a base to make decisions. (S. J.
> Apr.22/90)

> ...[P]erhaps guarding (and really often failing to guard) the
> spirit of the kids is a basic belief I hold—and I mean the
> spirit of the community of kids as well as the individual
> spirit. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

It became clear that this sense of community was a way of thinking, a way of

behaving and living that has had meaning for Sandy throughout her life. It made sense,

then, that Sandy would want to transfer this feeling of belonging and contributing to her

classroom. Sandy seemed to see her childhood in a small community as vital to developing

the values and attitudes that were most important to her.

A sub-theme of Sandy's image of a community was her belief in the "joy of work".

Sandy was raised on a dairy farm where there were lots of models for work. "We all

worked hard on that dairy farm. I absolutely loved it" (S. I. Mar 20/90). This hard work

was mixed with play and brought with it a sense of accomplishment. Sandy talked about

some of her most pleasant memories of her mother being the times when they were

working together.

> One of the favourite things to do with my mother when she
> was alive was to work with her. Work and the talk would
> flow. I love to work with people, the joy of working
> together with people I really like. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

Work seemed to be associated with many pleasant memories for Sandy and she

hoped that children could also learn to associate work with pleasant memories of

accomplishment and of trying to do their best.

Sandy talked about how working together could teach cooperation, collaboration

and compromise—things that she believed were important in life.

To Sandy, it was right and important to learn how to work and to appreciate it for

the benefits and memories it could offer. Because it was so important to life and because it

was a good way to live, Sandy wanted to share it with her class. Working did not come across as a chore, but as a fulfillment which was reflected in her personal life.

The second sub-theme was Sandy's role as a facilitator. Through our journals and discussions, Sandy frequently made references as to how she viewed teaching and her role within the classroom community. On the first day of school, when the children were invited into their new classroom community, Sandy started to establish her role.

> I try to be one member of the community and to accept the decisions that the community decides. It works for me to let them make most of the decisions. I am a facilitator with the big picture—the community plans the 'roads'—independence—choice—responsibility. (S. J. Feb.20/90)

Contrary to many previous experiences the children may have had, Sandy let the children know that she viewed her role as a teacher somewhat differently—as a facilitator.

> I am viewing a teacher as a facilitator/leader—(one who) organizes—supports—questions—encourages—teaches strategies—provides links for the learner. I do teach but as a member of the community of learners which also teaches. So I am also very aware of many people who are my teachers. (S. J. Feb.1/90)

> Teachers as learners and learners as teachers—a theme we consciously work at and a basic belief! (S. J. Jan.18/90)

Generally, in most teaching situations, "[k]ids take the idea of a facilitator-teacher... further—so involve them and they involve themselves readily" (S. J. Mar.1/90). But in other situations, such as feedback situations, the students had different expectations.

> I believe they (the students) view us as teachers and ask for feedback. I think I'd cheat them if I avoided feedback. There is always [something] positive [to say] so I do not view feedback as negative—total acceptance—OK—fine—good—etc. means one isn't really responding." (S. J. Feb.8/90)

Aside from the difficulties in providing feedback from the perspective of a facilitator, this role imposed challenges when it came to structuring and planning a lesson. Sandy often considered the effectiveness of teaching through the role of a facilitator.

> We can plan the experiences but we can't plan the learning.
> (S. J. Jan.18/90)

> I think the teacher can stage—set up an experience—then check to see if they learned/understood. If no—then try a new angle. Do people soak in learning experiences rather than the teacher pouring it down? (S. J. Jan.18/90)

> Flexibility is important but teachers must have priorities because they impact decisions. (S. J. Jan.23/90)

The role of a teacher implied many responsibilities and often did not seem to fit well with that of a facilitator. Sandy struggled with some of the apparent contradictions. "Am I so anxious to teach that I take away their time to learn?" (S. J. Mar 8/90)   But the bottom line still came down to "what's best for the kids".

> They work—if I do—trust. . . give them time, perhaps they'll gain more skills and emerge not unlike a butterfly??? They will teach each other—they'll encourage, compare, feel peer pressure, and I wonder if the 'community' can be effective. So I'll hesitate to take complete control. (S. J. Mar.8/90)

Sandy was working to understand why her view of the teacher as a facilitator was so important to her, yet this view was deeply held. She told me, "I think I am more powerful leading from behind—'within' than from 'above'. Through encouraging, teaching, linking, interacting" (S. J. Apr.23/90).

Sandy confided in me some of her most personal and basic beliefs about her role in the classroom.

And if I'm not here tomorrow, and this is the bottom line,
where will they be? They would fly without me. And I
suppose that part of my life is to teach so that—I don't know
if I'll always be there. So I'm never going to teach them that
I'm indispensable, you know, that I am that important. . . .
The community is that important. And I believe that because
they let me into their community, I know I have far more
power. They trust me a lot because I'm equal .... And much
better they give it (trust and power) to you. They tell me
what they need. How do I know what they need all the time?
And if I don't ask them constantly, and also if I'm not a
member of them, how do I account for all the mistakes I
make every day? And I make a pile of them and they're
much more forgiving of me for my mistakes because I'm not
the teacher here. Not the teacher in the sense of being the
ultimate dictator, whatever. And it also assumes they know
something; it's much more respectful. (S. I. Mar.20/90)

Sandy's image of the classroom as a community found its roots in her childhood as

part of a small community and was reinforced by her experiences as a student and a

teacher. Through building a classroom community, Sandy felt able to look after the best

interests of her students and to ensure that they were successful and fulfilled. Her

exploration of this image caused her to consider her attitude towards work and her role as a

facilitator.

Angie's and Sandy's Images Intersect—
Socially Constructed Knowledge

In the previous section, the images that Angie and Sandy held separately were examined. A study of the images contained within the personal practical knowledge of Angie and Sandy as separate people would likely have sought only to examine this exclusive kind of knowledge. However, as this study has already suggested, Sandy's and Angie's personal practical knowledge overlapped one another's significantly by virtue of their teaming and the collaborative conditions of this study. It became essential to explore socially constructed knowledge defined herein as knowledge that developed in a social context, was shared with others and enhanced our personal practical knowledge. As well, it was necessary to consider socially dependent knowledge, knowledge which depended upon the social context for its viability and availability.

Accordingly, this study seems to have generated evidence of how the collaborative, narrative approach can be used as a professional development experience. Evidence of how some of the knowledge generated by collaborative planning, teaching and reflecting may be understood as socially constructed knowledge later internalized as personal practical knowledge while some part of the knowledge generated may be understood as socially dependent knowledge, not internalized during the time frame of the study also existed. Examples of socially constructed knowledge which enhanced our personal practical knowledge, and, examples of socially dependent knowledge in the process of becoming personal practical knowledge, are thus explored in the final sections of this chapter.

Angie and Sandy held images of the classroom as a family and as a community before they met and began working together. These were examples of their personal practical knowledge. As a teaching team, interaction and reflection facilitated the development of two further images—collaboration and connectedness—which were examples of their socially constructed knowledge. It would appear that both Angie and

Sandy brought these images, in some form, with them into their teaming situation. However, it also appeared that these images were changed and evolved through the development of socially constructed knowledge. The overlapping images of collaboration and connectedness encouraged Angie and Sandy to enter their teaming situation and were further developed and extended as they worked together as a team and within the study and will be discussed in this section.

Collaboration

Angie and Sandy had taught in the same school for nine years, but while Angie taught Grade 6 and Sandy taught Grade 2, their opportunities for working together were limited. Anticipating the promise of collaborative work, they received permission to form a teaching team at the grade four level. At the inception of this study, they had succeeded in building a strong family or community within their combined classrooms.

We discussed their decision to work together as a team. Sandy and Angie felt that prospective team members should consider personal characteristics as well as basic beliefs of teaching before agreeing to collaborative work.

> It is important that team partners both feel the same level of
> commitment and also have similar energy levels. It would be
> ... frustrating to work with someone [with whom] you
> weren't well matched. (A. J. Apr.5/90)

While Angie and Sandy agreed that teachers who did not know one another well could work as a team, they also agreed that a prior friendship or relationship could help to ensure team cohesiveness and effectiveness.

> [The building of] trust, risk-taking [and] acceptance of
> individual differences takes time with adults as [well as] with
> children. Angie and I have met and worked together . . . for

several years [and our] mutual respect and trust . . . has
grown and developed. (S. J. Feb.8/90)

Sandy and Angie identified the conditions and benefits of successful teaming;

sharing, questioning and mutual reflection through discussion were emphasized. In

Sandy's view, "Talking is so important in teaming" (S. J. Jan.23/90). Angie commented,

"We do a lot of talking and are constantly making changes and adjustments as we go along.

This happens before, during and after class" (A. J. Jan.18/90). She continued, "I feel that

the people we work with can have a powerful influence over us" (A. J. Jan.18/90) while

Sandy said, "More people, more ideas, talking and planning often stimulate me to think and

remember" (S. J. Jan.18/90). We explored this idea of thinking and learning together and

looked at how a strong, supportive relationship could encourage the development of

socially constructed knowledge.

Sandy noted:

> I think teaming encourages growth. I feel good—basic
> beliefs [held in] common [are identified]. Then sharing
> comes because of trust. Good ideas can come from many
> places—people, books, workshops. (S. J. Mar.1/90)

Angie observed:

> A perfect example of this is the addition of Community of
> Readers to my repertoire. My team partner last year was the
> expert—it took all kinds of fears out of trying it on my own.
> She was confident, knew some of the pitfalls ahead of time
> and we just flew with it. By the end of the year, we had an
> article published in LIRA and this year I've helped with a
> workshop. Now I hopefully can help Sandy and the ball
> keeps right on rolling. I think that a strong relationship
> between team members is vital. If this is done, teams will
> still try new ideas and strategies because they have the
> support of one another. (A. J. Mar.1/90)

They also identified personal benefits to teaming and talked about how it felt to be in a working teaming relationship.

> I'm having such a wonderful year with Angie—I've always loved teaching but to work and talk constantly with Angie who does too is truly wonderful. (S. J. Jan.30/90)

> Teaming is such a wonderful way to work. We talk and share feelings about our beliefs and how to make them part of our lessons. What a change from being stuck in a closed classroom in the back of the school. (A. J. Jan.18/90)

I observed collaboration as an important aspect of their teaching process. When the curtain between the two classes was open, Angie and Sandy would sit together on a table at the front of the room and the lesson would flow from one to the other as if in a well-rehearsed play. As each teacher worked on a rapport with the children, they worked on their own connections as well. The children felt included in this connection and learned to mirror it in their own relationships; thus, teaming could be seen to provide a benefit within the atmosphere of the classroom community. "Important that the kids see us as a team and we love it; adds to comfort, consistency, learning" (S. J. Jan 18/90).

