A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY COURSEWORK AS A SUPPORT TO IN-SERVICE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

by

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Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

A Case Study of University Coursework as a Support to In-service Teacher Development

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Abstract

This thesis examines a dilemma faced by faculties of education: how to reconcile tensions between traditional expectations for credit coursework and experienced teachers' learning needs in times of fundamental educational change. The study focused on a two-semester collaborative project involving two school districts and Simon Fraser University. Using an action research approach, it followed the evolution of a course that engaged teachers in classroom-based inquiry and collaborative autobiography as means to reconstruct understandings of learning and teaching. University instructors and district facilitators worked together to: meet teachers' expressed learning needs; model constructivist and transactional approaches; engage teachers individually and collaboratively as learners in their schools; develop teachers' confidence to continue in a second course; and address the university's expectations for appropriate credit coursework.

Analyses focused on critical incidents and key decisions that influenced directions taken during course planning and implementation, and on teachers' evaluations of their learning experiences. Teachers expressed increasing self-awareness as reflective practitioners, and greater comfort with processes of educational change. They valued opportunities for collegial interaction, self-directed inquiry and time for reflection. However, the project involved ongoing negotiations to manage tensions among competing values and expectations of individual and institutional participants. The findings suggest that transactional instructional approaches can support several aspects of teacher development, but pose challenges for all participants because they confront traditional assumptions about university coursework.

The study is placed in the context of educational reform. Recent reforms in British Columbia have created an urgent demand for professional development opportunities that help experienced teachers cope with constructivist and transactional directions for

educational change. Faculties of education are pressured to reconceptualize course content, as well as instructional and evaluation practices, to address teachers' concerns. This research identifies challenges to be considered when moving toward more transactional approaches, and suggests that collaborative, critical inquiry into in-service teacher education might help to clarify related issues and values conflicts.

Dedication

to my support group

Acknowledgments

This study could not have happened without the participants in Project X—teachers, district facilitators and university colleagues. Only a little of what I learned from them is represented here. I am especially grateful to school district personnel who supported the concept and committed some of their scarce resources to the enterprise.

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Chapter 1

A DILEMMA

Introduction

This thesis is about a dilemma faced by Faculties of Education: how to reconcile tensions between traditional expectations for university credit coursework and the needs of experienced teachers struggling with fundamental educational change. Cuban (1992) defines dilemmas as "conflict-filled situations that require choices because competing, highly prized values cannot be fully satisfied." He distinguishes between problems, which are "fairly routine, structured situations that produce some level of conflict because a desired goal is blocked," and dilemmas, which are "complex, untidy, and insoluble" (p. 6). This chapter outlines some elements of the dilemma posed here, and explains the study.

The "transmission" approach. Faculties of education control the credentials that determine professional advancement for educators in British Columbia. Thus they have significant power to influence teachers' conceptions of what counts as valid learning. This power is exercised directly in terms of selection and presentation of course content, and indirectly through implicit messages embedded in the design, implementation, mediation and evaluation of participants' learning experiences. University instructors and program designers are purveyors of a hidden curriculum that speaks to teachers about how learning occurs and who should control the learning process.

Much coursework in education attempts to provide teachers with knowledge about educational foundations, subject matter or pedagogy. Instructors assume the position of experts whose responsibility is to present theoretical constructs and research findings while teachers play the role of passive learners. Typically, such courses involve the transmission of substantial amounts of information. In this so-called "transmission" approach (Newman, 1987, 1991), participants are rarely engaged in interactions that help them thoughtfully

examine the information or make connections with personal experience (Elbow, 1986; Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990).

> Few of us have any experience with other than "transmission" teaching where much of what the teacher does is based on three assumptions: the meaning of things in the world is immutable and independent of observer and circumstances, reality consists of discrete elements or building blocks which exist independently of one another, and reality as a whole can be known by understanding each of its constituent elements (Newman, 1987, p. 730).

The hidden curriculum thus communicates that learning involves the assimilation of information, that the essence of teaching is the selection and presentation of information according to an *a priori* plan, and that control of both the "what" and "how" of learning resides in the domain of the instructor.

Alternative perspectives. Recent trends in educational thought reflect a reconceptualization of learning and teaching that has significant implications for university coursework. In contrast to the transmission approach, the "interpretive" (Barnes, 1992) or "transactional" (Newman, 1991) perspective suggests that learning and teaching are interactive processes in which both teachers and students are learners. Discourse espousing this view of learning and teaching pervades the literature in such diverse fields as whole language and literacy development, pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher development, curriculum theory and feminist pedagogy.

> From an interpretive perspective, reality is inseparable from the individuals who construct it, the meaning of a situation is determined by the situation itself, and knowledge is an artifact of our continuous encounters with the world. From an interpretive stance the educational focus is on learning and on ways of creating contexts which allow learners to make sense of the world collaboratively (Newman, 1987, p. 730).

Underlying the transactional view of learning and teaching is the assumption that significant learning involves active participation in making meaning from relevant personal experience—sometimes identified as a constructivist theory or philosophy (Dewey, 1938; Sheingold, 1991). Dewey emphasizes the social nature of this process and the teacher's role within it.

> The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process. This quality is realized in the degree in which individuals form a community group.... When pupils were a class rather than a social group, the teacher necessarily acted largely from the outside, not as a director of processes of exchange in which all had a share. When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities (Dewey, 1938, pp. 58-59).

From a transactional standpoint, the teacher's primary tasks are to create environments in which groups of learners can be actively involved in making sense of the world, and to negotiate decisions *in media res* about how to support the collaborative learning process (Killion & Simmons, 1992; Newman, 1991). As teachers negotiate this process with their students, they are regularly confronted with problematic situations. To be effective practitioners, they must become skilled at constructing personal theories about appropriate courses of action for particular situations (Newman, 1991; Schön, 1983, 1987). From a constructivist perspective, professional development for teachers should help them critically reflect on their decisions, examine underlying assumptions, and bring their tacit knowledge under scrutiny (Newman, 1987).

Trends in teacher development.[1] Much of the literature in teacher development clearly reflects a constructivist, transactional perspective on teacher learning. Lieberman (in press) explains that:

> The concept of teacher development redefines the old idea of in-service education or staff development since it concerns itself with teachers' continuous inquiry into practice, viewing teachers as adult learners. The concept of teacher development assumes that the teacher is a "reflective practitioner", someone with a tacit knowledge base who continuously builds on that base through on-going inquiry into practice; constantly re-thinking

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[1] The terms in-service teacher education, professional development and teacher development are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive. Professional development encompasses teacher learning in general, and is sometimes divided into pre-service, internship and in-service phases. The term teacher education also encompasses these phases, but most commonly refers to professional development programs and activities that are sponsored by universities and involve credit toward a credential. Teacher development is a qualitative term that represents a particular set of assumptions and values. Its premises are often contrasted with those of staff development and school improvement, although some authors (notably Fullan, Bennet & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990) have tried to wed the tenets of teacher development to school improvement and staff development models.

> and re-evaluating his or her own values and practices in concert with others. In the past staff development or in-service education meant a workshop aimed at individual teachers, often carrying with it the assumption that presentation and knowledge of a topic was sufficient for teachers actually to use such ideas in their own classrooms. But the concept of teacher development represents a much broader idea. It is not only the means by which teachers improve and work on their practice with their students, but it also means building a more collaborative culture in the school; one in which teachers are encouraged and supported to lead and learn from one another (Lieberman, in press, p. 1).

In keeping with a conception of teaching and learning as constructive social activities, opportunities for collaboration and support among teacher-learners are considered to be key elements of teacher development (Barth, 1990; Lieberman, in press). Classroom practice is recognized and promoted as a legitimate source of professional knowledge and educational theory (Kincheloe, 1991; Lather, 1986; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1991; Olson, 1990; Pinnell & Matlin, 1989). Teachers are encouraged to view themselves as researchers whose voices should be clearly heard in the educational community. For those who embrace a social reconstruction agenda for teaching, teachers' learning activities must also include a critical examination of the socio-political context in which educational decisions are embedded (Kincheloe, 1991; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). "In a sense the teacher as researcher movement is a call to the profession to become a community of learners. It envisions teachers as learners collaborating to create a better and more democratic world" (Harste, 1990, p. viii).

The dilemma

Discrepancies between teacher development and traditional university coursework. Viewing teacher development from a transactional perspective raises questions about the role of traditional university coursework in in-service professional development. When teacher-learners undertake action research and collaborative inquiry they engage in a dynamic process of creating and renewing professional knowledge. As researchers they question, make hypotheses, experiment, observe, analyze, reflect and revise their beliefs (Wassermann, in press). They develop, test, and validate or disprove personal theories. As

members of learning communities they share insights, challenge one another's perspectives and clarify the understandings that inform their educational decisions. Because this kind of learning is driven by issues and questions arising from real classroom problems, it is important for participants to select the foci for their learning and design their own learning activities (Norman, 1986). In other words, teacher-learners must have a voice in both the "what" and "how" of their learning experiences. However, there is little correspondence between this view of teacher learning and the messages embedded in the transmission approach to university instruction. This discrepancy may explain why traditional education courses have often been regarded with disdain by teachers who describe them as too "theoretical" and ultimately irrelevant (Wideen & Holborn, 1990).

> We must recognize that learning takes place from the inside out, not the outside in. Neither teachers nor those they teach change simply by giving them information, by being told about theory and research or new approaches. Unfortunately, we often equate knowledge with information.... instruction won't improve in our schools if we continue to hold onto the idea that all teachers need is more information and everything will get better. Information is necessary, but it is not a sufficient condition for change (Jaggar, 1989, p. 78).

Transactional alternatives. The transmission approach to teacher learning is now being challenged by increasing numbers of educators and policy-makers who claim that it may impede rather than promote the desired outcomes of teacher education and schooling in general (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Smyth, 1987). Its critics recommend that faculties of education adopt more transactional approaches, founded on principles of inquiry and collaboration, in which university instructors and teachers together explore the challenges of teaching and learning (Cuban, 1992).

> Teachers in schools of education prepare teachers, who, in turn, teach in our nation's schools. Educational practice must be as close to the professor in a school of education as the land is to the professor in a school of agriculture. Each must connect to the field in ways that simultaneously enrich both inquiry and practice. This, of course, is the concept of *praxis*. Praxis is reflexive and evaluative. It influences and shapes the bases of knowledge that, reciprocally, influence and shape human action. It is influenced by underlying beliefs, values, and human interest, and it must therefore make such normative content manifest and subject to critical inquiry and action. It is knowing in action—a dialectical process of

reconstructing knowledge in the context of practice (Soder & Sirotnik, 1990, pp. 402-403).

It seems time to rethink the university's role in in-service education and teacher professional development. Opportunities for teacher-learners to engage in collaborative inquiry are now considered by many to be essential elements of effective teacher and staff development programs (Lieberman, in press; Newman, 1990). Several approaches to in-service coursework that are congruent with a transactional view of teacher learning have already been reported. Some focus on developing teachers' natural capacities to design and direct their own learning activities (Hopkins & Holborn, 1983; Norman, 1986). Others seek to help teachers access their personal, practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) or to foster reflective practice (Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Newman, 1991; Oberg & Underwood, 1992; Schön, 1987).

Possible implications. Adoption of a transactional approach to university coursework would require a shift in locus of control from university instructors to teacher-learners. This has several possible implications. One proposed by Grimmett (1991) is that the university instructor would become facilitator and mediator of a collaborative process in which teacher-learners were actively engaged in thoughtfully exploring dilemmas of teaching. Information, including theoretical constructs and research findings, might be presented to broaden perspectives or challenge assumptions, but the overall aim would not be to inform. Instead, the primary purpose would be to support teacher-learners as students of their own craft (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992). A more radical suggestion, implied by Soder & Sirotnik (1990) above, is that teacher educators might join teachers as co-learners in the process of "critical inquiry and action" into the practice of teacher education. This type of activity is illustrated by Newman (1991) in her book *Interwoven Conversations: Learning and Teaching Through Critical Reflection*, by Oberg and Underwood (1992) in their collaborative article on "Facilitating teacher self-development", and by McPhie (1992) in her study of university/school collaboration in the development of a teacher education program.

These approaches to in-service coursework create challenges for faculties of education. They generate tension between prevailing instructional practices and administrative structures on the one hand, and the need to reconceptualize the Faculties' role in supporting teacher development on the other (Soder & Sirotnik, 1990, p. 408). They raise issues that challenge the status quo. Teacher educators like Peter Elbow (1986), Charlotte Huck (1989), Anita Jaggar (1989), Allan MacKinnon (1993), Judith Newman (1991), Antoinette Oberg (Oberg & Underwood, 1992) and Selma Wassermann (1980) have written about the challenges faced by those who choose to adopt these approaches. Their reflections prompt questions such as these:

- Can learning experiences that support teacher development be accommodated within existing programmatic frameworks and administrative structures?
- How might traditional instructional practices and academic performance expectations be modified or reconceptualized to shift the locus of control toward teacher-learners?
- What happens when teacher educators engage in collaborative inquiry, with their students, into the practice of teacher education?
- What kinds of personal changes must a teacher educator make in order to accommodate to such new ways of teaching?
- To what extent can faculties of education provide the conditions that foster this kind of teacher learning and collaborative inquiry while simultaneously performing a credentialing role?

These are especially pertinent issues for faculties of education in British Columbia due to mounting pressures for change from the larger context of public education.

The dilemma in context

Educational reform in British Columbia. Public education in British Columbia is in the throes of change as a result of the report of the Royal Commission on Education in 1988. In response to the Commission's recommendations, the Ministry of Education and

Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights initiated sweeping revisions of provincial educational policy by introducing the Year 2000[2] framework in 1989. Since then, educators at all levels have been drawn into a process of program and curriculum change that is expected to continue indefinitely.

> We realize that the Commission's efforts to identify critical problems in provincial education, and to outline recommendations for change, are but small steps in a larger and more instrumental process. The truly difficult task is the one that the Commission bequeaths to school governance officials at provincial and local levels, to school staffs and their communities, and to the representatives of professional and other educational organizations. For it is they who must work together cooperatively to develop the structures, processes, and avenues of communication that will allow for the discussion and resolution of competing democratic ideals and values (*Royal Commission on Education*, 1988, p. 68).

The Commission clearly anticipated a long developmental process involving cooperation and negotiation to address the concerns identified in its report. Educators in British Columbia have been invited to help build future curriculum from the ground up (*Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks*, 1992). The Year 2000 framework articulates principles to guide this process, but does not provide a blueprint. This creates both difficult challenges and exciting opportunities for classroom teachers.

Reconceptualizing learning and teaching. The principles, position statements and curriculum/assessment guidelines presented in current Ministry documents challenge many past assumptions about teachers' educational responsibilities. For example, the principle that "People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates" (*Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*, p. 8) suggests that teachers' instructional decisions should be guided more by students' individual needs, interests and abilities than by a pre-determined curriculum sequence. Even further, it implies that comparative marks and letter grades are no longer adequate indicators of students' learning (*Reform of Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting for Individual Learners, 1992*). Similarly, the principle that "Learning is both an

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[2] Since the completion of this study, the British Columbia government has stopped using the term "Year 2000" as a result of public controversy. The principles and programs are still in place, however.

individual and a social process" (*Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*, p. 8) confronts the traditions of a school culture in which students were expected to learn without talking, and working together was considered cheating.

The philosophical foundations of the Year 2000 framework are most evident in the principles that "Learning requires the active participation of the learner" (p. 7) and that "Curriculum and assessment should be learner focused" (p. 9). These principles are also manifestations of a constructivist, transactional theory of learning: students are assumed to be active agents in the construction of meaning and have the capability, with guidance, to direct their own development (Dewey, 1938, pp. 44-45). The Primary Program explains:

> Intellectual development may be defined as the process of deriving meaning from experience through acquiring, structuring and restructuring knowledge. It is an integral part of every aspect of our lives. As we assimilate and use knowledge in independent, thoughtful and purposeful ways, we become able to shape our lives and the future of our world (*Primary Program Foundation Document* , 1990, p. 57).

The refocusing of public education on these principles corresponds with the reconceptualization of learning and teaching that is occurring in teacher development. If a constructivist, transactional philosophy of learning were fully embraced in public education, it would require a major shift in locus of control from teachers to students that would mirror the suggested shift from university instructors to teacher-learners. Teachers who adopt a constructivist philosophy would be willing to learn about and accommodate to students' needs rather than tightly controlling curriculum content and learning processes. They would be more likely to see themselves as facilitators of understanding rather than transmitters of information. Students, rather than externally-mandated and prepackaged curriculum, would provide the primary reference points for their educational decisions. The Intermediate Program describes the implications as follows:

> Learner-focused curriculum and assessment practices are those that are developmentally appropriate, allow for continuous learning, provide for self-direction, meet individual learning needs, and deal with matters of relevance to learners....Educators can adopt a learner-focused approach by first ascertaining prior attitudes, skills, and knowledge. They then collaborate with students to select content, plan activities, support learning,

and evaluate learners' progress (*Intermediate Program: Foundations,* 1992, p. 10).

Implementation of this approach in classrooms poses an overwhelming challenge for many experienced teachers. One possible reason is that their own schooling, based on a transmission approach, may have placed them in the role of passive information recipients. Because they have not experienced themselves as active agents in the construction of meaning, it is difficult for them to design and facilitate such learning opportunities for their students. They are struggling to comprehend, let alone embrace, the Year 2000 philosophy and its implications for their roles.

> First, there has to be a shift in role. Instead of transmitting information, we must discover how to invite students into the learning arena, how to create situations in which students see other people doing what they can begin to imagine doing themselves, how to sustain their participation in the group enterprise, how to keep conversations going, and how to respond to what they are trying to do. Second, through students' participation we learn about their interests, their strategies, and their difficulties. By following where students lead, we allow them to show us new directions to pursue, and we discover their potential for learning. Every teaching encounter becomes an opportunity for us to discover new things both about learning and about how to assist individual learners (Newman, 1990, p. 9).

Some experienced teachers also feel anger and resistance toward the Year 2000 philosophy because it contradicts implicit assumptions about learning and teaching that previously framed the public school curriculum. Operating from their beliefs about what curriculum ought to be, they feel frustrated by a perceived lack of specific information about appropriate classroom practices in the *Primary Program* (1990), *Intermediate Program* (1992) and *Draft Curriculum/Assessment Frameworks* (1992). They fear for their students, whom some view as a generation of guinea pigs at the mercy of a giant experiment.

Because the Year 2000 principles are based on a learner-focused, constructivist philosophy, these teachers can no longer depend on pre-packaged programs and guidebooks to determine content, scope and sequence of their instruction. Schooled to be good lesson-learners (Wassermann, 1987) they are now expected to be thoughtful decision-makers and creators of curriculum. Few are familiar with the broader social and educational

context in which the Year 2000 framework is situated. Many are unaccustomed to examining alternative classroom practices in relation to stated educational principles. For those whose sense of professional efficacy and personal self-esteem are based on "doing the right thing", the lack of clarity in expectations seems almost paralyzing. In short, they feel vulnerable and powerless.

> Every teacher wonders, "Am I doing this right?" The answer must come primarily from our engagement with our students—not from the assurances and suggestions of outside experts. When we shift from teacher-driven learning to learner-directed teaching we become learners too (Newman, 1990, p. 9).

The resulting anxiety has created an urgent demand for professional development experiences that help British Columbia teachers cope with the changes in which they are immersed. These teachers need support as they explore the implications of a learner-focused approach. They need time—to observe, read, reflect, research, and interact with colleagues (Leithwood & Dart, 1991). It seems reasonable to assume they could also benefit from opportunities to experience the constructivist principles and a transactional teaching approach from a learner's viewpoint, in an environment that provides models of congruent practices. "Change takes time and energy. It does not take place overnight, or as the result of a one day workshop at the beginning of the school year..." (Jaggar, 1989, p. 78). Where might they find such learning opportunities in a manageable form, given the pressures of their teaching lives?

Reconceptualizing in-service teacher education. One structure that could serve this purpose is university coursework. While it is difficult for even the best-intentioned educator to step out of the "dailiness" of teaching and engage in regular critical reflection, increasing numbers do find time to take university credit courses (S.F.U. Instructional Activity Analysis, 1991). However, evaluation data from recent in-service courses indicate that many teachers turn to the university with a mixture of skepticism, hope and desperation: skepticism because they know their most pressing learning needs derive directly from their

practice, hope because they still have faith in the halls of higher learning, and desperation because few other opportunities provide the time needed to engage in in-depth learning.

Until recently, continuing education for in-service teachers was a secondary concern for faculties of education in British Columbia. Now, the increasing demand for in-service coursework creates pressure to reconsider teacher education priorities. For example, the Office of Project Development (Project Office) in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University frequently receives requests from school districts and individual teachers for credit courses that address current program and curriculum changes. Although these requests vary in their substantive concerns, they reflect similar underlying needs: to understand current educational theory and principles; to relate these principles to appropriate pedagogical practices; and to address the dilemmas that arise as teachers attempt to implement the principles in challenging classroom situations. Several school districts have expressed interest in jointly developing and sponsoring a post-baccalaureate program that would focus on processes of implementation and teacher development.

Pressure on faculties of education to rethink their role in in-service education has also come from the College of Teachers (Bowman, 1991). Universities have been urged to provide learning opportunities for the entire spectrum of teaching practitioners from beginning student teachers through experienced professionals. As well as updating programs to reflect current changes in public education, they have been encouraged to collaborate with other institutions, particularly school districts and teachers' associations, to develop programs that meet the needs of professionals at all stages of development.

Current trends in the teacher development literature have also had a noticeable effect on the attitudes of knowledgeable educators toward professional and staff development. Many are no longer satisfied with "one-shot" workshops or conferences that present teaching strategies out of context (Langley & Wassermann, 1988). Similarly, they question the value of university coursework that discusses educational theories and principles of instruction without linking them to practice (Wideen & Holborn, 1990). Furthermore, as

teachers in B.C. investigate the principles of learner-focused instruction embedded in the Year 2000 framework, they are beginning to demand learning opportunities for themselves based on the same principles. They want to be actively engaged in relevant situations that involve both individual and social learning, that allow them to proceed at different rates and that honour their personal learning styles (Langley & Wassermann, 1988).

> If teachers are to create classroom communities in which students learn through active, collaborative inquiry, they must have similar learning opportunities themselves. This means a major rethinking of teacher education, both preservice preparation and inservice [sic] professional development. New structures will need to be found within which teachers can take a more active role in their own learning and in shaping the curriculum for which they are responsible (Pinnell & Matlin, 1989, p. vi).

These pressures combine to urge faculties of education to reconceptualize course content, as well as instructional and evaluation practices, to better serve their in-service teacher clients. It seems reasonable that university coursework could provide teachers with opportunities to experience the Year 2000 principles from a learner's perspective. If current conceptions of teacher development were applied to course design, and if curriculum and assessment practices from Year 2000 programs were adopted by university instructors, such courses might engage teachers in action research and collaborative inquiry as a means of reconstructing their understandings of learning and teaching. On the other hand, to provide courses about the Year 2000 using a transmission approach would be antithetical to the principles being discussed, and might exacerbate the dissonance already experienced by most teachers.

This study sits at the confluence of several movements in public and teacher education, all pointing toward a basic restructuring of the university's role in in-service teacher education. This thesis examines one attempt to explore some of the possibilities.

The study

Using an educational action research approach, the study investigated the development and implementation of a university course that attempted to reconcile tensions

between traditional expectations for credit coursework and the needs of experienced teachers struggling with educational change. The course in question encompassed the first semester of a two-semester collaborative in-service project (Project X) involving two school districts and the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. In keeping with the principles of educational action research, it was assumed that data gathered as part of the study would also be used to shape the course in progress.

Background. A framework for the two-semester Project was designed collaboratively during the spring of 1992 by representatives from the two participating school districts and the researcher, an in-service coordinator in the Faculty of Education. A course delivery model that had been field tested and researched extensively in previous years (Holborn & Oliver, 1987; Hopkins & Holborn, 1983; McLeod, 1985; Norman, 1986; Wassermann, 1987; Wideen, Carlman & Strachan, 1986) was used as the starting point, but was modified by the planners in response to perceived needs of participants and current conceptions of effective teacher development. Subsequent decisions by the Faculty of Education also influenced the Project design.

The design provided for an instructional team consisting of a faculty member, the in-service coordinator and two facilitators recommended by each school district to deliver the two courses during the fall semester of 1992 and spring semester of 1993. The challenge for the instructional team was to develop and facilitate a sequence of learning experiences that would simultaneously: meet the perceived needs of teachers attempting to cope with fundamental changes in the public school system; model the principles of learning, curriculum and assessment outlined in the Year 2000 framework; engage teachers individually and collaboratively as learners in their own contexts; develop teachers' confidence to continue their learning activities in a follow-up course; and address the university's expectations for appropriate credit coursework.

The course. Education 386, the main focus of this study, sought to create a learning environment in which teachers from the two participating school districts could

collaboratively explore the nature of educational change and study their own development as teacher-learners in a changing educational context. During the course they evaluated their classroom practices in relation to Year 2000 principles and began to engage in focused inquiry to explore alternative practices in their school and classroom settings. Individually and in small support groups, participants critically examined their teaching practices in relation to personal history, beliefs and values as well as current theory and research. Orally and in writing they began to develop personal narratives that focused on themselves as teacher-learners, looking back to the prior experiences that brought them to the course, and projecting forward into future possibilities. They engaged in individual, small-group and large-group activities that introduced them to focused inquiry and collaborative autobiography as basic elements of ongoing teacher development. In preparation for focused inquiry, each participant designed an individualized action plan in a specific area that he or she considered an appropriate focus for investigation.

It was anticipated that if the first course were successful, participants would have the confidence to pursue their focused inquiry projects during a second course in the following semester. Because the two courses in this project incorporated a number of innovative elements, this study provided formative evaluation data to guide planning of the second course. As well, it offered a means to assess, at mid-point, the impact of the coursework relative to participants' expectations.

Methodology. A basic action research cycle of planning, acting, gathering feedback and reflecting provided the framework for this study. The study encompassed the period from the commencement of Project planning with the district sponsors up to the conclusion of the first semester of the Project. This period constituted one cycle of action research, broadly conceived, since the results of the study were used to inform the planning of the second semester. However, several smaller cycles occurred during both the Project planning stage and the evolution of the first course.

The researcher was involved as a coordinator and university instructor during the Project. The research was discussed with the Education 386 class as a way to model the inquiry process. Simultaneously, the instructional team regularly sought input from teacher participants regarding their learning experiences. Data gathering was made as authentic as possible to allow participants freedom to respond naturally and fully to course experiences.

The following forms of data were gathered: ongoing field notes; audiotapes of class discussions; copies of artifacts such as course readings, charts, overheads and blackboard notes; documents such as course outlines and correspondence; teachers' written personal narratives and action plans for focused inquiry; and their responses to a course evaluation questionnaire that was distributed and collected during the last class of the semester. Data analysis focused on these questions:

Questions	*Data sources*
• What factors influenced ongoing instructional decisions prior to the first course and as Education 386 progressed?	field notes; audiotapes of class discussion; artifacts; documents
• What patterns of response to course activities were observable among participants during the Education 386 semester?	field notes; audiotapes of class discussion; personal narratives; artifacts; documents
• What aspects of the coursework appeared to support teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine and modify classroom practices?	course evaluation questionnaire; field notes; audiotapes; personal narratives
• What aspects of the coursework appeared to limit or impede teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine and modify classroom practices?	course evaluation questionnaire; field notes; audiotapes; personal narratives
• To what extent were participants prepared to	course evaluation questionnaire;

engage in focused classroom-based learning projects as a result of Education 386? action plans; personal narratives

Limitations. This study is framed by the following limitations.

- As an action research study, the research is exploratory in nature. Conclusions should therefore be treated as tentative working hypotheses to be tested in future situations.
- The conclusions drawn from the data are limited to the particular sample studied.
- The participants' activities and learning experiences during the course were continually evaluated and modified through a formative process involving ongoing interaction between the instructional team and the participants. Therefore the research process also influenced the activities being studied.
- The researcher, as a course designer, coordinator, instructor and observer, stands both within and outside the research process. Conclusions are necessarily framed by the personal philosophy and educational beliefs of the researcher who helped shape the course.
- The researcher was one of several collaborators on the instructional team, and contributed to but did not direct the shaping of course activities.

Assumptions. The conclusions drawn from this research are framed by the following beliefs and assumptions:

- Learning is more effective when participants are actively engaged in constructing meaning from relevant experience.
- Teachers can benefit both personally and professionally from activities that involve them in individual and collaborative meaning-making directly related to their classroom experience.
- Teachers vary in their rates and styles of learning, and therefore can benefit from opportunities to personalize and shape their own learning.

- Teachers whose in-service learning experiences are congruent with the principles and pedagogy being advocated are more likely to implement the principles and pedagogy in their own practices.
- Action research, which brings reflective practice into the public domain, can be used simultaneously to describe, understand and improve the practice of teacher education.

Overview of the thesis

A schematic overview of the research is provided on page 19 (see Figure 1). The study is presented in greater detail in the following six chapters. Chapter 2 defines and describes action research, outlines the action research cycle, discusses the data-gathering and analysis strategies used in the study, and clarifies several assumptions about differing views of action research. Chapter 3 provides the background to the study. It situates the study in its historical and current contexts, discusses the literature and research that informed the development of the Project, and summarizes beliefs and principles that influenced the initial framework for the Project. Chapter 4 discusses the planning phases of the Project and examines tensions between university and school district expectations. Chapter 5 describes and analyzes the course in action, using critical incidents to highlight key points of tension and decisions that shaped the progress of the course. Chapter 6 analyzes the course from the teacher participants' perspectives, drawing primarily from course evaluation questionnaires and personal narratives. Finally, Chapter 7 reflects on the entire study and the dilemma with which it began. It presents some hypotheses about the tensions inherent in collaborative, field-based, in-service teacher education and offers tentative suggestions for future research.

The dilemma: How to reconcile tensions between traditional expectations for university coursework and the learning needs of experienced teachers struggling with fundamental educational change.

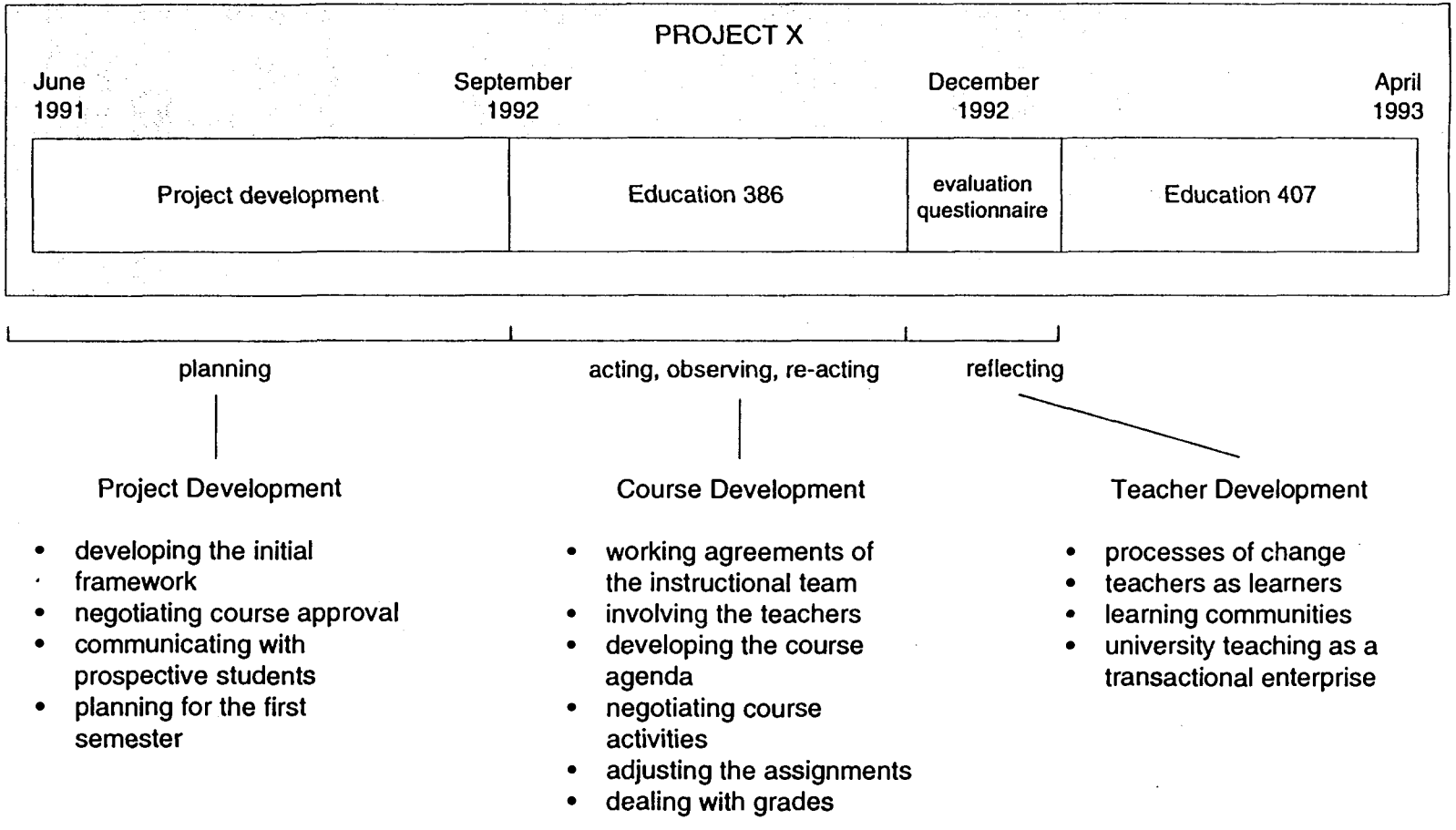

Figure 1. Schematic overview of the research

Chapter 2

THE APPROACH

Chapter overview

Chapter 1 has posed a dilemma faced by Faculties of Education: how to reconcile tensions between traditional expectations for university credit coursework and the needs of experienced teachers struggling with fundamental educational change. Education 386, the focus of this thesis, was an attempt to address the dilemma in ways that would: meet the perceived needs of teachers attempting to cope with fundamental changes in the public school system; model the principles of learning, curriculum and assessment outlined in the Year 2000 framework; engage teachers individually and collaboratively as learners in their own contexts; develop teachers' confidence to continue their learning activities in a follow-up course; and address the university's expectations for appropriate credit coursework

This chapter discusses the study of Education 386 as an instance of educational action research. It first defines educational action research, describes its features, and provides a rationale for its use in this situation. It then outlines the action research process and explains how it forms the framework for the remainder of the thesis. Next, it discusses in detail the data-gathering and analysis strategies used in this action research study. In closing, the chapter clarifies the researcher's assumptions with respect to differing views of action research.

Characteristics of educational action research

Action research has been discussed as an alternative to empirical analytic research in education at least since the 1960's (Brock-Utne, 1980). A widely-accepted working definition of action research is provided by Carr & Kemmis (1986):

> Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, students or principals, for example) in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out. (cited in McNiff, 1988, p. 2).

According to Klafki (cited in Brock-Utne, 1980), action research has three distinguishing characteristics: (1) it starts with educational practice as the focus of research; (2) it intervenes in educational practice for the purpose of changing it; and (3) it involves a shared process of learning that removes the divisions between researchers and scientists on the one hand and educational practitioners on the other. Züber-Skerritt (1992) identifies the following features that distinguish action research from traditional social science research: it is practical, participative and collaborative, emancipatory, interpretive, and critical. Action research is a way of thinking systematically about what happens in educational contexts, implementing critically informed action, and monitoring and evaluating the effects of that action with a view to improvement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Elliott (1991) points out the connections between action research and Schön's (1983, 1987) conception of reflective practice. Action research and reflective practice both focus on problems or dilemmas that are situated in particular contexts. They both involve personal judgments about appropriate courses of action that are continuously informed *in situ* by reflections on the consequences of prior action. Such judgments are framed by values one is attempting to realize in practice. Action research, like reflective practice, must therefore include a critique of values interpretations embedded in practice. This examination of values in practice brings an ethical dimension to the inquiry.

> The kind of reflection involved here is quite different to technical means-ends reasoning. It is both ethical and philosophical. Inasmuch as the reflection is about choosing a course of action in a particular set of circumstances, to realize one's values, it is ethical in character. But since ethical choice implies an interpretation of the values to be realized, reflection about means cannot be separated from reflection about ends. Ethical reflection has a philosophical dimension. (Elliott, 1991, p. 51)

McNiff (1988) stresses that action research is participatory and collaborative—"It is research WITH, rather than research ON" (p. 4). The researcher is a participant, along with his or her collaborators, in defining concerns, determining courses of action, implementing the actions, monitoring events and critically reflecting on both the process and its intended and unintended consequences. What distinguishes action research from reflective practice is that it is public. "It encourages teachers to become adventurous and critical in their thinking, to develop theories and rationales for their practice, and to give reasoned justification for their public claims to professional knowledge. It is this systematic ENQUIRY MADE PUBLIC which distinguishes the activity as research" (p. 6).

The essence of *educational* action research is its emphasis on improvement. Its primary purpose is not merely to describe or understand a situation, but rather to improve the practice that is the focus of study. Practice is a realization of values, and examination of the values embedded in the practice is also an essential element of educational action research . "Anyone who becomes involved in the enquiry is committed, and it is this act of commitment to improvement and to reflect on consequences that is educational" (McNiff, 1988, p. 20).

Action research in teacher education

Most discussions of educational action research focus on its application to schools and classrooms. Many supporters of action research (Elliott, 1991; Harste, 1990; Holly, 1991; Hopkins, 1985; Kincheloe, 1991; McNiff, 1988) see it as a potentially effective tool for educational reform because it gives stronger voice to practitioners and honours teachers as professionals. Action research is hailed as a solution to traditional dilemmas of theory and practice because it acknowledges the importance of "practical wisdom" and allows professional knowledge to be shaped by teachers (Elliott, 1991). Action research challenges dominant empiricist and positivist assumptions: for example, that theory determines practice, that quality research can only be conducted by "experts," and that knowledge is

generated by researchers and used by teachers (Kemmis, 1991; McNiff, 1988; Watson, Burke & Harste, 1989). Some educators also promote action research as a means to devolve power from universities to schools and from administrators to teachers (Stenhouse, 1984; Harste, 1990; Hopkins, 1985; Kincheloe, 1991).

Action research is often described as a means to shift the balance of power from universities to schools by enabling teachers to participate in the production of knowledge. Sometimes this is portrayed as a struggle for democracy (Kincheloe, 1991). Paradoxically, although one principle of action research is collaborative inquiry, these conceptions of action research imply a competition between universities and schools as centres of power and knowledge, rather than a cooperative endeavour for mutually beneficial purposes. Action research is seldom discussed as a means of supporting collaborative inquiry by universities and schools at the point where their interests intersect—the practice of teacher education. Although some educators (Cuban, 1992; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Soder & Sorotnik, 1990; Züber-Skerritt, 1992) have acknowledged the potential power of self-reflective inquiry by university teachers, they usually lament the lack of faculty involvement in such activities.

Some teacher educators have suggested roles that universities might take to collaborate with schools in the conduct of action research. Grimmett (1991), for example, proposes the following roles that university teacher educators might play in "collaborative teacher development":

> ...acting as a catalyst of inquiry; facilitating teacher acquisition of new behaviours, e.g., collaborative planning, to be learned; helping to resolve conflict; helping to build professional cultures; providing support for networks, change efforts [sic]; providing exposure to alternative worldviews; providing exposure to alternative forms of practice; challenging taken-for-granted beliefs and values; and providing sensitizing frameworks that release in practising teachers the powerful combination of action and reflection. (Grimmett, 1991, p. 9)

Here, the university teacher educator is portrayed as a facilitator who extends teachers' understanding of their practice by involving them in critical reflection as well as giving them

access to knowledge and skills they may not already possess. Grimmett claims that "...this role is very different from but no less important than that expected of them in more traditional forms of professional and staff development. It is framed around specific tasks and involves faculty members in working with teachers in critical but supportive ways" (p. 13). However, the image of collaboration here is one of helping those who have less knowledge and understanding, rather than inquiring with them into shared educational concerns. In the same paper, Grimmett expresses concern that to hand over these university functions to the field would be an abrogation of duty and responsibility.

The following excerpt from *The Empowerment of Teachers* (Maeroff, 1988) provides another example of these assumptions about the universities' relationship to schools:

> The fact is that more prestige is attached to higher education than to elementary and secondary schools. That in itself is a reason for building linkages. But it is more complex than that. Ties between schools and colleges have the potential of helping schoolteachers improve their craft. The most obvious contribution to the teachers is the knowledge they can get from professors who have more time to become experts in their subjects. But colleges can also facilitate contacts among teachers, provide settings for teachers to hone their skills, and give teachers entrée to research facilities and other amenities that add to their professionalization. (Maeroff, 1988, p. 60).