On another occasion, Angie wrote in her journal,

> I think that teaming is like parenting. You have to trust each other's decisions when you haven't had a chance to talk ahead of time, and support them whole-heartedly. This is very easy to do when you have common basic beliefs. (A. J. Feb.1/90)

Collaboration within the community of learners in the classroom also seemed important to Sandy and Angie. Perhaps because they were so aware of the benefits the

strong team had for them professionally and personally, they were anxious to encourage the growth of collaboration among the students.

Angie wrote:

> You can feed on each other. I think that you pick up ideas from one another. And again, you learn to cooperate and to collaborate and to compromise and there's a little bit of that in life. So I think all of that is very good. And I think that for the children its maybe a more realistic setting as well that they're exposed to a few more people. The community's a little bit larger.... I think there are benefits to that choice in people and the possibilities for different groupings. I think the collaboration makes us all grow a little bit more. (A. J. Feb.1/90)

Angie and Sandy extended the idea of collaboration beyond their team to other members of the staff and outside networks. For one social studies related art lesson, Sandy and Angie invited another teacher on staff to talk to the children about painting landscapes. Angie wrote in the journal,

> I feel ... that it is wise to use the expertise one has on a staff. Helping one another with ideas . . . benefits the kids and that's what we're here for. Too often teachers are jealous or overprotective [of their knowledge] and too unsure of themselves to share. That's a shame! (A. J. Jan.23/90)

In her journal, Sandy reminded us of how difficult it can be to build these relationships when she wrote, "I often feel a lack of time to interact—build relationships with all staff as working mothers are tied to home" (S. J. Mar.11/90).

It seemed that Angie and Sandy sometimes felt a need to have their ideas validated by an outside person. Angie commented that "We, or at least I, seem to need an 'expert' to back me up. Maybe we need to believe [more] in ourselves and our 'professional' judgment" (A. J. Jan.23/90). Sandy also expressed this need to connect with other teachers to validate her knowledge.

Collaboration was an image which was held jointly by Angie and Sandy and as such offered a connection between the images that they held separately. However, the separate images were of such importance, that, had they been in danger of being compromised, collaboration would not have been possible. Sandy summarizes this well:

> As long as my bottom, basic beliefs aren't compromised,
> I've come to believe that I really don't care if something's
> red, green or .... There are a whole bunch of things that
> aren't very important to me ... that I could move on. So in a
> teaming situation, like the one I'm in now, I don't feel that
> I've ever compromised any of my basic beliefs with kids.
> (S. I. Mar.20/90)

It is important to note that while Angie's and Sandy's use of the word collaboration might appear to be used as a possible "catch word", evidence would seem to indicate a stronger attachment to the knowledge. As they told their stories, collaboration in various forms was seen to play major roles in the operation of their classrooms. Sandy and Angie operated upon beliefs of collaboration but found it difficult to articulate these practices and beliefs. It would appear that using a word such as collaboration seemed to affirm what they already understood, as approval of an outside expert, and so the word came to be defined, for them, in terms of their personal knowledge.

Connectedness

Another image which appeared to grow as a result of the development of socially constructed knowledge was the image of connectedness. Angie held an image of the classroom as a family, where all the children learned to live together, to sort out differences and to respect one another. Sandy held an image of the classroom as a community where each member had a specific role to fulfill and a contribution to make to the whole. Both of these images suggested connections within the members of the family or the community as

well as connections beyond the walls of the school. Through the discussions and reflections held between Angie and Sandy as a team and among the three of us during the study, the image of connectedness was further developed. This new socially constructed knowledge was then internalized and became a part of Sandy's and Angie's personal practical knowledge.

Sandy and Angie used the word "connectedness" when they were discussing the links that they consciously forged between their classrooms and the home and community. They felt that learning as a lifelong activity could occur not only outside the classroom walls while children were in school but also well beyond those walls after children had left school. As Angie phrased it, "We don't just 'do it to them' in the classroom between 9:00 and 3:30" (A. J. Apr.22/90). As with the word collaboration, the use of the 'catch word' seemed to represent a belief that was deeply and sincerely held. Evidence from the study, to be discussed in this section, showed that these links connected the learning of the members of the classroom community with the "real world" as well as with the parents and the home.

Links began with the activities that occurred within a school; when the learning that a child experienced in one class was consistent and linked with the learning in another class, Angie and Sandy felt that the learning was reinforced and enhanced. School-wide activities also needed to be linked with what the children were learning as part of their everyday program.

The link that most seemed to occupy Angie's and Sandy's concern was the link between the school and the home. "Connecting home and school makes the connection complete for the child" (S. J. Apr.26/90). Many comments showed the importance of this link.

> Build links with home and we are supported in tangible
> ways, too. (S. J. Mar.20/90)

> Link student learning with parents and who knows what
> might happen? (S. L. Mar .5/90)

> When parents are aware of what their kids are 'up to' at
> school they are often thrilled to add to the experiences and to
> make us aware of happenings, too. (A. J. Mar .6/90)

> Parents need to be connected, aware, involved, welcome,
> supportive, to share leadership talents and link. Parents—
> important in my concept of the classroom scene. (S. J.
> Mar.11/90)

Not only did parents help to extend learning when involved in their child's school,

they became more supportive of what was happening.

> When the parents enter the child's work domain ... we share
> the role of teaching these students so it is important we have
> many interactions to get to know each other and what we're
> about. We can then better know how we can be supporting.
> (S. J. Apr.22/90)

One way in which Angie and Sandy fostered this link between the classroom and

the home was through homework. They wrote:

> Homework [can serve as] a connection to home life to
> involve the parents in a discussion with [their] children.
> Several children came to school and said that plastic was
> from fossil fuels—they were pleased their parents knew the
> answers. (A. J. Feb.20/90)

> Homework—I think it is work that links home and school
> and fits a community's goals. It must be independent work
> for the student that the student is able to be successful with at
> home; therefore, the kids must have understanding of
> expectations, materials, etc. . . . . Class assignment is
> important—relating to theme or study has kids
> linking/talking their work at home and who knows what
> follow-up parents may take on. Kids should have adequate
> time as they have agendas too. Celebrate a success at
> handling the job. (S. J. Mar.1/90)

Another link with the home was through parent volunteers. I saw parents playing a number of different roles both inside the classroom and alongside it. Angie commented that, "Parents enjoy being involved and contributing to the program. They enable us to offer some special projects. We . . . become partners in the child's education" (A. J. Mar.6/90). Sandy stressed that parents were "important to kids learning" (S. J. Mar.6/90). The comment was made that parents often extended a school topic for months, even years after it had been finished in the classroom—an example of life-long learning. Sandy summed it up by writing that parents...

> ... extend, reaffirm learning, link, make sense, value...
> school. Icing on the cake and I think the icing is part of the
> cake. Child sees we are all learners/ all teachers. (S. J.
> Mar.11/90)

One of the successful strategies used for several years by Angie and shared by Sandy to forge this link was through celebrations.

> It's through celebrations and talking with the parents that we
> all begin to appreciate one another more. We also see how
> much the children have learned and grown when they are
> busy celebrating with their parents. (A. J. Apr.22/90)

> I believe the [Social Studies] celebration was important
> because it linked the students, parents and teachers in a
> joyful time of students sharing and talking about their
> experiences, projects, reports. The students were able to talk
> about their work in a meaningful context—their school! The
> parents know where... we've been and can be involved in a
> concluding activity which might well be the introductory
> activity of more linkages to come. (S. J. Apr.22/90)

Celebrations required careful planning and the students were involved at all levels; the community of learners discussed the social studies celebration and came up with

guidelines. The students were the major decision makers during the planning stage and the major players during the event itself.

Sandy and Angie believed that celebrations didn't need to be major 'productions'; their importance lay in showing parents what the children did at school and were effective when kept simple and realistic. Parents were viewed as members of a team and "inviting parents in to celebrate <u>classroom</u> work is an excellent way to gain their support and make them feel a part of the team" (A. J. Jan.23/90).

The evidence indicated that collaboration and connectedness were well established as part of Angie's and Sandy's exclusive aspects of personal practical knowledge before they became involved as a team. Through working together as a team, Sandy and Angie explored and refined these images. Our reflection on the beliefs during the study helped to affirm and to further strengthen them. Perhaps most importantly, it became possible for Sandy and Angie to articulate and thus more fully understand these images as a result of our social interaction. Socially constructed knowledge was being developed and added to our aspects of personal practical knowledge.

Sandy commented:

> The importance and strength of collaborative work has
> firmly become established this year.... I feel and believe that
> a trusting relationship is crucial to the best work of teachers
> being exemplified. It would be essential for me to trust and
> feel respected in a teaming situation in order that I free
> myself to teach and learn. (S.R. Jun./90)

Angie wrote:

> I've learned and had verification, through the collaborative
> planning of this unit, of the great value of the linkages of
> learning between the home and the classroom .... The
> beliefs I <u>thought</u> I had, I now have had verification of. (A.R.
> Jun.12/90)

Collaboration and connectedness were personally held images that helped Angie and Sandy identify each other as team partners. Had they taught in isolation, or been involved in the study separately, these images, in a slightly altered form, would have been seen within the exclusive aspects of their personal practical knowledge. However, the nature of their teaming encouraged them mutually to reflect, to explore and to further refine their understandings of these images. Therefore, I suggest that these images, while further developed and shared as a result of social interaction, were held as a result of socially constructed knowledge which then became internalized as part of their personal practical knowledge.

That this knowledge was not dependent upon the social context of the three of us working together and therefore part of their socially dependent knowledge, became evident the year following the study when Sandy moved to a different school. Both Sandy and Angie became involved with new team partners and both worked to establish collaborative relationships and a connectedness of learning experiences for their students. This demonstrated that Angie and Sandy were independently able to reflect these images in practice. The new team situations evolved differently from the year before and also differently from each other. This could be explained by understanding that the process of socially constructing knowledge was continuing to occur in the new situations. Their knowledge, not being static, was continuing to evolve as a result of the new surrounding social interactions.

Examples of Socially Dependent Knowledge

As discussed earlier, one of the mutual benefits of this study was the further development of existing knowledge and the growth of new knowledge through the

processes of reflection, the interactive journal and the development of a metaphor of teaching. The social context of the study allowed for the development of socially constructed knowledge. The previous section discussed some of the socially constructed knowledge which affirmed existing knowledge and became internalized as part of our personal practical knowledge. This section will explore both a process of constructing socially dependent knowledge and some examples of socially dependent knowledge which remained dependent upon the three of us working together and, which, during the course of the study, did not become internalized within any of us as part of our personal practical knowledge. This knowledge which remained outside of our individual selves and depended upon our mutual joint work became part of what I have decided to call socially dependent knowledge for the purpose of this study.

When we were together, we accepted that we would look for ways to continue our growth and to share with others. Angie wrote, "I hope that I can continue to grow and learn in any new situation that I might find myself in next year and in the years to come" (A. L. Jun.12/90). We drew the confidence from one another to actively seek opportunities for improvement of our perceived weaknesses. For example, while Sandy worried about her ability to write, she confided, "I decided to take the Calgary Writers' Project to further help my development. Perhaps my confidence will further develop as well as my skill" (S. L. Jun.15/90).

The keeping of a journal, while not knowledge in itself, was something else which seemed to be socially dependent and, therefore, possibly an example of a process of constructing socially dependent knowledge. We understood the validity of the journal as a reflective process and frequently commented that it had been of major importance to our professional and personal growth throughout the duration of the study. The keeping of a journal was not something which any of us had done before although we had often wished or been encouraged to do so. Yet, during the study, the three of us wrote frequently. After the study period had concluded, we continued to find opportunities to write for several

more months. When the new school year began, however, none of us continued to write. It seemed that the journal depended upon the catalyst of the study and the three of us being together in order to function. Thus, even though we were aware of the significance of journal reflection to professional development, we were unable to maintain a journal independently of the study.

However, the following year, when we were each working independently, our confidence weakened and we were no longer as assured of the knowledge that we had intended to share. For the first few months of the school year, we were putting most of our energies into recreating our basic beliefs within new teaching contexts. It was during this time that our weakening understanding of our new knowledge was demonstrated by a lack of its practice in our classrooms and we made efforts to bring the group back together. Even these efforts were somewhat feeble; it was only through speaking and writing commitments made during the study that we found ourselves enthusiastically and confidently pulled together.

Two examples of socially dependent knowledge which we experienced as part of our mutual working together are: linkages of language to general learning and the creation of a metaphor of teaching.

Linkages of Language Learning

The year following the study, Angie, Sandy and I felt a need to continue to meet and work together. Certain ideas and concepts that had been discussed and were being demonstrated in classroom practice during the study suddenly seemed to need verification and affirmation. For example, during the study we began to explore linkages of language to general learning processes which could be reflected through social studies content. We discussed how children use language to understand how they are learning and then to build upon this knowledge in a life-long process. We began to consider the importance of professional linkages from a perspective of what we had to offer other teachers. While we

had long looked at the value of what others shared with us, we began to consider that we might have significant knowledge to share in the area of language learning. A sense of esteem grew as we began to place value upon our personal practical knowledge and we talked about the empowerment that this growing esteem afforded us. It seemed important not only to share our understandings about language learning with others but also to offer the same opportunities for esteem and empowerment to other teachers. We made plans for sharing opportunities for the following year.

That following year showed some interesting developments. Sandy had been the leader in our discussions on linking language learning and the following year her classroom was the only one that demonstrated any continued emphasis in the area. Angie and I seemed to need the continued link with Sandy in order to have this knowledge confirmed in our classroom practices. Perhaps Sandy was able to internalize more of what we had discussed because language learning more strongly reflected her previous personal practical knowledge. While Sandy continued to struggle to understand on her own, Angie and I, for whom the concepts were newer and more unfamiliar, depended upon Sandy's understandings. As a result, our plans for sharing in this area never materialized and our self-esteem eroded.

The Metaphor of Teaching

Another example of socially dependent knowledge was the understandings of teaching we were coming to have through the shared metaphor of teaching as a process of becoming a butterfly. While working together, this metaphor was exciting and offered opportunities for us to further explore our beliefs of teaching. When apart, however, the metaphor seemed unclear, unimportant and difficult to articulate to others. In fact, during the study, it was one aspect which seemed to be of most interest but, after the conclusion of the study, it seemed to most quickly lose its importance.

As with the linkages of language learning, one of us seemed pulled more strongly to the metaphor of teaching as a developing butterfly. While I was not the instigator of the metaphor, I was the one who felt the need to keep developing the metaphor. Perhaps this was because it seemed to form a unifying whole for our study and seemed to reflect not only our beliefs of teaching but also the process of professional development which we had experienced throughout the study. I was, therefore, the one who had to develop the understandings to the point where I could write about them and explain them to others. Angie and Sandy referred to the metaphor frequently in our follow-up discussions and enjoyed reading my interpretations of it, yet admitted that they were not consciously trying to develop the metaphor further on their own. It would be interesting to explore whether the metaphor would have become internalized for Angie and Sandy as well if the study had had a longer duration or if, perhaps, I had given the metaphor an inflated importance because of the connection I saw to our study.

It would seem that these understandings regarding language learning and the metaphor of teaching were socially dependent and were, therefore, examples of socially dependent knowledge. Sandy partially internalized understandings of language learning and I partially internalized understandings of the metaphor of teaching yet both of us continued to struggle when alone. A comfort level in discussion and understanding only appeared when the three of us were together.

It would be difficult to determine what would have happened to these examples of socially dependent knowledge if we had not been able to re-form the team. Would the understandings have disappeared for each of us? However, we did reform and, as we began to work together again, our understandings became stronger still as the process of socially dependent knowledge becoming personal practical knowledge continued.

Summary

This chapter has explored three different kinds of knowledge which became apparent during the course of the study—personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. An uncovering of the personal practical knowledge of Angie and Sandy was the original intention of the study. These images came to be identified as the classroom as a family image for Angie and a classroom as a community image for Sandy.

A complication of this exploration occurred simply because Sandy and Angie were teaching together as a collaborative team. The images which each of them held separately came to be discussed, examined and reflected upon within the course of their working together. Beyond that mutual reflection, further reflection occurred when they began to reflect with me throughout the course of the study. As a result, the knowledge that each of us held separately at the time the study began, was further developed and enhanced. This process was the development of socially constructed knowledge which affirmed existing knowledge and consequently became internalized as part of our personal practical knowledge. The images of collaboration and connectedness were examples of images developed within a social context as a result of team teaching and involvement in the study.

In addition to the affirmation and development of existing knowledge, new knowledge was also socially constructed which became examples of socially dependent knowledge. When we were operating within the context of the study, the knowledge relating to areas such as language learning, the metaphor of teaching and the interactive journals was comfortable and familiar. However, when we were working in isolation from one another during the year following the study, this knowledge became tentative and difficult to articulate. It no longer was reflected in our daily practices and, thus, appeared not to have been internalized as part of our personal practical knowledge. When we made efforts to reunite our group to discuss and reflect upon this socially dependent knowledge,

some of it gradually began to feel more comfortable. It appeared that time and continued discussion were factors in allowing us to internalize our new knowledge and have it take its place among our existing personal practical knowledge.

In conclusion, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge are both constructed within a social context and deal with aspects of our personal practical knowledge. Beyond these similarities, many differences between the two kinds of knowledge appear to exist which can be explored using Berger and Luckmann's language (1966). Socially constructed knowledge appears to be socially dependent only for its construction as it is easily integrated into existing personal practical knowledge. This may be so because it affirms existing personal practical knowledge and is common to the special knowledge of the teaching sub-world. The teaching sub-world supports its existence and the transfer from one member of this sub-world to another strengthens the knowledge. Language seems to be available to allow easy transmission and legitimization within the sub-world has been accomplished.

On the other hand, socially dependent knowledge is socially dependent not only for its construction but for its viability and availability. Internalization requires a greater length of time within the social context perhaps because the knowledge is new, unfamiliar and problematic as it is not yet common knowledge. The sub-world does not support its existence yet so the only support comes from the social context within which it developed. Within this social context, its truths are self-evident and transparent and yet the mechanisms for transmission to others are not yet available and transmission becomes problematic. New language is required and a process of legitimization is necessary.

While the existence of socially dependent knowledge is hypothetical, it has helped to explain why some new knowledge in this study was comfortable and was immediately added to our personal practical knowledge while other knowledge was exciting and motivating yet seemed to remain out of reach.

Chapter Six will turn again to a discussion the uncovering of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience and will explore the promises, implications and considerations inherent in and associated with professional development within a collaborative narrative study.

CHAPTER SIX: PERSONAL PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Introduction

Chapter Five discussed three kinds of knowledge that became apparent during the study—personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. Examples of each of these kinds were described.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the processes of uncovering personal practical knowledge within the context of a collaborative narrative study led to the development of socially constructed knowledge and to socially dependent knowledge. These processes and the resulting knowledge and images became a professional development experience for both the teachers and the researcher. Upon retrospection, it became apparent that the promises inherent in a collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge are of such a nature that they imply professional development. Within this study, professional development is narrowly defined as an inner personal journey, a learning experience, closely related to and affecting professional theory and practice. Externally motivated, planned and directed group experiences are not connected to the working definition of professional development for the purposes of this study. This chapter will explore these promises, the implications thereof and some associated considerations in the conduct of collaborative narrative research.

Promises of Collaborative Narrative Inquiry into Personal Practical Knowledge

As the orientation of the study shifted towards the recognition that uncovering personal practical knowledge could be a way to generate professional development, it became apparent that there were some promises of professional development inherent in the nature of a collaborative narrative inquiry. These promises were made by the literature on collaborative narrative research and personal practical knowledge and by myself, the researcher, during the negotiation of entry phase.

The first was the promise of collaboration, a promise to work together. The second was the promise of growth—both professional growth and personal growth. The third was the promise of respect for the teachers and their knowledge which could lead to a sense of empowerment and fulfillment for teachers. These three promises of collaboration, growth and respect combined to provide extensive opportunities for professional development for both the teachers and the researcher. With the understanding of the existence of these promises and their inter-relationships, came a further understanding of why the focus of the study shifted, as it did, towards the uncovering of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience.

The Promise of Collaboration

Research on teacher thinking can be roughly divided into two categories—research from a researcher's perspective and research from the practitioner's perspective. However, some research which claims to be from the practitioner's perspective still uses methodology which focuses on the researcher's perspective (Clandinin, 1986). Collaborative narrative research adopts a perspective which highlights the values and purposes of both the researcher and the participant through a promise of working together. Clandinin and Connelly state, "Narrative method involves participant observation and shared work in a

practical setting. The process is one of joint living out of two persons' narratives, researcher and practitioner, so that both participants are continuing to tell their own stories but the stories are now being lived out in a collaborative setting" (1989, p.8).

Negotiation of entry is considered to be an important first step in setting up a collaborative narrative inquiry. However, even if negotiation is successful, the results of the study may not be fruitful. Collaborative research requires a close relationship akin to friendship. Noddings (1986) stresses the collaborative nature of the research process as one in which all participants view themselves as members of a research community which has value for all. Hogan (1988) writes that this type of relationship is empowering but that time is required for the participants to recognize the inherent value that the relationship holds. "Empowering relationships involve feelings of 'connectedness' that are developed in situations of equality, caring and mutual purpose and intention" (p. 12).

As has been discussed in Chapter Five, Sandy and Angie were working in a close collaborative team when the study began. They were well aware of the benefits of collaborative work and saw the opportunity for the extension of the team with my involvement. I had known Angie for several years and a sense of common beliefs and teaching practices led me to approach her with the study proposal. We began with an attitude of respect for one another and a desire to better come to know one another. It soon became apparent that many of the qualities that had attracted me to Angie had also attracted Sandy. Thus the three of us began with a common understanding of the value of certain teaching processes.

We found other aspects, both professional and personal, that seemed to draw us closely together. Our similar views of teaching and our love for children and learning were professional bonds. Our similar life situations as mothers and wives of similar ages were personal bonds which provided common ground from which to build experiences and understandings.