No mention is made of teacher educators as learners, or the improvement of teacher education as a craft. It appears here that teacher educators hold the knowledge and resources, while teachers are the learners.

An entirely different conception of possible relationships between universities and schools is offered by McPhie (1992). In her analysis of collaboration between university-based teacher educators and school-based teachers to develop a pre-service teacher education curriculum, she states that:

> Worthwhile programs leading to teacher certification require a collaborative effort between educators based in schools and educators based in universities. These educators hold and develop knowledge that provides conceptual frames to guide inquiry into education, as well as knowledge that informs an understanding of the complex and value-laden contexts in which education takes place. The integration of these different kinds of knowledge

> within a collaborative effort can repair the discrediting of school and university knowledge that the traditionally isolated practicum and campus components of teacher education programs have engendered. Facilitated as well is an ongoing examination of educational thought and action that can include a critique of practice and a social critique of the structures that support and constrain educational work. (McPhie, 1992, p. iii)

McPhie's research suggests that this work requires a particular set of conditions to support collaboration. Among them are a shared view of all participants as learners, a commitment to suspension of judgment, a willingness to listen reflectively, and an attitude of reciprocity—"the equal opportunity for participants to both speak and to listen" (p. iii). She believes that the creation of such conditions "signals a shift in roles and relationships within the educational enterprise that disrupts traditional divisions of work, status and power" (p. iii), and that such conditions are characterized by tensions and conflicts. Rather than viewing these conflicts as power struggles between universities and schools, she suggests that they "provide fertile ground to examine competing knowledge claims and to reach towards new knowledge and possibilities" (p. iv). It is in this spirit that action research was undertaken in the study of Education 386.

Rationale for an educational action research approach to this study

An educational action research approach to this study was chosen for several reasons. First, action research is congruent in philosophy and methodology with the concept of teachers (and teacher educators) as learners—as students of their own craft. An action research approach was seen as a means to foster an attitude of inquiry toward the development of Education 386 and to encourage all participants to have a voice in its evolution. Second, action research is a public form of reflective practice. It allowed the researcher to participate as a colleague in the learning community that the course sought to create. Third, action research aims to improve the practice being studied. Education 386 was the first of a sequence of two courses, and action research provided a natural and authentic way to implement a formative evaluation that would help shape the second course. Finally, action research is founded on a constructivist and transactional view of learning.

The approaches taken by the researcher were similar to those teacher participants might use in their own classrooms. In short, action research was seen as the most appropriate representation of the researcher's values as an inquiring, collaborative teacher educator and learner.

The action research process

In *The Action Research Planner* , Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) discuss "four moments" that describe the process of action research: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. They depict this process as a cycle in which each sequence of moments leads to insights that modify the following sequence.

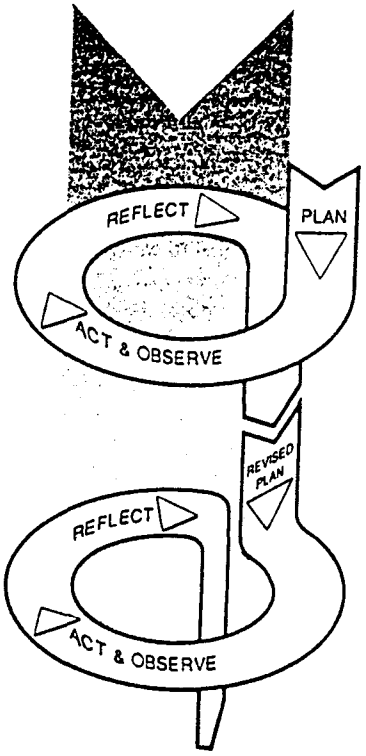

Figure 2. Action research spiral (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 11)

Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) process is collaborative—it is conducted by a group that shares a thematic concern, and is supported by critical reflection of the group on changes in language and discourse of participants, changes in activities and practices, and changes in social relationships and organization.

McNiff (1988) argues that Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) model, in the form depicted above, is too prescriptive because it suggests that action research is linear and proceeds in only one direction at once. She favours a modification called generative action research (McNiff, 1988, p. 45), which allows other problems to be explored through action-reflection spirals that spin off from the main concern. The advantage of the generative action research approach is that the researcher(s) can address many different problems at the same time without abandoning the main issue.

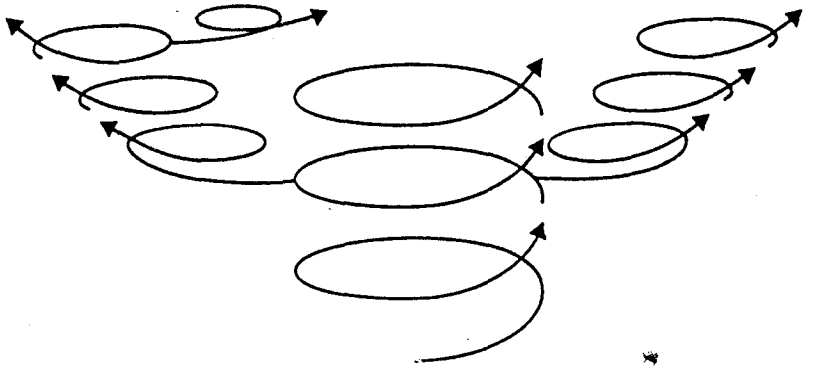

Figure 3. Generative action research spirals (McNiff, 1988, p. 45)

McNiff (1988) also adds to Kemmis & McTaggart's approach the concept of "living educational theory," taken from Whitehead (cited in McNiff, 1988, pp. 37-42). Whitehead's main concern was that action research must be, first and foremost, an educational endeavour. His fear was that action research could become a technical, academic exercise unless each individual had the power to focus on his or her own professional development, and he resisted Kemmis' insistence that action research be a collective activity. His alternative stressed dialogue among participants—a "dance of communication"—that would result in metamorphosis of understanding rather than restructuring (McNiff, 1988). Questions were central to Whitehead's conception: one

person's question could becomes another's answer, which in turn could provoke a question. "The practitioner is living out his questions, and his tentative answers to those questions make his own personal theory" (McNiff, 1988, p. 42).

In this study, the process of developing and shaping the course in action involved different participants in different roles at different times. It was dynamic and responsive, rather than prescriptive. From this process came hypotheses about how best to support teacher learning, given the particular situation, and the emergent theory helped shape further course activities in the following semester.

Participant involvement and informed consent

Project X involved two school districts (A and B), each of which could enrol up to 25 teachers in the Project. The total number of teachers who completed Education 386 was 47; of these, 24 came from District A and 23 from District B. In addition, each district provided two facilitators who were members of the instructional team. The university contributed two instructors: a faculty member who was assigned as official university instructor for Education 386; and the researcher, who was also the coordinator of the Project.

The total group met every two weeks throughout the duration of Education 386. On alternate weeks groups A and B met in their home districts with their local facilitators. On these weeks, the faculty member joined district B participants and the researcher met with district A. This study followed the progress of the total group throughout Education 386, but focused most intensely on District A, with whom the researcher spent every session. Participants in District A included a senior administrator, two facilitators, and 24 teachers who attended in school-based support groups of two to six participants each. These groups were selected by the district administrator from a pool of applicants who had attended an information meeting explaining the Project parameters.

The study was explained to participants at different points as they joined Project X. The district administrator, district facilitators and faculty member were consulted about the research at the early stages of planning. They understood that the course would evolve in response to participants' input, and that the research would provide a means to track this process. Teachers in the course were informed of the study at the first class session. They were told that the data collection was part of an ongoing formative evaluation of Project X, and that it would help the Faculty of Education develop and refine appropriate coursework for in-service teachers. They were also told that information obtained from them would be treated anonymously, and that confidentiality would be respected when requested. All participants were encouraged to discuss the study with the researcher at any time, and to provide input on the progress of the course whenever they wished.

A written description of the study, accompanied by a copy of the course evaluation questionnaire and an informed consent form, were submitted to the University Ethics Committee for approval prior to distribution. Teachers were then given the written description outlining how their course evaluation questionnaires, personal narratives and action plans would be used as data sources. Thirty-nine participants signed the release form indicating permission for their responses to be used.

Phases of action research in this study

The following overview is based on a synthesis of ideas drawn from Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) and McNiff (1988). It outlines generally-accepted phases of an action research study, and explains how each will be dealt with in this thesis. It should be noted that action research spirals or cycles can be viewed from a micro or macro perspective: that is, smaller spirals of action and reflection may occur within an action research cycle that has been broadly conceived. Such is the case in this study. Education 386 as a whole may be viewed as one cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting that led to the shaping of a following course. However, several smaller spirals of action and reflection occurred

within this cycle. For this reason, McNiff's (1988) diagram of generative action research spirals provides a more realistic depiction of the process in action than Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) cycle (see pp. 25-26).

Reconnaissance. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) suggest that the action research process begins with an initial phase of reconnaissance in which participants examine their situation as a basis for planning and action. This phase is informed by an analysis of such things as: the current situation, one's own and others' educational values; the place of one's work in the wider context of schooling and society; schools as institutions and the nature of reform; and historical self-understanding (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, pp. 54-55).

Whereas Kemmis & McTaggart insist on formalized collaboration as a necessary condition for action research, McNiff (1988) believes that action research "is for independents, but not for solitaries" (p. 68). In her view, an individual may undertake a personal inquiry but others must always be involved in some capacity so that the inquiry is public. These others may take a variety of roles such as participants, observers, validators, and readers of study findings. In this study there were a variety of participants whose involvement ranged from collaborators to validators and readers.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the reconnaissance phase of this study. It reviews the literature and research that informed the conception of Education 386, analyzes the historical and current contexts in which the course was situated, introduces the researcher, and presents the beliefs and principles that influenced the initial planning of Project X.

Planning. The planning phase deals with the question, "What is to be done?" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 65). It may involve a review of social and educational values, the conditions and constraints at play in the situation, and the goals of the action to be taken. An action plan is formulated that is strategic yet tentative. In this phase, negotiation is necessary to involve key participants in developing the plan and defining the responsibilities of group members.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart, the planning phase leads to a working plan that describes the concern, relates it to relevant literature, outlines the membership of the action group, describes specific actions to be taken and a schedule of work, considers how the project may affect others and the institutions involved, suggests how the action will be monitored, and outlines how the data will be used to inform reflection.

In this study, the planning process was more co-evolutionary than linear, and the working plan was less prescriptive than that described above. Planning occurred in several phases that are described and analyzed in Chapter 4.

Acting, observing, and re-acting. This phase considers the action *in situ*, and includes gathering information about the consequences of specific actions, reflecting on the consequences, and recording modifications to the action in process. Chapter 5 traces the evolution of Education 386 by documenting and analyzing several "critical incidents" (Newman, 1990) that caused changes in the shape of the course.

Reflecting. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), this phase includes analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, explaining and drawing conclusions. In this study, teachers' reflections were gathered through both a questionnaire and a group discussion in which participants' evaluated and commented upon their experiences and learning. Their personal narratives also contained reflections on course experiences. Chapter 6 analyzes, synthesizes and interprets these data.

Looking forward. In keeping with the forward-looking and generative nature of action research (McNiff, 1988), Chapter 7 re-considers the entire study and the dilemma with which it began. It presents some hypotheses about the tensions inherent in collaborative in-service teacher education and some tentative suggestions for future consideration.

Data-gathering and analysis strategies used in this study

The following provided primary data for this study: field notes, anecdotal records, artifacts, documents, tape recordings of class discussions, and a course evaluation questionnaire. Teachers' personal narratives and action plans provided additional resources to substantiate perceptions gleaned from the primary data. The study generated a massive data base in the form of computer notes, folders filled with documents, piles of wall charts, several audiotapes and a shelf full of students' written work.

The analysis began with the re-reading of all field notes and charts and a review of audiotapes to reconstruct the course in action. A pattern of action-reflection spirals was extracted from this reconstruction. Several critical incidents were selected that signaled significant moments of tension during the study and most clearly represented some of the participants' main concerns. These strategies led to a retrospective analysis of key decisions during both the planning and action phases of the course. Additional data from students' written course evaluation questionnaires, a recorded class discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the course, blackboard notes summarizing suggestions for the following semester, students' personal narratives and miscellaneous feedback from other participants were considered in the retrospective analysis. Course evaluation questionnaires were coded and triangulated with other data. This analysis yielded four themes that were examined in light of pertinent literature and research findings in teacher development and educational change. Finally, all analyses and interpretation were presented to two collaborators in the study for validation and to three other readers for independent critique.

Issues in the conduct of educational action research

Action research and social critique. The preceding overview has touched on some of the differences among conceptions of action research. Some proponents (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Kincheloe, 1991) insist that action research must be aimed at fundamental social change, and that social critique is therefore an essential element of the

research process. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), for example, stress that action research should include ongoing collective critique of language and discourse, activities, and social interactions. The intent of such critique is to ensure that the work of educators serves the ideals of a democratic society, a purpose that is considered emancipatory and empowering. Kincheloe (1991) explains that:

> The democratic ideal is based on the premise that there is an ethical basis on which social institutions are constructed. This conception, as old as Plato, requires that every human counts, regardless of social position. Moreover, whether in the workplace of the factory or the school, leaders must make sure that the wide variety of abilities and interests among individuals must be considered so that the unique potentialities and the contributions of each one may be realized (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 4).

However, the imposition of social critique as research methodology has been criticized as potentially just as technocratic and controlling as any other system if it does not leave room for individual participants' personal values or allow true dialogue and negotiation to take place. Action research must be meaningful to the lives of real, individual educators (McNiff, 1988). In this study, greater attention was given to including participants in shaping their educational experiences than to involving them in social critique of the institutional contexts in which the experiences took place.

Education 386 attempted to provide the conditions for collaboration identified by McPhie (1992), and thus to create an environment wherein shared meanings might be developed and tensions and conflicts negotiated. Harste (1990) expresses the sentiments underlying this study.

> I see three fundamental principles guiding the [teacher as researcher] movement: voice, conversation, and community....democratic communities are not characterized so much by likemindedness as they are by difference. Strong communities are forged by hearing many voices, by engaging in new conversations, and by knowing the particular strengths and differences of individual members. It is when the strengths and differences of community members are known and explored that they become a resource...(Harste, 1990, p. viii).

Conversations that highlight differences are inevitably charged with tension and potential conflict—the nature of the dilemma examined in this thesis.

Action research and situated practice. Elliott (1991) has suggested that in action research, one way to illuminate the values embedded in practice is to examine how the practice reflects the context in which it occurs. The concept of *situated practice* focuses attention on the influence of contextual conditions on teachers' and teacher educators' decisions. Usher (1989) explains:

> ...practitioners are always in the process of 'making sense' of their world of practice....This involves acting rightly and appropriately within the particular situations of practice. They do this by using a certain kind of knowledge and reasoning which is neither theoretical nor technical. It may involve theoretical knowledge and it is a kind of 'know-how' but it is always mediated in the light of the circumstances of the situation, and is, therefore, situational and ethical (Usher, 1989, p. 79).

In *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms*, Cuban (1984) has suggested that teachers' actions can be either constrained or enabled by the work ethos and organizational features of their school and classroom environments. Their behaviours can be viewed as reflecting their best solutions to dilemmas of practice, given the existing constraints. Cuban adds, however, that teachers' choices are also mediated by personal values and by beliefs about what is possible, and that different teachers may therefore choose different courses of action within the same constraints. Liston and Zeichner (1991) suggest that teachers' values and beliefs emanate from "biographical, institutional, and larger societal sources" (p. 124) and that only by critically reflecting on these aspects of their practice can teachers and teacher educators truly understand the influences on and implications of their decisions.

> Basically the notion of teaching as a situated practice is a view of teachers as social actors engaged in practices within a particular context. Teachers...are continually faced with decisions about what to do. Those decisions and their resulting actions and practices are influenced and shaped by their particular contexts, their situations. When teaching is examined as a situated practice, teachers' actions and practices are said to occur (are situated within) [sic] institutional and social contexts, and produce both intended and unintended outcomes. In its most general formulation we want to propose that university initiated educational research...could profitably examine teaching as a situated practice and thereby highlight the unacknowledged institutional and social contexts of this practice as well as its intended and unintended outcomes (Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 122).

This is, in part, a study of in-service teacher education as a situated practice. Project X was situated at the intersection of two institutional contexts—those of public schools and of the university. As McPhie (1992) has noted, teacher education has traditionally been separated into campus (theory) and school (practice) components. Each of these locations represents a different context, with its own culture and values systems, and each constrains the work of its participants in different ways. When representatives from one context visit the others' location, they respond according to norms and assumptions derived from long traditions. For example, teachers in campus-based courses often assume the role of passive learners while teacher educators are the experts. However, Project X disrupted traditional assumptions about university coursework for teachers by moving the location of Education 386 from campus to schools and by introducing new roles for field-based educators in the development and implementation of the course. The resulting tensions and conflicts became key elements in the experience of all participants and a focus of attention in this action research study. In this thesis, the concept of situated practice provides one lens through which to examine the experiences of participants in Education 386 as they clarified understandings and negotiated decisions about how the course should proceed.

Chapter 3

RECONNAISSANCE

Chapter overview

The purposes of the reconnaissance phase in action research are to examine the historical and current contexts in which a study is situated, and to illuminate the educational theories and values that influence the researcher's and other participants' work (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This chapter begins with a summary of historical antecedents leading up to the collaborative in-service project (Project X) of which Education 386 was a part. It traces the history of field-based coursework in the Faculty of Education at SFU, illustrating with examples from both policy and research. It then describes recent trends in approaches to field-based courses and explains the researcher's involvement as in-service coordinator. The values that guided the initial shaping of the Project are expressed in terms of principles grounded in current literature on educational change and teacher development. A conception of university teaching as a transactional enterprise is presented, with the support of examples drawn from other teacher educators' published work. Finally, issues and challenges encountered in similar ventures are identified.

Field-based coursework at SFU: an historical perspective

Historical roots. The Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University has been exploring alternative forms of field-based coursework for experienced teachers since it was established in 1967. For example, the directed studies option has always provided opportunities for students to design and implement individualized learning activities in collaboration with a faculty supervisor. The 1980's brought greater focus to these efforts as staff development and school improvement movements gained some faculty members' attention (Hopkins & Wideen, 1984). In 1982, for instance, Hopkins offered an undergraduate course which engaged teachers in classroom-based curriculum development

using an action research approach (Hopkins & Holborn, 1983). From an historical perspective, such courses were a natural representation of the Faculty's founding principles (Dawson, 1985) that viewed professional development as a life-long enterprise and emphasized the value of extended experience in school settings as an integral element of teacher learning.

Focus on in-service education. In 1980 the Faculty of Education sponsored a Summer Institute in Teacher Education (SITE) that brought together such recognized leaders in school improvement as Aoki, Fullan, Rudduck and Stenhouse, who "shared a common philosophy and approach to schooling which was somewhat different from the contemporary norm" (Hopkins & Wideen, 1984, p. 2). Four themes emerged from the group's interaction: increased awareness that top-down models of school improvement had been ineffective; the need to support, facilitate, but not control teachers' learning; recognition that educational change is complex; and the need for diversity of efforts that might produce alternative approaches to educational change (Wideen & Andrews, 1984, pp. 190-194). The book that followed from this event proposed "a set of different ways of looking at schools which we think are likely to be very powerful in turning them into better places for quality teaching and learning to occur" (p. 190). Its significant elements included a recognition of teachers' abilities to take responsibility for constructing their own understandings of educational change, and a view of teacher educators as supporters of that process.

> Good teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgement. They do not need to be told what to do. They are not professionally the dependents of researchers or superintendents, of innovators or supervisors. This does not mean that they do not welcome access to ideas created by other people at other places or in other times. Nor do they reject advice, consultancy or support. But they do know that ideas and people are not of much real use until they are digested to the point where they are subject to the teacher's own judgement. In short, it is the task of all educationalists outside the classroom to serve the teachers; for only teachers are in the position to create good teaching (Stenhouse, 1984, pp. 69-70).

The SITE program was attended by field-based educators from several British Columbia school districts, and it raised awareness about the university's interest in collaborating with schools on educational change activities.

Faculty policy. During the middle 1980's, efforts to extend the Faculty's collaboration with the field were led by Dr. Stan Shapson, whose position as Associate Dean included this mandate. A Faculty review of in-service programming "revealed a significant gap between what we know about in-service education and what we do about in-service education" (Norman, 1986, p. 4). A Study Group formed by the Faculty searched for ways to organize part-time study that would be more aligned with teachers' professional development needs. In 1984 the Faculty ratified a Planning Document that sought "to develop approaches which incorporate field-based components to follow up our university based courses" (SFU Faculty of Education, 1984, p. 1). This policy document acknowledged the weaknesses of in-service teacher education that did not involve experienced teachers in examining classroom practice, but it also reflected a "theory into practice" view of teacher learning. The operating principles identified in the document were:

i. That we concentrate on developing programs for practising teachers (e.g., those with a desire to upgrade, retrain, etc. because of changing needs in the school).
ii. That we actively encourage collaborative programming with teachers, other district personnel and other agencies to meet in-service needs.
iii. That we maximize the use of existing programs and structures (e.g., DISC, KNOW) and seek creative combinations to increase their attractiveness for in-service.
iv. That we monitor programs for their impact on the client (Do they make an observable difference in increasing teacher effectiveness?)
v. That we take an active role in advancing effective in-service, relating theory and practice consistently.
vi. That we encourage school-based development projects in conjunction with in-service programming.
vii. That we emphasize the long-term cost-effectiveness [sic] of in-service (SFU Faculty of Education, 1984, p. 1).

Principles of implementation-focused coursework. During the same period, the Office of Project Development (Project Office) was established under Dr. Shapson's direction to pro-actively pursue collaborative educational ventures. One of its

responsibilities was to extend the Faculty's involvement in in-service teacher education, with an emphasis on "field-based implementation." The Project Office began to sponsor several course delivery models (see Appendix A), including *Theory and Practice of Implementation* (initially Education 406, then Education 407), and *Comet Field-Based Implementation* (Education 384 and 385) courses. In brief, *Theory and Practice of Implementation* was conceptualized as an "in-service practicum" in which teachers would design, implement, monitor and evaluate a focused classroom-based project following a university course on a specific aspect of curriculum or pedagogy. Classroom supervision would be provided by a combination of university- and district-based personnel, and regular seminars would allow for collegial interaction and input from the university instructor. The *Comet Field-based Implementation* model involved participants in an intensive Summer Institute or similar experience (head of the comet) followed by a semester of classroom-based action and reflection (tail of the comet). Both models incorporated the following elements derived from school improvement and staff development research:

- study of theory and pedagogy in a relevant focus area
- classroom implementation based on a self-directed action plan
- opportunities for supervision and feedback from mentor and/or peers
- individual accountability through formative and summative reflection and self-evaluation
- leadership and support from key figures within the teachers' school and district organizations
- commitment in the form of resources from the key stakeholders (Holborn & Norman, 1991, p. 6).

The fidelity dilemma in field-based implementation courses. In keeping with a theory into practice or implementation-focused conception of teacher learning, these courses either included a training component or were linked to another university course that presented what should be implemented in the classroom. However, the field-based component emphasized self-directed action in a collaborative learning environment, and teachers were encouraged to pursue their individual learning goals within the focus for implementation. According to Norman (1986), the field-based component differed significantly from traditional university coursework "primarily in the amount of control

over decisions about what and how to learn that it affords to the student and its emphasis on process rather than content" (p. 12). He acknowledged that it was difficult to find a balance between fidelity and adaptation, and suggested that "In this regard, the role of the instructor is pivotal in helping students integrate and adapt the components while maintaining the integrity of the course" (p. 14). Norman also noted that "Accomplishing a basic transition from other- to self-directed learning[3] within an educational system largely designed for the transmission of content is not an easy matter" (p. 62).

Studies of field-based coursework. Tension between fidelity of implementation and teachers' individual learning needs is revealed in several research studies that critically examined specific field-based courses (Holborn & Oliver, 1987; Langley & Wassermann, 1988; McLeod, 1985; Norman, 1986; Wassermann, 1987; Wideen, Carlman & Strachan, 1986). Wassermann (1987), for example, analyzed the conditions that seemed to facilitate teacher growth and change in a year-long teaching for thinking project that provided the option of course credit. She found that these included commitment from the school district administration to support teacher learning, in-depth training in the focus for implementation, and ongoing support over time.

Wassermann confirmed the view that change is complex and that different teachers require different kinds of support. She also expressed concern about teachers who chose to withdraw when asked to implement a particular set of practices demonstrated in training. She offered several possible hypotheses: some teachers may retreat from feelings of guilt when confronted with discrepancies between "real" and "ideal" self; some teachers may not feel comfortable with the shifting of control toward their students, as advocated by the training program; and some teachers whose beliefs are highly resistant to change may avoid

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[3] The term "self-directed learning" refers to educational activities in which the learner is responsible for identifying a goal or question for inquiry, developing plans for learning, implementing and monitoring learning activities and self-evaluating the process and outcomes. Self-directed learning approaches have been used in many field-based implementation courses, and a self-directed action plan provides the basic structure for the *Comet Field-based Implementation* model.

situations that challenge those beliefs. She concluded that "If our work with the 30 teachers...over the course of this full school year has one major finding, it is that when a teacher signs on to a year's classroom work in teaching for thinking s/he embarks on an intense and profound developmental experience that imposes demands that extend considerably beyond the boundaries of traditional in-service expectations" (p. 9).

McLeod (1985) studied another school-based teaching for thinking program that emphasized implementation of skills demonstrated in training. She found that teachers increased their understanding and skill in thinking strategies, but still felt they had much to learn before they could "own" the innovation (p. 66). However, her participants valued the time for interaction and support that the course had provided, and appreciated the involvement of the school principal as a coach and mentor. McLeod argued that this form of professional development was particularly cost-effective compared to other models, especially "one-shot" workshops, and that it deserved financial support from field-based sponsors.

Holborn and Oliver (1987) evaluated a two-semester coursework sequence designed to help classroom teachers supervise student teachers more effectively during a semester-long practicum. In the first semester, teachers attended a university-based course that addressed supervisory strategies in the context of student teacher development. In the following semester these teachers supervised student teachers in their classrooms. Each classroom teacher created and implemented a series of individual action plans to improve specific aspects of his or her supervision. The participants also met for weekly seminars with the university instructor to discuss supervisory issues and assist one another in problem solving. Holborn and Oliver compared the classroom teachers' and student teachers' evaluations of the practicum experience to those of a matched group in which the classroom teachers attended only three days of supervisory orientation and training. The greatest differences between the two groups were in the course participants' ability to adopt a developmental perspective, their levels of confidence, and their student teachers'

satisfaction with the quality of the supervisor-student teacher relationship. The classroom teachers said they had learned most from collegial interaction about specific supervisory problems, and that these discussions had given them confidence to trust their own judgment. Holborn and Oliver concluded that it was difficult to compare quality of supervision received by student teachers in the two groups, but that the field-based course had clearly increased the potential for a more successful practicum. As in the other studies cited above, participants emphasized the value of extended time for professional development and opportunities to meet with colleagues as the greatest strengths of the coursework.

Wideen, Carlman and Strachan (1986) evaluated the impact of "problem-focused coursework" on teachers' practices. Their research examined the implementation efforts of teachers who had completed a university-based course that proposed a constructivist approach to science teaching. In the field-based course that followed, teachers articulated problems in the form of discrepancies between how they thought they should teach science and how they were actually teaching it. They then developed action plans to accomplish changes, and worked on these changes in their classrooms with the support of a university faculty associate. Regular seminars allowed the teachers to share experiences and get input from the faculty associate.

The researchers found that where changes in classroom practices occurred, teachers exhibited less control over students' choices of activity and outcomes of discussion. However, "These changes were accomplished with differing degrees of discomfort and understanding on the part of the teachers, and with different levels of success" (p. 7). The researchers concluded that field-based implementation coursework could lead to observable changes in classroom practice, but that "changes occur only under certain conditions and within particular contexts" (p. 8). They identified several influences they felt should be considered by university planners when designing field-based coursework: a conceptual

structure; consideration of teachers' motives; provision of support structures; attention to the process of change; and opportunities for teacher reflection.

> From the literature one sometimes gains the impression that there is a change process with a set of steps that everyone goes through. We found that while those teachers who made improvements in their classroom struggled with change...the particulars of that struggle varied greatly from one teacher to the next (Wideen, Carlman & Strachan, 1986, p. 9).

Their literature review also led them to comment that:

> ...those who propose and carry out teacher initiated improvement projects are guided by a very different set of assumptions from the ones which have been accepted in the mainstream of educational thinking for the past several decades. They view the teacher as capable of assuming much professional autonomy, assume that change is much more a bottom-up process than top-down, and view knowledge as a product of teachers' day to day activity (Wideen, Carlman & Strachan, 1986, p. 4).

These studies of field-based coursework at SFU in the 1980's suggest many strengths of the *Theory and Practice of Implementation* and *Comet Field-based Implementation* models: relevance to teachers' immediate concerns; opportunities for inquiry into practice using self-directed approaches; time for teachers to reflect; opportunities to interact with colleagues in supportive environments; provision for district support; opportunities for districts to demonstrate commitment to teachers' long-term professional development; and availability of mentors and coaches. However, the conception of implementation as a direct transmission of ideas from theory into practice has proven problematic. Embedded in most of these research reports are questions, explicit or implied, about the validity of a fidelity model of implementation which judges teacher learning on the basis of how well principles taught in university coursework are demonstrated in practice. Many authors return to the point that learning about teaching is complex. Each teacher must create his or her own understanding of an innovation and make it work in his or her own way. As instructors in field-based courses have continued to struggle with this dilemma, new possibilities for more transactional approaches have emerged.

Emerging trends in field-based coursework at SFU

Teachers as learners. One of the patterns reflected in studies of field-based coursework is participants' appreciation of opportunities to make sense of practice in their own ways, with the support of colleagues and a university instructor. Regular evaluations of field-based implementation courses have consistently indicated that teachers have valued the chance to take responsibility for their own learning projects, cherish the time that such courses provide for reflection and collegial interaction, and count them among the most powerful professional development opportunities they have experienced. The following are representative comments from two students who completed a *Comet Field-Based Implementation* course and a *Theory and Practice of Implementation* course, respectively.

> ...I've enjoyed the independence this course has allowed me and I look forward to repeating the experience. In terms of hours spent, I have worked harder on this course than any I've ever taken, but I've also learned more and enjoyed it more because I chose my own direction (Erickson, 1992, p. 2).

> I personally think the structure of this course is excellent. I would like to see it become a course that every teacher must take every two or, at most, three years in order to keep their [sic] certificate valid. The freedom permitted in the choice of a project allows teachers to be comfortable with their topic. At the same time the sharing that evolves in the classes, through the teaching, and outside of class as people dialogue about their projects and other ideas, encourages participants to become familiar with and accept recent ideas (Atkinson, 1991, p. 2).

A teacher development perspective. Recently, Hopkinson (1993) participated as an observer, facilitator and researcher in a *Comet Field-based Implementation* course that sought to extend participants' scientific literacy and comfort in teaching hands-on science. Experienced teachers attended a week-long intensive Summer Institute that modelled inquiry learning and demonstrated strategies for classroom teaching based on a constructivist perspective. The teachers then designed action plans for classroom science projects and conducted them during the following semester. Hopkinson met with participants in several follow-up seminars and found they were so eager to share their experiences that the university instructors had little time for input. When participants

reflected on their experiences in individual interviews fourteen months after they completed the implementation component, they consistently referred to the "importance of spending time with colleagues which was devoted to professional discussion around common concerns" (p. 110). Hopkinson concluded that "there is a crucial need for collegial, professional interactions in the working lives of elementary classroom teachers which has, so far, been seriously under-estimated" (p. 111). He also asserted that "although the change process was not easy and far from complete, indicating that real, meaningful change was taking place"(p. 94), the teachers had significantly altered their views of science teaching. In his opinion this impact was due primarily to the extended time frame of the course, its demonstration of strategies that involved participants as learners from a constructivist perspective, the opportunity for teachers to conduct self-directed projects in their own classrooms, and opportunities for ongoing collegial interaction and mentoring focused on the teachers' concerns.

Hopkinson interprets his conclusions in light of recent literature on teacher development. He suggests that the *Comet Field-Based Implementation* model in which he participated is compatible with principles of teacher development "as being *sustained, based in practice* and, in which a sense of *ownership* is fostered among participants" (p. 41). In his opinion, the training workshops that preceded teachers' classroom action projects were a necessary element of the overall experience, but the key to teachers' growth was involvement in classroom inquiry supported by opportunities to make sense of the process. He is certain that without these components, little change in practice would have taken place.

Orientation to inquiry. Some SFU teacher educators (McPhie, 1992; Montabello, 1993) have adopted transactional approaches to recent work with experienced teachers. Their field-based courses did not focus on implementation of particular content or pedagogies, but on collaborative inquiry into learning, teaching and teacher education. This work is grounded in a view of teacher learning that includes negotiation of meaning in a

supportive environment where all voices can be heard (McPhie, 1992), and where the university instructor is a fellow inquirer and a nurturer of inquiry (Montabello, 1993).

The Richmond Project, a recent collaborative venture sponsored by the SFU Professional Development Program, was explicit about adopting this position. The project involved student teachers, school associates and faculty associates in joint investigations of assessment, evaluation and reporting practices in secondary schools. Fisher, Ponsart and Terpening (1992) state unequivocally that in this project their primary purpose was to promote inquiry rather than implementation of a particular pedagogy.

> The project reflects the determination of the Faculty of Education at SFU to encourage the development of teachers who have a commitment to an ongoing inquiry into their practice, and who have the understanding and disposition necessary to make that inquiry fruitful. Part of SFU's reason for wanting to do this lies in the changes that promise to come in the next few years....What marks these changes as different is the degree to which the decision-making is being transferred to the classroom teacher. Change in the next few years will not be teachers learning to implement received wisdom from above; it's much more likely to be teachers making sense of the proposals in the light of their own lived experience in the classroom (Fisher, Ponsart & Terpening, 1992, p. 1).

Other voices. Some university instructors continue to question the "theory into practice" or transmissional model of field-based implementation coursework that was established in early Faculty of Education policy. There has been a visible trend toward more inquiry-oriented and transactional approaches that focus on teachers' individual needs and support the investigation of current concerns. These attitudes toward teacher development are not, however, shared by all faculty members at SFU.

In the years immediately preceding this study, tensions accumulated as faculty members with differing beliefs about teacher learning and the university's role in teacher education expressed increasing concern about directions being taken by field-based coursework. For example, a report to the Undergraduate Programs Committee on *Comet Field-based Implementation* courses (Richmond, 1992) states that:

> The Faculty of Education is a professional school and it is also a member of the academic community of the university. In responding to proposals for in-service education (or training) two key points must be bourne [sic] in mind. One is that a request from a professional group for an in-service course of the Comet variety is not self-justifying. Nor does a course proposal satisfy credibility questions by pointing towards ideas in the Year 2000 materials *per se*, many of which are debatable to say the least. The university has the abiding task of the fair and honest intellectual, of speaking truth to power. It's [sic] job is not that of rubber-stamping agendas set by others. It is that of educational leader, hence its emphasis on research. Second, the Faculty of Education maintains its own credibility in the university setting to the degree that it functions as an academic institution. It is this same credibility that translates into course credit. For this reason there cannot be a double standard with respect to "professional" course approval for such would lead to a loss of the very thing that is so highly prized when the Faculty's name is invoked....The notion of "meeting the needs of the field," or of "field-based programs," no matter how enticing, cannot be allowed to obscure fundamental questions about the value of content (Richmond, 1992, pp. 1-2).

The central issue in this report is cast as the nature of content that should be studied in field-based courses. The author specifically asks the question, "So what, in a nutshell, are the concepts to be understood, and in what specific context are they to be demonstrated?" (p. 4). He presents a strong argument for curriculum-oriented coursework in which "less emphasis should be given to the role of journals, perhaps, and more to the important skills and concepts identified in the head [the Summer Institute portion of a Comet course] and their exemplification in the production of a properly designed case study [during the tail of the Comet]" (p. 4). At another point the author notes that "It is the generic concern with certain preferred methodologies, none of which carries a *prima facie* priority that gives rise to the most searching questions concerning academic respectability," and asks the question, "Are the teacher's professional duties a suitable subject for credit?" (p. 2). The deeper issue seems to be what counts as an academically-defensible teaching/learning process worthy of university credit. It appears that, in this individual's view, negotiation of meaning or reflection on practice are out of the question.

MacKinnon (1993) articulates the dilemma posed by this issue within the Faculty of Education. In his paper on "Examining practice to address policy problems in teacher education" he says:

> ...the problem I believe we face at SFU stems from creating sharp boundaries between teaching practice in schools and the "rigorous" study of education. I believe our troubles are further exacerbated by a division of labour we seem to manufacture between thought and action. We tend to view 'thought' as something occurring in the university, and 'action' as something occurring in schools. By institutional arrangement I believe we have separated—in time and in place—the practical aspects of learning to teach from the disciplined study of education (MacKinnon, 1993, p. 5).

Project X and Education 386 were caught up in this dilemma, because the Project was developed during a period when tensions among differing views of teacher learning were coming to a head. These tensions were a powerful element of the context in which this study is situated.

Traditions of thought in teacher education. One framework for understanding such tensions within a Faculty of Education is offered by Zeichner (1993). He notes that throughout the twentieth century, proposals for teacher education reform have vacillated among several distinct traditions of thought that represent different values emphases. "New" reforms also have their roots in these traditions. Zeichner and his colleagues have described four traditions of thought which they call academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, and social reconstructionist (Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Zeichner, 1993; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991).

According to Zeichner (1993), most teacher education programs contain elements of all four traditions within their programmatic structures. Furthermore, within each tradition one can also find contradictions and internal conflicts in beliefs and practices. However, an examination of differing attitudes toward particular teacher education practices can illuminate distinctions among positions that may appear similar on the surface.

> ...all teacher education programs reflect particular patterns of resonance with all four of the various reform traditions. No teacher education program can be understood in relation to any one tradition. The four traditions focus our attention on different aspects of teaching expertise. All teacher educators are concerned about the particular issues that are emphasized in each of the traditions. It is the degree of emphasis and particular meaning given to these various factors within particular teacher education programs which give programs their identities (Zeichner, 1993, p. 8).

Elements of all four traditions described by Zeichner (1993) can be identified in the Faculty of Education's attitudes toward field-based coursework. The academic tradition is apparent in a concern for subject matter and the implied transmission of content from faculty member to student. In this tradition, the university is seen as the seat of knowledge and it "maintains its own credibility in the university setting to the degree that it functions as an academic institution" (Richmond, 1992, p. 2). The social efficiency tradition, which views knowledge as based on scientific research and seeks to apply that knowledge to the organization of learning, is reflected in the SFU Faculty of Education policy statement "That we monitor programs for their impact on the client (Do they make an observable difference in increasing teacher effectiveness?)" (SFU Faculty of Education, 1984, p. 1). A developmentalist perspective is apparent in many of the research reports on field-based courses that suggest "changes occur only under certain conditions and within particular contexts" (Wideen, Carlman & Strachan, 1986, p. 8). A social reconstructionist orientation is represented by individuals like McPhie (1992), who believes that collaborative inquiry among school-based and university-based educators can "provide fertile ground to examine competing knowledge claims and to reach towards new knowledge and possibilities" (p. 4).

Zeichner does not argue for "a grand synthesis that washes away ideological differences" (1993, p. 8), or for adoption of one clear path for any teacher education institution. Instead, he suggests that teacher educators might use the traditions of thought framework to situate their own practices and shed light on possible consequences of curricular and programmatic decisions. His analysis seems relevant to the study of Education 386 in several ways. It suggests that tensions among different perspectives are inevitable within teacher educators' situations of practice. It provides a framework for understanding curricular and programmatic decisions within teacher education programs. It also acknowledges that programmatic decisions may be either enabling or constraining to

the purposes and intents of a particular reform effort. This framework will be reconsidered when decisions made during the planning phases of Education 386 are analyzed.

A personal perspective on field-based coursework

Historical roots. This researcher was involved as an instructor and researcher in both *Theory and Practice of Implementation* and *Comet Field-Based Implementation* courses throughout the 1980's and early 1990's. Experience with more than fifteen groups of teachers, focused on such diverse topics as student teacher supervision, teaching for thinking, language and literacy development, principles of the Year 2000, and the *Primary* and *Intermediate Programs*, confirmed the findings of other studies of field-based coursework mentioned above. It seemed that regardless of the content, teachers responded in similar ways to coursework that encouraged them to engage in focused, self-directed learning. On course evaluations and in other forms of teacher responses, many teacher-learners identified the following factors as contributing to their growth: opportunities to identify and pursue personal learning goals; access to information and resources relevant to their goals; input that responded to specific concerns; extended time for practice and reflection on practice; a supportive environment that encouraged collaborative inquiry and risk-taking; and time for meaningful interaction with colleagues. In addition, they frequently mentioned the importance of congruence between the instructor's stated beliefs and educational practices, and the modeling of learner-focused principles and strategies. Teachers' course evaluations and assignments provided evidence that these courses had the potential to change teachers' views of themselves as learners—from passive recipients of information, dependent on others to determine what and how they should teach, to more autonomous professionals with a commitment to self-reflective inquiry, a motivation to explore new ideas, and confidence to take risks in their classrooms.