One of the topics of constant reflection was the teaming relationship and its many benefits. Throughout the study, I became a part of the team and not only contributed to the effectiveness of the team but benefitted from it. Sandy wrote about the affirmation of this belief:

> The importance and strength of collaborative work has firmly become established this year. I had thought, valued, believed this but now I _feel_ this at a deeper level as a result of this past year. I also feel and believe that a trusting relationship is crucial to the best work of teachers being exemplified. It would be essential for me to trust and feel respected in a teaming situation in order that I free myself to teach and learn. (S. L. Jun./90)

We entered the study as equal partners who shared mutual purposes of exploration of teaching beliefs and practices. While we played different roles in the study as teachers/researchers and graduate student/researcher, we became equally involved in the processes of uncovering our personal practical knowledge, developing socially constructed knowledge and building socially dependent knowledge. As a result, each of us became involved in a professional development experience and benefitted. During this study, our collaborative relationship deepened into friendship. Our concern and caring for one another grew stronger over time and in turn strengthened the nature and results of the study as well as our friendship.

The Promise of Growth

The potentials of both the uncovering of personal practical knowledge and the collaborative, narrative research approach provide promises for growth—professionally and personally. These promises might be one of the lures which draw teachers into such forms of research. Here the teachers are allowed to become involved in, to have a say in the form and direction of, and to receive mutual benefit from the research. Here the teachers can readily see and link the theory of the research and the practice of their classrooms. The

link is further reinforced when the teachers can consciously use the theory to strengthen their practice and the practice to strengthen the theory (McKeon, 1952). It might be argued that this is, indeed, what collaborative, narrative research is about—mutual benefit and growth for all parties involved—and forms part of the basic contract for such research.

Certainly, the promises of professional (practical) and personal growth were two of the lures that pulled Angie and Sandy into the study. This became a theme of much of our reflection and by the end of the study, we were conscious of growth in these areas.

I. Professional Growth

One promise was the possibility or potential for professional growth (or growth in practice). I will address the professional growth under the two headings of curriculum planning and growth in teaching practices.

a) Growth in Curriculum Planning

"Topic 4A - Alberta: Land and People" was part of the 1981 Program of Studies and appeared in revised form in the 1988 Program. Generally, it was a study of the geographic regions and natural resources of Alberta. The study of Alberta's people in this topic referred mainly to the use and abuse of resources by the people of Alberta. Issues of environmental concern, endangered species, pollution and conservation were considered.

As a result of their participation in the study, I believe that Angie and Sandy were more conscious of their guiding images of teaching and struggled to incorporate them into the teaching unit. Sandy discussed this in her after-study reflections.

> When Angie and I considered the implementation of the 4A
> social studies unit ... I was aware that the curriculum would
> emerge from the interaction of the children, the teachers and
> the resources coupled with our teaching practices. The
> collaborative narrative research with Dawne stimulated and
> extended our thinking, talking, and reflecting throughout the
> unit. . . . I feel I am becoming a teacher. Our ideas, teaching

and feelings were heightened because of the collaboration.
(S. R. Jun./90)

Angie suggested that much more time was spent planning and developing this unit because

of the study.

> I feel we were stretched to do our BEST job on this unit. We
> had, I guess, some pride on the line. But, we loved how the
> unit grew from the students and ourselves into a real
> "experience". (A. L. Jun.12/90)

Many areas were considered during the planning and teaching of the unit—choice,

involvement, co-operative learning experience, encouragement, patience, celebration and

the independent research process. In addition, concerns for integration of other subject

areas arose.

During the teaching of the unit, it was important to continue to plan, listen and

reflect to help ensure that the unit was meeting the needs of the individual children. Sandy

talked about this.

> We continually watched and listened as we taught. . . .
> "Kid-watching" helped us assess our activities and lessons.
> Often we would talk and change our lesson plan mid-stream;
> the students being the "key" in the lessons. We found that
> general strategies and plans in conjunction with a trusting
> teaching team brought out "teaching sense" because we
> could respond and react to the children's needs and work.
> (S. R. Jun./90)

Sandy discussed the links with the home which were consciously forged.

> [W]e linked a homework project [early in the unit] in order
> that the interest and home research might be stimulated
> between home/school., parent/child and parent/teacher. . . .
> As well the parents and students might do some talking and
> linking in many little ways unaware of the impact of their
> stories and experiences. (S. R. Jun./90)

A culmination of the unit was held in an evening for all parents to share and celebrate the accomplishments of the community of learners—students, teachers and parents. Angie talked about how the study helped to affirm and strengthen her purposes for celebrations.

> There has been verification of the great value of home and school linkages and I experienced time and again the joy children exhibit when given the opportunities to share their knowledge and learning. (A. R. Jun./90)

During this unit, Angie and Sandy used some strategies new to them or to their teaching of social studies. New to their teaching of social studies was the use of art as an introduction to the content. Both Sandy and Angie had used art as part of their language arts. They had just completed a Coldecott unit, reading books with award-winning illustrations. This was the first time, however, that art had been used as an introduction, to help the students "feel" the topic, in addition to the more common related art activities used throughout a unit. This focus continued with a conscious planning of activities that provided multi-sensory experiences for the students.

A new teaching strategy was the use of a seminar to model an independent research process. Angie and Sandy wanted the two groups of students to work together with them, sitting at their desks, as they modelled the process. To physically accommodate sixty students in front of one overhead projector, the desks were moved into semi-circles, similar to a lecture theatre. The students were told that university classes were frequently conducted in this way.

The teaching of the unit was followed by the writing of the unit plans formally for submission as part of the requirements for an independent study at the university. In addition, a collection of student work was created and put on display at the social studies Resource Centre. Other opportunities for sharing ideas and thoughts on the teaching of the unit with other teachers were sought. Thus, I feel that Angie and Sandy developed more

confidence in their abilities to plan a successful unit. Curriculum development became a link between practice (knowledge of teaching) and theory (professional reading and study).

The amount of energy and time expended on this unit was significant; teachers could not commit in this way to each unit taught throughout the school year. However, I believe, the process and the accomplishments contributed to the way that Angie and Sandy viewed their teaching.

b) Growth in Teaching

The purpose of the study had not been to improve Sandy's and Angie's teaching practices; however, the processes of reflection, the keeping of the journal and the mutual development of the metaphor of the metamorphosis of the butterfly had allowed us to focus on the strategies used in the classroom and the images which guided this practice. While we did not introduce new teaching strategies into the classroom, we did examine and confirm our beliefs in many strategies currently being used. Angie said, "I feel I've grown in my teaming abilities and my ability to put my ... beliefs into words .... Because of this study, I've become much more reflective about my skills and strategies and why, where and when they are best applied" (A. L. Jun.15/90). Sandy spoke of it in this way: "Our talk, (our) time together and especially the journals have helped me know myself better and further find my voice" (S.L. Jun./90).

Throughout the study, we were pleased to note that our discoveries were often affirmed in the literature we were reading. Caring for the individual, ideas of a thoughtful practitioner and connected teaching were some of our ideas so affirmed.

Noddings (1986) talked about a fidelity to persons that exists within an ethic of caring. She wrote that, "Fidelity is not seen as faithfulness to duty or principle but as a direct response to individuals with whom one is in relation" (p. 497). An ethic of caring holds fidelity of persons and the quality of relations at its heart.

Angie's image of the classroom as a family and Sandy's image of a community seemed guided by their concern for the individuals within. Questions of what would be taught, of the activities to be used, of the time spent were based on what was best for each individual. Sandy often talked about "what's best for the kids" when she was trying to make decisions. Noddings phrased the same consideration in a slightly different way: "We do not ask how we must treat children in order to get them to learn arithmetic but, rather, what effect each instructional move we consider has on the development of good persons" (p. 499). Noddings suggested that the appropriate ethical questions would be, "What effect will this have on the person I teach? What effect will it have on the caring community we are trying to build?"(p. 499)

Angie and Sandy talked about helping children grow to be the best they could be. Noddings explained that education need not be a contest of who is best but rather an act of confirmation and self-actualization. Importantly, an ethic of caring need not cause conflict between individual goals and social goals as aims of education but, rather, may condition the way a teacher thinks about these. One set of goals need not be mutually exclusive of the other. Thus, while Sandy and Angie spent the first few months of the school year building the sense of community, the atmosphere of trust and respect that allowed each member to function well, the curricular requirements did not need to be sacrificed. Rather, the curriculum was attended to with the individual and community needs in mind. With one set of needs met, the curricular needs fell into place more easily.

In the section on fidelity in teacher education, Noddings states that if caring is central to teaching, we must, then, produce caring teachers. What she says here related directly, however, to the way that Angie and Sandy functioned in the class community—Angie and Sandy wished to produce caring members of a community. One of the most effective ways of reaching this goal, according to Noddings, is through modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. These tools were the foundation upon which Sandy and Angie built their classroom community and family. By acting as models of caring,

many other desirable qualities were also modelled such as "meticulous preparation, lively presentation, critical thinking, appreciative listening, constructive evaluation, genuine curiosity" (Noddings, p. 503).

Another article that touched us was Nancie Atwell's, "The Thoughtful Practitioner" (1989), as discussed in Chapter Four. Our reading of this article confirmed much of what Sandy and Angie believed and were already practicing.

Teacher-researchers demonstrate thoughtfulness in four ways. The first is through continually examining and analyzing their teaching. Angie and Sandy had been doing this, especially since they began working as a team. Their patterns of reflection—examination and analysis—were well established when I arrived.

The second way to demonstrate thoughtfulness, according to Atwell, is to demonstrate to students that teachers still learn and to show how this learning is done. Atwell talked about the importance of the teacher demonstrating that learning is a life-long, social activity. Sandy and Angie continually demonstrated to their students that they were learning. They would describe the reading and discussion they had done to prepare for a class. They would ask the students to help them solve problems so that the process of thinking would be clear and obvious to the students. My presence in the classroom was explained as an opportunity for the two of them to pursue new knowledge and growth.

Concern with colleagues, both within the school and beyond, is the third demonstration of thoughtfulness given in the Atwell article. Often we talked about connections within the staff and with other teachers. For example, another teacher became interested in our study and began exchanging articles with us. As well, Angie and Sandy maintained a strong network of teachers and consultants with whom they were in frequent contact. Collaboration beyond their team was a vital source of new ideas. As I came to know Angie and Sandy better, I began to learn of the many times they had shared with colleagues at conventions and workshops. Our study further reinforced the importance of sharing good ideas for the benefit of others.

An unexpected effect of our study upon Sandy and Angie was scholarship, the fourth way of demonstrating thoughtfulness. We had often commented that we frequently referred to ourselves as 'just teachers' and wondered why. The gap between theory and practice loomed large; it was felt that teachers only practiced scholarship when they were involved in graduate work. However, we realized that our study was an example of scholarship; that what we learned as a result of our examinations was linked with theory and definitely affected Angie's and Sandy's practice. Because we produced the research, we were the first ones to make use of it. This process might well have allowed us to become more comfortable in examining the research of others.

Women's Ways of Knowing by Belenky, Clinchey, Goldberger, & Tarule (1986) was another reading that provided a unique sense of affirmation. The chapter on connected teaching sounded much like what we had often discussed. Angie and Sandy used the word connectedness which, in fact, became identified as part of their socially constructed knowledge. A connected teacher allows the process of thinking to be obvious to the students. A connected teacher allows students to express their feelings of latent knowledge and then uses that knowledge to build further knowledge. Sandy and Angie were always conscious that their students had much previous knowledge and experience and frequently allowed their students to act as teachers. It was important for them to uncover this knowledge so that lessons could be planned accordingly. Sandy talked about how they knew they needed a skeleton of a unit but that if they "canned and laminated a set of lessons", they could not be as responsive to what the children knew and brought with them.

In other situations, I watched as, often, Angie and Sandy would accept a student's first thought without criticism as they provided other experiences and thoughts. In this way, the student's thought would be protected as it was tentatively offered and then encouraged to change and grow. Each lesson was approached collaboratively with the students. An idea was presented and the class was invited to help plan and carry out the

lesson.

Belenky et al.'s concept of a connected class was described as providing a culture for growth. The members of the community nurtured one another's thoughts in a safe, trusting atmosphere much as a mother can nurture her child's growth. In such a class, the students are members of a community where each has a particular style of thinking rather than of a hierarchy where each occupies a role or position. The connected class constructs truth through the sharing and stretching of ideas, through concensus rather than conflict.

Noddings (1986) defines a connected teacher as one who trusts.

> To trust means not just to tolerate a variety of viewpoints,
> acting as an impartial referee, assuring equal air time to all. It
> means to try to *connect*, to enter into each student's
> perspective. (p.227)

Belenky et al. argue that women learn in different ways from men and that women teachers teach in a different manner from men teachers. Much of what Angie, Sandy and I had come to understand about their teaching in the classroom can be summed up in the following statement:

> ... educators can help women develop their own authentic
> voices if they emphasize connection over separation,
> understanding and acceptance over assessment, and
> collaboration over debate; if they accord respect to and allow
> time for the knowledge that emerges from firsthand
> experience; if instead of imposing their own expectations and
> arbitrary requirements, they encourage students to evolve
> their own patterns of work based on the problem they are
> pursuing. (p. 229)

While discovering understandings about oneself privately can be rewarding, coming to know that these understandings are shared by others can be empowering and stimulating. Our literature affirmations became so for us.

II. Personal Growth

As previously described, the second promise to be found in collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge is the promise of growth. The previous section discussed professional growth in the areas of curriculum planning and teaching strategies. Growth also occurred on a more personal level. Angie, Sandy and I had anticipated professional growth; we also knew that any exploration of the guiding images of teaching would promote personal growth. While Sandy and Angie were both aware of the individual unique images that they held, (discussed in Chapter Five), the processes of reflection and discussion on the images increased their understanding and refined their knowledge. But beyond saying that we would be better, more reflective teachers as a result of our work together, we were able to say that we, as people, benefitted. Sandy phrased it as a gift that "is not tangible nor can it be clearly articulated" (S.L. Jun./90). Our study provided verification of Angie's and Sandy's beliefs.

Further understandings grew. In trying to articulate this growth, Sandy and Angie each wrote a short letter included in the appendix at the end of the study. In addition, each of them wrote their response to the planning of the social studies unit and their participation in this study as partial requirements for an independent study at the university. I would like to let their words speak.

Sandy wrote:

> I began this project with an appreciation of teaming and
> collaboration. However, by the time the unit was completed,
> the importance, strength and joy of collaborative work had
> become more firmly established. I feel I am becoming a
> teacher... While working with Dawne and Angie, I was
> encouraged to examine my images... I believe I have
> grown in my teaching practices and my "voice" about
> education. There has been verification for some of my
> beliefs. I have furthered my understanding about myself as a
> teacher, and my students and myself as learners. Angie,
> Dawne and the students are special people who made this
> study something I could never have imagined in the
> beginning. (S. R. Jun.15/90)

Angie wrote:

> I feel I've grown in my teaming practices and in my abilities
> to express my former intuitive beliefs. Through directed
> discussions with Dawne and the many decisions made in the
> collaborative planning of the unit (and the year), I have better
> come to understand myself and my students as learners. I
> have become more reflective about practices and why they
> sometimes work and sometimes fail. . . . Through our
> reading, discussions, responses and experiences together, I
> have developed into a more reflective and understanding
> teacher. My hope is that I will continue to grow and learn in
> any new situation I might find myself next year, and the
> years to follow. (A. R. Jun.15/90)

The next school year, Angie and Sandy were teaching in different schools trying to

create new teaming situations. It is difficult to say, without further study, how much of the

knowledge gained during this study was internalized and carried into the new teaching

situations—personal practical knowledge—and how much remained within the domain of

socially dependent knowledge, available to us only when we were together in a

collaborative working situation.

The Promise of Respect and Empowerment

The third promise inherent in collaborative narrative research involves respecting

the value and worth of the personal knowledge of the teachers and providing a sense of

empowerment and fulfillment. Clandinin (1986), when discussing the role of the teacher in

such research, states that, "teachers are viewed as persons and their actions are seen to have

meaning in their situations. Teachers are accepted as persons creating their own meaning"

(p. 15).

In narrative inquiry, both the researcher and the practitioner have voice. Britzman

(in press, quoted in Connelly and Clandinin, 1989) writes: "Voice is meaning that resides

in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community. . . . The struggle

for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else." The struggle for voice is an accepted part of narrative inquiry and becomes an empowering experience.

Angie and Sandy expressed the importance of being involved in a study which focussed on their teaching practices and beliefs. It was important for them to be able to articulate their beliefs. It became meaningful to them that they had a great deal of personal practical knowledge. They were no longer content to call themselves "just a teacher" or "just a generalist". The importance of both roles became clear as they came to represent many of their basic beliefs about the classroom as a community or a family. They talked at length about calling themselves "just a teacher" in much the same fashion as they tended to call themselves "just a mother" or "just a wife". Through deeper understandings, they came to more fully appreciate the complexity and significance of their various life roles.

Beyond this verification, was the joy we found in working together. Our times together were ones we all looked forward to and the journals helped to further develop this friendship. We cherished the fact that our thoughts and ideas were in writing for us to experience over and over again. In the first entry, I wrote, "Already I feel so comfortable talking with you and being in class with you! You are both so open and full of stories to share that I know we'll get along well!" (J. Jan.18/90) On Apr. 5/90, at the end of the study, I wrote, "I have come to truly value our friendship and the time we have had together. I am constantly looking for ways to ensure that this friendship can continue."

Angie and Sandy responded in kind. "I know that social studies is one of my favourite times of the day and that we all . . . think we are up to some very important stuff!" (S. J. Mar.20/90) "I know you have added a joy to social studies/ Alberta (our topic)/ our teaming that I can not articulate" (S. J. Mar 29/90).

We agreed to work at ways of keeping our relationship alive, both personally and professionally. Again, Sandy's and Angie's words express our emotions best.

I want you to know that you are significant in my teaching
journey, Dawne. I feel this while I can only partly express it.
I hope we continue to work together, Dawne. (S. L.
Jun./90)

Thank you, Dawne, for being part of my "wonderful year".
I can truly say this has been the only year in my ten year
career that I don't want to end! (A. L. Jun.15/90)

And I want you to know, Dawne, I have deep joy and
appreciation in saying I have loved this work with you. The
gift is not even over! I didn't really know that you were the
gift—I had really believed that I could hold or say some new
piece of knowledge—and the gift is your spirit. I'll know it
as we continue to work together. (S. J. Apr. 5/90)

I saw Angie and Sandy develop more confidence and attempt things which were difficult for them. Both decided to continue to link theory with practice and returned to university for further study. They agreed to join me in a presentation at Teachers' Convention. Both found that the idea of sharing was important to development within the profession and were seeking opportunities for this sharing.

We found our friendship supported us not only in our classroom lives but in our professional and personal lives as well. In the classroom, our discussions and reflections strengthened and verified latent knowledge. In our professional lives, we learned to value the personal practical knowledge we held.

Summary

This chapter considers that professional development was an inevitable result of the promises inherent in collaborative narrative research. The promises of collaboration, professional and personal growth, and respect were fulfilled largely because of our commitment to the inquiry and the attendant development of the collaborative narrative

process. That the teachers recognized the potential of the inherent promises before the study began is a credit to their dedication to their chosen profession of teaching. This would indicate that if teachers are encouraged to become collaboratively involved in inquiry, the teaching profession will benefit.

This study has suggested that the uncovering of personal practical knowledge is indeed a viable and successful professional development experience; albeit, it has served to raise more questions which will require further consideration.

Chapter Seven will review some of these questions and some of the responsibilities and considerations which were implied by the promises of collaborative narrative research. Further research possibilities into the use of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience will also be discussed.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CONDUCT OF COLLABORATIVE
NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed how the uncovering of the personal practical knowledge of Angie and Sandy became a professional development experience for the three of us. Through the use of reflection, the keeping of an interactive journal and the development of a metaphor of teaching, we uncovered existing knowledge and created new knowledge. We came to understand three kinds of knowledge which were operating within the context of the study—personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. We became aware that the nature of a collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge implies promises of collaboration, growth and respect.

Promises also imply responsibilities which need to be considered by both the researcher and the participants. This final chapter will discuss the considerations which came to play a major role in assuring the success of the study. Two categories of considerations will be discussed—those that were obvious from the beginning of the study and those that became apparent as the study progressed.

A second section of this chapter will explore the contributions which this study may have made to the fields of personal practical knowledge and professional development. The appearance of socially dependent knowledge, the symbiotic relationships of the various kinds of knowledge, a discussion of the necessity of negotiation of exit and the use of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience will be included in this section.

The final section of the chapter will consider further research possibilities into personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience and efforts to explore the existence and nature of socially dependent knowledge.

Considerations In the Conduct of a Collaborative Narrative Inquiry into Personal Practical Knowledge

Initially, when the design of the study was being discussed and formulated, it became obvious that certain considerations would need to be met if the study was to be successful. These considerations corresponded to responsibilities implied by the promises inherent in a collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge as discussed in the previous chapter. The following section will discuss the initial considerations of equality, friendship, openness and trust.

As the study progressed, additional considerations became important. Issues that we had not considered at the beginning of the study, took shape as the collaborative nature of the study developed. Three of the most important considerations, to be discussed as further considerations, were the use of Angie's and Sandy's real names, the need for distancing during writing and the interruption of growth as the study ended.

Initial Considerations

The study which Angie, Sandy and I pursued was a personal one. It required that we were equals, that we were able to build a friendship, that we offered insights into who we were as teachers and people and that we trusted one another. Because we were able to meet these requirements during the research phase, the study became a meaningful one to each of us. Because we were also able to meet these requirements during the writing phase, the study will, hopefully, become meaningful to others.