Re-thinking the meaning of "implementation." Just prior to the initiation of Project X, this researcher also participated in a province-wide Ministry of Education study of one

hundred twenty-six Intermediate Developmental Sites. Each Site had designed a focused project to investigate the implementation of selected aspects of the Intermediate Program. The size and composition of Site project teams varied from small groups of teachers to entire school staffs, cross-district committees and inter-institutional groups.The research examined participants' patterns of experience as they implemented their projects, and attempted to identify conditions that supported the implementation of Year 2000 principles at these Sites. After visiting more than twenty Sites and examining reports from all projects, the research team was struck by the similarities among participants' responses. Despite the diversity of projects, six factors were mentioned consistently as contributing to participants' understandings of the Intermediate Program: opportunities to develop a personally meaningful shared framework; identification of a specific focus for inquiry; a supportive climate for change that emphasized growth rather than outcomes; shared ownership among individuals and groups with differing roles and responsibilities; opportunities for collaboration and collegial interaction; and time for reflection. Several of these factors were almost identical to those valued by participants in field-based courses.

This research also suggested that the term "implementation" was being redefined through teachers' experiences with the new programs.

> Developmental Site participants also discovered that implementation is an inquiry process. In the past, teachers have not thought of themselves as researchers, but today this is becoming a powerful process. Thinking about implementation as an exploration of possibilities rather than an imposition of a single approach reduces the need for an immediate, identifiable product. An attitude of inquiry opens the door to new discoveries, especially if educators, parents and students are working together toward similar goals. Once the inquiry process has begun, it can lead to unanticipated outcomes and new questions which stimulate further investigation (Dockendorf & Holborn, 1992, p. 2).

In the Developmental Site projects, three factors seemed to support an attitude of inquiry. First, Developmental Site participants were able to design their own projects without following a specified format. Many stressed the value of being able to explore without producing an immediate result. Second, time was set aside for focused reflection,

making it possible for Site participants to think about their experiences and build on what they were learning as they went along. Third, as a result of taking time to reflect together, participants supported one another in taking risks and learning from experience.

This research suggested that a fidelity model of implementation was not only inappropriate but also impossible in relation to Year 2000 programs. Educators in the Developmental Site projects were attempting to make sense of a complex framework of principles and policies presented for the first time in a single Ministry document. They had to create their own visions of how the framework might be applied in different situations. As they implemented their ideas, they had to adjust their expectations repeatedly in response to what they learned from experience. Changing their assumptions about implementation was a struggle for many Developmental Site participants.

> When the *Intermediate Response Draft* (1990) was introduced, many educators expected a sequenced package similar to curricula of the past. They assumed it would outline, in concrete terms, the 'what, when and how' of instruction for students in intermediate classrooms.
>
> As they investigated the *Intermediate Response Draft* (1990), Site participants discovered a different meaning for the term implementation. They learned that the *Intermediate Response Draft* (1990) was not a guide to be followed in step-by-step fashion. Instead, it provided a framework—a philosophy, a learning theory, a set of principles for designing appropriate learning experiences—but it assumed that educators, students and communities would make significant decisions about how to apply the framework to suit their contexts. They selected from many different approaches the ones that were best for their educational needs (Dockendorf & Holborn, 1992, p. 1).

The Developmental Site research seems to confirm the belief that many educators have been "de-skilled" (Apple & Jungck, 1992) by techno-rational approaches to teacher learning, including the fidelity approach to implementation. Teachers appreciate learning opportunities that allow them to make sense of new information, to choose their own learning goals, and to inquire into real dilemmas of practice, because these experiences affirm their capacity to learn and to make autonomous professional decisions. At the same time, the uncertainty and risks involved create fear, anxiety and a yearning for the familiar.

Consequently a supportive, encouraging environment appears to be essential for teacher self-development, particularly in times of educational change.

The in-service coordinator's role. In the late 1980's, while the Faculty of Education was exploring alternative approaches to field-based coursework, the thrust toward reform in British Columbia public schools was also gaining momentum. The Director of Project Development recognized that existing models of field-based coursework offered by the Faculty of Education could play an important role in supporting teacher development during the coming period of intense educational change. In 1990 he invited this researcher to join the Project Office staff in the role of in-service coordinator. This position offered a dual challenge: on the one hand, to collaborate with school districts and other agencies to create in-service education opportunities that were responsive to teachers' learning needs; and on the other hand, to establish academic and administrative support structures that would provide viable routes to university credit.

In 1991, the Project Office was approached by several school districts seeking opportunities for teachers to participate in field-based coursework focused on Year 2000 principles and programs. These districts had heard of similar ventures sponsored by SFU, and were eager to collaborate on courses that would meet their teachers' needs. This researcher, in the role of in-service coordinator, began a process of negotiation with four districts that eventually led to two collaborative field-based projects. One of these was Project X.

Beliefs and principles underlying the framework for Project X

The remaining sections of this chapter summarize educational beliefs and principles that framed the initial discussions of Project X. They are organized around four themes: processes of change; teachers as learners; learning communities; and university teaching as a transactional enterprise. These themes have been selected because each was carefully

considered in the design of Project X and Education 386, and each provides a lens for analyzing data gathered during the action research study.

The four thematic discussions draw on several overlapping bodies of literature on school reform, educational change, in-service teacher education and professional development. The views represented here are commonly associated with the term teacher development. Those who ascribe to a teacher development orientation share several common claims. They view learning as a constructive, collaborative and transactional process, and value reflective inquiry as a means of generating and renewing professional knowledge. They describe teachers as autonomous professionals capable of directing their own learning, but also emphasize the influence of culture and context on teachers' behaviours and beliefs. They suggest that changing these cultures through the development of collaborative learning communities may hold the key to significant educational reform. Some also assert that teachers, working collectively, can not only contribute to school reform but also shape the future of society through critical reflection and emancipatory action.

This literature, including philosophical and position papers, program descriptions, discussions of pedagogy, teacher professional resources and research studies, informed the development of Project X in several ways. First, it provided support for the learning theory and pedagogical principles that the course attempted to embody. Second, research involving in-service teachers suggested specific factors to consider in course design and implementation. Third, strategies to support teacher development described by other teacher educators were incorporated into course activities. Fourth, key themes in the literature provided categories for data analysis and templates for interpreting participants' perceptions of their experiences during the action research study. Each of the following sections introduces one of the themes, provides an overview of key points drawn from the literature, and summarizes beliefs and principles that informed the initial approaches to Project X.

Processes of change. Chapter 2 introduced the concept of situated practice as a lens through which to view the work and decisions of teachers and teacher educators. In British Columbia, teachers' situations of practice are presently characterized by uncertainty. This uncertainty arises from many factors: rapid societal change manifested through such indicators as increasing diversity of language, culture and family backgrounds in teachers' classrooms; political instability within the profession resulting from legislated changes in bargaining, budgeting and labor status; and successive waves of criticism unleashed by a public that views education as a scapegoat for economic and social ills. The climate of uncertainty is also fueled by warnings that today's schools are inadequate to meet the demands of the future, and that they must be fundamentally restructured to address changing societal needs (Daggett, 1992; *Forces of Change Influencing Education and Training*, 1991; Goodlad, 1990; *Report of the Royal Commission*, 1988; Sheingold, 1991).

Fullan (1991) describes two opposing forces for school reform in North America: intensification, characterized by top-down, linear approaches aimed at the improvement of existing practices; and restructuring, a developmental and participatory approach toward evolutionary but fundamental change. In British Columbia, controversy over school reform has been magnified by public response to Year 2000 initiatives. Year 2000 reforms are clearly aimed at fundamental restructuring over a long period of time. Some parent groups, politicians and media figures, however, favour intensification through a return to the "basics." British Columbia teachers are caught in an escalating struggle between these competing conceptions of educational reform. They are at the centre of the debate, and their practices are being scrutinized with increasing skepticism (CBC *Early Edition*, September 07, 1993; *The Vancouver Sun*, 1993, pp. A1, A9).

The current context for teacher learning, then, is one in which teachers are trying to make sense of a workplace where predictability has vanished. For them, making sense of educational change means more than understanding new programs. They have questions

about the educational, social, political and ultimately moral consequences of large-scale reform. They have practical concerns about how to bring the stated principles of learning to reality in their classrooms. They worry about the impact of uncertainty on students and community, and they seek order in an ever-changing context. Despite their concerns, however, most teachers realize that educational change is under way in British Columbia, and want to understand the proposed framework for reform.

Fullan (1991) points out that in the past, school reform efforts have failed because they neglected to address the personal, subjective elements of change. Individuals affected by change, whether voluntary or imposed, need opportunities to make sense of the changes on their own terms. This process takes time, and must address both the cognitive and affective aspects of participants' experience. All real change involves loss, anxiety, struggle and resistance. Loucks and Hall (1979) have shown that when a change is first introduced, teachers are most concerned about how it will influence them at a personal level, rather than with the goals or principles involved. If their concerns are not addressed, they may either give the appearance of changing but only superficially adopt new practices, or they may experience levels of anxiety that lead to outright resistance and rejection of new ideas.

> No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have the power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own (Marris, 1975, p. 166, quoted in Fullan, 1991, p. 31).

Fullan and Miles (1992) suggest that real educational reform is more likely to occur if change is viewed as a process rather than an event, and if all participants see the process as a learning experience in which outcomes cannot be predicted in advance. They suggest that an appropriate metaphor for educational change is that of a journey—one in which problems are inevitable. If problems are successfully managed through "active, assertive, inventive" approaches (p. 750), real constructive change is more likely to occur. However,

this view of educational reform is incompatible with a fidelity model of implementation. It is also unfamiliar to most teachers who have been de-skilled as autonomous learners by previous experiences with top-down, techno-rational approaches to educational change.

> Real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth. The anxieties of uncertainty and the joys of mastery are central to the subjective meaning of educational change, and to success or failure—facts that have not been recognized or appreciated in most attempts at reform (Fullan, 1991, p. 32).

A further point made by Fullan and Miles (1992) is that even if the impetus for change comes from a large-scale initiative such as the Year 2000, real change must be implemented at the local level. "...local implementation by everyday teachers, principals, parents, and students is the only way that change happens" (p. 752). At the local level, change is best managed by groups that represent a variety of roles. School district officials have a particular responsibility: "Successful change efforts are most likely when the local district office is closely engaged with the changing school[s] in a collaborative, supportive way and places few bureaucratic restrictions in the path of reform" (p. 751).

Project X was an attempt by school districts to support educational reform at the local level in ways that would give teachers time to make sense of proposed changes, deal with the change process both cognitively and affectively, and experience successful inquiry and problem solving that would carry them forward in learning about Year 2000 principles and programs. The following beliefs and principles about processes of change guided the initial planning of Project X.

1. Many teachers are overwhelmed by the magnitude of changes proposed by the Year 2000 framework. The change process can become more manageable when teachers select a personally meaningful focus for change, identify a goal or question for inquiry within this focus, and engage in self-directed action and reflection relevant to their particular situations of practice. Successful experiences in this approach to

change may lead to greater professional knowledge, skill, competence, confidence and autonomy in educational decision-making.

2. The development of understanding and ownership of change is a long-term process that teachers enter at different points and experience in different ways. Each individual needs opportunities to voice his or her opinions in an environment that respects and appreciates diversity. Teachers can benefit from time to construct individual and shared understandings in the presence of encouraging and clarifying feedback.

3. Teachers bring to the change process beliefs and assumptions about the power of others' expectations, including those of school district administrators and other authorities. Their growth is facilitated when school district leaders participate as co-learners in the change process and communicate encouragement, trust, and confidence in teachers' professional abilities.

4. Some teachers feel paralyzed by the uncertainty of their working world. Teachers can benefit from learning specific strategies to manage problems of change in ways that increase their feelings of competence and confidence. These strategies need to be realistic, relevant to dilemmas of everyday practice, and modeled in the context of meaningful situations.

5. Change involves struggle, resistance and fear. When these feelings are acknowledged and treated as natural elements of the change process, teachers become more accepting and tolerant of their own and others' reactions.

6. Significant change takes time. Teachers need extensive time to process and experiment with possible changes without the pressure to meet performance expectations or to demonstrate outcomes.

7. Teachers are more likely to view change as a learning opportunity in an environment that visibly supports the change process.

Teachers as learners. British Columbia teachers are attempting to make sense of recommendations for educational change for which there are no blueprints for implementation (Fullan & Miles, 1992). As suggested earlier, a fidelity model of implementation no longer seems appropriate to teachers' situations of practice. Teachers appear to manage educational change more effectively when they adopt an attitude of inquiry and view themselves as learners capable of resolving dilemmas of practice through self-directed action and reflection. Studies of field-based coursework and the research on Developmental Sites reviewed earlier indicate that learning is facilitated when teachers individually or collaboratively choose their own learning goals and embark on focused learning projects under conditions that provide support for inquiry and collegial interaction.

The work of Schön and Argyris (discussed in Schön, 1983, 1987, 1988) in the 1970's and early 1980's drew attention to the role of the teacher as thoughtful decision-maker in the complex, problematic world of the classroom. *The Reflective Practitioner* (Schön, 1983) became one of the most frequently-referenced works of the 1980's as emphasis shifted from helping teachers perform instructional tasks to enabling them to solve problems and critically examine dilemmas of practice. At the same time, discussions about learning as a meaning-making activity and teaching as a facilitative and transactional enterprise began to appear in teacher education as well as other fields such as adult education (Brookfield, 1983, 1986) and literacy development (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984). Teaching was described as a lifelong learning endeavour, and teacher education depicted as a continuum that encompassed an individual's entire career (Fullan, 1991). Researchers branched out toward investigating collaborative models of professional development (Lieberman, in press; Little, 1990; MacKinnon & Grunau, 1991; Miller, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989) and involving teachers as researchers of practice (Grimmett, 1993; Kemmis, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991; Olson, 1990; Pinnell & Matlin, 1989; Züber-Skerritt, 1992).

On the surface, current teacher development literature appears to adhere to common principles with respect to a view of teachers as autonomous professionals capable of engaging in continuous, lifelong learning. However, the valuing of teachers as learners, decision-makers and agents in the construction of professional understanding has brought to the surface other issues such as the validity of different forms of knowledge (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992; Shulman, 1988), and the role of education in shaping societal change (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Zeichner and Tabachnick (1991) argue that the term "reflective teaching" now has so many different interpretations that it has become almost meaningless.

> It's come to the point now that we don't know very much at all about a practice if it is merely described as something aimed at facilitating the development of reflective teachers. We agree with Calderhead's (1989) assessment that the full range of beliefs within the teacher education community about teaching, schooling, teacher education and the social order has now been incorporated into the discourse about reflective practice. There is not a single teacher educator who would say that he or she is not concerned about preparing teachers who are reflective. The criteria that have become attached to reflective practice are so diverse, however, that important differences between specific practices are masked by the use of the common rhetoric. (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991, p. 1)

Discourse in teacher development and adult education in general has begun to examine the significance of these differing beliefs and value systems. It pushes beyond rhetoric to ask questions about how much autonomy and control teachers should have in determining what and how they learn, and whether or not professional knowledge generated through inquiry into practice is sufficient to ensure thoughtful decisions. Numerous authors, particularly those who espouse the tenets of critical theory, argue that at the heart of these discussions are issues of authority and control, empowerment and emancipation. Kincheloe (1991), for example, writes of the need to empower teachers through critical inquiry into their own practice so that schools can become more humane and democratic institutions. Similarly, Liston & Zeichner (1991) emphasize that teacher education must involve all participants in the critical examination of beliefs and values, not only in relation to personal actions in the classroom but also with respect to the socio-

political contexts in which their work is embedded. These authors believe that teachers will become fully autonomous and responsible educators only when their reflections go beyond the techno-rational analysis of teaching as pedagogy to examine the moral and ethical dimensions of their decisions.

Beyer (1987), however, claims that such activities cannot occur within the prevailing structures of teacher education institutions, because their contexts and cultures are "hierarchical, divisive and impositional" (p. 30). He suggests that the dominant culture of teacher education can only be changed "in specific locations and in collaboration with those people—teachers, parents, students, administrators, etc.—involved in the day-to-day operation of schools and programs of teacher preparation."

Project X, situated in such a location, provided an opportunity to involve teachers as critical inquirers into practice, to help them develop skills and strategies for ongoing self-directed learning, to engage them in examination of personal beliefs and values related to proposed principles of educational reform, and to encourage their confidence as autonomous, thoughtful decision-makers. The following beliefs and principles regarding teachers as learners influenced initial discussions between the in-service coordinator and participating school districts about the framework for Project X.

8. Teacher learning is facilitated when teachers view their practice as an opportunity for action research leading to continuous growth.
9. Teachers are more likely to engage in meaningful inquiry if they are provided with opportunities and structures that enable them to identify and focus on significant dilemmas of practice.
10. Teacher learning is facilitated in situations that acknowledge and respect differing learning and thinking styles, beliefs, values, strengths and concerns.
11. Teacher learning can be facilitated by opportunities to analyze personal histories and current practices in relation to particular learning theories and principles.

12. Teacher learning is facilitated in situations that model the theories and principles being discussed.

13. When teachers see themselves as learners rather than experts, they are more likely to set realistic expectations for change and take risks to try new practices.

14. When teachers experience learning as a constructive, transactional process they are more likely to provide the same opportunities for their students.

15. Most teachers have a bias toward practical action because of the daily press of teaching life. For many, the avenue to reflection is through practical action.

Learning communities. Perhaps the most consistent message communicated by the research on both field-based coursework and the Developmental Sites is the value of teachers working together to make sense of their situations of practice, to investigate new ideas and to support one another's learning projects. Numerous studies such as those of Little (1990) and Rozenholtz (1989) have corroborated the power of opportunities for genuine collaboration. Little's study, for example, attributed the success of an innovative program to norms of collegiality and experimentation that were developed among participants.

Hargreaves (1992) warns of the dangers of "contrived collegiality" in which formal, bureaucratic procedures involving initiatives such as peer coaching, mentor teaching, formal meetings and mandated collaborative planning are imposed on participants. He suggests that collaborative cultures do not arise spontaneously, and have to be created and sustained through leadership that sets a tone of openness and trust and creates opportunities for teachers to work together rather than mandating collaboration. Hargreaves also suggests that collaborative cultures are most likely to be effective when participants share common concerns such as a focus on curriculum development.

> Collaborative cultures are most compatible with the interests of local curriculum development and the exercise of discretionary professional judgement. They foster and build upon qualities of openness, trust and support between teachers and their colleagues. They capitalize on the collective expertise and endeavours of the teaching community. They

> acknowledge the wider dimensions of teachers' lives outside the classroom and the school, blurring the boundaries between in-school and out-of-school, public and private, professional and personal—grounding projects for development and change in a realistic and respectful appreciation of teachers' broader worlds. Teachers' work is deeply embedded in teachers' lives, in their pasts, in their biographies, in the cultures or traditions of teaching to which they have become committed. Developing the teacher, therefore, also involves developing the person, developing the life. In this respect, the interweaving of the personal and the professional in collaborative cultures, and the qualities of trust and sharing within those cultures, provide the most collegially supportive environment for change (Hargreaves, 1992, p. 233).

Opportunities for informal teacher collaboration and the development of a supportive learning community were essential elements of Project X. The following beliefs and principles were fundamental to the development of such a community.

16. A supportive learning community is founded on attitudes of respect and caring. Facilitators can set this tone by modeling thoughtful listening and non-judgmental responses to all participants.

17. A supportive learning community requires substantial time for teachers to interact in informal settings where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute. This can be facilitated by allowing extensive time for small-group interaction focused on participants' experiences and concerns.

18. A supportive learning community can be facilitated by both informal and formal opportunities for teachers to share ideas and resources. Facilitators can encourage connections among teachers with common interests, structure opportunities for participants to contribute to one another's learning projects, and offer ideas and resources in response to participants' requests.

19. Teacher collaboration cannot be mandated but can be facilitated by an invitation to work in support groups of a manageable size.

20. Teacher collaboration is facilitated when individuals choose when, how and with whom they will work collaboratively.

University teaching as a transactional enterprise. Chapter 1 suggested that at this time there are many pressures for British Columbia universities to re-think their approaches to in-service teacher education. Dewey (1938) cautions that:

> ...the rejection of the philosophy and practice of traditional education sets a new type of difficult educational problem for those who believe in the new type of education. We shall operate blindly and in confusion until we recognize this fact; until we thoroughly appreciate that departure from the old solves no problems (Dewey, 1938, p. 25).

He proposes that the frame of reference for an alternative to traditional education must be the experience of the learner rather than the content to be learned. He also points out, however, that not all experiences are educative, and that educators must develop understandings about what an educative experience signifies. Dewey outlines two principles that guide the development of educative experiences: continuity and interaction. The principle of continuity proposes that educative experiences must connect with and build upon what the learner brings to the situation. The principle of interaction suggests that learning is an interactive, constructive process, and that educators must engage learners in interactions with ideas, concepts, information, people and materials that lead to appropriate further development. Educators "...should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile" (p. 40).

This is not to say that learning of particular content or concepts is not important. It does suggest that educators begin with and continually refer to students' experiences and understandings as the main points of reference for deciding how such content or concepts might be addressed. Shulman (1988) discusses the dangers of creating a dichotomy between the importance of learners' experience on the one hand, and content or concepts on the other. He describes how Dewey always began his analyses with a dichotomy and proceeded to illuminate the virtues of either side in order to suggest how the dichotomy might be resolved at a more fundamental level. Shulman notes that the apparent dichotomy between concepts or content (theory) and experience (practice) presents an ongoing

dilemma for teacher educators. To avoid the pitfalls of this dichotomy, they should ensure that teacher-learners critically examine concrete problems of experience in relation to general principles that might provide insight into specific situations.

> It is not enough merely to celebrate the reasons for the student's judgments or actions. Our obligations are not discharged until what is reasoned has been married to what is reasonable. What a learner finds reasons for doing are [sic] not always what we as teachers or teachers of teachers would wish to encourage as reasonable (Shulman, 1988, p. 34).

Stewart (1993) warns of the dangers of creating a false dichotomy between teaching and facilitating. He points out that good teaching involves three kinds of acts: intellectual or logical (e.g., explaining, questioning, probing, illustrating); strategic (improving the external practical conditions that make learning more likely); and moral (demonstrating values such as respect, caring, consideration, honesty, fairness, high standards, etc.). Good teachers engage in all three types of acts in order to create the most effective educative experiences for their students. Stewart believes that the idea of teaching as "facilitating", which he describes as a strategic act, has been opposed to teaching as "telling", an intellectual act, when both have a place in education. This has led to a false dichotomy that obscures the need for teachers to attend carefully to the development of learners' concepts. Stewart believes that:

> Where theoretical concepts are concerned, and therefore greater awareness of the world, the intellectual acts of teaching need to be fully and systematically engaged at least at critical points....How such objectives might be achieved systematically and meaningfully in the absence of informed and dedicated instruction by those already "inside" the forms of understanding, armed with the intellectual and moral acts of teaching, is unclear (Stewart, 1993, p. 11).

A question raised by Stewart's analysis is the extent to which concepts can be derived from experience, in an environment that facilitates critical thinking, rather than being explained directly by one with greater knowledge and understanding. The teacher development literature argues that, at least in the case of teacher-learners, general principles or theoretical concepts can be derived from critical examination of experience and do not have to be taught in a didactic sense. Furthermore, because the meaning of general

principles and theoretical concepts is mediated by particular situations, teacher-learners must play an active role in constructing that meaning. The teacher educator's role is to facilitate such critical reflection and construction of meaning.

Underlying these discussions are differing beliefs about the appropriate relationship between teachers and learners with respect to control of learning. To what degree are learners capable of directing their own development, and to what degree should teachers determine the "what" and "how" of students' learning? Those who lean toward greater teacher control believe that a primary goal of education is the development of understanding, and that students cannot individually re-create the immense depth of understanding that lies behind complex systems of thought. "Theoretical or conceptual frameworks do not lie about waiting to rush sensibly and coherently into untutored minds...nor are they readily mastered in some random and off-hand manner. These systems of thought are manifestly discontinuous with everyday experience" (Stewart, 1993, p. 10). Educators must control and direct students' learning so that these conceptual frameworks become apparent. "The primary and certainly most demanding goal of schooling is education, which...is the development of mind or consciousness through the achievement of various kinds of knowledge and understanding" (p. 8). Those who lean toward greater student control of learning suggest that a primary goal of education is to develop students' capacities for critical thinking and informed, moral action. In their view, these capacities cannot be developed without sustained engagement in tasks where the appropriate intellectual resources, including information, concepts, thinking processes and habits of mind, are brought to bear on real, relevant situations (Bailin, Case, Coombs & Daniels, 1993; Raths, Wassermann, Jonas & Rothstein, 1986). The degree of control accorded to learners in these situations communicates messages about their abilities to be competent, responsible decision-makers in a complex and changing world. In the case of teacher-learners, experiences that respect their professional abilities may positively influence their confidence as decision-makers and their capacity to act on behalf of their

students in thoughtful, moral ways (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992; Harste, 1990; Kincheloe, 1991).

These discussions also reflect differences in beliefs about the nature of learning and knowledge. Transactional approaches to teaching are based on the beliefs that learners are an integral part of the teaching and learning situation, and that learning is a transaction between learners and their situations (Bentley & Dewey, 1949). Learners' knowledge is constructed from these transactions. Newman (1991) describes some of the differences she perceives between learning situations based on these beliefs and those that are oriented toward transmission of previously-determined knowledge.

> Unlike a traditional transmission classroom, a transactional learning context is open-ended. Students are engaged in experiences that connect directly with what's going on in the world outside of school. They are invited to experiment, to make mistakes and to change what they're doing based on the outcome of their experiments. They are encouraged to examine and question their own strategies and assumptions of people around them. By working together they are able to discover the various ways in which things in the world are done (Newman, 1991, p. 20).

Transactional teaching approaches involve a dynamic negotiation of control between teacher and learners. Transactional teachers make decisions *in media res* about how best to support learners' development toward greater autonomy, using their understanding of the learners, their situations, and appropriate directions for development (Killion & Simmons, 1992). Learners may be involved in these decisions to greater or lesser degrees, but their input is always considered.

Wassermann (1980) describes the qualities of a "master teacher" of the transactional variety. This kind of teacher is able to intervene in each student's learning in ways that are enabling to the student's growth as a more skilled, more knowledgeable, more self-confident and more autonomous individual. "The Master Teacher employs strategies which, in the end result, enable the student to move forward on the self-teaching continuum" (p. 181). The Master Teacher functions as a person whose beliefs and actions are congruent, and who is a model of thoughtfulness, risk-taking and creativity. The

Master Teacher interacts with students in ways that express respect and caring, demonstrated through non-judgmental acceptance of students' ideas, opinions and beliefs. The Master Teacher also observes students carefully to discover what kinds of interventions might support growth, and provides realistic, practical and specific input. Often, such interventions take the form of questions that encourage students to consider their ideas more deeply and to practice ways of thinking that will serve them throughout their lives. Finally, the Master Teacher creates learning opportunities by designing "curriculum" in the form of active learning experiences that build on what students know and can do and yet challenge them to move forward to new levels of development.

Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992) discuss this type of teaching in relation to the role of public school teachers. They refer to it as a "craft", and note that it emphasizes personal judgment rather than knowledge derived from research. "It relies heavily on intuition, care, and empathy for pupils. It is steeped in morality and ever critical in its search for meaningful schooling and benefit for pupils" (pp. 428-429). Like Dewey, they claim that a primary purpose of this kind of teaching is to engage learners in ways that enable them to reach beyond what they already know. "Teaching is not telling, talking, cajoling, or coercing...." (p. 429). It does involve collaboration between teacher and learners on both the negotiation of meanings and the types of activities that their work together will involve. This work is characterized by student action, closely connected with the real world outside the classroom, and involves an audience beyond the teacher.

> Exceptional teachers assume that all students have within them an inherent desire to learn. Of utmost importance to them is finding ways of channeling that desire within the classroom. Consequently, it becomes sacrosanct for crafty teachers to ensure that all classroom work is infused by student choice, student volition, and student action. This perspective attempts to treat students not as potentially wayward children but as able members of society (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992, p. 430).

Educators like Smith (1988) and Newman (1991) talk about the differences between traditional learning activities and "enterprises" in which learners are collaboratively engaged in constructing and re-constructing theoretical concepts through learning projects

they have selected. "Enterprises are group undertakings whose purpose is self-evident. No one who participates in an enterprise ever has to ask, 'Why am I doing this?'" (p. 70). Smith believes that there are four conditions that define a worthwhile learning enterprise. First, there are no grades, because enterprises are judged by how well they succeed in satisfying their intentions. Second, enterprises are not restricted to what the teacher wants, or bound by administrative and bureaucratic structures. Learning can happen at any place and time. Third, enterprises are not coercive. Nobody is forced to participate, and nobody is excluded who wants to participate. Finally, enterprises attempt to reduce status distinctions between teacher and students, because everyone is considered a learner. "In other words, in an enterprise everyone is a learner; everyone is a teacher" (Newman, 1991, p. 17).

Wassermann (1980) warns that this is no easy matter for the transactional teacher.

> First, there is the undertaking of "field trials"—the setting up of your classroom as a laboratory in which the testing of new ideas, the examination and interpretation of results, the learning to live with failure, the recreating, retesting, reshaping of methodology, materials, interactive strategies, may all occur. There is the continued seeking of additional information, the identification and selection of specific new teaching skills, of sharpening old ones and discarding others which are no longer appropriate. There is the continuous and painful process of self-assessment, in which you learn to depend more and more upon your own internal evaluation system. In the process of self-teaching, the locus of evaluation rests heavily within the learner (Wassermann, 1980, pp. 182-183).

What might university coursework look like if such principles were fully adopted by teacher educators? A surprising number of university-based teachers have written about their attempts to move in this direction (e.g., Elbow, 1986; Huck, 1989; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Newman, 1991; Oberg & Underwood, 1992; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991; Wassermann, 1980).

In the book, *Interwoven conversations: Learning and teaching through critical reflection*, Newman (1991) describes her attempts to construct a learning enterprise with teachers in a two-week summer institute that focused on learning and teaching writing.

> ...that situation has come closest to what I'm attempting to learn how to do: teach a group of teachers...in a collaborative learning classroom, where the motivation for learning comes from the learners, where students take risks and are able to build on their existing strategies, where learning is largely incidental (the result of doing something that really interests the students); in a situation where there is no fear of being graded, constrained by the minimum of restrictions, where no one is coerced into complying with teacher demands but encouraged to find her own way, where everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher (Newman, 1991, p. 17).

Because she wanted to involve students in shaping their learning experiences, her preliminary planning consisted of preparing the environment. Initial preparations included: examining her intentions and underlying beliefs; locating resources that might be useful; organizing materials that might be needed; and arranging the physical setting in ways that communicated an invitation for students to interact and to assume responsibility for learning decisions. Her preparations focused on the questions, "What sort of learning conditions do I want to create? What beliefs about learning do I want to convey and how might I implement them?" (p. 19).

Once students arrived, the course moved through phases that included creating a climate for collaborative learning, clarifying expectations, engaging students in meaningful tasks, creating routines that allowed students to learn both alone and from one another, establishing regular opportunities for learners to reflect on events and provide input into course directions, and interacting with students in ways that extended their learning. Newman stresses the importance of her own participation as a learner during the course. For example, she shared her draft writing with the class and invited students to critique it. She also invited students to analyze each aspect of the course from the perspective of both learners and teachers, and she used their feedback to shape further learning experiences.

Newman's reflections illuminate an ongoing struggle to find the line between what she calls "guiding" and "control".

> "The issue of control is a complex one. Classrooms generally don't function well if the majority of learners have no sense of what to do and how to do it. Nor are they conducive to learning when the constraints are so limiting that students can make no personal commitment to the various required tasks" (Newman, 1991, p. 352).

She concludes that enabling student development must include providing some direction. The most workable position is a negotiated curriculum in which the teacher presents choices that learners can see as meaningful and worthwhile to their development. When teacher-learners critically reflect on their learning experiences and have subsequent opportunities to suggest course directions, they can be brought into the decision-making process and at the same time feel secure in their instructor's leadership.

Newman also wrestles with the challenge of learners who prefer to leave the responsibility in her hands rather than make a commitment to shared responsibility.

> Although I quite openly employ all kinds of structure—I prepare materials, set up activities, frame discussions, arrange furniture, ask questions, and respond regularly to writing—I try leaving the agenda as open as possible. I do worry about pacing, about keeping activities moving, about the level of engagement, about generating and sustaining interest. I always have to be on the alert for opportunities to step in and offer direction and support. However, no outcome is guaranteed. While I've tried to arrange activities to help people reflect on particular learning and instructional concerns, each learner has to evolve his or her own understanding. I cannot make sense for people; they have to do that for themselves (Newman, 1991, p. 355).

Oberg and Underwood (1992) use the metaphor of a journey to reflect on their experiences as university instructor and student in a thirty-six hour graduate course. They refer to their mutual learning as a dialogue in which one another's contributions led them together toward unexpected insights into both classroom and university teaching. Oberg speaks of her fear, as a university instructor, that "...nothing valuable will happen for students unless I provide the wherewithal" (p. 165), and describes how she decides to begin with students' stories from practice.

> Beginning with actual stories from teachers' daily practice was more than a capitulation to teachers' natural tendencies to tell stories of their professional life experiences. Rather, it was the mandatory starting-point for insights that would be firmly anchored in teachers' everyday realities. Insights that originate in someone else's theory are often difficult to connect to one's own everyday actions, but new perceptions of one's own situation and one's own place in it can often transform not only the way one grasps one's world but also the way one acts (Oberg & Underwood, 1992, p. 166).

During the course, as she responds to students' stories with comments encouraging them to "push further" (p. 169), she wrestles with questions about her role: "What is the role of a

teacher when a student begins to lose his or her balance? What right has the teacher in the first place to throw students off balance, to precipitate the personal and potentially permanent unease and uncertainty that come from questioning the grounds of particular practices?" (p. 169). When she shares her doubts with the class, her student replies:

> In my response to Antoinette's doubts, I knew the importance of her way of teaching to my wakefulness of purpose and I knew I wanted to protect that path for any future traveller who needed to follow it. Perhaps the strength of this awareness was due to her willingness to share her own discomfort. So often I learn so much from these encounters with the teacher as a vulnerable human being, rather than an Olympian authority (Oberg & Underwood, 1992, p. 170).

In reflecting on her teaching, Oberg identifies that she is not a problem poser, guide, leader, interpreter of meanings or final judge of students' learning, because these roles would take power for self-development away from students. Instead, she sees herself as someone who makes spaces, physical and psychic, for students to interact, and who sets a tone that is respectful and appreciative. In discussing assignments, she notes that "Students' conclusions must be given status as the main product of the course. That is, their insights must constitute the course assignments...." (p. 173). She emphasizes the importance of careful responses from the instructor, believing that for as long as possible she must remain non-judgmental and reflect students' ideas back to them in ways that clarify rather than critique.

Oberg also discusses the challenge of shifting the locus of control toward students:

> As teachers, we are socialized to take control, to take the lead, to take responsibility for what goes on in the classroom, even for what students accomplish. Moreover, our superior knowledge of the subject matter we teach is supposed to be the source of our authority and our responsibility to both guide and judge students' work. The teacher who hopes to facilitate students' self-reflection...must strike a careful balance between teacher authority and student self-determination. This balance can never be worked out according to a formula. Rather, it must be negotiated (and often renegotiated) with each student group (Oberg & Underwood, 1992, p. 174).

Oberg and Underwood talk about a different conception of responsibility on the part of both instructor and student in this approach to teaching and learning. The instructor bears a

responsibility to contribute her broader perspective. She does this by providing critical feedback on students' ideas and insights without taking control away from them. Students are responsible for engaging in direct, personal relationships with other students and the teacher—sharing their stories, insights and questions in ways that create a community.

> Within a context of responsibility, both student and teacher let go of the "power" inherent in their roles. The teacher gives up an attitude and belief that she is, by virtue of her position, the sole director of the classroom experience. She gives up invulnerability, inaccessibility. The student gives up a safe, passive role that allows her to accept or reject, without commitment or personal involvement, the authority of the teacher. She also gives up invulnerability, inaccessibility (Oberg & Underwood, 1992, p. 175).

One of the most difficult challenges for teacher educators who wish to adopt transactional approaches is confronting and overcoming the influence of teachers' prior experiences in transmission-oriented university courses. Students come to class ready to assume the stance of passive learners. They are often excessively concerned with the instructor's agenda and performance expectations (Elbow, 1986; Newman, 1991; Oberg & Underwood, 1992; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). As Oberg (Oberg & Underwood, 1992) notes, students arrive in her courses with uncertainties and expect these to be quelled right from the beginning by a clear statement of the instructor's expectations and requirements. Newman (1991) writes about the process of overcoming these feelings and attitudes:

> First, people have to confront their expectations about being students. They have to overcome their bewilderment with my not telling them what they're supposed to do and how to do it. They have to learn to "just try" and see what happens. They also have to learn how to react to my feedback and probing questions, not as criticism of their efforts, but as a nudge to look beyond present assumptions. They have to learn to trust that I really mean it when I say helping one another isn't cheating.
>
> Then they have to learn to work together. They have to learn how to initiate and sustain a focused discussion, to venture candid reactions to one another's ideas and experiences, and to respond openly to the feedback that's offered. It all requires trust and developing trust takes time.

> As the teachers begin to build a learning community a new level of discomfort emerges. People suddenly become aware that we're not play-acting, we're engaged in serious business....Play-acting is safe—beliefs aren't on the line. You go through the motions, receive a grade, and it's business as usual back in the classroom. But as the teachers begin trusting our evolving learning community they meet **fear**—fear of silence, fear of losing control, fear of being accountable, fear of exposure, fear of confrontation, fear of uncertainty—the list of fears is long (Newman, 1991, p. 358).

The challenge, according to these teacher educators, is to find the balance—between giving students greater control and responsibility, and maintaining enough structure for them to take risks with new ways of learning. Elbow (1986) discusses this issue as one of balancing freedom and constraint in ways which are unambiguous to students, which he admits is a difficult proposition. His solution is to deal with the issue head-on, making his beliefs, values and purposes as clear as possible.

> ...I find an inescapable power relationship in any institutionalized teaching. I feel this power relationship hinders the sort of learning situation I seek—one in which the student comes to act on his own motivation and comes to evaluate ideas and perceptions on their own merits and not in terms of who holds them. I feel I can best minimize this power relationship by getting the weapons out on the table. Trying to pretend that the power and weapons are not there...only gets the power more permanently and insidiously into the air (Elbow, 1986, p. 79).

Perhaps this is why students in past field-based courses have expressed appreciation for an instructor's authenticity, and have valued the congruence between an instructor's stated beliefs and educational practices.

University grading requirements seem to create the greatest dilemma for instructors working from a transactional perspective. Oberg (Oberg & Underwood, 1992) admits that the institutional demands of grading create an inevitable status difference between instructor and students, because of the power inherent in judging and ranking students' work. Underwood, however, comments that this problem lies as much with students who refuse to take on the responsibility of self-development as it does with the instructor.

> "Power" in this case would seem to be with the teacher, and yet how can it be if the teacher feels uncomfortable with such a situation, if her attempts to engage in a human encounter are rebuffed? Without "response-ability" between student and teacher, there is no power within the human relationship, only within the institutional (Oberg & Underwood, 1992, p. 176).

Newman (1991) agrees with Smith's (1988) contention that grades interfere with learning, and has tried a variety of methods to avoid the comparisons that are implied by differentiated grading. Two strategies she has used are giving the same grade to each student, or negotiating grades at the beginning of a course that students then contract to achieve. Other instructors such as Oberg (Oberg & Underwood, 1992) accept the responsibility of grading as a necessary institutional requirement, but try to prolong the period of non-judgmental feedback to students as long as possible, until assignment of grades becomes inevitable.

Elbow (1986) addresses the issue by bringing students into the grading process. In his opinion, an important function of evaluation is to enable students to become self-evaluative, and only by teaching them how to set criteria and standards can this occur. He believes that when students develop criteria and share in the evaluation of their own and one another's work, they learn to set appropriate standards and to see their learning in better perspective. Elbow also distinguishes between measurement and commentary as two forms of feedback that instructors can provide. He suggests that for most learning activities, students are more likely to benefit when commentary is provided without measurement.

In initial discussions about Project X, the following assumptions about teaching from a transactional perspective were made.

21. In a university course that advocates transactional teaching and constructivist learning principles, teaching strategies and learning experiences should model the principles being advocated. Students should have opportunities to reflect upon and critically examine these experiences from perspectives of both learning and teaching.

22. Transactional teaching begins by involving students in decisions about their learning. Arriving at shared decisions involves the dynamic balancing of freedom and constraint. In this process the instructor should be as authentic as possible. Students seek and appreciate clear explanations of the instructor's beliefs about

learning, how these affect participants' roles and activities, what the instructor expects as demonstrations of learning, and evaluation procedures and criteria.

23. The selection of issues to be explored within the learning community depends on students' background, prior knowledge, interests and needs. These can be clarified through dialogue among class members and between students and instructor. A course outline describing pre-determined content to be learned is inappropriate.

24. Teacher-learners bring to their coursework deeply-felt concerns and dilemmas associated with their situations of practice. These can provide starting points for designing meaningful learning experiences.

25. Teacher-learners' lives and professional experiences are closely connected. Personal histories and stories of practice provide rich material to stimulate critical examination of beliefs and values.

26. A university course that advocates transactional approaches to teaching should incorporate evaluation processes that promote ownership and autonomy in self-development. Students can benefit from being involved in negotiating criteria and methods of assessment and evaluation, and in self-evaluation of learning.

27. Teachers bring with them past experiences in university coursework that may cause them to resist the responsibilities of self-directed learning. They may need time to deal with feelings of fear, anxiety and resistance. It is important for the instructor not to assume responsibility for these feelings, but to support students as they work through them toward self-development.

28. Teacher-learners thrive on opportunities to investigate issues of personal concern to them. Self-directed inquiry projects can provide the framework for teachers to engage in individual and collaborative inquiry into practice and to investigate specific areas of interest related to Year 2000 principles and programs.

29. Teacher-learners thrive when they have opportunities to learn from one another. The instructor can support this process by ensuring that all voices are heard, so that power, authority and ownership of knowledge are shared among group members.

30. In a university course that seeks to promote attitudes of inquiry and discusses teaching as a learning process, the instructor should model these attitudes, participate as a learner in the inquiry process, and be willing to discuss his or her learning with students.

From reconnaissance to planning

This chapter has provided an overview of the historical and immediate contexts in which Project X was situated. It has introduced the researcher in her role as in-service coordinator and teacher educator, and illuminated the assumptions and beliefs she brought to the Project.

Although the in-service coordinator took the role of facilitator during the planning of Project X, it was a collaborative venture that also involved a university faculty member, district facilitators, a district administrator and teacher participants. Each contributed to the development of the Project from their own framework of beliefs and values. The values of the Faculty of Education, represented by the Director of Undergraduate Programs and the Undergraduate Programs Committee, also influenced the shaping of the coursework. The university's institutional priorities played a part as well. The following chapter describes how Project planning evolved as each of these participants entered the process in the months leading up to the first class meeting.

Chapter 4

PLANNING

Chapter overview

This chapter documents and analyzes the planning of Project X prior to the commencement of Education 386. As indicated in previous chapters, the intent of the Project was to provide a two-semester learning opportunity for classroom teachers dealing with educational change. The immediate aim of planning was to develop an approach to the first course that would simultaneously: meet the needs of teachers attempting to cope with change; model the principles advocated in Year 2000 programs; engage teachers as learners in their classrooms; develop teachers' confidence to continue with further learning in the following semester; and address the university's expectations for appropriate credit coursework. The planning process spanned more than a year from the first contacts between the university and two participating school districts up to the evening of the first class meeting. Analysis of events during this period revealed four overlapping but distinct aspects of planning: developing a Project framework; negotiating course approval; communicating with prospective students; and planning for the first semester. This chapter examines these four aspects and discusses how each shaped participants' expectations and assumptions about the Project.

The chapter first describes the co-evolutionary approach to planning that was taken in the Project and explains why this approach was chosen. It then summarizes events that led to the proposed Project framework, and analyzes the framework to show how the beliefs and principles outlined in Chapter 3 were embodied in the Project design. Following sections document and analyze subsequent activities in which other influences modified the framework and reshaped the proposed coursework. The chapter concludes by summarizing inconsistencies and tensions among participants' expectations and assumptions prior to beginning Education 386.

Data analysis

Data for this chapter came from field notes as well as documents such as correspondence. A chronology of events was re-created from these data and key decisions were noted. This revealed the four distinct aspects of planning, which were then reviewed separately to identify dominant voices and factors that appeared to influence the directions taken. Critical incidents were reconstructed in greater detail. All records were then re-examined to interpret meanings ascribed to the project by different participants and to compare their understandings. These analyses were synthesized to create an overview of individual and institutional expectations and assumptions about the Project at the beginning of participants' first semester of coursework.

The planning process

Conceptions of planning. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) describe the planning phase of an action research project as the period following reconnaissance when the researcher(s) and collaborators orient themselves for action.

> You need to decide, thinking about your thematic concern and the possibilities and limitations of your situation, what you can do to improve education in your setting....Deciding where to begin is a *strategic decision*—it is a practical decision about where to act to produce *the most powerful effect compatible with sustaining the struggle of reform* (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 65).

Kemmis and McTaggart also recommend that an action research plan indicate as clearly as possible the concrete details of "*what is to be done about what, by whom, where, when and how*" (p. 66). They propose that the plan specify the responsibilities of each group member, that it be endorsed by all members of the group, and that it indicate ways that progress will be monitored (pp. 66-67).

Miles and Fullan (1992) suggest, however, that a different type of planning is necessary for educational reform activities.

> There can be no blueprints for change, because rational planning models for complex social change (such as education reform) do not work. Rather, what is needed is a guided journey....The message is not the traditional "Plan, then do," but "Do, then plan...and do and plan some more." Even the development of a shared vision that is central to reform is better thought of as a journey in which people's sense of purpose is identified, considered, and continuously shaped and reshaped (Miles & Fullan, 1992, p. 749).

Whereas Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) assume that participants in an action research study begin their planning with a shared vision and common goals, Miles and Fullan (1992) see these as emerging through an ongoing process in which meanings are negotiated and ownership is developed over time. "In our view, ownership of a reform cannot be achieved in advance of learning something new. A deep sense of ownership comes only through learning" (p. 749). For Miles and Fullan, effective reform depends on "coming to understand and to be good at something new" (p. 749). This process implies conditions that support individual and group learning, and that allow people to reject particular changes at different stages of the process.

Rationale for a co-evolutionary approach to Project X. Project X represented a new initiative for the Faculty of Education. The initial framework was developed by the in-service coordinator (hereafter called the "coordinator") and school district representatives in response to districts' requests for field-based courses. It was then modified as different individuals and institutional groups added their perspectives. Thus the Project was not strategically pre-designed but took shape through a co-evolutionary process of "do, then plan...and do and plan some more." This approach to collaborative projects was typical of Project Office endeavours, and co-evolutionary planning was perceived by the coordinator to be part of her role.

A collaborative, co-evolutionary approach to Project X was considered appropriate for several reasons. One was the nature of the Project, which brought together participants from different institutional cultures and situations of practice. Co-evolutionary planning would, it was hoped, lay the foundation for a continuing process of planning, acting, reflecting and re-acting—the heart of action research.

Another reason for a co-evolutionary approach was the need for flexibility in response to unanticipated events. Participants' levels of participation were subject to time constraints and competing demands from other aspects of their work. A flexible approach would allow for adjustments to individual levels of participation at any stage of the Project.

Yet another reason for this approach involved the nature of the coursework. Detailed course planning prior to the commencement of Education 386 seemed incompatible with a transactional approach to teaching and learning. It would have implied a pre-determined content and sequence of events without input from the teacher-learners who were involved in the Project. Grimmett and MacKinnon (1991) distinguish between "anticipatory preparation" and "rolling planning" in the craft of teaching. Anticipatory preparation involves thinking through possible situations that might occur and gathering a range of resources on which to draw so that the teacher can react flexibly to students' needs. Rolling planning occurs during the interactions and transactions between teacher and students. "It consists of balancing teacher-initiated ideas with student-initiated ones so that the work context of inquiry becomes one that truly facilitates student learning" (p. 430). This approach to planning seemed particularly appropriate in the case of Project X.

In summary, the planning of Project X was viewed as an evolutionary process involving negotiation of meanings and development of ownership by participating institutions and individuals. Planning activities sought to: develop a framework for university-school district collaboration; identify the needs of teacher-learners who would participate in the coursework; clarify the principles on which teaching and learning activities would be based; identify emerging roles and responsibilities for members of the instructional team; and establish criteria and structures for course credit, admission and student registration that would satisfy the university's requirements. The remainder of Chapter 4 documents and analyzes this process, identifies some factors that seemed to influence its directions, and summarizes the situation just prior to the commencement of Education 386.

Developing the Project framework

Planning for Project X began with negotiations between the Project Office and several school districts who had requested field-based courses focused on Year 2000 principles and programs. This initial stage of planning spanned the period from June 1991 through March 1992, and led to a proposal for a collaborative project involving two school districts and the Faculty of Education. Chief participants included: the Director of Project Development and coordinator from the Project Office; senior administrators and district personnel from school districts A, B, and C; and a faculty member.

The term "framework" is used to indicate the basic understandings between the Project Office and school districts A and B about how they might collaboratively provide a two-semester field-based learning opportunity for in-service teachers. The main elements of the proposed coursework included an overall content focus on Year 2000 principles and programs, and a self-directed project approach to classroom inquiry. The framework suggested that teachers from the two districts would meet every second week for large-group sessions focused on Year 2000 issues, alternating with smaller district-based seminars that would allow time for interaction in cohort groups. It identified roles for district and university personnel as members of a "differentiated" instructional team, and specified the financial arrangements and schedule. It also proposed a course structure for university credit that combined the key elements of *Theory and Practice of Implementation* (Education 407) with a Special Topics component, although it was understood that the latter would be subject to approval by the Faculty of Education's Undergraduate Programs Committee.

Background. Beginning in 1984 the Project Office was largely responsible for responding to requests received by the Faculty of Education for off-campus, in-service courses. Two delivery models had become popular among local school districts: *Comet Field-based Implementation* courses, and *Theory and Practice of Implementation*

(Education 407) courses. However, these courses were not normally included in the programming of faculty teaching loads. They were usually taught by sessional instructors and were therefore dependent on budget allocations controlled by the Director of Undergraduate Programs. In the early 1990's, budget cutbacks resulted in increased competition between demands for regular on-campus programming on the one hand and requests for off-campus programming on the other. Planning for Project X began at a time when the Project Office had no sessional allocations for off-campus courses. Fee retrieval was not yet possible. Although some faculty members had expressed reservations about an "entrepreneurial" approach to field-based coursework (Richmond, 1992), co-sponsorship appeared to be one of the few options available to sustain field-based coursework for in-service teachers.

Starting points. Although Education 407 was expensive from an administrative point of view, it was particularly appealing to school districts as an educational opportunity for teachers. It combined regular meetings of teacher cohort groups with opportunities for individual classroom implementation of new programs or educational innovations. Its flexible structures and adaptability to a range of teacher concerns were well suited to professional development needs in a time of educational change. As noted in Chapter 3, prevailing approaches to implementation were moving away from fidelity-based models toward action research and teacher inquiry, and some districts saw Education 407 as an ideal opportunity to encourage teachers to investigate Year 2000 programs. Several Education 407 courses focused on Year 2000 initiatives had already been successfully mounted by the Faculty of Education. Its reputation as a worthwhile in-service option was known to the school district administrators who initiated requests leading to Project X.

Districts A and B initiated the planning process with requests for Education 407 courses. The nature of these requests is reflected in district A's letter:

> School District [A] would like to be involved with Education 407 in the spring term of 1992.
>
> Ten of our primary teachers worked on personal research projects this year with [a facilitator] under a grant from the Ministry of Education. We will be providing these teachers with release time to continue their projects in the coming year, and would be able to provide release time for any teachers involved in 407 as well. In addition, we are considering targetting some of our Program for Quality Teaching funds for "research projects," rather than attempting to expand our base.
>
> In short, [district A] is "into research." Any contribution the University could make would be helpful (District A, 1991, p. 1).

It seems clear that district A viewed Education 407 as an opportunity to extend professional development directions that it had already initiated. It brought to the planning process a recent history of professional development that valued teachers as self-directed learners, and was seeking a collaborative relationship with the university to further its emphasis on teachers as researchers.

District B had previously co-sponsored Education 407 with another school district. The course had been taught by a sessional instructor known for her transactional teaching approaches. In his request for Education 407, the district administrator communicated that he wanted a similar course and would be willing to collaborate again with another district.

Shaping the framework. Lacking an instructional budget, the Project Office was unable to respond to these requests without seeking financial support from school districts. The Director of Project Development and coordinator pondered the possibilities for mutual resource-sharing. They were aware that school districts had received Ministry of Education support for Year 2000 implementation activities. They also knew that several previous Education 407 courses had involved school district personnel as facilitators, mentors and resource persons to small groups of teachers. They thought that the university might assist school districts with their implementation efforts by providing teacher development facilitator training in return for their financial support to Education 407. A "differentiated staffing" approach might make it possible to offer Education 407 to teachers and provide a service to school districts at the same time.

This idea was explored further by the coordinator and a faculty member associated with the Centre for Teacher Education. Several other faculty members had already suggested, in informal discussions, the possibility of a differentiated staffing approach to field-based coursework, and this had been tentatively proposed to the Director of Undergraduate Programs. The faculty member and coordinator discussed an approach in which district personnel could act as teaching assistants to the university course instructor. The university instructor and field-based teaching assistants would form an instructional team, with the university instructor taking primary responsibility for large-group events and the field-based assistants facilitating small-group seminars. The coordinator would be responsible for facilitating team planning and supporting the field-based assistants in their activities. Together the instructional team could also investigate, through action research, the connections between the intent of new programs and the growth of teacher-learners involved in an action research approach to educational change. This conversation sowed the seeds for the present study: an action research project inquiring into the practice of in-service teacher education.

Using this framework as a starting point, the Director of Project Development and coordinator developed a discussion agenda for meetings with school districts to explore the possibilities for collaboration and resource-sharing (see Appendix B). This agenda suggested four structural components for the proposed coursework: workshops, seminars and networks, individual or group implementation projects, and supervision. It also identified the resources and cost-sharing formula needed to make Education 407 administratively feasible. It proposed that SFU would provide a university instructor as well as a coordinator who would coach and mentor district facilitators. The school districts would provide the district facilitators, .5 days of release time for teachers to engage in consultation and peer supervision, facilities for district-based workshops and seminars, and financial support. Two facilitators per district could be included on the instructional team. This discussion agenda was explored in meetings with districts A and B during the month

of February 1992. Its components were accepted by both districts, who agreed to participate in a collaborative Education 407 course beginning the following September.

Critical incident. District C had also requested an Education 407 offering for the spring of 1992. In the meantime, however, senior administrators in district C had examined their situation and decided they wanted a more comprehensive collaboration with the university. They wished to develop a coursework initiative that would include elements of Education 407 but would extend the opportunities for teacher inquiry over a longer period, potentially contributing toward a post-baccalaureate credential. As with districts A and B, their primary concern was to support classroom-based investigations into Year 2000 programs. They were prepared to share costs and resources for such an endeavour.

The coordinator met with district C administrators. She was aware of previous initiatives that had combined a Special Topics course with an Education 407 course. Although the two courses had been handled administratively as separate and sequential events, the instructional team had treated them as one learning experience spanning an extended time frame. A proposal for two semesters of coursework based on this approach was sketched out at the district C meeting.

The following excerpt from a letter confirming this discussion indicates district C's view of the Project's potential.

> As we discussed, offering Education 407 will be timely; it will facilitate our plans for developing programs and implementing strategies for enabling learners. It will provide teachers with the means to become familiar with current learning principles and research and use their classrooms to implement new ideas and strategies, using a cohort approach. (District C, 1992, p. 2).

The letter also expresses preference for the two-semester proposal. "We prefer this concept, because it offers much more continuity and has the potential to make a significant impact on the implementation of the Year 2000" (p. 2).

In mid-February the coordinator prepared a description of the two semesters of coursework discussed with district C and sent it to the Dean of Education and Director of

Undergraduate Programs for their reactions (see Appendix C). Meanwhile, district C decided to approach district D, with whom it had a close working relationship, to join the two-semester project.

This critical incident was the catalyst for a reconceptualization of the arrangements between the university and districts A and B. The coordinator contacted the senior administrators in these districts to find out whether they wished to participate in a similar project. Districts A and B decided to proceed with a two-semester project within the same parameters as districts C and D, in preference to their original agreement for a one-semester Education 407 course.

Analysis of the initial framework

The essence of the proposed framework is captured in the text of a notice distributed by districts A and B in late March to advertise information meetings about Project X.

> These two courses provide teachers with the opportunity to use their own classrooms as laboratories for exploring, analyzing and evaluating the processes of implementation. Course content focuses on the implementation of current principles of effective education for students at all levels within the Year 2000 framework. Theory and practice are linked through workshops, seminars and classroom implementation projects....Course events will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. weekly from September through March. Activities will alternate between cross-district workshops organized by S.F.U. and in-district support group seminars facilitated by district staff. Participants will be expected to attend all course activities and to conduct an implementation project on a focus of their choice. Because peer support and consultation are an integral part of the course design, small groups of teachers from the same school are encouraged to attend together (Project Office, 1992a, p. 1).

The basis of the framework for Project X was Education 407. It was the primary reference point during planning discussions, and its emphasis on classroom inquiry was the feature that district representatives appeared to value most. Prior research had already identified some benefits of Education 407, including: "relevance to teachers' immediate concerns; opportunities for inquiry into practice using self-directed approaches; time for teachers to reflect; opportunities to interact with colleagues in supportive environments; provision for district support; opportunities for districts to demonstrate commitment to

teachers' long-term professional development; and availability of mentors and coaches" (Chapter 3, p. 44). It appeared to the coordinator that the senior administrators involved in the planning discussions wanted these benefits for their teachers. She interpreted their requests to mean that they were seeking coursework that would embody, to the degree possible, the principles of teacher development identified in Chapter 3. The following analysis examines how those principles were seen to be addressed in the proposed framework for Project X.

Processes of change. Earlier chapters have discussed at length the impact of Year 2000 initiatives on schools and teachers. It was believed that a focus on Year 2000 principles and programs in Project X might help teachers cope more effectively with processes of educational change. By examining program and curriculum documents from an inquiry perspective they could be encouraged to make sense of proposed changes on their own terms. They might come to understand program implementation as an evolutionary process, and to comprehend the range of teaching approaches compatible with a transactional view of teaching and learning. The extended length of the two courses would allow time to develop individual and shared understandings, to recognize personal strengths and learning styles and to find manageable goals for individual professional development. The selection of an individual focus for classroom inquiry would identify a relevant starting point for each teacher-learner and provide a structure to make change more manageable. A self-directed project approach would indicate trust and confidence in teachers' professional abilities, and help them feel more competent and confident in their capacity to learn. The investment of district resources in Project X would communicate visible support for teacher learning and affirm that the senior administration valued an inquiry approach to educational change. Ongoing small-group seminars could be used to create a supportive environment where feelings could be acknowledged and accepted. Regular times for extended interaction would provide opportunities for encouraging and clarifying feedback. District facilitators who were familiar with teachers' work contexts

could help other members of the instructional team understand teachers' situations of practice and support their struggles.

Teachers as learners. The self-directed project was adopted from Education 407 as a central element of Project X coursework. It was envisioned that teacher-learners would individually or collaboratively identify a focus question or goal related to the Year 2000 principles of learning, and would pursue a classroom investigation in their chosen focus. This approach was seen as congruent with a view of teachers as researchers into their own practice, and with a lifelong learning perspective on teacher professional growth. An emphasis on these projects early in the coursework would model a transactional approach to learning and teaching. The instructional team could take its lead from teachers' individual and collective interests, dilemmas and concerns, and could support teachers in developing their own learning plans. Within the context of these projects or "enterprises" (Smith, 1988), teacher-learners could be challenged to examine Year 2000 theories and principles, to critically evaluate personal beliefs in relation to practice, to set realistic expectations for change and to take risks to try new practices. The instructional team could provide input that would support each teacher's investigation, and might also introduce readings, activities and questions for discussion to stimulate thoughtful consideration of broader issues. It was believed that teachers' projects would naturally give rise to dilemmas of practice that would stimulate this reflective thinking. It was also envisioned that teachers would support one another's learning by forming small collegial groups, and that within these support groups they might learn to acknowledge and respect different learning and thinking styles as well as beliefs, values, strengths and concerns.

Learning communities. The framework for Project X was designed to include extensive time for collegial interaction during district-based seminars on alternate weeks throughout the two courses. Participants were encouraged to attend the course in school-based support groups. This was not meant to create contrived collegiality, but to take advantage of naturally-occurring opportunities for interaction and support outside the

coursework schedule. It was hoped that the formation of a collaborative instructional team would also provide opportunities to model supportive interactions and to take advantage of diverse and complementary backgrounds and strengths. In the role of coach to district-based facilitators, the coordinator expected to model interactions that would communicate respect and caring, and to encourage and support the facilitators as they developed their own approaches to the seminars. It was hoped that with encouragement and modelling from the instructional team, teachers would willingly share ideas and become resources for one another's projects.

Teaching from a transactional perspective. It was believed that if Project X began by involving participants in decisions about their learning using the self-directed project approach, they would quickly come to understand and feel comfortable with the transactional nature of the coursework. Self-directed projects focused on specific aspects of Year 2000 principles and programs were seen as the vehicle to help them identify important concerns and dilemmas they might want the instructors to address. These concerns and dilemmas could then become the topics of learning activities designed to model constructivist, transactional approaches during the large-group sessions. On these occasions teacher-learners would have opportunities to participate in and critically examine the activities from the perspectives of both teachers and learners. It was also anticipated that some teacher-learners might want to know the instructors' performance expectations and procedures for evaluation early in the coursework, and that this would create opportunities to model negotiation of expectations and development of criteria for self-evaluation. The conception of Project X as an action research project also sought to communicate that, in a learning community, everyone is a learner.

Analysis of the development process

Factors influencing the planning process. Analysis of this aspect of planning highlights several factors that influenced the directions taken. First, the lack of university

financial support for off-campus courses, particularly Education 407, made it necessary to explore collaboration between the university and school districts. When districts agreed to support these projects with resources and personnel, they also expected greater ownership and influence in shaping the projects. Second, these districts' past experiences with Education 407 and other inquiry-oriented professional development activities enabled them to clearly express their needs and desires. Their familiarity with the components of Education 407 provided a basis for discussion about specific elements of the projects. Third, concerns of district C administrators about the encroachment of American graduate education programs on Canadian turf caused them to be adamant in their demands for an extended field-based coursework opportunity. Their concerns convinced the coordinator to suggest a two-semester collaboration with districts C and D. Without this initiative, districts A and B might have been content with their original request for a one-semester Education 407 offering.

Dominant voices. This aspect of planning was dominated by the following voices: the Director of Project Development and coordinator, who represented the Project Office focus on field-based in-service teacher education; senior administrators from three school districts, who represented the districts' perceptions of teachers' learning needs; and the faculty member from the Centre for Teacher Education, who represented some faculty members' interests in field-based research in teacher development. In terms of Zeichner's (1993) traditions of thought, their perspectives on teacher education appeared to favour developmental and social reconstructionist orientations.

Situations of practice. It appears that in this aspect of planning, most participants also viewed teacher education from a field-based perspective. Their decisions seemed to be influenced by their knowledge of situations of practice in public schools. The senior administrators' primary concerns arose from their wish to help classroom teachers cope with the dynamics of educational change and the implementation of Year 2000 programs. Their goals were to encourage teachers to investigate new instructional practices and to

support long-term professional development. The two Project Office representatives were supportive of these goals, perhaps due to their previous experience as school-based practitioners as well as the field-based orientation of their roles in the Faculty of Education. Both had worked extensively with groups of teachers attempting to cope with change, and had participated in Education 407 courses and research projects. The faculty member had also taught Education 407 and conducted several school-based research projects. He had just completed an in-depth field-based study of a school in process of change and was writing a book about it. Although a university-based teacher educator, he was aware of the impact of educational change on teachers' learning needs. These individuals shared a vision of in-service teacher education that was situated in public schools and supported teachers in their struggles with educational reform.

Negotiating course approval

This aspect of planning dealt with the reconciliation of the initial framework for Project X with the university's expectations for appropriate credit coursework. Discussions occurred from mid-March through early May 1992. Activities focused on developing an academic course outline for the Special Topics component of the Project, presenting the course outline to the Undergraduate Programs Committee for approval, and selecting a faculty member to be involved in teaching the course. The main participants were the coordinator and Director of Undergraduate Programs. Input was also given by other faculty members, and course approval was granted by the Undergraduate Programs Committee.

Background. The Undergraduate Programs area in the Faculty of Education is responsible for the academic aspects of all coursework for certified teachers other than those in Masters' or Doctoral Programs. Courses fall into two categories: "calendar" courses that have been previously approved by the Faculty and Senate; and Special Topics or Directed Studies courses that are specially created to serve short-term or individual

student needs. The latter are subject to approval by the Undergraduate Programs Committee before they can be offered.

Several calendar courses have been set aside for school-based teaching practica. These "practicum" courses are unique in several ways: they focus specifically on classroom practice; they carry 5 credits (rather than 3 or 4 for "academic" courses); and they are not graded but use a pass/withdraw evaluation system. One of these is *Education 407-5: Theory and Practice of Implementation.* When the Faculty of Education adopted its in-service policy in 1984, this course was designated as an "in-service practicum" in which certified teachers could engage in supervised field-based studies for academic credit. It was this type of coursework that school districts A , B, C and D hoped to sponsor. The Special Topics component was seen as a means to extend this learning opportunity to two semesters, to allow more time for investigation of Year 2000 programs.

Starting points. The framework for Project X proposed two courses: a Special Topics course and Education 407. The Education 407 component, being a calendar course, did not need academic approval, whereas the Special Topics component did. In developing the Project framework with school districts, the coordinator had assumed that although administratively the courses would appear in sequence, beginning with the Special Topics course and followed by Education 407, in practice their content and instructional approaches could be blended to create an extended, coherent learning experience. She was aware of a previous instance in which this had occurred, but this had been several years earlier when the approval process for Special Topics courses was not as formalized. Current procedures required the completion of a Special Topics proposal form, support from a faculty sponsor, and careful review by the Undergraduate Programs Committee.

The discussion document. The first document prepared by the coordinator was based on the elements of the proposed Project framework (see Appendix C). It took the form of a "Proposal for field-based implementation coursework for educators" that could serve as both a basis for discussion with faculty and a Project overview for school districts.

The content was drawn primarily from the agenda for a previous Education 407 course that had also focused on Year 2000 principles and programs. The description presented the two courses as being administratively separate and sequential, but it outlined only one set of purposes for the coursework. The document also described the proposed structural components, which included: *workshops* focused on Year 2000 principles, programs, learning theory, criteria for educational decision-making and teaching/learning strategies; *seminars* to provide a forum for reflection and peer support; *classroom implementation projects* including ongoing reflection and documentation of learning; and *peer consultation and coaching*.

The discussion document was sent to the Dean and Director of Undergraduate Programs in February. They did not comment at the time. In March it was discussed with three faculty members in the Centre for Teacher Education who, it was thought, might be interested in participating as either instructors or researchers. The faculty members explained that, although they were interested in this type of coursework, their teaching loads had already been determined and they were committed to other research.

Critical incident. In early April, the coordinator met with the Director of Undergraduate Programs to explain the Project and discuss procedures for course approval. The Director expressed concern about the proposed relationship between the two courses, and emphasized that they should be kept conceptually as well as administratively separate. He suggested that the Special Topics course should involve the critical, academic study of the Year 2000; the second course could provide an opportunity for students to implement selected aspects of Year 2000 programs. He pointed out that Education 407 was an implementation practicum, and that implementation should follow a thorough study and critique of the Year 2000 documents. The coordinator was instructed to prepare an academic course outline for the Special Topics course. The Director would review it prior to submission to the Undergraduate Programs Committee.

This incident was important because it implied a different conception of implementation than the one on which the original framework for Project X was based. Project X was designed to facilitate a dialectical relationship between action and reflection. It assumed that many teachers were already engaged in inquiry-oriented implementation, and were seeking support in reflecting on and making sense of their experiences. The recommended academic structure, on the other hand, implied a theory into practice approach in which teachers should be taught the appropriate meanings of principles and programs before their own classroom practices were considered.

Preparing a course outline. A Special Topics proposal form was used to create an academic course outline. In the first version, the coordinator attempted to address the Director's concerns by separating the study of Year 2000 programs from classroom inquiry. The Director suggested revisions to the course objectives and assignments which were incorporated by the coordinator. The second version was distributed to several faculty members, who made further suggestions. The coordinator incorporated their recommendations, which were further modified by the Director. The coordinator prepared this version (see Appendix D) for review by the Undergraduate Programs Committee, which approved it in early May. This course became Education 386, the first semester of Project X and the main focus of this study.

Selecting a faculty instructor. Previous field-based courses had been taught most often by sessional instructors. During the development of the Project framework, the coordinator assumed that because faculty teaching assignments for fall had already been made, this pattern was likely to continue. She had, however, approached several faculty members to encourage their interest in the Project.

During discussions about the course outline, the Director of Undergraduate Programs indicated that Education 386 was an important course for the Faculty of Education and should only be taught by a regular faculty member. He said he would identify someone, and would rearrange teaching commitments if necessary. He approached

a faculty member who agreed to teach Education 386 in the fall semester in place of another assignment. By the time this decision was made, negotiations with districts were complete and the coordinator had met with district facilitators to discuss their perceptions of teachers' learning needs. The coordinator provided the faculty member with the discussion document and other background information, and asked for his input on the course outline as it was being developed. He became the faculty sponsor for the course outline when it was submitted for approval.

Analysis of the course outline

Metamorphosis of the course outline. The first version of the course outline was titled "Year 2000: Theoretical Foundations and Principles of Implementation." This title was changed to "Year 2000: Critical Examination of Theoretical and Practical Bases." The first and final versions of the course objectives are presented below.

> First version—Students will:
> - examine the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs and other curriculum documents;
> - understand the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
> - identify emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluate them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;
> - describe and evaluate current models of social and educational change;
> - discuss implementation issues which link educational change to the broader social context;
> - understand design principles involved in creating a plan for an implementation project;
> - create an action plan for a specific implementation project (Project Office, 1992b, p. 1)
>
> Final version—students will:
> - carefully study and become thoroughly familiar with Year 2000 documents;
> - examine the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs and other curriculum documents;
> - critically examine the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
> - identify emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluate them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;

- study additional literature which explicates and criticizes major theoretical underpinnings of the documents (Project Office, 1992c, p. 1).

Several readings were removed from the original outline and replaced by others. Only the changes are indicated here.

First version:

Barth, R. (1990). A personal vision of a good school. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71, 7, 512-516.
British Columbia Ministry of Education (in press). *Vision to action: Supporting curriculum change*. Victoria, B.C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.
Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. Toronto, Ont.: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
Jaggar, A. M. (1989). Teacher as learner: Implications for staff development. In G.S. Pinnell and M. L. Matlin (Eds.), *Teachers and Research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 66-80.
Senge, P., & Lannon-Kim, C. (1991). Recapturing the spirit of learning through a systems approach. *The School Administrator*, November, 8-13 (Project Office, 1992b, pp. 2-3).

Final version:

Barrow, R. (1990). *Understanding Skills*. London, Ont.: Althouse Press.
Case, R. (1992). *Constraining systemic school reform: Troubling lessons from B.C.* Paper presented at the Restructuring Conference, OISE, Toronto, February, 1992.
Case, R., (Ed.). (1991). *A Critical Analysis of British Columbia's Proposals for Educational Reform*. Educational Perspectives No. 1. Burnaby, B.C.: Simon Fraser University.
Gibbons, M. (1982). Self-education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 7, 4, 82-86.
Hamm, C. (1982). Critique of self-education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 7, 4, 87-106.
Muhtadi, N., & Shute, W. (1991). *B.C.'s "Year 2000:" A plan in jeopardy. Canadian School Executive* (Project Office, 1992c, pp. 2-3).

The course outline in context. The course outline was originally prefaced with a description intended to explain the proposed parameters of Project X to the Undergraduate Programs Committee. It attempted to respond to the Director's concerns by indicating that students would begin with an examination of theoretical and research foundations and move toward implementation projects.

> This course is part of a collaborative venture of the Faculty of Education and [districts A and B]. The purposes of the project are to engage educators in rigorous and meaningful credit coursework focussed on the principles of the Year 2000 and processes of educational change and implementation, to assist the districts in establishing an ongoing teacher development network, and to train district personnel as teacher facilitators. The project design

> encompasses two semesters of coursework beginning with an examination of theoretical and research foundations of the Year 2000, and moving toward design, implementation and evaluation of specific implementation projects using action research strategies. The project maximizes the resources of both the university and school districts through sharing of costs as well as human and material resources.

This description did not accompany the course outline when it was reviewed by the Undergraduate Programs Committee. It appears that the Director wanted the course to be evaluated as a unique entity rather than as a component of a larger endeavour. This decision seems to imply a transmissional conception of teaching and learning. Such approaches tend to break down content to be learned into parts that are viewed as separate building blocks, rather than as elements contributing to the construction of broader understandings.

Analysis of the approval process

Factors influencing the approval process. Discussions about the Education 386 course outline occurred when the Faculty of Education was in the midst of a review of field-based in-service coursework. As noted in Chapter 3, some faculty members were concerned about the directions being taken toward inquiry-oriented and transactional approaches. The Undergraduate Programs Committee had called for a report on faculty's views of *Comet Field-based Implementation* courses, and individual interviews were being conducted by a faculty member at the time. Several *Comet* course outlines for the fall were also being developed for the Undergraduate Programs Committee at the same time as Education 386.

The timing of the request for course approval may also have been problematic for the Undergraduate Programs Office. It had taken ten months to negotiate an arrangement for Project X that would be administratively and financially feasible. By this time the university's deadlines for fall programming had already passed. The Office of Undergraduate Programs had to make special arrangements with the Registrar's Office to list the course, which caused additional pressure on a busy staff. It is possible that this made the Director less willing to support the Project.

Another factor in the directions taken during the approval process could have been the Director's lack of familiarity with teachers' current situations of practice and with the nature of Year 2000 programs. He indicated, during the preparation of the course outline, that he had not read any of the Ministry documents on the Year 2000 and did not know which ones should be included on the readings list. It may have been difficult for him to understand the kind of coursework being proposed within the framework for Project X.

Dominant voices. This aspect of planning was dominated by the Director of Undergraduate Programs who, in his official position, represented the academic and administrative concerns of the Faculty of Education. His re-shaping of the course outline and modification of the reading list point to an orientation to teaching and learning that differed substantially from that of the original designers of the Project. The Director's inclusion of the two papers on self-education also appear to reflect his concerns about self-directed projects and his wish that this approach be carefully critiqued.

In terms of Zeichner's (1993) traditions of thought, the influence of the Director on the course outline seems to reflect an academic perspective on teacher education. The academic tradition embodies the view that courses focused on teaching practice interfere with the fundamental goals of a liberal education, and that beyond an initial apprenticeship, teachers should not need professional courses to help them in their work.

> Why should not an educated person, broadly and deeply versed in educational philosophy and experience, help himself from that point on? Why should his attention be diverted...to the trivialities and applications with which common sense can deal adequately when the time comes? (Flexner, 1930, quoted in Zeichner, 1993, pp. 2-3).

Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992) and Zeichner (1993) maintain that the academic tradition of thought represents a conservative orientation to reform. They see it as being grounded in a view of education as a vehicle for cultural transmission. The academic perspective, in their opinion, opposes any changes that might undermine the dominance of historical academic traditions. The Director's insistence that the Special Topics course emphasize a critique of Year 2000 principles, programs and implementation processes could be

interpreted to suggest that he did not support this direction for educational reform and sought to highlight its problematic aspects. To the degree that the course approval process separated the Special Topics course from Education 407, it could also be viewed as representing the social efficiency tradition. In this tradition, appropriate pedagogies are identified by experts through scientific research and then applied by practitioners using a fidelity model of implementation.

Situations of practice. The Director's official position within the Faculty of Education gave him the authority to interpret the academic standards and requirements of the Faculty of Education. At this time the Faculty was not united in its beliefs and values about in-service teacher education, but was debating the role of an academic institution in responding to field-based requests for professional development support.

> Academic credit is given, in the main, for an examination of ideas in which the objective demands of evidence, truth, argument, and counter-argument are salient. The purposes...should lie in an increase of breadth and depth of understanding not in the bare acquisition of certain methodological skills, or in the absorption of programmatic prescriptions (Richmond, 1992, p. 4).

One point emphasized in these discussions was the role of the Faculty as critic of educational reform.

> ...the teaching approach ought to be critical rather than simply expository which is the impression given in the proposals. The workshops or seminars cannot be seen as simple training devices, as inductions into particular ideologies, or as a means for learning about a particular innovation (Richmond, 1992, pp. 3-4).

Tension between the demand for academic rigor and respectability within the university and the expressed learning needs of teachers in schools inevitably influenced the subsequent development of Project X.

Communicating with prospective students

This aspect of planning concerned the university admission and registration of teacher-learners wanting to participate in Project X. It began with information meetings in early April and extended into early September 1992 when the course began.

Background. Several years earlier the university had introduced strict enrollment quotas to combat reduced budgets and pressures for increased services. These quotas gave preference to students entering university from secondary schools and colleges, and left relatively few spaces for students who had already completed a degree or teaching certificate in another institution. The Project Office staff was aware that these quotas could prevent some interested teachers from participating in Project X.

Starting points. The Director of Project Development, Director of Undergraduate Programs and coordinator met with Admissions Office staff to discuss admissions procedures and forestall potential problems. It was agreed that teachers applying for Education 386 would be admitted if: they met calendar grade point standards rather than quota grade point requirements; the numbers of new students were limited to a few; these students would only register in off-campus courses; and the Project Office would collect all applications and ensure that they were complete before forwarding them to the Admissions Office. This agreement allowed school districts to enroll any interested teachers who met the basic university entrance standard, rather than limiting enrollment to students who had attended SFU before.

Admissions and re-admissions deadlines for fall semester were set for June 1. Negotiations with districts A and B were completed in early March. This left little time to inform prospective students of the coursework opportunity and collect applications before the deadline. The coordinator and district representatives wanted potential participants to be informed about the nature of the Project before making a decision to register, and thought this could be accomplished by holding an information meeting in each district. They set up a collaborative procedure involving the school districts, the Undergraduate Programs office and the Project Office to ensure that teachers' applications would be handled smoothly.

Information meetings. Information meetings were held on April 6 and 9 (see Appendix E). More than one hundred teachers attended. The coordinator distributed the discussion document and explained the parameters of Project X. (It should be noted that

these meetings preceded the negotiations for course approval because of pressure from the admissions deadline.) She emphasized that the coursework would provide opportunities to conduct self-directed classroom inquiry projects and that both university and district facilitators would be involved. She answered students' questions about assignments, workload and evaluation procedures, based on the proposed Project framework. Teachers who attended expressed enthusiasm for the course format. In District A, for example, more than sixty teachers requested application packages.

Admissions and registration process. It was decided that due to high interest levels, each district would screen its own applicants and forward the names to the coordinator. Teachers accepted by their districts would then submit applications to the Faculty of Education, where they would be cross-checked with the districts' lists. This procedure gave districts greater ownership over the process and enabled district facilitators to get a sense of teachers' interests by background and level. District A decided to group applicants by school, while district B took applications on a first come, first served basis. Applications to the university were received by the staff person in Undergraduate Programs, who worked closely with the district facilitators to ensure accuracy. On May 31 a set of 50 completed applications and list of students were forwarded to the Admissions Office for processing.

Critical incident. In early August, some students whose applications had been sent to Admissions in June learned that they had been rejected by the university. They received letters from the Admissions Office indicating either that their grade point average was too low or that the university quota had already been filled. An investigation revealed that these students had been rejected because the enrollment quota had already been reached and they lived within commuting distance of the university. The Admissions staff felt they had to be rejected because they might subsequently decide to take an on-campus course and put greater pressure on university facilities and programs.

The immediate problem was resolved by a consultation between the Dean of Education and the Director of Admissions, who agreed to reverse the rejections. In the

meantime, however, some teachers who had been rejected decided to withdraw from the Project. The school districts' senior administrators expressed concern because the rejected teachers were among those that could benefit most from the coursework, and the rejections could be harmful to their confidence as learners coping with change. According to one district administrator, some rejected teachers felt they were no longer "university material" and were afraid to participate even after their rejections were reversed.

This incident was significant because it seemed to introduce an element of suspicion, in the minds of some district personnel and students, that the university might not live up to its word. This tone was carried forward by some teachers who were overly concerned about whether or not they could meet the university's academic expectations. It may also have influenced subsequent discussions between the Project office and one senior administrator about whether his district should have to pay its full share of Project costs.