As with any learning situation, we had to take risks before we could benefit. My risks were that this study formed the basis of a thesis for a Master's degree towards which I had worked for many years. Angie's and Sandy's risks were that they allowed me into their classrooms where I would be witness not only to their successes but also to their failures. The three of us took risks when we shared our stories—when we talked about our pasts, our hopes and dreams, our personal selves.

As in the classroom, where a good teacher encourages the students to take risks but provides a safety net, we needed to provide a safety net for ourselves in this study. This net consisted of the initial considerations which we sometimes accepted on faith and which, at other times, we took care to ensure. These considerations dealt with the requirements of a collaborative narrative inquiry as we understood it—equality, friendship, openness and trust.

I. Equality

One of the ground rules of the study was that each of us was to benefit personally and professionally from participation. We believed that mutual benefit would occur in a situation where the participants and the researcher had equal status. Thus, from the beginning, while we each played different roles and had special talents to offer, our voices, beliefs, ideas and understandings were of equal significance.

An example of our equality might be illustrated by the direction which our discussions took. As mentioned previously, I came to discussions prepared with topics that we had noted in the journals as being important to discuss further. However, Angie and Sandy often came to our discussions with stories of the day's happenings. It seemed important that these stories be told first. While initially I was concerned that our agenda was not being dealt with and that we were not discussing issues directly related to the study, it became apparent that the stories which Sandy and Angie needed to tell were indeed glimpses of their personal practical knowledge. These glimpses then proceeded to guide the

creation of our socially constructed knowledge and our socially dependent knowledge. Because Angie and Sandy felt able to direct the course of the discussions, they were demonstrating their equality within the study.

Even further, the direction of the discussions significantly affected the direction of the study. By our creating new knowledge, we were allowing the study to move beyond an uncovering of existing personal practical knowledge to a professional development experience. As a researcher, I had given up some control so that we could follow our mutual vision of the study.

This study belonged equally to each of us. Together we became teachers and participants, researchers and scholars. Care and attention were required at the beginning of the study to ensure a sense of equality. Once established, however, this sense of equality maintained itself throughout the study.

II. Friendship

While my official role was as a participant-observer, we all sensed that we could be more than 'business partners' in this venture; we felt an affinity and an excitement in being together. Friendship grew naturally and quickly as we spent time together, discovered mutual grounds of experience, talked, wrote and worked. As our friendship developed, our discoveries about one another moved from the realm of the classroom to our personal lives, families and past histories. Together we celebrated joys and consoled disappointments. Much of what was uncovered during the study might never have been discussed had we not become friends.

Not every collaborative, narrative inquiry is going to lead to the establishment of a deep friendship; ours was a special, unique experience. However, I do believe that a collaborative, narrative inquiry can only be successful if a positive, professional relationship is established. It is vital that the researcher develop more than a passing acquaintanceship with the participants, that an honest attempt at building bridges of

understanding, caring and concern be made. Narrative requires that stories be told and retold together. Collaboration requires that this storying be a mutual process. Neither of these processes can occur unless a solid, respectful atmosphere has been established.

III. Openness

With a sense of equality established and the foundations of a friendship developing, we were able to move into the process of exploration and discovery through our stories. While a researcher could certainly build some sense of teaching beliefs through classroom observation, lesson plans, newsletters and the like, a true exploration involves reflection and deliberation. These processes occur through both talking and writing and require an open telling and acceptance of stories.

This exploration of selves was a tentative one primarily because it was a new experience. Sandy and Angie had talked a great deal during the year they had been teaming together; to talk to an outsider was a different situation. Here we found the journals to be of great help. Often, during our conversations we would express ideas or understandings but time would interrupt us. Thinking through our writing allowed us time to reconsider or to "change our minds". It allowed us to challenge perceptions and to clear up misconceptions. It freed us from thinking "wisely" on our feet by allowing us to make "mistakes" and fixing them privately. We found, too, that it was sometimes easier to write about some things than it was to say them. Writing gave us time to formulate ideas or to remember stories. Writing assured us that all thoughts would be duly noted and spread among us.

Our growing friendship encouraged us to be more open and honest with one another; in turn, this openness assured that our friendship would become more deep. This became possible because of the fourth requirement, trust, which became the ultimate safety net for the risks we were taking.

IV. Trust

Trust was an undercurrent which existed from our first meeting. In one journal entry, I expressed concern that my time in the classroom not be viewed by Angie and Sandy in an evaluative light; I was a collaborative researcher not an evaluator. Angie and Sandy assured me that they understood the purpose of our working together to be to explore images of teaching, to expand our powers of reflection and to positively influence our teaching practices.

I was aware of the trust placed in me and consciously made efforts to confirm that trust. The journals were one effort. Everything that I had written in my field notes and that we had discussed each visit was translated into the journals. In this way, everything was open and made available for Sandy and Angie to comment on, to disagree with, to revise and to add to.

Images were developed, built and understood collaboratively. Sometimes I would comment in a journal entry that something seemed to indicate an image of teaching; at other times this comment would come from Sandy or Angie. I was concerned that if I created a tentative interpretation and presented it in writing, Angie and Sandy might comment but would be more inclined to accept what I had written. I didn't feel comfortable in interpreting others' beliefs. Therefore, we made a point of discussing these images and understandings. I would write notes and phrases during our discussions and later write a tentative interpretation. It would be useful to explore methods of further extending collaboration.

After the interpretations had been written, discussed and altered as required, I made a list of areas I felt needed more discussion. These further discussions enabled us to review much of what we had done, to reflect on how we felt about what we had discovered for ourselves and to continue to build new ideas.

The writing process was an interesting one, as well. Many drafts of the manuscript were read and commented on by Sandy and Angie. However, I have noted, sadly and

uncomfortably, that during the final editing phases, Sandy and Angie have had less input than before. I can only hope that because most of our interpretations were made collaboratively, my writing style did not alter our understandings significantly.

V. Conclusions

Our safety nets of equality, friendship, openness and trust grew out of initial efforts to ensure the success of the study. The fact that this was a new experience for all of us may have encouraged us to take more care in these initial phases. We all agreed that in order to learn, we must take risks. Angie and Sandy frequently referred to our basic ground rules throughout the study and to the need for safety nets when taking risks. Perhaps because we had taken care to build these nets, we were all more able to share, learn and reflect.

When a study involves people sharing what is personal, bringing the personal into a public domain, great care needs to be taken to protect those involved. No one can demand to be given glimpses of the personal; one can only earn the privilege of such glimpses. A study which involves personal practical knowledge is asking for permission to be allowed into the personal part of a person. Safety nets are essential to ensure that the personal is carefully guarded and protected.

Further Considerations

Based upon our written reflections at the conclusion of the study, it was felt that a significant amount of professional development had occurred and that the inherent promises of the research had been fulfilled. Both Angie and Sandy talked about growth in reflective abilities and development of broader understandings of their images of teaching. They experienced verification of beliefs that had previously not been articulated but which had affected their practice. Our work together strengthened much of what we had come to see as part of their socially constructed knowledge—belief in the importance of collaboration and connectedness.

We were able to define specific areas of growth as a result of the study and yet we were aware that we had only started to build understandings in other areas. By acknowledging the existence of knowledge which appeared to be dependent upon the social context of the study continuing—our socially dependent knowledge—we were becoming aware of some further considerations inherent within a collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge. The promises of collaboration, growth and respect, discussed in the previous chapter, also implied certain considerations. Three considerations deserve further attention here—the use of Sandy's and Angie's real names, the need for distancing during writing and the interruption of growth.

I. The Use of Angie's and Sandy's Real Names

The original proposal made to the Ethics Committees of both the University of Calgary and the Calgary Board of Education included a clause on complete anonymity as is usual current practice. This has been traditionally included as a safeguard to protect the participants' rights to privacy and confidentiality. However, part way through the study, Angie and Sandy spoke to me about the possibility of having their real names used throughout the written report. They addressed a letter to me dated March 19, 1990 which stated:

> We are enjoying our involvement in this reflective research
> project. At the beginning, we agreed to anonymity.
> However, talking, reflecting and reading has changed our
> minds. We wish our names to be used, because we believe
> that we've made a valuable contribution and deserve credit.

The promises of collaboration and respect had involved each of us equally within the study and Angie and Sandy felt that they would like their involvement to be recognized and credited. My initial reaction was pleasure that they felt such ownership. I briefly considered

how the use of their names might affect my reporting but decided that I would find little difference whether I referred to them as Ann and Sara or Angie and Sandy.

We proceeded to take the requests to both Ethics Committees where we did not encounter any opposition. Only after I began writing the final report, did I start to see that this issue required further thought.

One thought was what could have become a conflict between two of the givens of this study—fidelity to truth and trust. On the one hand, it was necessary that everything reported be a faithful record of what had occurred throughout our time together. On the other hand, it was essential that everything reported adhere to the guideline of trust upon which the study had been based. These givens raised cautions about what to include and how to phrase certain statements. Aware of the cautions, was I able to say what needed to be said? Did the cautions allow honest interpretations? Did they interfere with the pursuit of professional development? Could I truthfully record data or did my concern for trust cause me to hold back or rephrase data? Despite the questions, within this particular study, I did not feel that I needed to violate either truth or trust; however, I could see that other studies might be more difficult.

Another thought was that the use of Sandy's and Angie's names could open them to disapproval or recriminations by their peers and administration. Interestingly, we discovered that this began to happen while the study was still in progress, long before the writing phase occurred. Both Sandy and Angie were faced with accusations of spending too much time with me and not enough with their staffs and of working too hard on the social studies unit and neglecting other areas of the curriculum. There were also concerns expressed that the students had experienced a unique classroom situation as a result of the study and my presence that may not have been desired by parents and other staff. These concerns surprised and worried us and started to lead us into an examination of the perceived role of professional development for individuals within the context of an institution.

Having had this experience during the study, I was even more careful during writing that any comments made not reflect upon the students, the school or the administration, none of whom had requested, nor been asked, to be identified.

Another thought was the appropriate use of quotes. Collaborative narrative studies have relied heavily upon the use of quotes from the participants as part of the data. I had to consider editing the use of vernacular and familiar phrases to more accurately reflect an academic style. I did not wish readers to make inaccurate judgments regarding Angie's and Sandy's writing abilities even though many of the quotes were taken from personal journal entries and conversations.

If collaborative research is to be truly collaborative, I feel that requests of participants for acknowledgement need to be respected. However, this will require a full and honest discussion of the benefits and disadvantages for the participants and the researchers. The discussion will need to consider, in part, elements of trust, fidelity to truth, use of quotes, confirmation of text before publishing and perhaps an exploration of the use of collaborative writing, where possible. Future studies need to balance the benefits with the possible disadvantages of future recriminations both to participants and their institutions, each judged according to the individual situations.