Analysis of the communication process

Factors influencing communication with students. This aspect of planning was influenced by two institutional factors: admissions deadlines and enrollment quotas. Because of impending admissions deadlines, information meetings were held prior to negotiations about the Special Topics course outline. Potential participants were told in both the information meetings and descriptive literature that the two courses would be treated as one learning experience with a focus on investigation of Year 2000 programs through classroom-based inquiry. They were also led to believe that they would be admitted to the university as long as their grade points met the calendar minimum. Although this information was given in good faith, it later proved to be misleading.

Dominant voices. One dominant voice in this aspect of planning was that of the university administration. The apportioning of admissions quotas suggests that the university's highest priority is the delivery of academic credentials to young students. Continuing teacher education appears to be less important than other university mandates.

Although the Director of Admissions attempted to interpret the quota policy flexibly by agreeing to admit a few new students to off-campus field-based courses, this proved difficult in reality.

The university's grade point criterion for limiting admissions could be taken to reflect a social efficiency perspective on higher education—one in which educational opportunities are only accessible to those with the greatest chances of academic success, and in which the primary function of the university is the granting of credentials. Although this may not be the intent of its decision-makers, it may be the message communicated to field-based educators.

Situations of practice. Grade point average and time of application are two of the primary criteria used to regulate admission to the university. From an institutional perspective, these criteria ensure that in a competitive situation the most academically worthy students will be accepted. Higher priority is also given to those beginning post-secondary study and much lower priority to those seeking post-baccalaureate study. The Faculty of Education, situated within the larger institution, is subject to these policies. In-service teachers, especially those wanting off-campus coursework, are competing for scarce resources. In Project X this created a tension between the credentialing function of the university and the educational needs of in-service teachers whose academic records did not meet appropriate standards. The intents of the school districts and the university appear to be at cross-purposes in this situation: whereas the districts sought to support teachers' learning regardless of their academic standing, the university sought to invest its resources where they would have the most benefit in the realm of academic success.

Planning for the first semester

This aspect of planning began with a meeting in March 1992 to prepare for district information sessions, and continued until the first class meeting on September 13.

Participants included the faculty member, the coordinator, four district facilitators (Mrs. C, Mrs. D, Mrs. P, and Mrs. S), and one senior administrator from District A.

Background. The framework for Project X proposed an instructional team consisting of a faculty representative, the coordinator, and one or two site leaders from each district. It was thought that the complementary perspectives and skills of a diverse team could be used to advantage in the alternating large-group sessions and small-group seminars. It was anticipated that the university representatives would take primary responsibility for facilitating large-group sessions while the district representatives would facilitate small-group seminars.

Starting points. After the proposed Project framework had been developed, the district administrators were asked to identify individuals whom they felt would be appropriate facilitators of teacher development. By mid-March each district had identified two women to fulfill these roles. On March 23 the coordinator, Mrs. C, Mrs. D, Mrs. P and a senior administrator from District A met to get acquainted and plan the district information meetings. There was no faculty instructor present because he had not yet been appointed.

Participants were invited to describe their individual interests in the Project and to present their perceptions of teachers' learning needs. Mrs. C was a former district helping teacher who had recently returned to the classroom. She would be going on maternity leave part way through the Project, but wanted to retain her involvement in supporting teacher learning as long as possible. Mrs. P had also been a district helping teacher. She wanted to use the Project as an opportunity to do field work for her Master's degree and to improve her teacher support skills. Mrs. D had been involved in her district's Program for Quality Teaching but had never been a teacher facilitator and wanted to learn. The district administrator hoped to attend planning meetings and assist with the research aspect of the Project. Mrs. S, a current district helping teacher and previous Education 407 student, was unable to attend.

The group briefly shared their perceptions of teachers' learning needs. These included: support for classroom implementation activities; resources for implementation; reassurance ("there are no pre-set 'answers' to Year 2000 implementation"); and development of confidence ("am I doing this right?").

The meeting led to agreements about individual districts' application procedures, how information meetings would be conducted, and a tentative agenda for another meeting to begin planning the course. The district facilitators expressed excitement about being involved in a collaborative project, and appreciation for the opportunity to participate.

Critical incident. After the faculty member had been appointed, the coordinator attempted to arrange another planning meeting before the summer. The intent was to further explore teachers' needs, to identify goals and learning outcomes for the course, to clarify roles, and to discuss how the team would integrate the workshops, seminars and classroom implementation aspects of the coursework. The faculty member indicated that he would not be able to begin course planning until July because of other commitments, and that perhaps the rest of the group should go ahead with these discussions. The district facilitators were anxious to learn more about their roles and how the course would be organized. They all had vacation plans when school finished in June. It was impossible to find a common date for a planning meeting. The coordinator agreed to meet with the district facilitators in May and with the faculty member during the summer.

This sequence of events was significant because it limited the instructional team's opportunities to build a sense of shared purpose and ownership in the Project, to establish an adequate level of trust and comfort, and to develop common understandings about how the coursework might proceed. Without this interaction, several differences of interpretation about the coursework were not apparent until after the fall semester had begun. This resulted in some confusion over roles and an awkwardness within the instructional team that continued into the course.

District facilitators' perspectives. The district facilitators met with the coordinator on May 27. The agenda included a review of the Project framework and principles of effective in-service, updates on district agreements and status of Developmental Site grant proposals, discussion about individual roles, and a tentative overview of the semester schedule and potential planning meetings.

The district facilitators identified some potential outcomes for teacher-learners in the course. These outcomes were brainstormed randomly, but have been grouped here into the four themes identified in Chapter 3. In the category of "processes of change" they hoped that teachers would: "understand why there is a need for change"; "understand the need for a focused approach to curriculum change"; "appreciate the developmental nature of change"; "be able to deal with change"; and "feel comfortable about letting go of old stuff." In the category of "teachers as learners" they wanted teachers to: "appreciate what they are already doing that is worthwhile in promoting learning"; "understand the value of process in developmental learning"; "become conscious, reflective lifelong learners"; "understand background and research re Year 2000 strategies"; "become familiar with Year 2000 principles, goals, philosophy"; "become aware of different routes into Year 2000"; "know where they want to go with Year 2000"; "demonstrate principles in projects"; and "be able to explain and defend student-centred learning." In the realm of "learning communities" they hoped teachers would: "develop increased understanding of and tolerance for individual thinking and learning styles"; "collaborate with one another and different districts"; "draw other teachers in"; and "spread knowledge and understanding." With respect to "university teaching as a transactional enterprise", they expressed two desired outcomes for the university: "the university will appreciate the value of these courses"; and "the university will understand its role in developing schools for the twenty-first century."

This group felt that the course should: "connect strategies to theory and research"; "model student-centred learning"; "create a safe environment where everyone's voice could be heard"; "create a collaborative environment; provide opportunities for a range of

projects"; "include lots of interaction"; and "work from expressed needs and concerns." Some strategies they hoped to see included: "ongoing reflective writing"; "project planning"; "portfolio conferences with peers and facilitators"; "presentations and demonstrations of learning"; "sharing of classroom experiences"; and "individual and small-group analysis of Year 2000 principles."

Faculty member's perspectives. The faculty member was a member of the Primary Program Steering Committee, had participated in the Primary Program Review and was involved in teacher research groups investigating Year 2000 approaches. He also had a broad background in teacher development. His orientation to teacher learning focused on helping teachers reflect on dilemmas of practice.

The coordinator and the faculty member met on August 19. It was their first opportunity to discuss the course in detail. The coordinator assumed, based on previous conversations, that the faculty member was using the discussion document as his framework. She briefly reviewed the organizational arrangement with the school districts and described the meeting with district facilitators. The faculty member and the coordinator agreed that they would try to develop the course from teacher-learners' needs and make decisions as the course proceeded. There was no discussion of how links might be made between the two semesters.

They began planning around the question, "What kinds of structures and processes might we need to address, to help teachers feel comfortable in their own development?" Suggestions emerged as a list of topics: action research, visions that blind and visions that enable; how do teachers learn; the nature of educational communities; accountability; reflective practice; finding questions rather than answers; problem-posing; inquiry processes; handling uncertainty; experience and learning; practical knowing; and passion in teaching. The faculty member suggested that these topics might be addressed through readings: for example, an article on community and one on authenticity. He proposed activities such as small-group discussions with questions to draw out the main concepts.

The coordinator suggested a framework for planning seminar activities that would begin with specific aspects of teachers' classroom experiences, ask them to examine those experiences, draw out the concepts, beliefs, or values embedded in the experiences, and invite the posing of hypotheses, problems or questions. The faculty member proposed that they might try this framework for one or two classes, critique it and then suggest another one.

On September 12, the faculty member and the coordinator met a second time to discuss an agenda for the first class, scheduled for the following evening. The faculty member proposed that the course begin by asking teachers to identify issues, dilemmas or problems they were facing. Through these kinds of activities he hoped to unearth what they thought about Year 2000 programs and to begin exploring their conceptions of teaching and learning. The focus areas to be analyzed were: problematic features of teachers' own development; problematic features of the Year 2000; and the relationship between the two. The coordinator suggested asking teachers to share their excitements as well as concerns with respect to Year 2000 programs, and to identify questions they would like the course to address. The faculty member added that he would also like students to describe a memorable learning experience, to draw from the group what makes learning memorable.

The faculty member and coordinator agreed that they would set the tone for inviting input from students by explaining that they hoped to develop the rest of the course in response to participants' needs and interests. They would listen to teacher-learners' questions and concerns during the first class, and return to the following large-group session with a course agenda for the group's response.

Analysis of planning for the first semester

A comparison of perspectives. Although each member of the instructional team had read the discussion document and was familiar with the organizational components of Project X, their individual visions of teaching and learning within this framework appear to

be somewhat different. For example, the district facilitators emphasized beginning with the best of teachers' current practice, and looking at Year 2000 principles, goals and philosophy within the context of educational change. Their priorities included helping teachers "feel comfortable with what they were already doing" and "feel comfortable about letting go of old stuff." They wanted teachers to "understand why there is a need for change," "appreciate the developmental nature of change," and "be able to deal with change." The facilitators and coordinator also envisioned teacher-learners engaging in classroom inquiry where they would "demonstrate principles in projects." In contrast, the faculty member wanted to focus on problematic features of the Year 2000, and on teachers' dilemmas of practice. His suggestions for in-class activities, such as discussion of readings, seemed to focus more on understanding experts' and researchers' views of Year 2000 principles and teacher development concepts than on having teachers reflect about their own hands-on inquiry and experiences with educational change.

The course agenda prepared by the faculty member for the third session (see Appendix F) appears to support this interpretation.

> This course is framed around a critical examination of issues in the Year 2000 program. It represents a humanistic and critical way of looking at how innovation takes place in the work context of teaching. It will engage participants in an in-depth examination of the questions raised by authors and researchers working at the "cutting edge" in learner-focussed teaching. At the same time, participants will engage in classroom inquiry around the dilemmas of practice they face in their respective classroom contexts. The aim is to learn interactively and dynamically from practice and from well-known researchers who have specialized in the area of learner-focussed teaching, and to do this in a manner in which participants take a critical and independent stance relative to their own ideas and the ideas presented. Further aims in the course have then to do with:
>
> 1) careful study of and familiarization with the Year 2000 documents;
> 2) examining the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs, and other curriculum documents;
> 3) critically examining the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
> 4) identifying emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluating them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;

5) studying additional literature which explicates and criticizes the major theoretical underpinnings of the documents;
6) providing opportunities for participants to grasp the substantive ideas with confidence, accuracy, and appropriate use of analytical language;
7) engendering in participants the ability to make sense of competing theoretical claims, to evaluate conflicting evidence, and to understand the relationship between research findings and practical application (SFU Faculty of Education, 1992a, p. 1).

Objectives 6 and 7 were added by the faculty member to the course objectives approved by the Undergraduate Programs Committee. They could be seen to say that there are "correct" interpretations of ideas in the Year 2000 documents, and that it is important for teachers to articulate these ideas accurately in appropriate language. This differs from the district facilitators' desire that teachers learn "there are no 'pre-set' answers to Year 2000 implementation." There are also no references in these objectives to understanding processes of change, an area that was highlighted in the facilitators' desired outcomes.

One explanation for these discrepant interpretations may be differences in the information and information sources to which each instructional team member referred. The coordinator and district facilitators based their interpretations on the discussion document. They assumed that the dialectical links between Education 386 and 407 were still in place. The faculty member based his interpretation on his teaching assignment, communicated to him by the Director of Undergraduate Programs, in which Education 386 was clearly separated from Education 407. The faculty member had not been directly involved in developing the framework for Project X. Although he had seen the discussion document, it differed from the approved course outline and the Faculty's parameters for his teaching assignment. It appears that the faculty member referred primarily to the approved course outline which reflected a theory into practice view of implementation.

A further source of misunderstanding may have been differences in the planners' past experiences with teacher research and classroom inquiry. The faculty member was familiar with literature and research that emphasized dilemmas of teaching as appropriate starting points for critical reflection and teacher development. He suggested that classroom inquiry should begin with a focus on dilemmas of existing practice. The district facilitators

and coordinator were familiar with models of classroom inquiry that involved investigation of new approaches built on the best of a teacher's existing practices These differences of interpretation created tension as instructional team members attempted to understand one another's perspectives during the first semester.

Factors influencing the planning process. The most significant factor in this aspect of planning was lack of time. The district facilitators, on the one hand, were coming to the end of a stressful school year and wanted to clarify their roles in the coursework before leaving for summer break. Their overlapping vacation schedules left no time for a summer meeting. The faculty member, on the other hand, had only recently adjusted his teaching commitments for the fall to include Education 386. He also had other pressing responsibilities. Because he had not been involved in the early stages of planning, he may not have realized the implications of participating on a collaborative instructional team when he agreed to teach Education 386.

The lack of time to build a working relationship resulted in decisions being made without adequate clarification. The faculty member and the coordinator did not know one another well enough to explore their differences comfortably. Their discussions seemed to be characterized by unresolved tensions. Toward the end of the course, the faculty member told the students:

> If [the coordinator] and I were to discuss our learning we would have to tell a story of arguments. We saw each other as stereotypes—the academic and the teacher facilitator. The kinds of experiences we have had reflect these assumptions. Our story would tell how they affected what we did and said, and how those assumptions are changing. It would be a story of development. Our story would reflect the impact those assumptions had on us.

Another factor was confusion about whether the instructional team was basing its planning on the discussion document which had been given to students, or on the official course outline for Education 386. In keeping with a co-evolutionary approach to planning, the coordinator assumed that this would be clarified when the team met to shape the coursework. The entire team did not meet together until after the third week of classes. The

faculty member was not involved in early discussions with district representatives and did not have a context for interpreting the information he had been given about the Project.

Dominant voices. This aspect of planning is characterized by competing voices, each asserting itself in turn to contribute to the development of Education 386 and to claim a role on the instructional team. The district facilitators spoke for the learning needs of teachers whose reform efforts they hoped to support. The faculty member spoke for critical rigour and informed action with respect to Year 2000 principles and programs. The coordinator spoke on behalf of the participating districts whose expectations for the coursework involve self-directed classroom-based inquiry.

Situations of practice. Each voice on the instructional team represented a different situation of practice, and hence different priorities in shaping the first semester of coursework. The district facilitators were oriented to situations of practice in schools. They were familiar with the turmoil and uncertainty of teachers' work contexts, and wanted to emphasize a supportive approach to teacher learning and educational change. The faculty member, as a university-based teacher educator, represented a situation of practice in which analysis, critique, writing and research are valued. He, too, wanted to support teacher learning, and approached this task by focusing on problematic aspects of teachers' existing practices and on analysis of expert theory and research underlying Year 2000 initiatives. The coordinator, in her role as Project facilitator, wanted to ensure that teachers' and districts' expectations for the coursework were understood and addressed. These conflicting priorities continued to challenge the instructional team as it made its way through the first semester of Project X.

Summary

In-service teacher education takes place at the intersection of several different situations of practice. Liston and Zeichner (1991) have suggested that educators' decisions are shaped by the institutional and social contexts in which their work is situated. These

decisions may produce both intended and unintended outcomes. In the case of Project X, conflicting decisions arising from different institutional situations created tensions and challenges for those at the intersection.

The school districts, situated within a context of large-scale educational reform, requested coursework that focused on implementation of Year 2000 principles and programs. Their view of implementation emphasized self-directed classroom inquiry and reflection. Teacher chose to participate in Project X based on a description that outlined this approach. District facilitators also interpreted their roles from this perspective.

The Faculty of Education, situated within the university, was committed to academic criteria and standards based on a different view of teacher learning. The Director of Undergraduate Programs interpreted the academic criteria and standards to include a critique of Year 2000 reforms and a theory into practice approach to implementation. The decision to alter the Project framework redefined the nature of the coursework and the role of the faculty member, and set up a conflict between two different views of implementation.

The faculty member's situation of practice, constrained by other academic pressures, did not allow time for collaborative planning or clarification of these competing views. He brought to Education 386 a different understanding of the course intents than those held by teacher participants and district facilitators. This created a tension within the instructional team and confusion for teacher participants as they tried to understand the course expectations.

The rejection of some teachers' applications, arising from the university's situation as an institution with scarce resources and other priorities, also created a tension between educational intentions and credentialing functions of Project X. This may also have caused some teachers to be unnecessarily concerned about coursework expectations.

The following chapter discusses how these tensions and challenges were experienced and negotiated by Project X participants during the Education 386 semester.

Chapter 5

ACTING, OBSERVING AND RE-ACTING

Chapter overview

This chapter examines the evolution of Education 386 from the first workshop on September 13, 1992 to the last seminar on December 2. It documents how the framework for Project X functioned in reality, and how all participants contributed to the shaping of the first semester of coursework. Analyses focus on the transactions among participants, on critical incidents and influencing factors, and on observed patterns of change in participants' understanding and attitudes as the course progressed.

Chapter 2 discussed McNiff's (1988) conception of generative action research spirals, in which several cycles of acting, observing and re-acting may spin off from a main area of concern. In this study, the main thrust of action research was to develop university coursework that would address teachers' learning needs in a time of educational change. The intent was to engage all Education 386 participants in creating the best possible educational opportunity within the parameters of the Project. During Education 386, action research spirals addressed different concerns as they arose. Each area of concern involved decisions that influenced the course in progress, and so each has been treated as a separate focus of analysis. These aspects were not identified as discrete foci during the study, but could be seen from subsequent analysis of the research data.

This chapter follows the evolution of the course. Sections alternate between description and analysis of concerns that arose at different points in the semester. The first section describes the instructional team's intentions at the beginning of the semester. It outlines the working agreements discussed by the coordinator and district facilitators, and the transactional principles espoused in their initial meetings. Subsequent sections deal with involving the teachers, developing the course agenda, negotiating course activities, adjusting the assignments, and dealing with grades.

Data analysis

Data sources included field notes, audiotapes and transcripts, documents such as course outlines and agendas for class sessions, and artifacts such as charts created in class. These data were used to reconstruct course events, and a timeline was developed to show critical incidents that shaped the course in action. Records of instructional team meetings were reviewed and correlated with course activities to draw out principles, planning approaches, and patterns of interaction. Field notes and artifacts were examined to identify teacher-learners' expressed needs and their responses to specific course activities, and to look for evidence of changes in understanding and attitudes. When these analyses were completed, teachers' personal narratives were re-read to check perceptions and identify substantiating data.

Working agreements of the instructional team

Organizational structure of the semester. Twelve sessions were held during the fall semester, alternating weekly between large-group workshops and district-based seminars (see Appendix G). Workshops were attended by teachers from both districts, with the locations alternating between the two districts' Resource Centres. These sessions were usually conducted jointly by the faculty member and coordinator, referred to hereafter as the "university instructors." The district facilitators provided support during workshops by interacting with participants individually and in small groups. Seminars were conducted by district facilitators in their local Resource Centres. Each university instructor joined one of the district seminar groups, to be available for support. The coordinator usually attended district A seminars while the faculty member went to district B. The data for this study were collected during large-group workshops and district A seminars. Consequently some findings may not be representative of district B.

Rolling planning. Chapter 4 described a co-evolutionary approach to the preliminary planning of Project X. A similar approach was adopted by the instructional team toward the

development of course activities during Education 386. Although the team members may have had different assumptions about how this might look in practice, they agreed in principle that rolling planning would be necessary throughout the semester to respond to teacher-learners' changing needs and to give them a voice in shaping the course. They also felt it would be important to model learner-focused approaches to the study of Year 2000 principles and programs.

> *Coordinator:* I guess I'd like to establish some common understandings... about how we might deal with the question of relating the seminars to the workshops and back and forth. [The faculty member] and I are working in a really evolutionary kind of way. That is, we want to get a sense of where the people are coming from and to continue to build the curriculum from them. So, my understanding is that we would have some ideas based on where the course seems to be going generally but that we would always want to have your input around the seminars, which means that there's not going to be a lot of long term planning. It's responsive kind of work....It means that you'll have to speak up and be tolerant of the uncertainty sometimes. How do you feel about that?
>
> *Mrs. D:* I think we've all learned to survive that way.
>
> *Mrs. P:* It's familiar.
>
> *Mrs. S:* Well, that's why we're here.
>
> *Mrs. C:* I like evolutionary so much better than confusion. It has a nicer ring to it.

It was generally agreed that input would be invited from teacher participants at each session. Subsequent planning would be based on decisions about how best to respond to teachers' expressed needs and to support appropriate directions for development. To expedite this approach, the instructional team agreed to meet following each workshop to outline the next week's seminars. During seminars, the university instructors would gather suggestions from their respective district groups. They would then meet on campus to plan the workshops, and would communicate their proposals to district facilitators by telephone or fax.

Analysis

The district facilitators and coordinator met following the first workshop. The faculty member was unable to attend, but was given a transcript of the discussion. This meeting established some tentative understandings among the coordinator and district facilitators about planning and teaching approaches to Education 386.

Analysis: Flexibility. The coordinator and district facilitators acknowledged that roles might evolve as the semester progressed, and recognized the need to monitor the process and speak out when necessary.

> *Coordinator:* Are there concerns generally? About your roles?
>
> *Mrs. D:* I think it would be evolutionary.
>
> *Coordinator:* ...I trust that you'll work out, among yourselves, your own style as you collaborate with your seminar group, and we'll be there to support you. You can let us know how you want us to support you.

Analysis: Sharing of ideas. It was understood that all team members could contribute to planning. Each could offer suggestions based on their experiences.

> *Coordinator:* We didn't talk tonight about...recording their thoughts—keeping track of what they're doing and where their thinking is going. It might be really important to do a couple of activities in the seminar where they are doing some reflective writing for themselves.
>
> *Mrs. P:* And maybe a part of that...This summer when I took a course I found it really helpful...to have a key question or some focus. For those that want to have that, it's there; for the others that have already got...what they want to write, they're already far into that whole process.

Analysis: Responsiveness to teacher' needs. The district facilitators were prepared to listen to teachers' in-class discussions and use their ideas to develop subsequent activities.

> *Mrs. C:* I'm...thinking that there is so much really good discussion that went on. I really want to get my hands on looking through the document. I really need to spend time doing that and I sense that other people do too....
>
> *Mrs. S:* Maybe one of the things that might be helpful would be to bring all of the collection of Year 2000 documents that it would be possible one might be talking about, because I suspect people don't have a perspective on the range of things.

Analysis: On-the-spot re-acting. During the first workshop, an incident occurred in which the university instructors responded to an unexpected teaching opportunity. This impromptu change of plans seemed acceptable to the district facilitators.

> *Mrs. S.* Well, I'd like to thank you for something....Your idea of rephrasing concerns as questions. That's just great—it makes such a difference.
>
> *Coordinator.* I think perhaps we're all thinking along the same lines....[the faculty member] and I were saying when we re-created the question activity at the end of the session tonight, "That isn't exactly what we had planned." But we see that this business of reframing questions and sorting questions in terms of their relevance to us personally...is where we might put our energy over the next few weeks....

Analysis: Listening and clarifying. The district facilitators acknowledged that listening and providing clarifying feedback would communicate respect for teacher-learners and help them become more reflective about their ideas. The faculty member had provided an example at the first workshop that was noted by the district facilitators.

> *Mrs. C:* One of the things that I really liked that [the faculty member] had done is how he took some of the rephrasing of the questions and made them more relevant, more pertinent, more along the lines of questions that we could actually pursue and deal with. Some of the questions that people came up with were so nebulous and broad that they would be impossible for us as a group to really grapple with. I think it's beginning to hone in on making those questions a little bit more relevant....
>
> *Mrs. D:* ...when the big questions come out about funding and stuff like that, I really sense fear....I have a lot of fear around it and so what I noticed was happening when [the faculty member] was reframing those things was that it kind of dropped the level down a bit. There was a...perceptible difference in the tone of the place....

Analysis: Facilitating teacher-teacher interaction. The district facilitators also hoped to encourage teachers to listen to and learn from one another.

> *Mrs. P:* What else I liked is that woman who spoke up when the question was, "What about funding?" Well, funding is out of our hands. We can't really do very much. But, "What can we do with the limited resources we've got?" That is something that we can grapple with....Beginning to have people understand that those are the kinds of questions that we need to ask ourselves—not ones that are out of our control, but ones that we do have some control over.

Analysis: Balancing structure and flexibility. The coordinator anticipated that some teacher-learners might be uncomfortable with a perceived lack of direction early in the course, and discussed this possibility with the district facilitators.

> *Coordinator:* There may be people who express some frustration at the looseness—what appears to be looseness. You could explain to them that what we're doing is generating questions that, as a community of inquirers, we can take a look at. Some of those questions might even be questions that are out of their control, so ask them not to lose track of those ones but to group them. The other thing...you might want to do is to reassure them that ultimately they are going to take responsibility for investigating a question and that it's really important to give themselves time and permission to find a question that they care about....The learning is not going to start after they get their question—it starts right now. The process of finding it is part of the coursework.

Analysis: Building a community of inquiry. The district facilitators hoped to maximize teachers' opportunities to learn from one another.

> *Mrs. S:* ...we found, with a number of really large meetings that we've had about the Year 2000 program, that where we had a mixture of primary, intermediate, and graduation people, the discussion was really rich and people were just stunned. Like, "I never realized you had to deal with that" and "Wow, that's different"....And people really appreciate that opportunity.

Analysis: Transactional approaches to teaching and learning. The values implied in the above examples appear to be congruent with characteristics of transactional teaching described in Chapter 3. For example, instructional team members were prepared to build on teachers' experience and knowledge. They began the course by asking teachers to reflect on their excitements and concerns regarding Year 2000 initiatives and to identify questions that the course might address. They attempted to provide a balance between structure and flexibility by preparing a focused activity that they then adapted *in situ.* They intervened to provide direction for further development by refocusing teachers' concerns as questions to be explored. They expected to offer appropriate resources such as an array of Year 2000 documents. They listened to and clarified teachers' ideas. They hoped to promote critical reflection and self-evaluation, as suggested by the discussion on focused reflective writing. They placed importance on helping teachers learn from one another, as in the district

facilitator's example of mixing groups across program levels. They also appeared to trust that teacher-learners would take responsibility for their own development—"ultimately they are going to take responsibility for investigating a question and...it's really important to give themselves time and permission to find a question that they care about...."

Analysis: Communication within the instructional team. This was the third meeting between the district facilitators and coordinator. Roles and responsibilities had been identified. The comfort level appeared adequate to allow everyone to contribute. The district facilitators seemed prepared to conduct the seminar portions of the course with support from the university instructors. Since the faculty member had not yet been able to participate in a planning meeting with the entire instructional team, the distance between his experiences and those of the other instructional team members continued to widen.

Involving the teachers

The first workshop activity asked teachers to identify their excitements and concerns about Year 2000 initiatives. One of its purposes was to show that the instructional team valued teachers' professional experience and knowledge. A second was to gather information that would help shape the agenda for future workshops and seminars. During this activity the university instructors explained that they would develop a course agenda from participants' concerns and questions, and present it for reaction at the next workshop.

The university instructors' perspectives. The university instructors' remarks to the class at the first workshop indicate their commitment to this approach.

> *Faculty member:* This course is owned by all participants. We will inquire into the Year 2000 together. We are modelling what we want you to do—to study your practice. All of us will benefit from seeing all teachers as researchers....
>
> *Coordinator:* Because this class is learner-focused, it is not laid out in advance. We need your input to shape the course. You can tell us what you want using the framework of seminars and workshops. The [workshops] will provide opportunity for interaction across districts for collaboration and problem-solving. The seminars will allow for more depth in home-district interaction.

The district facilitators' perspectives. District facilitators reiterated these messages in the following week's seminar. For example, District A teachers were invited to cluster their questions about Year 2000 initiatives into three categories: "might be 'owned' personally—significant to me"; "might be addressed collaboratively"; and "beyond our control." They were encouraged to focus on areas where they might have a personal influence. During this activity a district facilitator remarked to the class that the quality of the course would depend on the quality of their questions, and that it was important to make the questions personally significant.

The senior administrator's perspective. This position was also reinforced by the senior administrator from district A when he spoke to the class at the first seminar. He explained that the district wanted to encourage classroom inquiry in order to set a tone of learning throughout the schools, and he quoted from two articles that teachers had been asked to read (Jaggar, 1989; Lieberman, in press) that emphasized reflection as a means of learning from practice. In the next seminar the senior administrator also reminded the class that this course allowed them to set their own learning agendas and required them to take some responsibility for learning.

The teachers' perspectives. When this approach was introduced, some teachers immediately expressed concern about not knowing the course expectations. They especially wanted more clarity about course assignments. The coordinator responded that since this might be a new way of learning for some of them, they might find it uncomfortable for a few weeks. When she noted that there would be no examination and no academic papers, the group seemed to breathe a sigh of relief.

Other teachers, particularly a few who had completed a *Comet Field-Based Implementation* course the previous year, said they appreciated the flexibility. For example, when one teacher commented that many teachers know about strategies that reflect Year 2000 principles but don't use them, a second replied:

> If you go to a workshop and hear something once, you store it away. If you hear it again, you go back and look at it. If you hear somebody talking in the staffroom then you really think about it. When you connect and build on it—you make it personal—then you do something with it.

A third teacher commented that this was the constructivist idea of learning, and that this was what the course was trying to help them do.

Critical incident. In the first seminar, district A teachers worked in small groups to categorize their questions. One group's questions reflected concerns about how in-class time might best be used.

> Should we be using this course time for reflective thinking?
> When do we get past our concerns onto a positive application?
> Should we be using this course time to collaborate with colleagues?

When asked to explain these questions, the group said they felt uncomfortable about collaborating with colleagues and taking time for reflection in the course. They thought they should be getting information about Year 2000 programs before they could begin to address their own questions.

This incident was important because it highlighted the assumptions that some teachers bring to university coursework: experts have the information teachers need to implement educational change; university courses involve receiving information from experts; and implementation involves getting the right information first and then applying it—a theory into practice view. The teachers' questions also may imply that reflective thinking is less important than assimilating information, and that teachers have little to learn from their colleagues. All these assumptions are congruent with a transmissional model of university coursework in which control of learning resides within the domain of the instructor.

Responding to teachers' concerns. As a result of this incident, the university instructors decided to begin the next workshop with an activity that would highlight the issue of structure in learner-focused teaching. At the beginning of the session, teachers were asked to reflect on "How are you feeling at this point in the course?" and "What do

these feelings mean to you vis-a-vis your development?" Some teachers were positive: "not all alone," "hopefulness that something will change," "enjoyment of time to reflect", "course honours my own process," "grateful," "inquisitive," "refreshed" and "anticipation of reaching my personal goal." Other responses included words like "apprehensive," "overwhelmed by the number of questions," "inadequate because of my lack of background," and "frustrated." One teacher summarized her concerns this way:

> We've been together for eight hours already and I have lots of questions. I want some of the answers please!

The faculty member then presented the focus question, "What does this tell us about structure and learner-focused teaching?" He pointed out that teachers' feelings encompassed a continuum from frustration to freedom, and that this might give the group some insights into different learning styles. He asked, "In a learner-focused situation, what is the role of structure?" Some teachers responded that "structure is like a safety net, " "structure equals security" and "maybe I have to make a structure for myself." One person expressed an "aha"—she could see the connections between her feelings about Education 386 so far and how children in her classes might feel until they understood the structure of a learner-focused classroom.

Analysis

Factors influencing teachers' responses. Initial efforts to involve teachers in shaping the course agenda for Education 386 received a mixed response. Several factors may have influenced participants' reactions. One factor, suggested above, is that some teachers entered the course expecting a transmissional learning experience. Such an experience might have been more familiar to them, and might have felt safer than one in which they had to state their own questions and concerns. They may have experienced discomfort about having to take responsibility for learning, uncertainty about whether they could succeed, and anxiety because of the perceived risks and possible failure involved. This could have been compounded by the university's rejection of some teachers during the

application process described in Chapter 4. Most teachers are eager to do well in their studies, and want to know what is expected of them so they can get the best grades possible. Not knowing the expectations for assignments may have caused anxiety, especially if teachers were skeptical about whether the university instructors could be trusted.

The district facilitators noticed that positive feelings were expressed by teachers who felt comfortable with the process of identifying questions, whereas frustration was expressed by those who wanted more information and direction. One district facilitator commented that people who seemed to be more linear in their thinking were anxious to know where the course was headed, and that practical people wanted facts about the Year 2000. This suggests that learning or personality style could be a variable in teachers' comfort levels when first entering a transactional learning experience.

Education 386 participants represented a continuum of prior experiences extending from teachers who had already participated in self-directed courses or teacher-as-researcher groups to those whose situations of practice did not support educational change. A district facilitator who was familiar with teachers' work contexts attributed one group's frustration to a competitive school environment in which there was a "vested interest in staying the same," and another group's anxiety to a situation in which a new administrator was encouraging staff to move quickly into Year 2000 approaches. The district facilitator hypothesized that those teachers might be looking for immediate answers to relieve the pressure. It seems possible that teachers' situations of practice may also have influenced their reactions to a process-oriented and transactional introduction to the course.

This was only the third session of the course, and the second meeting between the two districts. The group was large, and the location had changed each session. It seems possible that the class had not yet developed an adequate level of comfort and trust to feel secure within a flexible approach to teaching and learning. Following is an excerpt from field notes at the time:

> No matter how clear we try to be about putting more of the ownership into the teachers' hands, it seems to take an immersion into a new experience to break down old assumptions. This aspect of their learning takes time—they need reassurance to foster confidence and trust. It reminds me that we must be very sensitive to their prior experiences and help them to reshape their assumptions through clear communication and consistent experiences that give a different message. Any inconsistencies will undermine the trust.

The first two classes had attempted to communicate a consistent message that Education 386 would be developed around teachers' needs and expectations. However, differences in assumptions about Project X, carried forward from the preliminary planning phase, seemed to interfere with clarity and consistency. The next section shows how confusion developed about course activities and expectations.

Developing the course agenda

Background. Chapter 4 described how, prior to applying for Project X, teachers had received information indicating that the coursework would emphasize investigation of Year 2000 initiatives through self-directed classroom projects. They had also been told that Education 386 and 407 would be similar in approach. Workshops would deal with substantive issues related to Year 2000 initiatives; seminars would provide opportunities to reflect on teachers' self-directed classroom inquiry. The official academic course outline for Education 386, developed later, represented a different view of the relationship between the two courses. It indicated that Education 386 would deal with substantive issues in the fall, and Education 407 would focus on implementation activities in the spring. To resolve this tension, the coordinator had asked the Director of Undergraduate Programs if the two courses could be offered concurrently across both semesters. The Director of Undergraduate Programs replied that the faculty member could teach Education 386 as he saw fit.

In the first Education 386 class, teachers had been given a course overview that presented the objectives of both Education 386 and Education 407 under the heading of "coursework" (see Appendix G). It outlined the coursework components as previously

discussed with the school districts and teachers: workshops, seminars, classroom implementation projects, and peer consultation, with release time provided by the districts for individual teachers' self-selected learning activities. In particular, it contained the following description of self-directed projects.

> The classroom component of the course involves the design and implementation of a project in which each participant investigates the use of specific practices that represent the Year 2000 principles in action. A format for project design will be provided and discussed in seminars (SFU Faculty of Education 1992b, p. 2).

The first session of Education 386 began with a review of this course outline. Both university instructors were present. One question raised by a student was, "What distinction is there between this course and the other in the spring?" The coordinator responded, "There is no distinction. The process of development goes on, so the process will continue through to the next course."

Substantive themes. As described earlier, in the first two sessions teachers had been asked to provide input in the form of questions they wanted the coursework to address (see Appendix H). After the second session, the university instructors met to develop a course agenda for the next workshop. This was their first meeting since the course had begun.

They started by exchanging impressions of the respective district seminars they had attended. The coordinator commented that some participants in district A were anxious about course expectations. The two instructors decided to brainstorm what they thought the course might include. They laid out some general guidelines, then worked together to categorize the teachers' questions. According to the field notes:

> ...our approach to forming categories seemed to be influenced by our different interpretations of what the teachers meant by their questions. My interpretations have been formed by listening to other teachers ask the same questions and exploring them...across many groups. [The faculty member's] seem to be informed more by his familiarity with the constructs in the literature. For example, when we came to a question about, "How can we cut down the time planning and preparing?" [the faculty member] put it into the category of Program Foundations...I thought...that it was not an information but a coping issue....This offered numerous opportunities to clarify our beliefs and assumptions about what teachers' concerns were, and to discuss the ways that issues were related....

The categorized questions were then used to develop a list of substantive themes: foundations of the Year 2000 program; learner-focused teaching; student empowerment; parental involvement; and societal/political/systemic constraints. It was proposed that one theme would be addressed in each workshop.

Assignments. Next the university instructors discussed possible course assignments. A portfolio assignment had already been described in the discussion document handed out at information meetings. The coordinator explained her idea of a portfolio which could model Year 2000 assessment and evaluation approaches. It would provide teachers with choices about how to represent what they were learning from course activities and classroom inquiry. The faculty member proposed that one element of the portfolio should be a story of teaching. They decided on four components: a story of personal development; an analysis of changes in thinking; a representation of something tried in the classroom; and an action plan for further development (See Appendix F).

Grading. Education 386 was a graded course. The coordinator proposed that the course model a variety of strategies for incorporating self-evaluation and peer evaluation into the portfolio assignment. Teachers could be involved in setting criteria, looking at their own and others' work, and in a final self-evaluation conference with the university instructors. The faculty member agreed.

Critical incident. The coordinator and faculty member then decided that he would write up the substantive themes and portfolio assignment for the agenda. She would summarize the seminar component and fax her draft to be incorporated into his text. She suggested using the text from the previous course overview.

When the course agenda appeared, several aspects of the course description were substantially different from the previous course overview. As documented in Chapter 4, two new objectives had been added, placing emphasis on critique and on "providing opportunities for participants to grasp the substantive ideas with confidence, accuracy, and

appropriate use of analytical language." There was no mention of self-directed projects. As well, the language used to describe each component had been altered.

This incident was important because it revealed significant differences in assumptions about the coursework between the faculty member and other member of the instructional team. The changes may have increased teachers' confusion and uncertainty about Education 386 when the agenda was presented at the third session.

Teachers' responses to the course agenda. The agenda was presented right after the activity that invited teachers to express and discuss their feelings about the course. The faculty member and district facilitators were present but the coordinator was absent. Data were collected on audiotape.

Teachers were given time to read and discuss the agenda in small groups. They quickly noted the differences between the new version of the coursework and the previous overview. One teacher asked another, "Which is the real course outline?" Another teacher wondered whether she could still do her classroom project.

When discussion opened in the large group, teachers did not comment on the list of substantive themes for the workshops. Most of the discussion focused on the assignments and expectations for grading.

> *Teacher:* Before this came out, I was O.K.—now I'm overwhelmed. This looks like an awful lot!
>
> *Teacher:* What are the expectations of this course? What will you use for evaluation?
>
> *Teacher:* How can we show where we started, if we've already made changes in our classrooms?
>
> *Teacher:* How long does this portfolio story have to be?

The faculty member reminded teachers that the course agenda was negotiable, and that it had been developed in response to their questions. "If you don't like it, come back with alternative suggestions." He also explained that the grades would be negotiated as described in the agenda.

Teachers asked if they would still be able to do classroom projects. The faculty member responded that the projects would be the focus of the second course after Christmas. He suggested that teachers concentrate on finding a question during Education 386.

Analysis

It appears from a comparison of the two course descriptions that the two university instructors did not have the same understanding of how Education 386 might evolve in response to teachers' concerns and questions. Their differences appear to stem from differing conceptions of the relationship between Education 386 and Education 407.

Differing conceptions of the coursework. One key difference was the removal of self-directed projects from the course agenda. After observing teachers' reactions, the coordinator wrote:

> I realized that some of the assumptions on which [the faculty member] and I had differed were about the relationship between 386 and 407. I felt that we had...discussed this in our planning by looking at the themes—the workshops being about the concepts and the seminars being about implementation. Apparently that was never clear....We were really operating from very different frameworks and conceptions of the course.