Because of the initial considerations—equality, friendship, openness and trust— upon which the study had been based, the use of Angie's and Sandy's names did not cause great difficulty during writing. Indeed, I would say that, rather than an imposition, the use of their names was an honour. Our study proved to be a source of professional development and empowerment which was partially based on Sandy and Angie being recognized not only as teachers and participants but as researchers and scholars.

II. The Need for Distancing

The promise of collaboration inherent in the study had required that Angie, Sandy and I work together as equal partners. However, as this study was the basis for my thesis, the writing phase required that I play a distinct role. This created two specific problems for me—distancing myself and understanding my role. Distancing myself from the emotional experience that had enveloped us for several months for the purpose of writing clearly was difficult. The bond of friendship had become strong and it took time for me to be able to step back from that bond and begin to review and to write. I had already considered the constraints of relativism upon the collection of data but was now faced with it from a slightly different perspective. Smith (1988) discusses this and opens with the following statement:

> Once one realizes that objectivism is impossible, even for the methodologically sophisticated empiricist approaches to inquiry, relativism can then be seen for what it actually is— the inevitable consequence of our hermeneutical or interpretive mode of being in the world. (p. 18)

While a narrative style of writing allows for some changes to the traditional academic prose, I encountered difficulty writing about an emotional experience in a formal, distanced style that would prove meaningful and valid to readers. I had to admit to myself that I required some time away from the experience and the data before I could begin to write.

The second problem dealt with my role within the data. As I wrote, I discovered that at times I was able to talk about the growth and development that Angie and Sandy experienced, while at other times, I found that I seemed to be unavoidably included. Upon reflection, I found that I was able to exclude myself whenever I was discussing Sandy's and Angie's personal practical knowledge or the socially constructed knowledge which they had added to their personal practical knowledge. Whenever I began to discuss certain

knowledge that belonged within the framework of socially dependent knowledge as defined in the context of this study, I was included. It would appear that any discussion of socially dependent knowledge of necessity included me because I was part of the team upon which that knowledge was dependent. This raised questions about the role of a participant-observer who becomes part of the data, such as the subjectivity of data collected in such a situation, the ability to define and interpret the influence of the researcher upon the data and the study itself, and the assigning of credit and recognition to the participants in the study. It also pointed out another reason why it had been so difficult for me to distance myself from a study in which I had become an integral part.

III. Continued Growth

Even before we had explored the concept of socially dependent knowledge, we were aware that the conclusion of the study was unnatural and uncomfortable. During the negotiation of entry into the study, we had planned the conclusion and given it a time frame. As the study progressed, we found ourselves extending the time frame considerably. However, the time came when Sandy and Angie had successfully concluded the teaching unit and needed to move on to the next unit. That signalled to us the end of the study.

We entered a phase which I labelled negotiation of exit. We found that this phase was far more difficult than the entry phase partly, perhaps, because of the bonds of friendship which had developed and the dependency of our socially dependent knowledge upon the continuation of our team. Negotiation of exit will be discussed more fully in the following section.

We had been exploring many exciting aspects of knowledge but, alone, these aspects only appeared as perceptions of knowledge. We longed to continue our explorations but knew that without the cohesiveness of the study, further explorations would be difficult because of the separate teaching situations we were in. Our efforts to exit

from the study indicated that a strong partnership was being torn apart and the experience was emotionally hurtful. The friendship could continue but the dialogue, reflection and journalling could not to the same extent because of time constraints imposed by our new teaching situations. Continued professional and personal growth of the type occurring during the study was severely hampered. The promises of the study and their fulfillment had been so exciting that the loss of them following the study was difficult to accept and understand.

It would be difficult to say how much of our socially dependent knowledge did eventually become, or might yet be, internalized without a long term study to monitor further effects on our practice. A question of the validity of using personal practical knowledge investigations as a method for professional development arises. If, after three months of intensive work, much of our socially dependent knowledge was not, nor could be, internalized, are such methods of professional development feasible? It would appear that the process followed in this study requires a length of time in order to be effective. Further studies would be needed to determine an appropriate or necessary amount of time. Such studies would also require that teachers be committed to working within stable social situations for that amount of time and that administration accommodate requests to maintain stability of staffs and teaming partners.

IV. Conclusions

A collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge promises collaboration, growth and respect for the participants and the researcher. These promises also imply responsibilities. We recognized some of these responsibilities and considered them during the design phase of the study. Other considerations grew as the inherent promises were being fulfilled.

As further studies of this type are conducted, other considerations will likely develop as each study evolves individually to fulfill its implied promises.

Contributions of This Study to Personal Practical Knowledge and Professional Development

It has been stated previously that this study evolved in a new direction and involved both the participants and the researcher to an unexpected degree. In the area of personal practical knowledge, at least three different areas were explored. One was the awareness of knowledge that was both socially constructed and socially dependent. The second occurred as a result of that awareness. If some knowledge is socially constructed, each time we uncover and examine elements of our personal practical knowledge in a social context (for example within a team or a study), they may be expanded, clarified or enhanced. Our personal practical knowledge is, therefore, altered; it does not remain static. Thus the second area of exploration has to do with the symbiotic relationship between personal practical knowledge, socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge. The third area involved the need to negotiate exit from the study and the team. While negotiation of entry into a study is currently well established in the literature, negotiation of exit, to my knowledge, does not appear to be.

In the area of professional development, our experience differed from the more traditional external form of professional development where teachers attend workshops or inservice courses and are presented with experiences, activities and information. Our professional development experience could be likened to an inner journey as a result of the use of inner as well as outer stimuli and knowledge.

These contributions to both personal practical knowledge and professional development will be discussed in the following section.

Personal Practical Knowledge

Personal practical knowledge was a motivating concept in the study which seemed to grow and develop beyond our expectations. We had not expected to become involved in areas beyond the uncovering and interpretation of our teaching beliefs and images. Exploring socially constructed knowledge and socially dependent knowledge and experiencing the symbiotic relationships between that knowledge and our personal practical knowledge was exciting. Discovering the need for and difficulty of negotiation of exit from the study was painful. Each of these areas are worthy of further investigation.

I. Socially Dependent Knowledge

Having a body of knowledge (socially dependent knowledge) that was available to us when we were working together as a team was not at first something that we thought about. We only knew that whenever we were together and were able to discuss topics such as the metaphor of teaching, we felt invigorated and refreshed. At first, I don't believe we were aware that this knowledge was not readily available to us when we were apart because we did not seem to consider discussing it with others. Initially, it simply belonged to us as part of our time together. We knew that such discussions were motivating and that we seemed to be searching deeper into our selves as a result. Perhaps we were unconsciously aware that we could not articulate this new knowledge easily and, therefore, did not try.

It was not until I began to try to start interpreting, in writing, what we had learned about ourselves, that I recognized my inability to articulate the meaningful experiences. I struggled to find a way to explain to others that did not trivialize what we had discussed and I found my difficulty disturbing. When I spoke to Angie and Sandy, I learned that they had felt the same difficulties. Only then did we begin to understand what had occurred.

Vygotsky (discussed in Bruner, 1986) talks about something similar to socially dependent knowledge when he refers to the zone of proximal development. Here he talks about the influence a teacher has on a student. While in class and with a teacher, the student

is able to comprehend; on his own, away from the teacher, the understanding fades. Socially dependent knowledge was similar in that our knowledge was available collectively within a zone of the team's influence. Outside of that zone of influence, the understanding faded and the knowledge became difficult or impossible to articulate.

II. Symbiotic Relationships

In previous studies of personal practical knowledge, a researcher worked with one teacher. Our study was automatically complicated when two teachers working as a team were involved. With one teacher, discussions would ensue with the teacher attempting to understand, clarify and explain with the researcher. The images were not changed significantly, merely understood more fully. In our situation, whenever discussions were held, while images and beliefs of teaching were also explained and clarified to one another, the discussion often resulted in thought-provoking questions, further reflection and some cognitive dissonance. As a result, many of the images and beliefs were being enhanced, challenged and expanded. Thus, our personal practical knowledge did not remain static but experienced change and growth.

By bringing personal practical knowledge into a social context where knowledge was being socially constructed, it was not only being uncovered but was also being developed. The symbiotic relationship between personal practical knowledge and socially constructed knowledge was mutually beneficial. Personal practical knowledge was being enhanced by the social construction of knowledge. Our discussions benefitted from using our personal practical knowledge as the knowledge base from which to build.

III. Negotiation of Exit

In the initial design of the study, I was to act as a participant-observer in Angie's and Sandy's class for a period of six weeks during the teaching of the social studies unit. We envisioned that, at that point, I would begin the writing phase and continue to interact

with Sandy and Angie as they read and responded to the chapters. In reality, my time in the classroom lasted three months, the interactive journals lasted another two months beyond that and our interactions with the writing continued an additional twelve months beyond the end of the journal writing.

Although we had set timelines for the study when we were designing the study, the established time for the unit to end and for me to leave the classroom passed. We explained the need for more time by saying that the social studies unit had taken on a life of its own and was needing far more time than expected to complete. Finally, a natural break in the school year occurred, Spring Break, and it was necessary for Sandy and Angie to move onto other topics before the end of the school year. As discussed in the section on journals, our entries indicated how difficult it was for me to pull out of the classroom. I wrote what I expected to be the last journal entry to correspond with my last day in class. However, Sandy requested an additional journal entry and that led to another and another. Again, a natural break in the school year, the end of June, occurred and as each of us went our separate ways during the summer, the journal entries stopped.

The reading and responding to the chapters, however, was even more difficult to bring to a conclusion. It did not end until the written study was finished. While the study had been concluded, the friendship had developed outside of and beyond our professional relationship and we continued to see one another on a regular basis. If one of us was encountering a difficult time in our classroom or educational life, we would call one another to meet and talk. Angie and Sandy remained particularly close friends perhaps because their friendship was established before I entered and perhaps because their teaching situations were more alike. Separated the following year in different schools, they were hoping and planning to teach together again.

This experience made it clear to me that, while timelines may be established on entry into a study, the nature of collaborative narrative inquiry into personal practical knowledge has the potential to develop powerful personal relationships. In these cases,

total exit is no longer appropriate or desirable. While, indeed, a study must be brought to conclusion, a relationship holds other commitments. At this point, I cannot say whether it would be possible to determine the development of a strong personal relationship before the study begins in order to prepare for it. However, I think it may be important for the researcher and the participants to be aware of the possible need to negotiate exit. Perhaps, it may then be possible to make the exit less painful and more productive.

Professional Development

This study took a different approach to professional development than is normally taken in a school setting. Certain elements varied: goal setting, place, types of knowledge and experiences, and length of process.

I. Goal Setting

Rather than setting goals to explore a particular topic or teaching strategy, our goals were very broad and open-ended. Initially, Angie and Sandy just hoped for some sort of professional growth. Sandy talked about believing that at the end of the study she would hold something tangible, a new idea or teaching strategy. Angie talked about growing and learning and doing some reflection on herself. At the end of the study, we did hold tangible new knowledge and we did feel we had grown and learned and reflected upon ourselves. But we also became more confident in our abilities to teach and work with children and our self-esteem had been strengthened. We sought opportunities to share what we had learned and to continue to grow.

Our goals were self-set. They were goals that we each felt were valid and appropriate for our needs. Interestingly, we each set different personal goals and yet we reached them through a common experience. I believe this was because we were building on our personal practical knowledge. We each began with somewhat different understandings and beliefs which allowed us to build in different areas of interest. The

commonalities among our images and beliefs allowed us to use a common experience to our own personal ends.

In our case, it appeared that being able to set our own goals rather than accept externally set goals, made our experience more relevant and meaningful. This was exhibited in our classrooms where much of what we discussed and learned was quickly put into practice.

While I agree that it would be risky to only offer professional development experiences where the goals are as nebulous as ours were, this study showed that deep personal involvement, commitment and ownership ensured that growth and learning would occur.

II. Place

Most traditional professional development activities involve collecting teachers together in a common large location for the benefit of talking to many at one time. Our experience took place in the classroom or close to it. While many of our discussions and reflections took place before or after school, many also occurred while the students were present. This allowed us to pick up quickly on situations as they were happening and to talk and reflect. It also allowed us to take action immediately rather than waiting. Thus our experience became professional development in action. The talking and learning were occurring at the same time as the teaching.

Again, this type of approach required that we be more open-ended and flexible both with our topics and our responses. The benefits of using real situations to learn from rather than case studies or hypothetical situations, however, far outweighed the disadvantages of a flexible agenda.

III. Types of Knowledge and Experiences

Many traditional professional development experiences involve a facilitator who leads teachers through a series of pre-planned activities for a specific purpose. While the teachers are encouraged to provide input and to use their own experiences and knowledge as the basis for discussions, the agenda and activities are planned with a specific goal in mind. Our experience differed significantly. In our team, each of us had specific areas of expertise. For example, Angie was the expert on Community of Readers and celebrations, Sandy was involved with language learning and I came as the social studies person with some knowledge of personal practical knowledge and collaborative narrative inquiries. Each of us also held many other areas of knowledge and expertise. Our experience became one of trying to draw and learn from each other and to pool what we knew for our mutual benefit.

Each of us took turns playing a leading role, while at other times, no one took the lead. We set the agenda and felt free to alter it as required or desired. Because we were operating in an action mode, we were able to evaluate what had happened in the classroom, what we had tried, and then perhaps alter what we further planned to do. Because we had so much collective knowledge, we did not feel as if we were ever lost or searching blindly around. We grew more confident in our own abilities to solve problems, to search out further information and to take appropriate action. The team provided the necessary direction; an external direction was not necessary.

IV. Length of Process

A significant departure from traditional professional development activities was the length of our process. Rather than a three hour, or full day or two day workshop, our process continued for three months in the classroom and another two months outside of it. The length of time we were able to allow for the experience had significant impact on its

success. We were able to allow time for discussions, for reflection and for further discussion. We were then able to try certain experiments within the classroom, observe, discuss and reflect some more. This leisurely way of linking our talk and our practice helped ensure that what we were learning was having a chance to become internalized as part of our personal practical knowledge and then become evident in our classroom practice.

In the area of our socially dependent knowledge, even five months was not long enough to internalize and make use of some of our new knowledge. One of the benefits of our ongoing friendship was the ability to continue our discussions in areas that remained within the socially dependent domain. Interestingly, because our relationship after the study was not as intense nor as closely connected to the classroom, certain elements of our socially dependent knowledge were developing in differing personal ways. The influence that we might have had on one another's thinking and development had decreased and we had come to rely more upon our own knowledge and background.

Teachers are generally unable to take new ideas and incorporate them immediately into their practice. Short term workshops and inservices frequently suffer because of this. A longer term experience, such as we had, might prove to be more effective in terms of teachers being able to internalize and put into practice new knowledge. I would suggest that socially dependent knowledge frequently operates in a traditional workshop setting. While at the workshop, teachers are comfortable with new ideas. When back in their classrooms, outside of the sphere of influence of the facilitator and other teachers, the new knowledge becomes tentative, difficult to articulate and to put into practice. Understanding the influence of socially dependent knowledge and providing appropriate time for internalization of the new knowledge may be a key to effective professional development.

V. Conclusions

Our professional development experience was unique. It involved an inner journey where we set our own goals, directed our own processes with the context of the classroom and used our personal practical knowledge as the base for discussions, reflections and actions. A reasonable length of time allowed us the leisure to explore, reflect, alter and internalize new knowledge so that it was comfortably demonstrated in our classroom practice. The entire experience derived from inside of our collective selves. Nothing was externally imposed or mandated. We felt that this inward experience was more closely connected to our personal goals and belief statements and was, therefore, more meaningful.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study, while attempting to contribute to the field of personal practical knowledge within a fairly new but established process, began to raise unexpected questions and to encourage consideration of previously unexplored areas. Further study is required in areas such as the existence of socially dependent knowledge, the use of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience and further growth of collaboration in collaborative narrative inquiries.

The concept of socially dependent knowledge is a new and undeveloped one which would require further study for substantiation. Its existence and the uses it may have for professional development could provide interesting topics.

It would seem to be indicated that further attempts of the use of personal practical knowledge as a professional development experience need to be made. Willinsky (1989) talked about the challenge of the researcher shifting the focus away from the teacher's work to the process and meaning of the research. It would appear from our study that Angie and Sandy felt that the research needed to serve their practice. Therefore, it would seem that this

type of research needs to consciously attend to the professional growth of the teacher collaborators. Additionally, there is a growing awareness that by simply studying existing belief structures, the structures are being called into question thus creating dissonance and a culture for possible professional growth. Studies could perhaps explore the amount of time required for such a process to be effective, when such processes should be initiated and upon whose suggestion, and the effectiveness of this type of professional development for individuals and teams within the larger context of school staffs.

A further question would be how the social context of the school is affected during such professional development experiences. In our study, the school's social context imposed itself in a somewhat negative fashion. Questions of the validity of a study of personal practical knowledge in exclusion of the surrounding social context have been raised. This issue seems to warrant further consideration.

A third area for further consideration is that of the degree of collaboration by participants in a collaborative study. Collaborative narrative research depends upon collaboration for the successful collection of data. Willinsky (1989) discussed how after this initial collaboration, the teacher's voice is often kept distinct and subordinated. It is introduced at the writer's discretion to support that writer's interpretations and conclusions. Our study attempted to move collaboration into the interpretation phase, but because the study was grounded within a thesis, extension into the writing phase was not possible. If there is to be a strong future for collaborative narrative research, I believe it will become important to explore possible extensions of collaboration and credit for the teachers who participate. Further, it will be important for the partnerships (teachers and researchers together), rather than the researchers alone, to lead the direction of the studies.

In conclusion, this was an exciting and motivating experience for those of us involved that has encouraged us to actively seek further opportunities to explore some of the considerations raised, to build upon some of the understandings developed and to

pursue professional development through a continued study of our personal practical

knowledge.

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APPENDIX A

LETTERS FROM ANGIE AND SANDY

A LETTER FROM ANGIE

June 12, 1990

Dear Dawne,

I find it interesting that my hopes and predictions for this project have more than come to pass. In the first journal entry I responded that, "Our prediction, that this is going to help us grow, develop and better understand our beliefs and why we do things the way we do them, is definitely going to be a reality."

I feel I've grown in my teaming abilities and my ability to put my 'gut feelings' and beliefs into words. This being my first year of teaming with Sandy, coupled with our involvement with you, has meant a more directed discussion about our beliefs and how our reflected interaction with the children can better reflect these beliefs.

Because of this study, I've become much more reflective about my skills and strategies and why, where and when they are best applied.

I've learned and had verification, through the collaborative planning of this unit, of the great value of the linkages of learning between the home and the classroom.

I feel we were stretched to do our BEST job on this unit. We had, I guess, some pride on the line. But, we loved how the unit grew from the students and ourselves into a real 'experience'. Instead of pouring facts and figures about Alberta into the students, we all became partners in experiencing Alberta's landscapes and resources. The learning was so much more complete than it might have been if we simply had followed the curriculum's teacher resource manual.

I learned time and time again that all the children have valuable experiences to contribute and that when they are excited about their learning, and share at home, the experiences become even richer.

Through reading, discussions, responses, and experiences together, I have developed (I hope) into a more reflective and understanding teacher whose beliefs about

children and learning have become more vivid. The beliefs I _thought_ I had, I now have had verification of.

This project has been a wonderful opportunity for quality professional development. I hope that I can continue to grow and learn in any new situation I may find myself in next year and in the years to follow.

Thank you, Dawne, for being part of my 'wonderful year'. I can truly say this has been the only year in my ten year career that I don't want to end!

Reflectively yours,

Angie Craigie

A LETTER FROM SANDY

June 15, 1990

Dear Dawne,

Our work together was a highlight of this school year. Early in the journal I remember writing that there would be a gift I'd receive working closely with you. Your gift to me is not tangible nor can it be clearly articulated. Throughout my teaching, I have wanted to find my voice and link theory, my beliefs and practices in order that I become a teacher. Our talk, our time together and especially the journals have helped me know myself better and further find my voice.

I have viewed curriculum as the mixing of children, resources and me. I appreciated the acceptance you had of our general plans in order that we teach the 'kids' and not be dictated by the Teachers' Resource Manual. You were important to Angie and me working to the best of our ability. I believe we stretched to do a better job because of your interest and our respect for your thesis.

You were important in further developing me as an educator in writing curriculum for SPEDS because you and Angie encouraged me. It was enjoyable and something I'd do again.

In the fall, I attempted to get a sabbatical for master's work at the University of Calgary. The Calgary Board of Education encouraged me to begin and reapply. I have shared my concern over my ability to express myself in written form. Dawne, you have been encouraging me with positive comments on my responses to you. I decided to take the Calgary Writers' Project to further help my development. Perhaps my confidence will further develop as well as my skill. Angie and I became interested in continuing to link our work with you through a class at the University of Calgary. We sought your ideas, encouragement and support in establishing such a study. Would it be correct to say that you've extended our learning into the university?

The journals were a valuable link. You'd respond to our lessons and discussions in a language that encouraged me to rethink and reflect. Our talk would include the organization, content and people as well as our views of teaching. Angie and I were great 'talkers' before you came, Dawne. I think you added to our talk because of your questioning, wondering, journal entries and sharing of professional articles with your thoughts.

The importance and strength of collaborative work has firmly become established this year. I had thought, valued, believed this but now I <u>feel</u> this at a deeper level as a result of this past year. I also feel and believe that a trusting relationship is crucial to the best work of teachers being exemplified. It would be essential for me to trust and feel respected in a teaming situation in order that I free myself to teach and learn.

I want you to know that you are significant in my teaching journey, Dawne. I feel this while I can only partly express it. I hope we continue to work together, Dawne.

Sincerely,

Sandy Wenz