Differing conceptions of inquiry. The original course overview described a classroom implementation component "in which each participant investigates the use of specific practices that represent the Year 2000 principles in action." The later course agenda stated that "participants will engage in classroom inquiry around the dilemmas of practice they face in their respective classroom contexts." Whereas the first description focused on an investigation of new initiatives, the second referred to reflection on problems encountered within existing practices. In their early conversations about the course, both the coordinator and faculty member had used the term "inquiry" to refer to classroom investigation, but it appears that the term had different meanings for each of them.

Differing conceptions of portfolio assessment. When the faculty member and coordinator discussed the portfolio assignment, the coordinator anticipated that teachers

would be engaged in classroom implementation projects. She envisioned them documenting these classroom investigations and critically reflecting on what they had done and learned. The faculty member had suggested a portfolio component that asked teachers to write a "story of development as a teacher grappling with the Year 2000." He probably saw these stories as opportunities for critical reflection on past histories and existing practice. The two university instructors had different understandings about what was expected in each of the four portfolio components, because they had different assumptions about the kinds of learning activities in which students would be engaged.

Factors influencing the situation. The faculty member was a member of the Undergraduate Programs Committee. He had sponsored the official course outline for Education 386 when it was approved, and had been asked to teach the course by the Director of Undergraduate Programs. In this situation he may have been caught in the tension between the academic agenda of the Faculty of Education and the developmental and social reconstructionist agenda of the school districts. Later in the semester he mentioned that, as the faculty member, he had felt responsible for planning Education 386 and thought it should meet the university's official course expectations.

The faculty member's teaching assignment was only for the first half of Project X. He may have modified the course outline so that he could contribute more fully during this period. Up to this point, he had not participated in instructional team meetings, and may not have understood that the other team members expected to participate in collaborative planning.

The coordinator wanted to work collaboratively with the faculty member. She was caught in the tension between the school district's expectations and her commitment to developing a better relationship between the Project Office and the Faculty. She may not have presented the situation clearly to the faculty member.

Consequences for teacher participants. The course agenda was prepared in response to teachers' needs, concerns and questions. Its intents were to model transactional

approaches and to illustrate how teachers can create direction and structure from learners' expressed needs. Its unintended impact was to communicate mixed messages about the university instructors' expectations for Education 386. This appeared to raise some teachers' anxiety levels and may have contributed to suspicions about whether the university instructors could be trusted.

Teachers' responses to the agenda indicated that they were concerned about the university instructors' performance expectations. When they read the portfolio assignment with its four components, they began to ask questions about superficial details such as the required length of a particular component. These behaviours seem typical of teachers in transmissional learning experiences. It appeared that the course agenda undermined rather than enhanced the transactional relationship between teaching and learning that the course sought to develop.

Negotiating course activities

Teachers' responses to course activities. During the next three sessions, course activities included viewing and critiquing a video of learner-focused instruction, listening to the faculty member's presentation on Year 2000 principles, discussing readings, reflecting on classroom experiences in relation to the principles and readings, and reflective writing. When teachers were asked for feedback on October 20, the district A group expressed frustration about the directions the course was taking.

> There's nothing to whet my appetite here.
> We've had enough talk.
> There's not enough meat.
> I don't feel like a risk-taker because there's nothing that encourages me to take a risk.

Teachers' recommendations. The district A facilitators provided a forum for teachers to record their recommendations. The teachers suggested the following:

"be" a community of learners, not "talk" about community
form support groups to work on specific issues
more mixing among school groups to build networks
time for problem-solving
input to help us connect principles and practice
jumping off points/resources/people
a structure for getting at our own questions
room for everyone to participate in this community of learners
room for different styles and levels of experience
small group activities
practice-oriented questions
resources
mentors from the group feeding into the large group

Rethinking Education 386. When the faculty member and coordinator met the following week to discuss this feedback, they explored possible approaches that might address teachers' concerns. A framework having two complementary components was created. The collaborative autobiography component would ask teachers to critically examine their past and current practices and reflect on what influenced their development. The action inquiry component would focus them on thinking about future directions, including refining a question for investigation and developing a plan for a classroom inquiry project. It was anticipated that teachers could use their questions as a way to connect with other teachers and form collaborative support groups. The university instructors prepared a handout (see Appendix I) that explained the two components in detail, and agreed that they would introduce it at the next workshop.

Critical incident. The next workshop began with the continuation of an activity that had been initiated in the previous week's seminars. Teachers were asked to form small groups representing both districts to exchange ideas about how the class might build a community of learners. At this point the framework for collaborative autobiography and action inquiry had not been introduced.

The teachers resisted. Although asked to form mixed groups, they stayed in their chosen places with colleagues from their home districts. The following dialogue was overheard.

I don't want to make this a bitch session, but our needs are not being met. Some people are upset by the direction of the course. There is too much ambiguity about the assignment....The majority of our group decided there was too much of a gap between the philosophy of the university instructors and the teachers....Let's move on. I came here to collaborate. Now get out of our way and let us collaborate.

That's ironic because that's why I came too. I paid money to collaborate, which is odd. There is no time to collaborate at school.

We are already a group from one school.

People like that are being thwarted by the university.

We are busy people. Don't waste our time with more talk. I'm not convinced this process is leading to anything.

After a short period for small-group discussion, the faculty member explained that the university instructors were prepared to refocus the course in response to teachers' concerns. The framework was handed out, and teachers were given time to read and reflect on the proposal. Some teachers expressed concerns about how assignments would be handled.

Teacher: I am concerned about the timelines for the assignment.
Coordinator: You may have the assumption that you have to do something huge.
Teacher: Then we have permission to take small steps.
Coordinator: Give yourself permission to explore.
Teacher: That's hard.

The focus of the assignment was readjusted to emphasize what teachers might learn from their investigations.

Coordinator: Perhaps we should shift the focus of the assignment to "What will you be able to say about your learning, your story" instead of "What did you try and how did you succeed?" The assignment would allow you to speak to what you are learning. It would allow you to gather data as you go along. It is hard to look at learning until you step back....

The faculty member reassured teachers that he would support their investigations into classroom practice.

Faculty member: My part is to see that there is academic credibility—that the academics are being met. I am also committed to the idea that teachers learn from their practice. You must realize this is not a lowering of expectations. It is making the process part of the expectation...it gives us all permission to be in process. In this context I am as much a learner as you are.

This incident was important because it reaffirmed the transactional approach to Education 386 and gave everyone a voice in shaping the remainder of the course. The faculty member could support teachers' reflections on practice through the collaborative autobiography component. The coordinator could support teachers' self-directed projects through the action inquiry component. The district facilitators could provide teachers with access to Year 2000 resources and opportunities to interact in focused interest groups. Teachers' expressed needs to work collaboratively on specific issues could be accommodated.

Analysis

Factors influencing teachers' perspectives. The rethinking of directions for Education 386 was precipitated by teachers' dissatisfaction with the first third of the course. This dissatisfaction may have been caused by several factors. First, teachers elected to participate in Project X based on a description that promised investigation of Year 2000 initiatives through classroom-based inquiry. During the first few weeks they cooperated with the instructional team because they were told that their questions would be used to shape the course agenda. Many believed these questions would become their focus of inquiry in a self-directed project, because this had been indicated at the information meetings and in the first seminar. When the new course agenda was introduced in the third week, it indicated that projects would not be undertaken until after Christmas. Teachers may have felt deceived and even manipulated.

A second source of dissatisfaction may have been teachers' perceptions that their input was not taken seriously. They had been invited to state their questions and concerns. In return, they asked for substantive input on Year 2000 topics. From their perspective this meant opportunities to deal with burning questions such as the following:

How d I go about teaching students to be reflective?
How can I keep a useful record of student progress?
What does learner focus look like?
How can we ensure that special needs students become as fully involved members of the class as possible?

In the two weeks following the gathering of questions, little attention was given to teachers' expressed needs for input on Year 2000 issues. At this stage they did not see the value of reflecting on others' theories and research, especially about topics that were tangential to their main concerns. The resulting frustration may have led to their recommendation that they "form support groups to work on specific issues."

Another source of frustration could have been the lack of recognition given to teachers' professional experience. Those who had already participated in field-based implementation courses or teacher-as-researcher projects had probably experienced inquiry-oriented approaches to implementation. The language of the course agenda may have appeared to devalue this background, because it emphasized understanding "the relationship between research findings and practical application." This could have led to the remark that "People like that are being thwarted by the university."

Factors influencing the university instructors' perspectives. This sequence of events forced a confrontation between the two university instructors over the course directions. It was the first time their different understandings and hopes for the course were made explicit. The tensions generated during the preliminary planning of Project X had to be resolved. The discrepancies between their conceptions of implementation and their views of university teaching had to be confronted. They had to transcend their personal differences and enter into a transaction that would produce a better learning opportunity for teachers.

From their earliest interactions both the faculty member and coordinator had stated that they wanted the course to evolve in response to teachers' needs. This provided a point of commonality. Conflict seemed to arise from the different meanings and interpretations they gave to teachers' questions, and to their differing situations of practice. Their own learning styles and personalities made them comfortable with different teaching approaches.

Their differing backgrounds led them to value different elements of learning. When they were able to see how their individual approaches could complement one another, a new framework emerged. The field notes record how the faculty member used this example to emphasize how everyone in the class was a learner:

> [the faculty member] illustrated how we learn from our practice by using us as an example. He said that we had come to a point in our interactions last week where I was thinking of him as the academic who was removed from teachers, and he was thinking of me as an ideological practitioner who thought I knew all about teachers because of my experience. He described how we had worked to understand one another's position and to come to a common understanding about what we were trying to do.

Consequences for teachers. It seems that at this point Education 386 did become a transactional teaching and learning experience for the participants. This set a more constructive tone for the remainder of the course. According to the field notes:

> Several times during the latter part of the evening [the faculty member] and I crossed paths and both commented on how this was really how we liked to work. At one point...I think I said, "How come it took us so long to get here?"

Adjusting the assignments

The inquiry projects. When teachers began to work on their inquiry projects it was the beginning of November. Course activities were structured to allow teachers to find groups with common interests so they could share resources and support one another's investigations.

The action inquiry framework provided the following outline to help teachers shape their projects.

> Shaping the chosen *focus* of inquiry
> Choosing a *question* for collaborative or individual inquiry
> Developing an *action plan*
> Engaging in *observation* and *reflection*
> Gathering *data*
> *Analysis and interpretation*
> Deriving *implications* for curriculum change

Teachers were also given a handbook, *Vision to Action* (Holborn, 1992) that contained supplementary activities to assist them in planning their projects. Their topics for inquiry

included such things as learning styles, authentic assessment, student-led conferencing, integrating special needs students, and dealing with math in multi-age classrooms.

Once teachers had identified possible topics for inquiry and found focus groups, their confidence in learning and positive attitudes toward course activities seemed to increase. Here are two examples from field notes:

> As I looked around the room, teachers were actively attending to one another in small groups. I saw people sharing resources and overheard people talking about problems of practice—e.g., "what can one do when one wants a multi-age class but other teachers in the school won't agree;" "how does one find time to do extras"...I heard [a teacher] say that she had achieved an insight as she talked about what she had written. I asked her group how their frustration level was tonight. [A teacher] said it was lower now that they were focusing on their questions and the assignments were not such a big deal.
>
> [A teacher] told me that he is feeling really good about doing what he wants to do, but that it took a long time to believe that this was what was expected.

Collaborative autobiography. Teachers appeared to feel comfortable about taking responsibility for their projects and were starting to demonstrate more thoughtful reflection about their teaching. The collaborative inquiry framework provided a structure for them to reflect on their personal histories and examine the influences that had shaped their teaching. It asked them to think about the following questions.

> With respect to my chosen area of focus, what is the nature of my working reality?
> With respect to my chosen area of focus, how do I think and act in the classroom?
> How did I come to be the way I am?
> What do I want to do about it?

Teachers were able to relate these questions to their inquiry projects, which grew out of issues that were important to them. The field notes provide an example:

> At the end of the reflective writing, I asked students to comment on any insights they had as a result of the group discussion and writing. It was exciting to me to finally hear them being really reflective. For example, [a teacher] said that she had come full circle. She got into education to help society, but once she was there she got into the technological, daily things. Now she is seeing that the classroom reflects who she is and what she believes. Teaching is a way of being. She wants to affect the students, but not to control them.

Negotiating the course assignment. The instructional team did not want the course assignments to disrupt this progress. It was apparent that a portfolio would be premature for this stage of teachers' development within the new framework. On November 8, the team discussed the possibilities.

> We talked about how to help people capture the dynamics of their learning over the period of the course....After extensive discussion, we talked about using a story framework that had personal themes established through the collaborative autobiography.

The instructional team decided to focus part of the next workshop on helping teachers shape a personal narrative that would constitute their assignment for Education 386. For the following three sessions, teachers worked in small groups to help one another develop their individual themes, edit their personal narratives and decide how to present their stories to colleagues at the last session of the semester.

Critical incident. At the November 17 seminar, district A teachers proposed that they could help one another with the assignment by sharing ideas about what could be included in a "teacher as learner" story. The district facilitators organized an impromptu brainstorm. Teachers suggested that stories could include such items as: "what teaching means to you;" "where your desire to teach came from;" "how you perceive your past classroom experiences in comparison with today's classroom experience;" "connections you make as a learner from various sources and how this leads you to change;" "the process you followed to choose your focus/goal;" "critical incidents/vignettes that illustrate your change or movement;" and "your comfort level with your project at this point compared to the beginning weeks of the course." Suggestions for possible organizers included chapters, a journey metaphor, a timeline, chronological diary entries, and a movie script. Their final message to one another was "Make it fun!"

This incident seemed important because the teachers spontaneously proposed this approach to supporting one another's learning. Rather than waiting for direction from

district facilitators, they suggested an activity that would meet their needs. They did this with enthusiasm and in a spirit of cooperation.

Analysis

Factors influencing the teachers' perspectives. After the collaborative autobiography and action inquiry guidelines were introduced, teachers appeared to feel more secure with course expectations for Education 386. The questions included in the collaborative autobiography outline appeared to stimulate their thinking. They seemed more willing to engage in thoughtful reflection within this framework. Their responses to the framework provided data that they could use for their personal narratives. The action inquiry framework appeared to respond directly to teachers' initial course expectations. They appeared more able to draw on previous course activities to identify questions that were important to them, and to develop a plan for focused inquiry. These two complementary structures seemed to lead naturally to the suggested assignment. There was little resistance when the assignment was suggested as an alternative to the portfolio. Only one teacher was taken aback because she had already begun to work on a representation of classroom learning for her portfolio. She decided to continue with it and to make it part of her personal narrative.

Factors influencing the instructional team's perspectives. The instructional team had been able to observe teachers working on collaborative autobiography and action inquiry for several weeks. It seemed important to develop an assignment that would be relevant to their development at this point in the course. Proceeding with the portfolio assignment could have undermined the progress that teachers seemed to be making.

Transactions within the instructional team. The refocusing of Education 386 on collaborative autobiography and action inquiry also appeared to mark a turning point in the instructional team's transactions. The decision to change the assignment was made by all members of the team, rather than just the university instructors. This was probably due to

several factors. By this time in the course, they all had a common context. They shared a situation of practice in which they all had opportunities to contribute to teachers' development. Major differences in assumptions about Education 386 had been clarified.

Consequences for teachers. The critical incident described above suggests that the assignment was probably an appropriate one. Teachers felt comfortable enough to "own" the expectations and to demonstrate a more internalized locus of control than in any previous discussions about course assignments. In this incident, the brainstorming activity was comfortably negotiated between district facilitators and participants. Rather than looking to the facilitators for direction, the teachers proposed their own approach. A decision about how to proceed was made directly in response to teacher-learners' expressed needs. The learning that occurred as teachers considered one another's suggestions for teacher-as-learner stories appeared to be an "enterprise" for all.

It seems significant that this incident focused on the course assignment. According to educators cited in Chapter 3, performance expectations and grading are the most challenging aspects of transactional teaching and learning. This incident suggests that some District A teachers had begun to internalize responsibility for learning and were comfortable enough to initiate transactions with the district facilitators.

Dealing with grades

Chapter 3 discussed some of the challenges posed by grading in a transactional teaching and learning situation. Educators like Newman (1991) and Smith (1988), for example, suggest that they interfere with learning. The university instructors' original intention in Education 386 had been to use the portfolio assignment to involve teachers in self and peer evaluation. They had also intended to conduct individual conferences to negotiate the grades. This would have been in keeping with Elbow's (1986) strategy of bringing students into the grading process.

By the time the Education 386 assignment had finally been clarified, only a few weeks remained until the end of semester. Teachers were deeply involved in writing their personal narratives and developing their action inquiry projects. They were assuming increasing responsibility for their learning activities. The instructional team was apprehensive that, when grading loomed, teachers might revert to worrying about externally-imposed performance criteria.

The faculty member proposed a solution. He would ask the Director of Undergraduate Programs if grades for Education 386 could be deferred until the end of the next semester. Teachers could receive a notation that showed the course was still in progress, and could continue their investigations throughout the next course. In April, they would be graded on their work for Education 386 and would receive a simultaneous pass for Education 407. The Director agreed.

This news was communicated to teachers on November 17, two weeks before the end of semester. The university instructors explained that, since the personal narratives did not have to be graded, they would respond with anecdotal feedback. Teachers seemed relieved that Education 386 would not be formally evaluated until April. They were pleased to continue work on their projects without disruption. One teacher joked, "But what about my letter grade? My students in grade four are upset because they are not getting letter grades!"

At the last seminar, teachers presented their personal narratives and plans for action inquiry to one another in an informal exchange. The field notes indicate that "there seemed to be a general tone of relaxation and a slow pace, but on the tables were a variety of different artifacts that teachers had brought with them to contribute to their storytelling." Despite the absence of grades, all teachers had completed the assignment and seemed to take pride in sharing their stories of learning with colleagues. Following are examples from teachers' personal narratives.

> ...I realize now more than ever the importance of self reflection, of establishing firmly to myself why I am doing what I am doing in the classroom so that I can feel more comfortable with it and confidently share it with others.
>
> At the beginning of the course, I experienced feelings of anxiety and frustration at the seeming lack of guidelines and structure. As the course progressed and our suggestions and concerns were discussed and acted upon, I began to see that the relaxed expectations, which had at first caused anxiety, allowed for experimentation. I found that I had more of a tendency to try things in the classroom that were not "safe," but required an element of risk-taking on my part....I found that I was refreshed by the legitimization of reflective thinking in class. Further, I gradually began to anticipate the achievement of my personal goal in the course, that is, to become more adept at helping my students to become evaluators of their own learning.
>
> ...one of my students said, "[Teacher], today you go to school." I felt very happy because my students see me as a learner. I have learned the importance of collaboration and I have learned what I want to focus on to improve my classroom....With the help of my students and colleagues, I am very excited abut following my action plan, documenting my experience in the classroom and my growth as a teacher....

Analysis

Factors influencing the situation. By re-negotiating the course activities and assignments in response to teachers' frustrations, the university instructors had shifted the locus of control for learning toward teachers, orienting the course more toward Year 2000 principles. Responding in this way had brought the university instructors' practices more in line with the values stated at the beginning of the course: "This course is owned by all participants. We will inquire into the Year 2000 together. We are modelling what we want you to do...." There was little time left to bring students into the grading process in ways that would have modelled appropriate assessment and evaluation practices. It would have been inconsistent to impose traditional evaluation and grading procedures. This could also have drawn the locus of control away from the teachers, and destroyed the momentum toward greater autonomy and confidence that was developing in the latter half of the course.

Consequences for teachers. Postponing grades for Education 386 relieved teachers of external pressures to complete their assignments. Nevertheless, all continued to work on their personal narratives and action inquiry projects during the next two sessions. They

appeared animated and involved when discussing teaching strategies and resources, telling their stories to colleagues, clarifying one another's beliefs, or collaboratively editing one another's work. This suggests that opportunities to engage in classroom inquiry, to make sense of their practice, to thoughtfully reflect on educational values and beliefs, and to collaborate with colleagues may be intrinsically motivating to teachers. The absence of grades appeared to remove some of the tension between learning and seeking university credentials, allowing teachers to invest more fully in inquiry and self-evaluation.

Summary

This chapter has presented Education 386 as an educational action research experience. The participants—both teachers and the instructional team members—entered this experience with perspectives derived from differing situations of practice. They brought with them expectations and assumptions based on past events.

The instructional team set out to work with teacher-learners and with one another in transactional ways. Like other educators, they discovered the challenges of this approach. As the semester progressed, they learned that difficult negotiations were necessary to resolve tensions among competing perspectives. They struggled to create a dynamic balance between "giving students greater control and responsibility, yet maintaining enough structure for them to take risks with new ways of learning" (p. 77). In the process, they created their own "situation of practice," in which decisions could be considered in the context of shared experience.

This chapter has said little about how teacher-learners perceived the educational value of the course, or about how course activities seemed to influence their development in the four areas discussed in Chapter 3. The next chapter takes a reflective look at Education 386 from these perspectives, using data from evaluation questionnaires and teachers' personal narratives.

Chapter 6
REFLECTING

Chapter overview

This chapter looks back at Project X as a whole. Its main focus is a critical examination of the course evaluation data gathered from teacher-learners who participated in Education 386. This retrospective evaluation had several purposes: to discover how the coursework may have influenced teachers' development in the four theme areas identified in Chapter 3; to identify aspects of the coursework that appeared to either support or limit teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine and modify classroom practices; to determine the extent to which participants were prepared to engage in focused classroom-based learning projects during the remainder of the Project; and to highlight both effective elements of the coursework and those that might need attention in the following semester or in future endeavours. The evaluation also touched on broader questions and issues about in-service teacher education that will be considered more fully in Chapter 7.

The chapter begins by documenting teachers' expressed purposes and learning goals when they chose to join Project X. These are analyzed in relation to school district and university perceptions of teachers' learning needs. The discussion then moves to the four aspects of teacher development that were considered in the initial Project design: processes of change; teachers as learners; learning communities; and university teaching as a transactional enterprise. Within each theme, the beliefs and principles identified in Chapter 3 are reconsidered in light of confirming or challenging evidence drawn from teachers' responses to the course evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix J). The next section analyzes and interprets teachers' overall reactions to the course, based on their identification of its most helpful and least helpful aspects, their recommendations for the following semester of the Project, and their suggestions to the Faculty of Education regarding this type of coursework. The chapter concludes with a summary of perceived strengths and

limitations of the approaches taken, and examples of teachers' intentions for the second half of Project X.

Data analysis

The primary data sources for these analyses were evaluation questionnaires completed anonymously by 23 of the 24 district A teacher participants. The following items were included:

1. What were your reasons for joining the [district A and B] Project?
2. What were your learning goals when you began the coursework in September?
3. What are some of your important learnings so far?
4. What benefits have you derived from working on your action plan?
5. What do you see as some of the problems or limitations of this approach to learning?
6. What aspects of the coursework have been most helpful so far?
7. What aspects of the coursework have been least helpful?
8. What do you hope to gain from the second half of the coursework?
9. What suggestions do you have to make the second half of the coursework most worthwhile for you?
10. How would you compare this type of learning to other university courses you have taken?
    a. In what ways is this coursework like other university courses you have taken?
    b. In what ways is this coursework different from other university courses you have taken?
11. What suggestions do you have for the Faculty of Education regarding this type of coursework?

Responses to questions 1 and 2 were analyzed separately to identify teachers' reasons for joining the Project and their goals for learning. Responses to questions 3-7 were categorized by theme, and then examined in relation to the beliefs and principles of teacher development that shaped the initial framework for the Project. Representative responses were selected to illustrate each statement. Where reactions varied, a balance of supporting and challenging responses was chosen to reflect teachers' differing perceptions. Responses to questions 8-11 were analyzed separately to identify patterns in teachers' recommendations for the following semester and their suggestions to the Faculty of Education regarding this type of coursework. When these analyses were complete,

teachers' personal narratives and action plans were reviewed to validate the analyses and to seek pertinent examples where needed.

Teachers' purposes and learning goals

Reasons for joining the Project. Teachers who elected to join Project X all gave several reasons for their initial commitment. Eighteen of 23 mentioned "Year 2000" as one of their motivators.

> I wanted to learn more about the Year 2000 program, find out what I could be doing in my classroom to further implement strategies in it.
>
> To become more familiar with the contents of the Primary program, and with the philosophy of the Year 2000.

As these examples illustrate, some teachers were more oriented toward practical implications of Year 2000 programs, whereas others were more concerned with the philosophical foundations. The words "understand" and "learn more" appeared frequently, but were applied to different areas of concern ranging from philosophical foundations to strategies for teaching a particular component of the curriculum.

An opportunity to work with colleagues was the second most frequently mentioned reason, noted by 11 of the 23 respondents. In several cases this appeared to be influenced by encouragement from district A's administrator for teachers to attend in school-based support groups—for example: "To develop a 'strong' support team with my colleagues from the school"; "To be able to develop collegiality between teachers in my school and other schools."

Seven teachers mentioned the opportunity for professional growth as one of their incentives—"I had a need for another challenge"; "This course would...encourage me to make meaningful changes for the students"; "To learn how to do a research project in my classroom."

Almost half the group also mentioned university credit as a reason for joining the Project, although only one teacher noted it first on her list. Most teachers had already begun

working toward a fifth or sixth year credential, but one said the coursework opportunity had pushed her to renew her education. Four teachers said they were attracted to the course partly because of its location—"It was very close to home."

Learning goals. Sixteen of the 23 teachers also mentioned the Year 2000 in their learning goals. They noted intentions such as: "learn how to implement the principles"; "familiarize myself with more of the philosophy"; "have a chance to process my own understanding"; "become more familiar with the Government documents"; and "find out what other teachers were doing with the Year 2000."

Many, like this teacher, wanted information and examples directly related to their particular situations of practice.

1. See some models of Year 2000 classrooms, year 2/3.
2. Gain practical ideas to implement in my own classroom.
3. Have a sound knowledge of the information in the Year 2000 document.

Some wanted to determine their own directions for implementation.

> I had hoped to discover some insight into where I should be going and what I should be doing; and to find my starting point....
>
> To use the course as a platform for deciding on what, why, and how to implement the strategies which are in keeping with a program geared toward a student-centred classroom.

A few did not mention the Year 2000 at all, but spoke more broadly of their own professional development.

> I wanted to stretch my work as a teacher and felt that this course might help me with that.
>
> I expected to be able to continue my Teacher as Researcher experience.
>
> [My learning goals were] to think about the way I learn, and to gain useful information that I could try out in my classroom.

Analysis

Teachers' responses on these two questionnaire items may not accurately represent their views at the beginning of the course, since these data were gathered at the end of the semester. However, their expressed reasons for joining the course, in combination with

their learning goals, appear to confirm the school districts' perceptions that teachers were trying to make sense of educational change in British Columbia and would respond to professional development opportunities focused on implementation of the Year 2000 philosophy and principles. Some teachers mentioned the need to "finally read through some of the Ministry binders re Year 2000" and to "try to 'get a handle' on what the Year 2000 was really all about." This suggests that they may have felt overwhelmed by the volume of information available, and needed time and support to make sense of the Year 2000 framework.

The majority of responses imply that teachers' goals were to understand the Year 2000 in relation to their situations of practice, rather than to criticize the philosophy, principles and programs from a theoretical perspective. They expected that topics addressed in the course would help them "implement the Year 2000 in my class." It seems, nevertheless, that they expected to be taught what to do, rather than to take responsibility for their own learning. Most teachers had "transmissional" expectations of the course pedagogy—"...teach me how to implement the Year 2000."

It was apparent from the large number of teachers who commented on collegial interaction that this was also an important motivator for taking the course. Teachers mentioned that they were seeking time to "talk with other teachers about Year 2000" and to "work with colleagues," perhaps implying that they found this difficult within their daily situations. They came to the course "to learn about what other teachers were doing with the Year 2000" and "to work with a group in my school to support each other in developing and doing the research project." This suggests that some were anticipating opportunities to work together on classroom-based inquiry. Teachers who had participated in the "Teacher as Researcher" program in district A apparently valued this approach, since they hoped to continue their research through the coursework.

In summary, it seems that teachers' purposes and learning goals were largely congruent with the initial Project X focus on implementation of Year 2000 principles and

programs. The majority of teachers saw the coursework as an opportunity both to gain a stronger understanding of Year 2000 philosophy and principles and to learn about some alternative approaches to classroom practice. However, few appeared to anticipate the transactional approaches that would be taken, or to understand that they would be responsible for making decisions about their learning. It appears that many came expecting definite answers. They may have believed that the "experts" from the university could relieve their anxieties and feelings of ignorance about Year 2000 initiatives. They did not seem to think of educational change as a process for which there are no blueprints (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

Processes of change

Introduction. Chapter 3 indicated that the main intent of the initial framework for Project X was to "give teachers time to make sense of proposed changes, deal with the change process both cognitively and affectively, and experience successful inquiry and problem solving that would carry them forward in learning about Year 2000 principles and programs" (Chapter 3, p. 60). It was hoped that Education 386 could provide opportunities for them to: become familiar with Year 2000 principles and related practices; reflect on processes of change in a relatively safe environment; identify successful practices they could build on; and engage in action planning leading to manageable self-directed projects. It was anticipated that, if this approach were successful, teachers would feel prepared to continue their inquiry projects in the following semester of coursework.

The following section analyzes teachers' perceptions of Education 386 and their own learning, using the lens of processes of change. Statements about beliefs and principles pertaining to this aspect of teacher development, drawn from Chapter 3, provide the framework. Each belief statement is numbered and given in italics, and is followed by representative teacher responses that either support or challenge the statement. These

responses are analyzed, and possible interpretations are suggested where appropriate. The section is followed by an overall summary of highlights from this theme.

Statement 1. Many teachers are overwhelmed by the magnitude of changes proposed by the Year 2000 framework. The change process can become more manageable when teachers select a personally meaningful focus for change, identify a goal or question for inquiry within this focus, and engage in self-directed action and reflection relevant to their particular situations of practice. Successful experiences in this approach to change may lead to greater professional knowledge, skill, competence, confidence and autonomy in educational decision-making.

Sample responses.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were that] I've been able to look at concerns/problems in ways that have helped me understand them more clearly. My investigation has been truly my own. I've been able to investigate my own teaching without an imposed structure.
>
> [My action plan] has given me a chance to observe my students more closely and forced me to "reflect" which has resulted in a more confident "me" as far as Year 2000 principles [are concerned].
>
> I am learning to focus on my immediate needs, to determine how I will meet those needs through various resources and support groups.
>
> I have learned to practice what I preach/teach—to slow down the pace, and reflect.
>
> [I've learned that] you can't do everything!

Analysis: Statement 1. These teachers appear to value the opportunity to engage in self-directed inquiry. Some seem to recognize that if they focus on and investigate self-selected areas of concern, change could become more manageable. Some responses also seem to suggest that by focusing and reflecting on specific aspects of their practice, these teachers have begun to experience greater clarity of understanding and increased confidence in their professional abilities. Such responses support the stated principle, and suggest that the action inquiry component of Education 386 may have helped some teachers feel more comfortable with processes of educational change.

Statement 2. The development of understanding and ownership of change is a long-term process that teachers enter at different points and experience in different ways. Each individual needs opportunities to voice his or her opinions in an environment that respects and appreciates diversity. Teachers can benefit from time to construct individual and shared understandings in the presence of encouraging and clarifying feedback.

Sample responses.

> I have learned a great deal about what is possible, achievable and desirable by listening both to the instructors and to my colleagues as we have engaged in extensive dialogue.
>
> [I've learned that] Year 2000 is really "open" to interpretation by individual teachers.
>
> [I've learned that] no one knows where we are going; I had worried that I had a long way to go to get to where some others had arrived but discovered that they are also on a path, and we are all headed in the same direction.
>
> [I've learned] how exhausting the process of reflection is, but also how valuable.
>
> [I have learned] that "change" is not easy—takes "little" steps.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning was] this approach encourages reflection and thought—>both difficult after teaching all day.

Analysis: Statement 2. These responses illustrate some teachers' developing understandings of educational change as a journey rather than an event. Some are beginning to realize that, through interaction with others whose experiences and perceptions differ from their own, they can begin to construct understandings about directions for change and find a place along the "path." They also acknowledge that this is a time-consuming and exhausting process for teachers, and that they need to find ways to make it manageable by taking small steps. These responses appear to support a constructivist approach to change, in which teachers' previous experiences and understanding can be reconsidered through both individual reflection and interaction with others. They also highlight the importance of dialogue in constructing shared understandings about educational change.

Statement 3. Teachers bring to the change process beliefs and assumptions about the power of others' expectations, including those of school district administrators and other authorities. Their growth is facilitated when school district leaders participate as co-learners in the change process and communicate encouragement, trust, and confidence in teachers' professional abilities.

Sample response.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] support of the facilitators—especially [a university instructor] and [a district facilitator]. Warm, easy to talk to, frank, open. This helps to set up that trusting environment.

Analysis: Statement 3. This teacher has noticed the instructional team's approachable characteristics, including authenticity and openness—features that have also been appreciated by teachers in previous studies of field-based coursework. This response suggests that university and district personnel, working together, can create supportive environments for teacher development. In this instance, both the university instructor and district facilitator mentioned here were conducting their own action inquiry projects, which were discussed with the class on several occasions. Perhaps the modelling of learning in process may have enhanced the creation of the "trusting environment" described here.

Statement 4. Some teachers feel paralyzed by the uncertainty of their working world. Teachers can benefit from learning specific strategies to manage problems of change in ways that increase their feelings of competence and confidence. These strategies need to be realistic, relevant to dilemmas of everyday practice, and modelled in the context of meaningful situations.

Sample responses.

> [I have learned that] I can determine my own learning goals by thinking, creating questions and working at answers to those questions.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] journal writing—in the beginning I wrote each week because of frustrations. Then I found I liked it and kept on.

> [A benefit of working on my action plan has been] some very real time lines and clear goals that I will have to complete.
>
> [A benefit of working on my action plan has been that] I have layed [sic] out my goals and given myself a structure to work within and some expectations for myself and other people I need to help me.
>
> [A benefit of working on my action plan has been] getting my ideas sorted out and organized [and] finding materials to help me.

Analysis: Statement 4. These responses indicate an awareness and valuing of several strategies introduced during Education 386: identifying personally important questions for inquiry, working to answer one's own questions by developing an action inquiry plan, writing regularly in a journal, setting goals, developing timelines for action, identifying resources and support systems, and getting organized. It appears that the action inquiry framework may have provided a structure that helped some teachers begin to take action on a manageable aspect of educational change. Teachers may have adopted these strategies and found them beneficial because they were suggested in the context of a meaningful experience that was self-selected and focused on everyday practices.

Statement 5. Change involves struggle, resistance and fear. When these feelings are acknowledged and treated as natural elements of the change process, teachers become more accepting and tolerant of their own and others' reactions.

Sample responses.

> (One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is] some feelings of intimidation....We are asked to come up with our own (often tentative) questions and answers and many are unsure of themselves. Then we are asked to share—BIG STEP!!—This involves considerable trust and courage....
>
> At first it was difficult to feel comfortable with large groups until a feeling of comfort and trust was built up. As a result I did not always voice my concerns, anxieties and feelings of inadequacy.
>
> [I've learned] how difficult it is to establish a safe, secure and nurturing environment.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that I'm] not sure I feel as safe as I would like to feel.

Analysis: Statement 5. These responses articulate some individuals' fears of expressing their ideas within the group, and suggest the need for a "safe, secure and nurturing environment" where this could happen. Although some teachers in Education 386 did experience a "trusting environment" (see Statement 3), others did not appear to feel an adequate level of comfort to express themselves, even by the end of Education 386. Several factors within the coursework situation could have contributed to their discomfort, such as: size of the large group (more than 50 people); alternating class locations; confusion about the objectives and structure of Education 386; and changes of expectation regarding assignments. These factors were each mentioned by some teachers as among the "least helpful" aspects of the coursework. Several teachers also indicated that the frequent shifting of discussion groups during the early weeks of the course interfered with their sense of security and ability to focus on learning (see Statement 20). Although this strategy was intended to facilitate group building and networking, for some teachers it apparently had the opposite effect. Some teachers' levels of comfort could also have been influenced by factors apart from the course itself, such as: learning and personality styles; mistrust due to previous experiences in university coursework; or need for more time to adjust to this type of learning situation. It also seems possible, as suggested by Newman (1991) and Oberg and Underwood (1992), that a period of discomfort may be necessary in the transition from transmissional to transactional learning. Regardless of the influencing factors, these teachers' responses suggest the importance of attending to the affective dimensions of educational change, and indicate that this aspect of Education 386 did not meet all participants' developmental needs.

Statement 6. Significant change takes time. Teachers need extensive time to process and experiment with possible changes without the pressure to meet performance expectations or to demonstrate outcomes.

Sample responses.

> I was able to wait to actually write something. If I felt pressure of a timeline, I would have been stuck with a project that wasn't right for me.
>
> My action plan has changed many times—I'm just getting started with my new one.
>
> Time is one of the biggest limitations but I fully realize that one has to make time in order to fulfill obligations, even to oneself.
>
> [I've learned that] we need to slowly change [sic] for teachers.

Analysis: Statement 6. These teachers seem to recognize that educational change takes time, effort and commitment. They acknowledge that Education 386 did provide time to explore questions and re-think priorities—both "real" time during class sessions, and "psychological" time without performance expectations. This time seemed to help these teachers to "own" their eventual choice of projects. It also appears that they see the locus of control as being within themselves. They have acknowledged their "obligations...to oneself" and have taken the time to choose projects that are right for them, rather than expecting someone else to tell them what or how they should be learning.

Statement 7. Teachers are more likely to view change as a learning opportunity in an environment that visibly supports the change process.

Sample response.

> The action plan encouraged me to try something daring—I wasn't afraid if it failed, since it was a part of this course. I was meant to make mistakes and learn from them.

Analysis: Statement 7. This response is typical of several that commented on the value of action planning in Education 386. It appears that the action inquiry framework encouraged participants to take risks as part of their learning in the course. This message may have been communicated during Education 386 by: the modelling of action inquiry by the instructional team; explicit statements that the action inquiry project was an opportunity for learning rather than performance; frequent opportunities, during the latter part of the course, for participants to dialogue about learning in process; and the re-negotiation of

assignment expectations to remove performance pressures. This teacher's response also implies that she experienced Education 386 as a course in which mistakes would be viewed as learning opportunities rather than performance errors.

Summary: Processes of change

It appears that, for the most part, Education 386 did foster teacher development with respect to processes of change. Most teachers' responses were consistent with the stated beliefs and principles that informed this aspect of Project X. Some teachers articulated a new awareness of educational change as a journey (Fullan & Miles, 1992), and a realization that everyone is a learner in the process. Some said they learned the value of reflection, and of opportunities to construct understanding in interaction with others. Teachers' responses generally indicated a more realistic perspective on the challenges of implementing Year 2000 principles, and a few expressed greater confidence in their abilities to manage change. The greatest area of weakness was in teachers' feelings of safety when expressing their views in a large group. A smaller class might have created a more conducive climate for this aspect of teachers' growth. Overall, the teachers' responses appear to support Fullan's (1991) view that reform efforts need to address both the cognitive and affective aspects of change. As he suggests, it seems that participants need time to make sense of proposed changes on their own terms.

Teachers as learners

Introduction. Teacher development literature suggests that when teachers view themselves as active agents in their own learning, they are more likely to engage in critical examination of practice and take greater responsibility for thoughtful, autonomous decision-making. Project X was "an opportunity to involve teachers as critical inquirers into practice, to help them develop skills and strategies for ongoing self-directed learning, to engage them in examination of personal beliefs and values related to proposed principles of educational reform, and to encourage their confidence as autonomous, thoughtful decision-makers"

(Chapter 3, p. 64). This section presents and analyzes teachers' responses to Education 386 in relation to beliefs and principles about teachers as learners.

Statement 8. Teacher learning is facilitated when teachers view their practice as an opportunity for action research leading to continuous growth.

Sample responses.

> [A benefit of working on my action plan has been that] it provides a practical and workable framework.
>
> [I've learned the] basic steps for planning a research project.
>
> [My action plan] detaches me emotionally from classroom situations—allows me to "research" rather than control.
>
> I have successfully implemented part of my action plan; and as a result, I have seen my students do things I would not think they're capable of.
>
> My action plan is no longer what it was when I started. It has led my thinking to places it wouldn't have gone if I hadn't started it in the first place.

Analysis: Statement 8. These teachers' responses suggest that the action inquiry framework introduced in Education 386 provided an impetus for classroom learning, both by offering a manageable structure for research and by creating opportunities for inquiry that led to unexpected discoveries. It also helped some participants to see themselves as learners in the classroom—"to 'research' rather than control." It appears that, as a result of classroom inquiry, some teachers became more aware of their students as learners and more critical of their assumptions about both their own and their students' learning. An awareness of control issues seems central to understanding transactional, learner-focused approaches. It seems that involvement in classroom inquiry may have brought these issues to some teachers' consciousness, and allowed them to become more objectively critical of their practices.

Statement 9. Teachers are more likely to engage in meaningful inquiry if they are provided with opportunities and structures that enable them to identify and focus on significant dilemmas of practice.

Sample responses.

[Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] letting me choose my focus.

My action plan has helped me focus on the question I was investigating in a more formal way.

My implementation plan was very pertinent. Working on the plan has helped me focus my thoughts and devise the delivery. (Gave me focus, so I could see more.)

[A benefit of working on my action plan has been that it] has kept me focussed on what I'm trying to do.

[A benefit of working on my action plan has been] being more aware of what I'm trying to accomplish and therefore making time for it.

Analysis: Statement 9. Identification of a focus for inquiry apparently had a positive influence on these teachers' commitments to learning from classroom practice. From their perspectives choosing one's own focus seems particularly important—either to validate a concern already identified, or to select an area needing an investment of time and thought. The action inquiry framework appears to have helped some teachers become more responsible for learning by encouraging them to set and make time for priorities. It seems that having a focus may also increase some teachers' learning by allowing them to attend more thoughtfully to particular elements of classroom practice—"gave me focus, so I could see more."

Statement 10. Teacher learning is facilitated in situations that acknowledge and respect differing learning and thinking styles, beliefs, values, strengths and concerns.

Sample responses.

[I've learned by] self reflecting on my own learning style and [how] that is found in my classroom and approaches to a focus [and] action plan.

I think I've learned more about myself than I have about the Year 2000 program.

[I'm] discovering more about myself as a learner.

[I've developed] some understanding of my own learning style.

Analysis: Statement 10. These responses suggest that Education 386 helped some teachers gain greater self-awareness, particularly of their individual learning and teaching styles. Examples of such differences were often explicitly acknowledged during instructor-student interactions and in large-group discussions, and these interventions may have heightened teachers' consciousness about this aspect of teaching and learning. The collaborative autobiography framework may also have influenced teachers' self-awareness, because it encouraged them to discuss their personal beliefs, values and teaching approaches with one another. It seems likely that in the course of these discussions, differences in beliefs, values, strengths and concerns would have been revealed.

Statement 11. Teacher learning can be facilitated by opportunities to analyze personal histories and current practices in relation to particular learning theories and principles.

Sample responses.

> [I] discovered I was implementing more of the Yr. 2000 than I thought.
>
> [I've learned] that what I'm already doing is Year 2000 based.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] a reason to explore some of the [Ministry of Education] documents—a purpose.
>
> There has been lots of time for sharing and I have enjoyed creating an action plan and working on my project. I am still searching for "INPUT" from those who have knowledge and experience different from or more expert than my own.
>
> I think before you can reflect you need some information—this gives one something to reflect on.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that I] need more information before all that reflecting.

Analysis: Statement 11. Questionnaire responses indicated varied reactions to course activities focused on analysis of personal histories and existing practices. Some teachers seemed pleased that they discovered strengths in their current approaches—for example, that they were already engaged in practices appropriate to Year 2000 principles. Others felt there was too much reflecting in the absence of "information" about Year 2000

programs. At this stage of Project X, teachers were apparently seeking "new information about Year 2000 to use in class" rather than opportunities to evaluate existing practices. Teachers' reasons for taking the course, such as "trying to 'get a handle' on what the Year 2000 was really all about," seemed to imply a sense of urgency in this regard. In Education 386, however, assigned readings dealt with topics such as "teachers as learners" and "communities of learners," that were not directly relevant to these concerns. If the assigned readings had been balanced with more opportunities to examine and discuss Year 2000 documents, perhaps teachers might have felt more prepared to reflect on current practices. Activities aimed at thinking through and making sense of Year 2000 principles and programs, using constructivist approaches, might have helped them develop templates for analysis.

Statement 12. Teacher learning is facilitated in situations that model the theories and principles being discussed.

Sample responses.

> It's important for teachers with a Year 2000 philosophy to feel what it's like to be a learner under Year 2000 conditions.
>
> [I've learned that] We need to experience Year 2000 first hand to understand and be critical of our teaching.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] legitimizing self reflection—we encourage the kids to do it, but often feel guilty about doing it ourselves.
>
> The only problem I've experienced was adjusting to the learner focused format because I have not experienced this type of learning before.

Analysis: Statement 12. It appears that Education 386 helped some teachers "feel what it's like to be a learner under Year 2000 conditions," and let them see their teaching practices from that perspective. Questionnaire responses also indicated that this was, for some, a new and unsettling experience. A question remains as to whether it would be possible to ease their initiation into this type of learning, or whether such discomfort is a necessary element of the transition toward greater autonomy and responsibility.

Statement 13. When teachers see themselves as learners rather than experts, they are more likely to set realistic expectations for change and take risks to try new practices.

Sample responses.

> [I've learned] that I've come a long way in implementing aspects of the Year 2000, but still have a long way to go—I feel more confident now about facing the challenges ahead.

> [I've learned] That I'm okay. The Year 2000 isn't so different. You can teach skills, etc., when necessary but you organize in a different way (not everyone-everything, just those who need it).

Analysis: Statement 13. It appears here that some teachers in Education 386 were beginning to see change as a long-term process in which they could move forward by building on what they were already doing. These responses also seem to indicate that some teachers found it helpful to identify strengths in their existing practices as a foundation for learning and a source of confidence. For some individuals, it seems that analysis of existing practices to celebrate strengths and successes may contribute to confidence in risk-taking. This perspective differs from the focus on problems and dilemmas of practice that was emphasized in the first part of Education 386. It supports the district facilitators' beliefs that teachers needed to "appreciate what they are already doing that is worthwhile in promoting learning" and "feel comfortable about letting go of old stuff."

Statement 14. When teachers experience learning as a constructive, transactional process they are more likely to provide the same opportunities for their students.

Sample responses.

> [I've learned] to take small steps and to follow where the children lead insofar as is compatible with the larger framework of my educational plan.

> I feel I am more observant/cognizant of several factors that impinge on learning.

> Learning takes time. Motivating learning takes more time. My expectations may interfere with my students' learning.

> [One benefit of working on my action plan has been] the awareness that some students can talk about their learning/evaluate their learning.

Analysis: Statement 14. The above responses suggest that, during Education 386, these teachers were beginning to make connections between their own learning experiences and those of their students. In particular, they seemed more aware of: attending to factors influencing learning; shifting the locus of control toward students; listening and responding to students; allowing time for thoughtful learning; and providing opportunities for self-evaluation. However, since most teachers were just beginning their classroom investigations near the end of the semester, it was probably too soon in the inquiry process to assess the full impact of these connections on their classroom practices.

Statement 15. Most teachers have a bias toward practical action because of the daily press of teaching life. For many, the avenue to reflection is through practical action.

Sample responses.

> [This type of coursework is] crucial for learners like myself who need to be practical but want exposure to the academic world. I don't have extra time to work on projects that are not meaningful to me.
>
> I have actually gotten on with the "doing" rather than just learning about what I can do.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] formation of the action plan.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] that I got to work on something that was useful to me.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is] too much reflecting and sharing within a group; we need more time to put our thoughts into actions.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is] too much reflecting, not enough working on action plan.

Analysis: Statement 15. Many questionnaire responses indicated that teachers valued the introduction of action inquiry projects in Education 386 because of their relevance and practicality. However, at the end of the semester most teachers were still designing their plans and were just beginning their classroom inquiry activities. It was probably too soon to judge whether their projects might lead to thoughtful reflection. Some teachers' suggestions for the following semester did indicate that they looked forward to

this aspect of the coursework. For example, one teacher saw her project as "a chance to 'zero in' on an aspect of the Yr. 2000 I'm really interested in and observe my students' responses." Another hoped to gather "concrete data to demonstrate growth in both my students' and my own reflective thought." The problem of "too much reflecting" noted by some of these teachers may indicate their dissatisfaction with earlier stages of Education 386. Teachers who expected that the course would provide "practical" information on new initiatives were frustrated by "thinking about our feelings and going over the concerns and questions related to the Year 2000 too often" in the first three sessions. It is also possible, however, that some action-oriented teachers may not value personal reflection as an opportunity for learning.

Summary: Teachers as learners

Some aspects of Education 386 seemed to promote teachers' self-awareness and confidence as learners in a time of change. The action inquiry framework was seen as a particularly useful and effective approach by most teachers. Choosing a focus and starting an inquiry project appeared to help them see themselves as researchers in their classrooms, to attend more thoughtfully to classroom practice and, in some cases, to learn from their students. However, some teachers pointed to the need for more opportunities to build a framework of understanding about Year 2000 principles and programs, particularly through examination of Ministry of Education documents. This suggests that learning in times of educational change involves more than reflecting on existing practice. As Shulman (1988) has pointed out, teachers may also need templates for change derived from critical examination of alternative possibilities.

Learning Communities

Introduction. A key purpose of Project X, from the districts' perspectives, was to encourage interactions that might help to create a more supportive learning community. This was one rationale for offering the coursework at district sites rather than at the university.

District A teachers were also encouraged to attend in school-based support groups as a means of building more collaborative relationships among teacher colleagues in the same schools. This section examines the effectiveness of Education 386 in creating a learning community among teacher participants.

Statement 16. A supportive learning community is founded on attitudes of respect and caring. Facilitators can set this tone by modeling thoughtful listening and non-judgmental responses to all participants.

Sample response.

> [The university instructors] were both excellent "leaders"—they were both so open to comments of the group and really tried to accommodate the learning styles and feelings of individual group members.

Analysis: Statement 16. Those district A teachers who chose to comment seemed satisfied with this aspect of the coursework. None of the questionnaires contained negative statements about the attitudes or interactions of the university instructors or district facilitators. It appears that teachers were aware of their efforts to create an environment in which all individuals could feel acknowledged and respected. However, the fact that some teachers still did not feel completely safe (see Statement 5) suggests that even more attention could be given to this dimension of the coursework.

Statement 17. A supportive learning community requires substantial time for teachers to interact in informal settings where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute. This can be facilitated by allowing extensive time for small-group interaction focused on participants' experiences and concerns.

Sample responses.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] time to work within support groups.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] talking to my colleagues and being reassured that I am using the Year 2000 and that you cannot do everything at once. Reassurance that the program isn't as open as the public is led to believe.

Analysis: Statement 17. Informal collegial interaction was most frequently mentioned as a helpful aspect of the coursework. Most teachers appeared to prize their conversations with colleagues, using words like "sharing," "collaborating," "talking," "discussion," and "interaction" to describe the types of opportunities they valued. Teachers indicated that these interactions provided them with: opportunities to construct shared understandings about the nature of educational change; reassurance that individual teachers were on the right track; support within their specific situations of practice; and access to ideas and resources. Their appreciation for this aspect of Education 386 seems to affirm the importance of developing "cultures of collaboration," as described by Lieberman (in press) and Hargreaves (1992).

Statement 18. A supportive learning community can be facilitated by both informal and formal opportunities for teachers to share ideas and resources. Facilitators can encourage connections among teachers with common interests, structure opportunities for participants to contribute to one another's learning projects, and offer ideas and resources in response to participants' requests.

Sample responses.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] talking to my colleagues, sharing experiences, ideas and suggestions for beginning strategies, activities, etc.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] working with small groups on activities related to my action plan.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] working with a support group to gain practical information.
>
> [One benefit of working on my action plan has been] talking to people who have information and experience that has helped me get organized.
>
> Being with colleagues helps me focus and get more done in coursework and my class at school.

Analysis: Statement 18. This statement was supported by many comments throughout the questionnaires. In Education 386, support groups were self-selected by the teachers, either by school or by interest area. These groups were more highly regarded than

the informal discussion groups organized early in the semester by the instructors. To help teachers form support groups, the facilitators listed all the action inquiry topics teachers were interested in, and individuals were then able to connect with others having the same interests. Once these interest groups were formed, individual action planning occurred in the small-group context. On the evaluation questionnaires, the most frequent recommendations for the following semester were: "working with groups on similar areas of interest"; "time to work with others who have the same question"; and "more in-class time to work on our action plans with others in our 'focus' group." For many teachers, this appeared to be the most effective element of Education 386.

Statement 19. Teacher collaboration cannot be mandated but can be facilitated by an invitation to work in support groups of a manageable size.

Sample responses.

Collaboration and a support group are most important.

[One of the problems has been] too large a support group.

Analysis: Statement 19. These two responses suggest that, although teachers valued opportunities to collaborate and to work in support groups, some groups were not ideal in composition. In this instance, a group of six teachers from the same school had chosen to work together, but then found the size of their group made interaction unsatisfying. In future it might be advisable for a class to identify criteria for effective support groups, so teachers could anticipate this difficulty and adjust accordingly.

Statement 20. Teacher collaboration is facilitated when individuals choose when, how and with whom they will work collaboratively.

Sample responses.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far have been] discussions with close colleagues (our school group) for it gives us the time to discuss what is often discussed in 5-10 minute sessions at lunch or after school.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far have been] the team working within our school.

> [Least helpful aspects of the coursework were] being forced to work with so many "new and different" small groups.
>
> [Least helpful aspects of the coursework were that] sometimes there was frustration at frequent moves from one group to another, as it occasionally interrupted the flow of ideas.

Analysis: Statement 20. Most comments on this aspect of Education 386 came from teachers who attended the course in school-based groups . It appears that, for these teachers, the opportunity to work with others from their school was highly valued. The coursework seemed to facilitate supportive interactions among colleagues that did not normally occur in their workplace, even though they spent considerable time under the same roof. This seemed especially important to teachers from schools that did not appear to support teacher inquiry or educational change. Two of these school-based groups preferred to work together in every class rather than mixing with other teachers. Given their responses, it seems possible that coursework like Education 386 could have a positive influence on school cultures by changing the nature of interactions among staff members.

Summary: Learning communities

Opportunities for collegial interaction in focused interest groups were the most frequently mentioned positive aspect of Education 386. This seems to support Hopkinson's (1993) assertion that "there is a crucial need for collegial, professional interactions in the working lives of elementary classroom teachers which has, so far, been seriously underestimated" (p. 111). It also supports Hargreaves' (1992) contention that teachers are more likely to engage in true collaboration when the organizational structure helps them identify common interests, concerns or learning goals. Teachers in Education 386 did not appreciate the "forced" interactions imposed by the facilitators, also supporting Hargreaves' warnings about "contrived collegiality." It was interesting to note, however, that once teachers were settled in their own focus groups, they became more interested in what other groups were doing. For example, several teachers suggested inter-group presentations as an activity for the following semester: "I hope to learn a lot from other people's experiences."

University teaching as a transactional enterprise

Statement 21. In a university course that advocates transactional teaching and constructivist learning principles, teaching strategies and learning experiences should model the principles being advocated. Students should have opportunities to reflect upon and critically examine these experiences from perspectives of both learning and teaching.

Sample responses.

> [I've learned that] university courses (education) can be useful in helping my practise grow/expand.
>
> I'm the focus of my learning—my choices—my needs—my interests.
>
> I have found myself thinking about what I am doing more often. I have taken the time to think about how the children must see me.

Analysis: Statement 21. During Education 386 the instructors and facilitators frequently drew teachers' attention to parallels between the structure of the coursework and Year 2000 principles. It seems that, for most teachers, the message that "I'm the focus of my learning..." was clear. By the end of Education 386, however, a few teachers were still seeking a "transmissional" learning experience. This was indicated in their recommendations for the following semester: "Someone who has more knowledge and answers come to the class and help"; "More direction on what is expected..."; and "How to implement all the aspects of the Year 2000—not one isolated area."

Statement 22. Transactional teaching begins by involving students in decisions about their learning. Arriving at shared decisions involves the dynamic balancing of freedom and constraint. In this process the instructor should be as authentic as possible. Students seek and appreciate clear explanations of the instructor's beliefs about learning, how these affect participants' roles and activities, what the instructor expects as demonstrations of learning, and evaluation procedures and criteria.

Sample responses.

> [I] really appreciate the open-endedness of the course.

[This course has been] flexible (adapts to needs of learners)—meaningful activities [sic].

[This course has been] relevant/self-directed.

[This coursework is] valuable as a means of learning about what is happening in the field of education without the emphasis on feeding back what one perceives as being expected by the instructors.

I've had to fight less...between doing what I want and doing what I think the profs want. I feel better about doing what I want, and because of that I'm getting much more out of it.

[One of the problems of this approach to learning was that I] need more structure and set guidelines to give us guidance and security. I am a more confident learner and feel I give more when I have some goals set out for me.

[One of the problems of this approach to learning was that] I am more used to "structured" courses and sometimes felt a "little lost" and concerned about what was expected of me.

[The least helpful aspects of the coursework were] changing expectations of the course. I'm happy, however, with the way things were eventually laid out for us.

Analysis: Statement 22. As these responses indicate, teachers' comfort levels with the transactional approach to Education 386 varied considerably. Some appeared to appreciate the opportunity to make decisions about their own learning goals. Others seemed more concerned about whether they clearly understood the facilitators' expectations. Perhaps some teachers would have been more secure if the underlying structure of the coursework had been more clearly articulated. Some teachers may also need to take smaller steps toward self-direction, with guidance and feedback from instructors and facilitators: "[I need] time to work on [my] action plan—perhaps with some direction as to how to work on it—i.e., organize ideas, how to focus on one part at a time." In Education 386 it appears that some teachers' anxieties were increased by confusion over course expectations early in the semester. Earlier, analysis of Statement 5 suggested that a safe, trusting environment seems especially important in this kind of coursework, to encourage teachers' full participation in learning transactions. In future it would probably be helpful for an

instructional team to check their understandings with one another and jointly decide how to communicate their expectations to the class.

Statement 23. The selection of issues to be explored within the learning community depends on students' background, prior knowledge, interests and needs. These can be clarified through dialogue among class members and between students and instructor. A course outline describing pre-determined content to be learned is inappropriate.

Sample responses.

> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that I] need more guidelines and structure at the beginning of the course, so we know more about the direction we're heading in.
>
> [One of the problems of this approach to learning was that] I personally need more structure and would appreciate an outline—don't think I'm really comfortable with "setting my own agenda" yet.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that] it took too long to get to work on "focus"
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that] We were asked to voice our concerns about the Primary Program twice, and then still didn't get to seek any answers in a directed way by the facilitators.
>
> [Least helpful aspects of the coursework were] thinking about our feelings, brainstorming concerns and questions related to Year 2000. Never focusing on some possible answers.

Analysis: Statement 23. Education 386 asked teachers to identify questions and concerns from which a course agenda could be created. This approach apparently was not effective for some teacher-learners. There appear to be several weaknesses in the way the approach was carried out. First, the course agenda did not seem to provide the information some teachers needed to feel secure within a transactional approach. Perhaps greater attention should be given to explaining how such a course might evolve, so that teachers could anticipate what they might expect from the experience. Second, the extended time spent on examining teachers' questions and concerns at the beginning of the course seemed to frustrate some people who wanted to get on to "some possible answers." The confusion over whether self-directed projects would be a part of Education 386 contributed to the

delay. These teachers might have been more satisfied with activities that helped them "get to work" more quickly, particularly since this was their expectation of the coursework before the semester began. Education 386 was also negligent in not following through on some teachers' expressed concerns. Although their input was sought in the first few sessions, some felt their concerns were not considered in the directions taken during following weeks. Several teachers suggested that, in future courses, greater attention be given to providing a "...better working understanding of [Year 2000] documents and info and which ones apply to us, which should we use...how do we use them...less reflecting on nothing." Structured activities focused on reading pertinent Ministry documents, with focus questions to help teachers think about what was of importance to them, might have addressed this problem. It seems possible that such investigations could be accommodated within a constructivist, transactional framework, if learning activities were designed appropriately.

Statement 24. Teacher-learners bring to their coursework deeply-felt concerns and dilemmas associated with their situations of practice. These can provide starting points for designing meaningful learning experiences.

Sample responses.

> [This coursework is] flexible and therefore meaningful to EVERY individual. It truly is a situation in which you get out of it what you put in. It is intrinsically motivated learning with worthwhile personal outcomes.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] making time to focus on an area that needs developing.
>
> [A benefit of working on my action plan has been that it] encourages me to stay focused on self-evaluation (too much to do in so little time).
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is that I] still do not feel completely knowledgeable with Year 2000 documents.

Analysis: Statement 24. Most teachers appreciated the opportunity to identify an aspect of teaching on which to focus their learning activities, which they appeared to view as "areas for development" rather than dilemmas. At the same time, some teachers seemed

frustrated that they were not gaining a broader perspective on Year 2000 principles and programs. As noted earlier, this broader perspective was an area of neglect in Education 386. Perhaps a better balancing of focused inquiry and investigation of broader issues could address both aspects of teachers' learning needs. The concerns raised here pertain to a more general question about the role of content studies in transactional coursework. For these teachers, examination of information and seeking of possible answers to their questions were important learning needs. They have indicated they want an instructor or facilitator's help to "seek...answers in a directed way...." As Shulman (1988) has pointed out, there is a danger in creating a dichotomy between content and experience, and teachers may need structured opportunities to "critically examine concrete problems of experience in relation to general principles that might provide insight into specific situations" (Chapter 3, p. 68).

Statement 25. Teacher-learners' lives and professional experiences are closely connected. Personal histories and stories of practice provide rich material to stimulate critical examination of beliefs and values.

Sample responses.

> [I've learned that] time for me to reflect is an integral part of my change process.
>
> [I've learned] how important the reflection process really is.

Analysis: Statement 25. Although numerous teachers mentioned both the value and the challenge of reflecting on their practices, they did not specifically comment on personal histories and stories of practice. The collaborative autobiography framework was introduced to stimulate critical consideration of beliefs and values, but was not mentioned directly on the evaluation questionnaire. One might infer, from teachers' many positive comments about collegial interaction, that they did share stories of practice. It seems likely that they also engaged in critical examination of beliefs and values. The following excerpt from a teacher's personal narrative supports this interpretation.

> For me the most valuable part of this course was the sharing with others and the clarification of ideas which helped me to reform my personal teaching philosophy. After twenty years of teaching I was really undergoing a crisis of confidence which my in-district and cross-district support groups eased.

Statement 26. A university course that advocates transactional approaches to teaching should incorporate evaluation processes that promote ownership and autonomy in self-development. Students can benefit from being involved in negotiating criteria and methods of assessment and evaluation, and in self-evaluation of learning.

Sample responses.

> I really appreciated the beginning of the course. I was thrown a little when the assignments were imposed but realized that it met other people's expectations. I felt I would have difficulty completing the assignments at that time as I was not ready to make the commitment early enough to have all the assignment finished on time. Very relieved when assignments were delayed until next semester. Felt we were back on course.
>
> I need very "practical" guidelines with assignments.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning was] the 4 projects!
>
> Assignment expectations were not clear and were subject to change.

Analysis: Statement 26. Chapter 5 explained that the assignments for Education 386 were adjusted twice, in response to both feedback from participants and the instructional team's perceptions of teachers' stages of development. The above responses suggest both advantages and disadvantages of this flexible approach. Some teachers seemed able to understand and appreciate the reasons for the adjustments, and felt the transactional approach was "on course." Others were still preoccupied with the instructors' expectations at the end of semester, even after the assignments had been simplified and grades had been deferred. Although teachers had informally evaluated and discussed their learning, through both structured reflective writing activities and personal narratives, they did not participate in any formal evaluation procedures during Education 386. It seems likely that changes in the assignments, combined with discrepancies in the two course outlines, made it more difficult for teachers to "own" the evaluation process, or perhaps even to believe that this was the instructors' intent. Teachers may need to experience an alternative approach to

evaluation in a university course, before they can understand and accept opportunities for ownership.

Statement 27. Teachers bring with them past experiences in university coursework that may cause them to resist the responsibilities of self-directed learning. They may need time to deal with feelings of fear, anxiety and resistance. It is important for the instructor not to assume responsibility for these feelings, but to support students as they work through them toward self-development.

Sample responses.

> The whole process at the start took a lot of time. Now we have begun to see the benefits.
>
> ...I think everyone should experience this because many may think that it's not for them until they try it.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is]—pretty scattered—took too long in beginning to help us to learn about this way of learning.
>
> [One problem/limitation of this approach to learning is] it should be undertaken by those who are already well on their way to achieving goals.
>
> I felt a little lost—>guidelines unsure. The course was being developed as we went along.
>
> Seems unorganized. I want to be taught.

Analysis: Statement 27. These responses, like others discussed previously, illustrate a range of teacher opinion about a transactional approach in which they were expected to take responsibility for identifying and pursuing a learning goal or investigative question. It is difficult to judge whether these teachers were expressing natural feelings of fear, anxiety and resistance, or whether they were reacting to conditions in Education 386 that caused additional confusion and doubt. The overall pattern of questionnaire responses suggested that, by the end of Education 386, most teachers could see the benefits of a transactional approach, but thought it "took too long in beginning" to get started. This could suggest that they were impatient with the time and effort necessary to move toward

self-directed learning, or with the inconsistencies in course expectations communicated by the differing outlines.

Statement 28. Teacher-learners thrive on opportunities to investigate issues of personal concern to them. Self-directed inquiry projects can provide the framework for teachers to engage in individual and collaborative inquiry into practice and to investigate specific areas of interest related to Year 2000 principles and programs.

Sample responses.

> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] creating my action plan in terms of establishing a focus and initiating some steps.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] the "focus" groups so we could grapple with a meaningful issue and come up with ways to approach the issue.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] time spent talking to people about Year 2000 documents [and] time spent studying Year 2000 documents.
>
> I believe it is very worthwhile because teachers need time to talk, to share info. [sic] and practices and to set direction as they see fit in their classroom. It is empowering.

Analysis: Statement 28. All teachers made positive statements on the evaluation questionnaire about their action plans and classroom inquiry projects. It appears that by finding a focus for inquiry, some teachers could begin to grapple with issues and investigate Year 2000 initiatives in a more systematic way. When asked for suggestions for the following semester, most teachers also indicated that continued work on implementing their action plans was one of the most important priorities: "I want to continue to work on my action plan, and look forward to sharing with others. I hope to learn a lot from other peoples' experiences." These responses suggest that the full benefits of the action inquiry approach were probably not realized during Education 386.

Statement 29. Teacher-learners thrive when they have opportunities to learn from one another. The instructor can support this process by ensuring that all voices are heard, so that power, authority and ownership of knowledge are shared among group members.

Sample responses.

[Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] collegiality. Having time to talk about what I am doing and listening to hear what others are doing. It's a feeling of support.

[I've learned] that my colleagues are as informative as any Primary binder or development text—they are a resource.

[Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] talking to my colleagues, sharing experiences, ideas and suggestions for beginning strategies, activities, etc.—e.g., sharing my anxiety about having little concrete material on self-evaluation at the P/1 level.

Analysis: Statement 29. As noted in the section on learning communities, opportunities for collegial interaction were perceived by teachers to be the most valuable element of Education 386. Throughout the semester, the instructional team sought to maximize these opportunities by: devoting much of each class to small-group interaction; helping participants form interest groups for their inquiry projects; inviting teachers to bring and share resources; listening and responding non-judgmentally to participants' opinions, feelings and ideas; posing questions about underlying assumptions; and highlighting broader issues for groups to consider in their deliberations. It appears, however, that these teachers simply valued time for focused interaction in interest groups. As they discovered the value of listening to one another's ideas, they seemed to look less and less to the instructors for guidance, and more toward one another for information, resources, support and reassurance. This prompts the question, "What is the role of a university instructor in learning situations where some teachers may have more experience and knowledge than the instructor, and where teachers are probably more capable than the instructor of understanding and supporting one another's situations of practice?" This question is considered more fully in the following chapter.

Statement 30. In a university course that seeks to promote attitudes of inquiry and discusses teaching as a learning process, the instructor should model these attitudes, participate as a learner in the inquiry process, and be willing to discuss his or her learning with students.

Sample responses.

> I appreciate the flexibility [the university instructors] have shown and their honesty in promoting a truly learner-focused situation—good example to set.
>
> [Most helpful aspects of the coursework so far were] flexible facilitators.
>
> [This course has been] very flexible in meeting the needs of the learner; prime example of interpretive teaching.

Analysis: Statement 30. The instructors and facilitators in Education 386 tried to model transactional teaching and learning, to participate as learners in the course, and to discuss their learning with the class. The coordinator, for example, discussed this action research study with students several times. The district facilitators each undertook an inquiry project and participated in a support group. The faculty member also described his learning to the class (see Chapter 5). It appears that these examples were understood and appreciated by some teachers. However, other participants thought the flexible approach was "unorganized" (see Statement 27). It could be that teachers who are not able to accept responsibility for learning may project blame for their feelings of discomfort onto others who are supposed to be the "experts." This seems especially likely in a university course, where traditional assumptions about passive learning may be difficult to overcome. Statements such as "I want to be taught" (see Statement 27), suggest that some teachers may find it difficult to accept a transactional philosophy or an inquiry approach to learning in a university course.

Summary: University teaching as a transactional enterprise

Transactional teaching and learning involve a dynamic balancing of flexibility and structure, freedom and constraint. Flexibility allows learners to take responsibility for their development by making thoughtful choices and directing their own learning activities. Structure provides security, guidance, and a sense of direction. Some teachers in Education 386 appeared to thrive on flexibility; others desired more structure. The latter group felt that the instructors did not adequately communicate the nature and direction of the coursework,

at least in terms that they could understand and visualize. It is difficult to assess the relative influence of factors that might have affected these teachers' responses—for example: individual learning styles; need for external approval; mistrust of university instructors; confusion over differing explanations of the course; and changes in assignment expectations. However, some teacher responses suggest that clearer and more consistent messages about this type of coursework could provide greater security, and perhaps enable them to feel more comfortable about engaging in transactional learning. As other educators (Dewey, 1938; Newman, 1991; Oberg & Underwood, 1992) have noted, it seems that in transactional teaching situations, careful attention must be given to structuring the processes of learning to connect with students' previous experiences and perceived learning needs, and to support appropriate directions for development.

In Education 386, some elements of the transactional approach, such as the action inquiry framework and the emphasis on collegial interaction, appeared to be quite effective in helping teachers become more autonomous learners.. These aspects of the coursework also provided practical strategies for managing educational change. Other elements of Education 386 appeared to be less effective. For example, focusing extensively on teachers' questions and existing dilemmas of practice at the beginning of the course were seen as less helpful because they did not attend to teachers' pressing needs to make sense of Year 2000 principles and programs.

Educators like Elbow (1986), Newman (1991) and Oberg (Oberg & Underwood, 1992) have noted the challenges of incorporating alternatives to instructor-controlled evaluation into university coursework. This possibility was not fully tested in Education 386, because assignments and grading were deferred to the following semester of Project X. Under different circumstances, could the course have provided opportunities for students to set performance criteria, to discuss a variety of ways to represent learning, and to be involved in regular self-evaluation, peer evaluation and conferencing? Within such a framework, specific elements of assignments, as well as methods of assessment and

performance criteria, could still be negotiable. These types of evaluative experiences would be compatible with the philosophy and principles being advocated, and might enable teachers to take greater responsibility for self-development. However, such approaches would have to be carefully planned out and explained to participants at the beginning of a course.

Summary: Factors influencing teacher development

Teachers' evaluation questionnaires, personal narratives and action plans provided information that indicated both strengths and limitations of the initial framework for Project X and the first semester of coursework. Not all aspects of the coursework had the same effect on every teacher. This summary presents general patterns for the majority of participants. Aspects of Education 386 that appeared to support or limit teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine classroom practices are listed in two categories: very important and less important.

What aspects of the coursework appeared to support teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine and modify classroom practices?

Very important:

- focus on Year 2000 principles and programs
- ongoing interaction with colleagues from the same school and district
- opportunities to design and implement an action inquiry project
- time for exploration of possibilities
- opportunities to work in focus groups having similar interests
- supportive interactions from university and district facilitators
- opportunities and encouragement to share ideas and resources

Less important:

- opportunities to reflect on dilemmas of existing practice
- structured learning experiences that modelled transactional approaches

- visible support from senior district personnel
- opportunities to read about teachers as learners and learning communities
- opportunities to interact with teachers from another district

What aspects of the coursework appeared to limit or impede teachers' openness to change and readiness to examine and modify classroom practices?

Very important:

- lack of clarity in course expectations and assignments
- initial confusion over course objectives and directions
- lack of focused examination of Year 2000 documents

Less important:

- large cross-district group size
- "forced" small-group interaction
- limited input, including readings, on specific issues of concern to teachers
- lack of modelling of practical strategies with direct classroom application

To what extent were participants prepared to engage in focused classroom-based learning projects as a result of Education 386?

Despite some teachers' anxieties and concerns about a perceived lack of clarity in course expectations, all but one of the 47 teachers in Project X decided to continue their studies in the following semester. Each teacher had created an action plan. Here are some examples indicating readiness to engaged in focused, classroom-based learning.

> [In the second half of the coursework I hope to gain] confidence and "working knowledge" about how to implement valid changes in my classroom—I hope I'll feel able to use the Action Plan on my own in the future.
>
> [In the second half of the coursework I hope to] work on Research Project to incorporate more of Year 2000 philosophy in my teaching.
>
> [In the second half of the coursework I hope to gain] more practical ways to work towards my "question"; time to work with others who have the same question.

[In the second half of the coursework I hope to] keep moving on this path—gain confidence in myself.

[In the second half of the coursework I hope to] perhaps learn how to set even more specific goals for myself so as to attain them and then move on to the next. I love where I'm headed but I still feel unfocussed in some ways.

[In the second half of the coursework I hope to] beef up my action plan, gain more insight from others as they work on their projects—I can learn from them.

I expect to get results from my action plan.

Comparison with other university courses

The evaluation questionnaire asked teachers to describe how Education 386 was similar to and different from other university courses they had taken. Responses revealed both positive and negative aspects of Education 386 in comparison to other coursework experiences.

Similarities between Education 386 and other courses included such elements as reading, doing assignments, keeping a journal, working in groups, and discussing ideas. Positive similarities were described with words such as "interesting," "stimulating," "helpful," and "you get out what you put in." Negative similarities were all related to the competitive and performance aspects of university coursework—for example, "the threatening feelings involved in completing a product to hand in," and "essence of competition even though this was not intended (natural reflex??)."

Many differences were noted between Education 386 and other university courses. The great majority of comments were positive. Frequently-mentioned adjectives included: "flexible," "relevant," "intrinsically motivating," "learner-focused," and "meaningful." Other key phrases were "worthwhile personal outcomes," "more time for reflection," "not as stressful," "ownership," "freedom," and "collegial support." The negative aspects of Education 386 were all concerned with the lack of clarity in expectations and assignments—"assignment expectations were not clear and were subject to change." One teacher

specifically expressed frustration about her personal narrative assignment: "a great deal of work but nothing concrete to show for it."

Suggestions regarding this type of coursework. Most of the suggestions fell into two categories. About half were general comments about the approach taken in Education 386. Most of these indicated that this type of coursework should be offered more frequently.

> This type of coursework responds in a direct meaningful way to the true needs of teachers as learners.
>
> More of it! A lot more.
>
> Provide more classes following similar formats, especially courses catering to working teacher who are upgrading or working on completion of a degree.
>
> It is a valuable course for practising teachers because it provides support, expertise, encouragement, etc., to implement changes that will always be a part of teaching.

The other half of the responses provided specific suggestions for Education 386. Almost all recommended more structure and clarity, especially at the beginning of the semester.

> Set a specific list of criteria. Outline exactly what is going to be covered.
>
> I'd like to see more structure.
>
> Needs some stricter guidelines as to what we are expected to achieve by completing it. Coursework requirements outlined at outset.
>
> I recommend it again; but have clear strategies to meet the objectives and start sooner.

Two other suggestions appeared several times. One recommended that more time be given to the study of Year 2000 documents, and the other suggested beginning the action planning earlier.

Analysis

Teachers' reactions to Education 386 as a whole seem to indicate a tension between learning for its own sake and learning in the context of a university course. Positive

comments pertained to the benefits and satisfactions of learning in a situation that allowed for meaningful, relevant choices, modeled constructivist approaches, and encouraged collegial interaction. Negative comments and recommendations pertained mainly to the need for clearer course expectations and assignments. For some teachers, the flexibility of a transactional approach appeared to be, at one and the same time, both desirable and threatening. On the one hand, the freedom of choice and opportunity for ownership of learning seemed to be intrinsically motivating. On the other hand, the discomfort of not understanding the university instructors' expectations appeared to be inhibiting.

This apparent paradox could be seen to indicate that, although these teachers were moving toward greater autonomy and internal control of learning, they still retained many assumptions about being good "lesson-learners" (Wassermann, 1987). Teachers' comments suggest that discrepancies in the course information they received at different points, as well as the instructors' differing interpretations of course expectations and assignments, created a climate of uncertainty that heightened their anxieties. Their performance concerns might also reflect fears that they had not gained enough demonstrable "knowledge" as a result of taking a university course. These teachers came to Education 386 to learn "how to implement the Year 2000." Many demonstrated, through their responses, a growing awareness of educational change as a learning process, and increased recognition of the need to "take little steps." Some indicated that they were beginning to move forward in learning about a focus area, and that they were becoming more reflective and critical about their practices. Nevertheless, they may have assumed that the university instructors expected them to "know" something about the Year 2000 that was still unclear. It seemed difficult for them to comprehend that course expectations and assignments were intended to focus on their growth as autonomous, thoughtful learners rather than on their knowledge of specific theories, principles and practices. Some found it hard to believe that their assignments did not have to demonstrate fidelity of implementation, even though they were not sure what was to be implemented.

Teachers' questionnaires revealed differences among individuals in terms of general comfort levels with the transactional approach. Those who wanted to be "taught" about Year 2000 strategies at the beginning seemed to express greater frustration with the lack of clarity and changing course expectations than those whose goals were more oriented toward professional growth. These teachers may have entered the coursework with different levels of readiness for a transactional learning experience. Their differences in attitude might also be related to individual learning styles. Questionnaires seemed to follow a pattern in which those who were seeking concrete, "practical" suggestions for classroom activities at the beginning were still seeking those types of experiences from the second half of the coursework. Those who expressed an inquiry orientation in their learning goals seemed more satisfied with what had happened in the first semester.

This raises a question as to whether all teachers can accept a transactional philosophy. For some teachers and learners, transactional approaches may contradict fundamental beliefs about the nature of learning. Wassermann (1987) noted in her study of teachers attempting to adopt new practices that some individuals may withdraw from a learning experience if it challenges their basic values and self-esteem. However, this did not happen in Education 386. In spite of the discomfort, all teachers from district A and all but one from district B elected to continue in Project X. Could it be possible that the benefits and satisfactions of engaging in collegial interaction might offset the transmission-oriented needs of some teachers? If so, this might enable them to see the world of learning through the eyes of others with different perspectives, and to reconstruct their understandings of teaching and learning over an extended time. This was a question to pursue further in the second half of the Project.

Another question prompted by teachers' reactions to Education 386 is whether this type of coursework is advisable for all teachers ("many may think that it's not for them until they try it"), and whether it could be structured adequately to meet the needs of those who "want to be taught." Concerns about course expectations and assignments suggest that, for

some teachers, assumptions about performance expectations in university courses may interfere with their willingness to accept greater responsibility for the "what" and "how" of learning. Would teachers have reacted differently if the same experiences had been provided without the university credit component? If Education 386 were not a graded course, would teachers' have experienced the same levels of concern?

Looking forward

This action research study has followed the evolution of Project X up to the end of the first semester of coursework. The final chapter of the thesis reviews the Project in the broader context of in-service teacher education. It presents some hypotheses about the tensions inherent in collaborative, field-based, in-service teacher education and offers tentative suggestions for future consideration.

Chapter 7

THE DILEMMA RE-VISITED

Chapter overview

Chapter 1 posed a dilemma faced by faculties of education in British Columbia: how to reconcile tensions between traditional expectations for university credit coursework and the needs of experienced teachers struggling with fundamental educational change. The intervening chapters reported on a study of Project X, a collaboration between the university and two school districts that attempted to incorporate principles of effective teacher development within the constraints of university credit coursework. This chapter re-visits the dilemma in light of the study.

The dilemma reviewed

Chapter 1 suggested that recent educational reforms in British Columbia have created an urgent demand for professional development opportunities that help experienced teachers cope with educational change. The reform movement reflects constructivist and transactional orientations to teaching and learning. Current models of teacher development, representing similar theoretical and philosophical orientations, recommend action research and collaborative inquiry as tools for teachers and teacher educators to explore alternate approaches to teaching and learning together. However, transactional approaches have not been typical of university coursework in the past. Many teachers have not experienced learning from a transactional perspective, and expect to adopt a passive role in university courses. Faculties of education, pressured to provide more relevant learning opportunities for in-service teachers, face questions about whether transactional approaches can be reconciled with traditional expectations for credit coursework.

An exploration of possibilities

Project X was developed in response to school districts' requests for coursework that would help teachers cope with the challenges of educational reform. The initial framework was designed to encourage classroom-based inquiry and collegial interaction, in keeping with current principles of teacher development. It proposed a transactional approach that would model theories and principles being advocated in the reform movement, and that would shift the locus of control and responsibility for learning toward teacher-learners. This approach was seen as significantly different from transmissional teaching methods in which teachers are passive recipients of information and the instructor controls the "what" and "how" of learning. It was anticipated that, if the first semester of coursework were successful, teachers would be more open to change, ready to examine and modify classroom practices, and prepared to engage in focused, classroom-based inquiry in the second half of the Project.

Education 386, the first semester of Project X, appeared to gain some measure of success in realizing these intentions. As previous chapters have shown, the coursework seemed to encourage some aspects of teacher development valued by school districts and in-service teachers: for example, understanding and becoming more comfortable with processes of educational change; investigating the nature of educational reforms; engaging in action research to explore alternative practices in the classroom; and developing supportive collegial relationships. However, the Project also uncovered significant challenges in its attempts to support teacher development within the framework of a university credit course. The study provides information that may inform a consideration of the dilemma inherent in field-based in-service credit coursework.

Aspects of the dilemma revealed by this study

The following questions drawn from Chapter 1 highlight aspects of the dilemma encountered in this study.

Can learning experiences that support teacher development be accommodated within existing programmatic frameworks and administrative structures? Project X was based on a model of field-based coursework that had already been field-tested, researched, and offered regularly for at least eight years. While programmatic frameworks and administrative structures to support the coursework were, in theory, already in place, the proposed model raised questions about whether this type of coursework, focused on "teachers' professional duties" was deserving of academic credit. In response, changes to the proposed course structure were mandated by the Director of Undergraduate Programs.

Project X uncovered tensions among differing perspectives and values held by university and field-based educators involved in shaping the coursework. In particular, the research suggested that differing conceptions of teacher learning and of the nature of implementation influenced decisions made by various participants during the course development process. Zeichner (1993) suggests that an analysis of differing traditions of thought within a Faculty of Education can shed light on tensions among different perspectives and can provide a framework for understanding curricular and programmatic decisions. A challenge to a faculty of education may be to explore these differing conceptions so that criteria for decisions about support to field-based coursework can be more clearly understood.

How might traditional instructional practices and academic performance expectations be modified or reconceptualized to shift the locus of control toward teacher-learners? Project X adopted a transactional approach that was intended to model principles of learner-focused teaching. It engaged teachers in ongoing action and reflection about topics that were important to them, using classroom inquiry projects as a means of focusing their investigations of educational reform. It also encouraged supportive collegial interactions through small focus groups as well as large-group discussions about relevant concerns. These approaches provided opportunities for participants to construct and reconstruct understandings about the meaning of educational change, and to help one

another explore alternative practices appropriate to the principles advocated in the reform movement.

Academic performance expectations were an ongoing challenge during Education 386. The instructors proposed a portfolio assignment that would incorporate self-evaluation and peer evaluation as well as individual conferencing to determine grades. This proved too ambitious within the time frame of the course. The assignment was subsequently modified through negotiation with the class, and grades were deferred to the end of the second semester of the Project.

The following excerpt from a teacher's personal narrative summarizes experiences described by many teachers in the course evaluations (see Chapter 6).

> I can't help but parallel my classroom experiences this term with the way Education 386 has evolved and unfolded. It too has taken unexpected twists and turns as facilitators and learners have discussed the...inherent expectations of a graded university course—a course attended by focused, goal-oriented teachers who more often than not have been conditioned to work and teach in an isolated, competitive atmosphere. The barriers for learning have been lowered here. Where's the structure, the security of knowing exactly what is expected of you? A lot of fear and insecurity has been generated here. Yet in spite of our varied expectations and learning styles we have managed to become a community of learners who have accepted the challenge of assessing and implementing some part of the Year 2000 program in our classrooms.
>
> This has not been the usual "make and take" style of course. It has challenged our firmly entrenched attitudes and expectations about how a class should be conducted. There has been a lot of risk taking here. There have been a lot of questions asked, answered, and left unresolved. There has been the encouragement to take risks and make these experiences successful. We have benefitted through collaboration because we openly share our diverse interests, concerns and experiences. We are learning to be co-operative learners because the emphasis is on challenging our own beliefs. There is a feeling of being successful because the pressure of being competitive has been redirected. There emanates from this community of learners a feeling of trust and support. We have been given TIME TO GROW.

From this teacher's perspective, Education 386 encouraged collaboration, provided an environment of "trust and support," and allowed "TIME TO GROW." She felt that, in this situation, some teachers "accepted the challenge of assessing and implementing some part of the Year 2000 program in our classrooms." They also became engaged in

"challenging [their] own beliefs." These perceived benefits were among those sought by the school district sponsors of Project X. They also indicated support for most of the teacher development principles that informed the initial framework for the Project.

This teacher also suggests that Education 386 "challenged our firmly entrenched attitudes and expectations about how a class should be conducted." For some teachers, the transition from transmissional to transactional learning seemed to create "fear and insecurity," and left questions unresolved. Perhaps weaknesses in the course delivery heightened this discomfort. It also seems likely, however, that some dissonance may be inevitable as teachers take risks to accept more responsibility for their own development. Teachers who choose this type of learning experience may be challenged to re-think their assumptions about learning in university courses. University instructors who choose to undertake this type of coursework may be challenged to develop, within a supportive environment, meaningful experiences in which dissonance can lead to real growth.

Course evaluations suggested that Education 386 did promote conscious, critical reflection and more autonomous learning among some teachers. It may not have been as effective for others. Some participants appeared to need more structured learning experiences and more explicit templates for professional decision-making to help them move forward with educational reform. Chapter 6 raised questions about whether all teachers could eventually accept a transactional philosophy, and whether this type of coursework would be advisable for all teacher-learners. A challenge faced by all participants in this type of coursework may be to negotiate an appropriate balance of flexibility and structure, so that a range of differing needs can be met.

Chapter 6 also identified a paradox within some teachers' attitudes toward the course. On the one hand, they seemed to appreciate opportunities to choose their own learning projects and to learn from one another; on the other, they complained about the instructors' lack of structure and clarity in course expectations. The paradox may indicate tension between teachers' developing autonomy within a transactional learning environment

and their deeply-held assumptions about the nature of university coursework. A challenge for university instructors may be to develop clearer explanations of how a transactional experience might evolve, so that teachers might feel more secure about the process.

The teacher quoted above identified "a feeling of being successful because the pressure of being competitive [had] been redirected" in Education 386. Other teachers, however, described a competitive element similar to that in other university courses they had taken. This could indicate tension between norms associated with "cultures of collaboration" that Education 386 sought to establish, and competitive norms associated with academic performance in university coursework. Both teachers and university instructors in this situation may be challenged to negotiate appropriate criteria and procedures for individual evaluation that do not jeopardize the benefits of collaboration. It seems likely that this challenge is made more difficult by comparative grading practices in most university courses.

What happens when teacher educators engage in collaborative inquiry, with their students, into the practice of teacher education? In Project X an instructional team representing both university and school district educators planned and delivered the coursework. This collaborative approach to in-service teacher education was a new experience for all participants, including teachers enrolled in Education 386. The instructors communicated to teachers their intent to study the experience as a way to improve in-service teacher education. Ongoing transactions during the course provided one opportunity for collaborative inquiry. This action research study offered another.

However, the instructional team encountered several challenges to full realization of this intent. One was some teachers' assumptions about what a university course ought to be. Whereas some teachers indicated that they appreciated the exploratory nature of the coursework and thought it was a "good example to set," others expected the instructors to provide clear criteria for course expectations and a structured course outline that would detail all events in advance. It seems that some teachers' past assumptions about the nature

of learning in university coursework, combined with their anxieties about academic performance, may have interfered with a disposition toward collaborative inquiry into teacher education. It may be that the university's credentialing role, as well as its traditional assumption of "expert" status in teachers' learning experiences, creates difficult barriers to true collaboration. As noted in Chapter 3, Beyer (1987) claims that true critical inquiry cannot occur within the prevailing structures of teacher education institutions, because they are "hierarchical, divisive and impositional" (p. 30). Even though Project X shifted the venue of teacher education to another location, it appears that teachers carried with them their past assumptions about learning in university coursework.

Another challenge to collaborative inquiry in Project X was the limited time available for interaction within the instructional team. Time constraints seemed especially challenging for the faculty member during the early stages of planning. It may be difficult for faculty members to reconcile a commitment to collaborative planning, teaching and critical reflection in an in-service course with other pressing demands inherent in their situations of practice.

What kinds of personal changes must a teacher educator make in order to accommodate to such new ways of teaching? A transactional approach to teaching, as experienced in Education 386, seems to require flexibility and openness so that teachers can feel free to voice their ideas, opinions, feelings and concerns. A climate of trust and support, where teachers feel safe to take risks and make mistakes as part of their learning, appears to facilitate teachers' willingness to shift the locus of control toward themselves. In Education 386, many teachers expressed appreciation for the instructors' and district facilitators' warmth, openness and flexibility. Even so, some still said they did not feel fully safe. As Oberg and Underwood (1992) suggest, it may be that some teachers hold assumptions about roles and relationships in university coursework that are resistant to change, and may project blame onto instructors for not providing the security they want.

A challenge for teacher educators is to create what Oberg and Underwood call "response-ability"—a condition in which all parties are prepared to engage in learning transactions, and each acknowledges some responsibility for learning. Under this condition, the instructor must be prepared to support students through uncertainty and disequilibrium, yet trust them to come to terms with their own discomforts. Teachers' anxieties may initially create feelings of concern and self-doubt for teacher educators, particularly if teachers appear to blame them for not assuming the role of "expert." A challenge for teacher educators in this situation may be to remain open to teachers' feedback and suggestions, without taking responsibility for their feelings of dissonance as they move toward more autonomous learning.

Another challenge for teacher educators in this situation may be to focus on the affective aspects of teachers' learning, and particularly to encourage self-evaluation of strengths. Education 386 suggested that this might help to establish the supportive conditions some teachers appear to need for autonomous learning. This approach may not seem compatible with the emphasis on rigour and critical analysis that university teacher educators associate with their situations of practice.

A third challenge for some university-based teacher educators may be to re-think their assumptions, attitudes and roles with respect to "expert" knowledge. When transactional approaches are adopted, teachers may identify areas of study that are unfamiliar to instructors. Some teachers may have experiences and knowledge in particular aspects of practice that exceed those of university teacher educators. It may be important for teacher educators to be prepared to learn from teachers, and to structure experiences that allow all participants an equal voice in the learning community.

To what extent can faculties of education provide the conditions that foster this kind of teacher learning and collaborative inquiry while simultaneously performing a credentialing role? This appears to be the most difficult aspect of the dilemma faced by faculties of education. Project X suggested that some elements of the university's culture,

as well as its bureaucratic and administrative structures, may interact to reinforce its role and authority with respect to academic excellence. For example, difficulties encountered by teachers trying to gain admission to Project X revealed a tension between the educational intents of the Project and the credentialing priorities of the university. The university's valuing of the academic tradition, as suggested by the restructuring of the course outline for Education 386, created tension with the more developmental and social reconstructionist orientations apparent in current educational reforms. As noted earlier, the university's comparative grading practices also appeared to reinforce competitive elements of the coursework and to undermine the "culture of collaboration."

These challenges raise questions about how best to support teacher development within the constraints of university coursework. For example: Would it be possible, in field-based in-service courses that aim to promote collaborative cultures and autonomous teacher development, to replace comparative grading with a pass/withdraw system? Could this be accomplished without compromising the university's credentialing responsibilities? Would this approach be acceptable to the Faculty, given pressures for "academic respectability" in field-based courses (Richmond, 1992)?

A consideration of the perceived benefits of this kind of coursework for in-service teachers uncovers even more fundamental questions: To what extent should university courses support directions for educational reform? Do faculties of education value, as part of their roles, the provision of time for in-service teachers to work toward personally-identified goals for development? Is this type of learning a reasonable and justifiable means of acquiring academic credit? Could coursework based on principles of teacher development be considered lacking in scholarly foundation, because its approach is embedded in a particular framework that differs from traditional academic values? These questions highlight the nature of the dilemma faced by faculties of education as they try to determine how to support in-service teacher development in the present context of public education.

The nature of dilemmas in teacher education

As noted in Chapter 1, dilemmas differ from problems because they involve judgments about competing and highly-prized values. Confronting dilemmas would appear to involve difficult negotiations and compromises, so that the interests of all participants can be accommodated. There are no simple solutions. Cuban (1992) warns that:

> When the template of technical rationality is laid over a messy social or educational problem, it seldom fits. The entangled issues and their ambiguity spill over. There are no procedures to follow, no scientific rules for making decisions. Worse yet, the template hides values conflicts. These so-called "problems" are complex, untidy, and insoluble.

What alternatives approaches might be adopted, if techno-rational strategies fail to resolve tensions and conflicts inherent in a dilemma? One alternative may be to approach the issues with an attitude of critical inquiry—to explore the roots of tension, so that better compromises may be negotiated. If the inquiry includes all participants affected by a dilemma, then their experiences may be better understood and considered in decisions to be made.

The dilemma re-visited

This thesis has suggested that faculties of education face a dilemma with respect to determining their roles in field-based coursework for in-service teacher educators. Demands from field-based educators for coursework that engages teachers in classroom-based inquiry and self-directed learning challenge the status quo. They produce tensions among competing, highly prized values held by various individual and institutional participants.

> Over the last century, at least three overlapping cultural values have created conflicts. The university culture, prizing the values of reflection, rigorous analysis, and scientifically produced research, competes against values within a professional school of applying disciplinary knowledge to practical situations in order to prepare the next generation of teachers, administrators, and researchers. Both sets of values embedded in university structures compete against another set of values within schools. There action is prized. The knowledge that is admired is concrete, relevant, drawn from experience, and applied to the practical dilemmas of teaching and learning....Despite decades of trying to reconcile these competing values and conditions through varied compromises, one obvious outcome has been

> a stunted sense of community among educational researchers and practitioners (Cuban, 1992, p. 9).

One factor that may exacerbate the present dilemma faced by faculties of education in British Columbia is increasing pressure for reform directed not only toward public education, but also toward universities (Bowman, 1991; British Columbia Human Resource Development Project, 1992; Goodlad, 1990). Current directions in public education seem to indicate a fundamental shift in thinking—about learning, teaching, and teacher development. This shift may have significant implications for how faculties of education are viewed by field-based practitioners. As teachers and schools adopt values of collaborative inquiry and collegial interaction, it seems possible that they may increasingly question, and perhaps even reject, the transmissional approaches and underlying hierarchical values they encounter in some university courses.

It seems timely, then, for faculties of education to re-examine prevailing practices and to engage in critical reflection and collaborative inquiry with others having a shared interest in in-service teacher development. Cuban (1992) asks, "How can we create intellectual communities among practitioners and professors that develop shared standards of teaching practice, and engage in sustained conversations over dealing with our common moral dilemmas?" (p. 9). Perhaps such communities could create environments where processes of change become more manageable for all.

Possibilities for future research

This study did not examine many of the questions that could shed further light on ways to proceed with field-based in-service coursework. For example, it did not gather sufficient data to analyze Project X from the perspectives of school district administrators or district facilitators. It did not fully examine Project X as a collaborative university/school district venture. Such studies might suggest future directions for faculties of education in building the collaborative intellectual communities recommended by Cuban above.

Another focus for research that might be particularly helpful to faculties of education facing dilemmas such as the one explored here would be critical inquiry into the practice of teacher education. For example, analyses of past administrative and programmatic decisions using the traditions of thought framework might provide starting points for policy development regarding in-service teacher education. As suggested by Liston and Zeichner (1991) and Zeichner (1993), this type of systematic self-study might "highlight the unacknowledged institutional and social context of this practice as well as its intended and unintended outcomes" (p. 122).

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Appendix A

In-service coursework opportunities
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Option 1: Field-Based Implementation - Comet (Education 384/385)

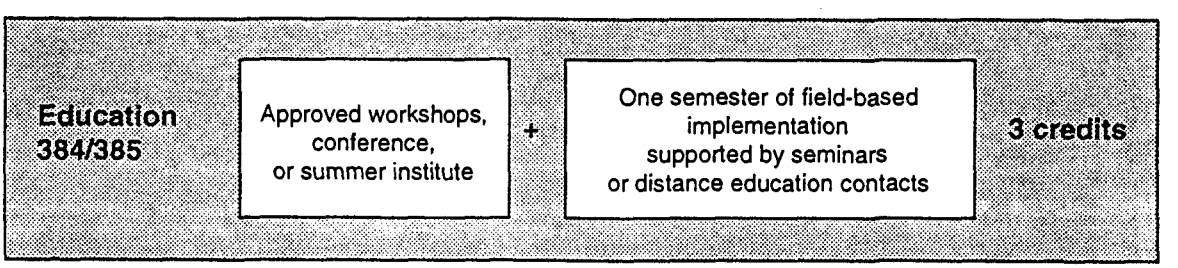
Description

Participants attend a summer institute, conference or workshops of no less than 24 contact hours, collaboratively planned by representatives from the district and the university. These events are presented by a team of educators that includes a university-approved course facilitator and district personnel. During the institute, conference or workshops participants learn about current educational programs, principles and practices and plan a project to be carried out during the following semester. They also form small colleague support groups and attend follow-up seminars in the district during the implementation phase.

Participants interested in credit register with the university at the end of the institute, workshops or conference. During the next semester they implement their projects with support from colleagues and in-district seminars. At the end of semester, credit participants submit a portfolio assignment to the university facilitator for evaluation.

Features

- Teachers may participate in the institute and follow-up seminars regardless of whether they wish to register for credit. Participants choose the level of involvement that suits their needs. The credit component is not dependent on participant numbers.
- Participants are encouraged to work in small colleague support groups during both the institute and fall semester. If they attend the institute in school-based support groups, these may become catalysts for change within school staffs.
- Fall seminars are held in the district and facilitated by district personnel with support from the university facilitator. This structure supports district- and school-level networking, and provides a leadership training opportunity for district staff.



Option 2: Theory and Practice of Implementation (Education 407)

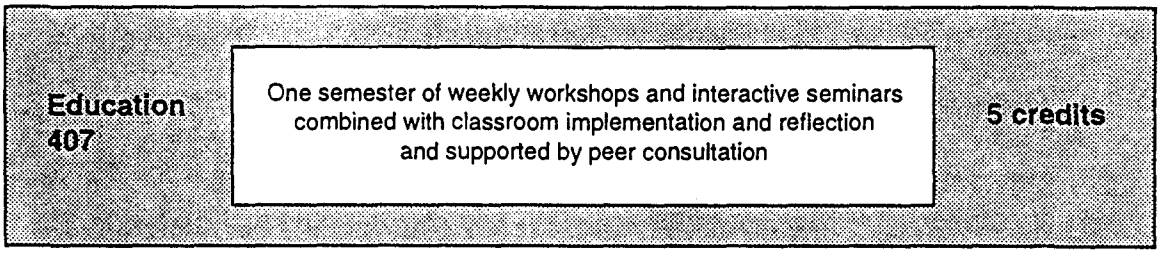
Description

This course takes place over one full semester. Participants' activities include four components: regular instructional and interactive class sessions on the course topic; input on educational change, including theory and practice of implementation; individual action planning, classroom implementation and reflection; and peer consultation and support. The university instructor is involved in weekly in-district workshops and seminars and is also available to visit students in their schools. Students organize small colleague consultation groups to provide peer feedback and support.

All participants must be eligible for university admission and must register for credit.

Features

- Teachers are able to explore in-depth issues of concern to them over an extended time;
- Teachers receive ongoing input and support over time from both the university instructor and colleagues;
- Teachers develop strong cross-school and cross-level networks as a result of working closely together over time;
- Involvement of district staff (optional) in consultative role provides opportunities to develop close connections with district teachers;
- Greater amount of credit attracts and maintains commitment to learning through difficult stages of implementation;
- This model is compatible with a professional growth plan approach to teacher evaluation.

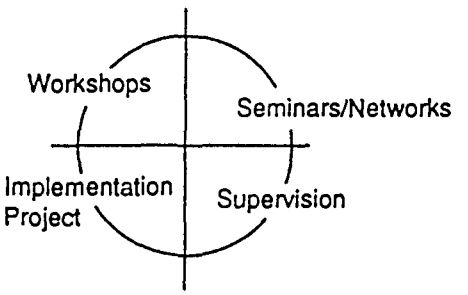


Appendix B

Discussion Agenda

1) District Focus

2) Education 407 (Theory and Practice of Implementation) - Structure



3) Resources and Cost Sharing

	SFU	District
Instructional Costs ($7000)	$4000	$3000
Facilitator Team	Instructor and Coordinator	Site Leaders

Release time (.5 release days X number of teachers to maximum 25 - Districts)
Sites and related costs: Workshops (Two each ?)
Seminars (Six (?) Districts)

4) Possible Ministry Sponsorship (Intermediate Development Site Grants - Mar4/92)

Additional Release Time (1 release day X number of teachers)	$7500
Additional Coordination	$2500
Program Evaluation	$2500
Additional Resource People	$1500
Sites/Travel/Miscellaneous	$1000

5) Other

FACULTY OF EDUCATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Peter Norman 291 4385
Pat Holborn 291 3808

Appendix C
Project X
Proposal for
FIELD-BASED IMPLEMENTATION COURSEWORK FOR EDUCATORS
Education 386-3 and Education 407-5

This project is a collaborative venture of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and the .....school districts. Its purpose is to engage educators in rigorous and meaningful credit coursework focussed on the principles of the Year 2000 framework and the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs. The coursework will be offered through Simon Fraser University, spanning the period from September through March 1992. Participants may withdraw from the project without penalty following the fall semester.

Fall 1992	Special topics course	3 credits	Educ. 386
Spring 1993	Implementation practicum	5 credits	Educ. 407

The purposes of the coursework are to help practising teachers:

- Understand the base of theory and research in curriculum, child development, language learning and other fields on which the Year 2000 and the Program frameworks are based;
- Examine the beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Year 2000 document, the Program frameworks, and other curriculum documents;
- Explore the practical implications of these program and curriculum directions by becoming familiar with a variety of instructional and evaluation strategies that support a developmental, learner-focussed approach to learning and teaching;
- Clarify personal beliefs about the teacher's role in a program that assumes a developmental and learher-focussed approach;
- Implement the principles of the Year 2000 through appropriate strategies drawn from such areas as whole language, cooperative learning, teaching for thinking, student-centred evaluation, etc.

Project components

1. *Workshops*

The workshop component of the course will provide participants with a theoretical framework for implementation and a process for designing, implementing and evaluating their own implementation projects. Activities will include examination of:

* the Royal Commission recommendations, the Year 2000 document, the Program frameworks and other materials which support their implementation;
* a developmental approach to teaching and learning based on current theory and research;
* learning as a constructive, generative and collaborative process;
* principles and criteria for educational decision-making based on a coherent educational philosophy;

* strategies for creating developmental learning environments;
* strategies for selecting, organizing and implementing appropriate instructional approaches;
* strategies for assessing and evaluating pupils, teachers and educational programs.

Workshops will be held approximately every second week from September through March. All participants from both districts will attend. The location will alternate among S.F.U. and the two school districts. Workshop presenters will be drawn from the S.F.U. Faculty of Education, school districts, and other recognized educational leaders. An intensive conference format that provides participants with a variety of perspectives on the Year 2000 and appropriate curriculum practices may be included in place of one of the workshops.

2. *Seminars*

The seminar component of the course will provide a forum in which participants can support and learn from one another as they compare their implementation experiences. Seminars will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their personal knowledge of children, teaching and learning, and how these change through the processes of implementation. Seminars will be facilitated by district personnel and an instructor from S.F.U. They will be held separately in each district, every second week, alternating with the workshop schedule.

3. *Classroom Implementation Projects*

The classroom component of this course will involve the design and implementation of a project in which participants investigate the use of specific practices that are congruent with the principles of the Year 2000 framework and programs. A format for project design will be provided.

Participants will be asked to keep a reflective journal in which they document and evaluate changes in their understanding and teaching practices throughout the semester. Evaluation for university credit will be based primarily on a portfolio submitted at the end of the semester which represents the participant's work and evaluates their learning.

4. *Peer Support*

Participants will be asked to identify a **small** (no larger than 4) support group to provide one another with peer consultation and coaching throughout the implementation projects. Time for support group discussion will be provided during district-based seminars. Suggestions for forming a support group will be provided by the instructor. Participants are encouraged to register in small school-based or interest-based groups to facilitate peer support.

5. *Release Time*

As part of its contribution to this course, the School Districts will provide each participant with one-half day release time for learning activities directly associated with the student's implementation project. This will be explained further during project sessions.

University grading procedures

Evaluation of the fall course follows regular grading procedures. The implementation practicum in the spring is based on a pass/withdraw system.

Appendix D

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

SPECIAL TOPICS PROPOSAL FORM

1. **Course number:** 386 **Credit Hrs.:** 3 **Vector:**

Title of Course: Year 2000: Critical Examination of Theoretical and Practical Bases

Description of Course: This course examines the theoretical foundations and pedagogical implications of the Year 2000 framework and the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation Programs and discusses the implementation of these programs. Students will become thoroughly familiar with the documents and examine them in the context of a variety of educational and pedagogical theories. Emerging trends in program and curricular change will be identified and analyzed.

Prerequisites (or special instructions): Valid teaching certificate and teaching experience.

2. **Objectives (including a statement of how the course in embedded in a theoretical/cognitive/interpretive intellectual framework):**

Students will:

- carefully study and become thoroughly familiar with Year 2000 documents;
- examine the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs and other curriculum documents;
- critically examine the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
- identify emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluate them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;
- study additional literature which explicates and criticizes major theoretical underpinnings of the documents.

3. **Rationale for course offering (reasons why course is needed):**

The Year 2000 document and the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation Programs outline the mandated framework for curriculum in the Province of British Columbia. Educators at all levels are struggling with fundamental changes in school organization and instructional practices as they attempt to implement the framework. Without a clear understanding of the theoretical assumptions and research base underlying recommended changes, they are unable to make informed decisions about appropriate implementation strategies and practices. This course is intended to help participants

develop a solid understanding of the theoretical and research foundations underlying the Year 2000 principles, and to provide them with a broader perspective on educational change and processes of implementation. The course is prerequisite to an implementation practicum (Education 407: Theory and Practice of Implementation) which will be offered in the following semester.

4. Bibliography (list all books & articles required and/or recommended):

Required readings:

Barrow, R. (1990). *Understanding Skills*. London, Ont.: Althouse Press.

British Columbia Ministry of Education (1989). *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education (1990). *Primary Program Foundation Document*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1991). *Supporting Learning*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1992). *Curriculum-Assessment Frameworks, Primary, Intermediate and Graduation*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1992). *Graduation Program Revised Draft*. Victoria, B.C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1992). *The Intermediate Program Revised Draft*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Royal Commission on Education (1988). *A Legacy for Learners: Summary of Findings*. Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

Case, R. (1992). Constraining systemic school reform: Troubling lessons from B.C. Paper presented at the Restructuring Conference, OISE, Toronto, February, 1992..

Case, R., (Ed.). (1991). *A Critical Analysis of British Columbia's Proposals for Educational Reform. Educational Perspectives No. 1*. Burnaby, B.C.: Simon Fraser University.

Gibbons, M. (1982). Self-education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 7, 4, 82-86.

Hamm, C. (1982). Critique of self-education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 7, 4, 87-106.

Muhtadi, N., & Shute, W. (1991). B.C.'s 'Year 2000": A plan in jeopardy. *Canadian School Executive*.

Recommended Reading:

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1992). *Developing Images of the Intermediate Program.* Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education (1990). *Primary Program Resource Document.* Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights (1992). *Thinking in the Classroom. Vol I & Vol II.* Victoria, B. C.: Queen's Printer for British Columbia.

Case, R. (1992). Educational reform in British Columbia: Bold vision - flawed design. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, in press.

Deal, T. (1990). Reframing reform. *Educational Leadership, 47*, 8, 6-11.

Leithwood, K., & Dart, B. (1992). *Building commitment for change: A focus on school leadership.* Victoria, B. C.: Program Evaluation and Research, Ministry of Education.

5. List of student assignments to be completed and any other expectations of students:

Each student will:

- Attend and participate fully in all course activities, including seminars, workshops and special presentations. (10 %)
- Respond to all readings in a professional journal and be prepared to discuss required readings in class. (20%)
- Compare and critique metaphors for teaching presented in current literature and program documents. (20%)
- Analyze one of the program or curriculum documents listed in the recommended readings. The analysis should: explain the foundational principles on which the program is based; support the principles with reference to pertinent theory and research; provide a critique; and describe one or more areas of current instructional practice that demonstrate implementation of the principles in a specific educational setting. (50%)

6. Description of student assessment and grading procedure:

Students will be evaluated according to S.F.U. grading policy.

A Represents superior (A-) to exceptional (A+) performance which goes beyond the specified requirements of the assignment(s).

B Represents good (B-) to very good (B+) performance which meets all the specified requirements of the assignment(s).

C Represents acceptable (C-) to satisfactory (C+) performance.

D Contains one or more of the following weaknesses: major factual inaccuracies, major gaps in the knowledge base, lack of critical analysis, ambiguous, unclear or inaccurate presentation, poor organization leading to lack of coherence, or major errors in style.

F Represents unacceptable flaws in content, critical analysis and style, and/or a failure to address the assignment focus.

Appendix E

Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education

in collaboration with

School Districts [A and B]

offers two sequential courses for educators working with the Year 2000 framework.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF IMPLEMENTATION: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

September 1992 - April 1993

These two courses provide teachers with the opportunity to use their own classrooms as laboratories for exploring, analyzing and evaluating the processes of implementation. Course content focuses on the implementation of current principles of effective education for students at all levels within the Year 2000 framework. Theory and practice are linked through workshops, seminars and classroom implementation projects. In the fall semester, students will register for a 3-credit Special Topics course (number to be announced). In the spring, those who wish to continue will register for a 5-credit Implementation Practicum (Education 407). Please note that if you have already taken Education 407, you may not get credit for this course a second time.

Course events will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. weekly from September through March. Activities will alternate between cross-district workshops organized by S.F.U and in-district support group seminars facilitated by district staff. Participants will be expected to attend all course activities and to conduct an implementation project on a focus of their choice. Because peer support and consultation are an integral part of the course design, small groups of teachers from the same school are encouraged to attend together.

A meeting to provide further information about the course design, requirements and registration procedures will be held on Monday, April 06, 3:30 p.m. [District A] School Board Office

Appendix F

COURSE OUTLINE

This course is framed around a critical examination of issues in the Year 2000 program. It represents a humanistic and critical way of looking at how innovation takes place in the work context of teaching. It will engage participants in an in-depth examination of the questions raised by authors and researchers working at the "cutting edge" in learner-focussed teaching. At the same time, participants will engage in classroom inquiry around the dilemmas of practice they face in their respective classroom contexts. The aim is to learn interactively and dynamically from practice and from well-known researchers who have specialized in the area of learner-focussed teaching, and to do this in a manner in which participants take a critical and independent stance relative to their own ideas and the ideas presented. Further aims in the course have then to do with:

1) careful study of and familiarization with the Year 2000 documents;
2) examining the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs, and other curriculum documents;
3) critically examining the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
4) identifying emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluting them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;
5) studying additional literature which explicates and criticizes the major theoretical underpinnings of the documents;
6) providing opportunities for participants to grasp the substantive ideas with confidence, accuracy, and appropriate use of analytical language
7) engendering in participants the ability to make sense of competing theoretical claims, to evaluate conflicting evidence, and to understand the relationship between research findings and practical application.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Workshops

The workshop component of the course provides educators from both districts with the opportunity to participate in a community of inquiry. Workshops will be held every second week and all participants are expected to attend and vigorously to take part in small and large group discussions around topics and issues deriving from practical dilemmas and the assigned readings.

Seminars

The seminar component of the course provides a forum in which educators from the same district can support and learn from one another as they grapple together with dilemmas of practice endemic to the implementation of the year 2000 program. These sessions will be held in each district every second week, alternating with the workshop schedule. Seminars will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their knowledge of children, teaching and learning, and on how this is affected by classroom-based inquiry.

Each component will have two strands. The *workshop* strands are framed around 1) a substantive and critical focus on the Year 2000 program and 2) a focus on developing a community of inquirers. The *seminar* strands are framed around 1) self-assessment and evaluation, and 2) action planning and reflection on practice.

EXPECTATIONS

Participants are expected to develop a portfolio characterizing themselves as learners. The following components of a portfolio would be expected:

- **Story of development as a teacher grappling with the Year 2000**
  This should be written with an audience of other teachers in mind, developing criteria for how you will know that you have connected in a powerful way with such an audience, and describing the burning concerns/issues you have generated, how you framed them into questions of inquiry, how those questions were addressed in light of your understanding of the Year 2000 program and of classroom inquiry. This story is not just descriptive narrative but also critical reflection.

- **Representation of changes in your thinking and understanding**
  This representation can take the form of a poster board, audio-visual presentation, photographic ethnography, poetry, and other forms of expression.

- **Demonstration of learner-focussed classroom action**
  This demonstration, like the representation task above, can take different forms. What is different here is the focus on classroom action.

- **Action plan for 407**
  Details of what is required in an action plan will be presented during the course.

Each workshop and seminar will provide opportunities for participants to engage in reflective writing. This ongoing reflective writing will provide not only a basis for in-class discussions but also a record of participants' growth and development throughout the course. As such, it becomes a vital source of reference when constructing the portfolio assignment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND GRADING

Emphasis in both workshops and seminars will be placed on modelling assessment and evaluation using the portfolio format for the course assignment. Exemplars will be presented to help participants prepare their portfolios. Workshops and seminars will provide opportunities for participants to develop criteria and standards, and to practise self and peer assessment. Final grades will be determined by a review, undertaken by individual participants and the instructors, of self, peer, and instructor evaluations.

SUBSTANTIVE THEMES

Day 1: Tuesday September 15, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Introductions and Orientation to the Course* (Coquitlam)

Day 2: Tuesday September 22, 1992

TOPIC: *Seminar*

Day 3: Tuesday September 29, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Foundations of the Year 2000 Program* (Maple Ridge)

Day 4: Tuesday October 6, 1992

TOPIC: *Seminar*

Day 5: Tuesday October 13, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Learner-Focussed Teaching* (Coquitlam)

Day 6: Tuesday October 20, 1992

TOPIC: *Seninar*

Day 7: Tuesday October 27, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Student Empowerment* (Maple Ridge)

Day 8: Tuesday November 3, 1992

TOPIC: *Seminar*

Day 9: Tuesday November 10, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Parental Involvement* (Coquitlam)

Day 10: Tuesday November 17, 1992

TOPIC: *Seminar*

Day 11: Tuesday November 24, 1992

TOPIC: *Workshop: Societal/Political/Systemic Constraints* (Maple Ridge)

Day 12: Tuesday December 1, 1992

TOPIC: *Seminar*

Appendix G

Project X

Field-Based Implementation Coursework for Educators

*Education 386-3: Year 2000 - Theoretical and Practical Bases

*Education 407-5: Theory and Practice of Implementation

Proposed Calendar

Times

Tuesdays, 4:00 - 7:00 unless otherwise arranged.

Dates

September 15	workshop	
September 22	seminar	home districts
September 29	workshop	
October 06	seminar	home districts
October 13	workshop	
October 20	seminar	home districts
October 27	workshop	
November 03	seminar	home districts
November 10	workshop	
November 17	seminar	home districts
November 24	workshop	

One or two short breaks will be included and light refreshments will be arranged. If you need more, please bring something with you.

Purposes of the Coursework

[Project X] is a collaborative venture of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and the ..... school districts. Its purpose is to engage educators in rigorous and meaningful credit coursework focussed on the principles of the Year 2000 framework and the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs. Participants have the opportunity to register for two courses through Simon Fraser University spanning the period from September 1992 through April 1993.

The purposes of the Education 386 course are to help practising teachers:

- carefully study and become thoroughly familiar with Year 2000 documents;
- examine the educational beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Sullivan Royal Commission, the Year 2000 framework, the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs and other curriculum documents;
- critically examine the theoretical and research foundations on which the Year 2000 principles are based;
- identify emerging trends in school organization and instructional practices and evaluate them in relation to the Year 2000 principles;
- study additional literature which explicates and criticizes major theoretical underpinnings of the documents.

The purposes of the 407 course are to help practising teachers:

- explore the practical implications of these program and curriculum directions by becoming familiar with a variety of instructional and evaluation strategies that support a developmental, learner-focussed approach to learning and teaching;
- clarify personal beliefs about the teacher's role in a program that assumes a developmental and learner-focussed approach;
- understand the design principles involved in creating a plan for an implementation project;
- develop a plan to implement some aspect of the Year 2000 through appropriate strategies;
- participate in thoughtful inquiry and reflective practice.

Components

Workshops

The workshop component of the course provides educators from both districts with the opportunity to participate in a community of inquiry. Workshops will be held every second week from September through early April, and all participants from both districts will attend.

Seminars

The seminar component of the course provides a forum in which educators from the same district can support and learn from one another as they compare their implementation experiences. These sessions will be held in each district every second week, alternating with the workshop schedule. Seminars will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their personal knowledge of children, teaching and learning, and how these change through the processes of implementation and classroom-focussed research.

Classroom Implementation Projects

The classroom component of the course involves the design and implementation of a project in which each participant investigates the use of specific practices that represent the Year 2000 principles in action. A format for project design will be provided and discussed in seminars. Participants will be asked to keep a reflective journal in which they document and evaluate changes in their understanding and teaching practices throughout the project.

Peer Support

Participants will be asked to identify a small support group to provide one another with peer consultation and coaching through the implementation projects. Time for support group discussion will be provided during district-based seminars. Suggestions for forming a support group will be provided by the facilitators.

Release time

As part of their contribution to this course, each school district will provide each participant with one-half day release time per semester for learning activities directly associated with the implementation project. This will be explained further in seminar.

Appendix H

Education 386 Questions

Program foundations

Why don't we keep our students for 2 years or more?
Will we have 'signposts' for each age, year, grade, skill?
How can we assure teachers' consistency in understanding benchmarks?
What is happening with the intermediate program?
When are we going to speak a common language?
How do we develop a common meaning (for us as teachers) re Year 2000?
How do we look through /beyond problems to see solutions?
When do we get past concerns onto positive application?
How to move from the philosophy/ theory to classroom?
What can I do in the classroom this week to further implement the Year 2000 course?

Learner-focussed teaching

How do I extend free-choice activities for late primary children?
How can I extend the learning at centers to challenge the children?
How can we strike a balance between different teaching/learning models?
How do I make sure all the learning styles of the children are addressed?
How do we motivate students, especially those who are not interested in *anything*?
How can we help children deal with/cope with the changes experienced at each school level (i.e., primary, intermediate, junior, high school, and university)?
How can we ensure that special needs students become as fully involved members of the class as possible?
How do we, teachers and students, ensure that all student needs are being met?
How do we meet the needs of all students?
What does learner focus look like?
How can we meet the individual needs of all those kids?
How do we prepare and support teachers with special needs' integration?
How can we more successfully involve *all* kinds of learners in our program?
How can I get special needs students involved in learning activities?

Student empowerment

How do I go about teaching students to be reflective?
How do we build confidence and pride in students that they *can* be accurate self-evaluators?
How can I keep a useful record of student progress?
How do I carry out authentic assessment?
Where do we find time to observe students?
How can we relinquish control to the kids and still remain comfortable?
How do I being to give more control to the learner?
How do I initiate/use learning logs effectively?
How do we collect "authentic assessment'?
How do we look *into* students and colleagues instead of *at* them?
How do I go about teaching students to be reflective?
How can we empower our students to be more independent and responsible learners?
How do we foster independence and responsibility?

Parent involvement

How can I report authentically to parents?
How do I educate parents to understand the value of multi-age grouping?
How does a teacher report honestly and meaningfully to parents?
How can we report to parents in a time-efficient manner?
How to educate parents on Year 2000, and who is responsible?
How do we involve parents in their child's learning?
How can we report positively, yet realistically, to parents?
How can I explain to parents the importance of 'play'?
How do we get parents on board?
How do we educate the public about its role in children's education?
What is the most meaningful way to relay progress to the parents?
How can we more successfully inform parents about the reporting process?

Constraints

What kind of changes would you like in space furniture management?
How can we better anticipate and plan for external interruptions?
How do we get a computer for every teacher?
How can individual teachers build up resources without spending a fortune?
How do we facilitate this program with the support/resources we have?
How do we fit the Year 2000 into inflexible timetables?
Can the Year 2000 withstand the political pressures of the day?
As educators do we reflect society (social values) or do we change it/them?

Coping

How can the teacher realistically meet the specific needs of so many students without suffering total burnout?
How do I 'pick and choose' form all the different strategies?
How can I renew myself so I am able to model enthusiastic thoughtful action?
How do we protect teachers from teacher burnout and becoming fossilized?
How to make more time! --treadmill, never catch up.
How can we 'cut down' the amount of time planning and preparing?
How do I put *all* the ideas into something cohesive?
Is self-doubt *really* critical reflection?
How do I find the time to implement the many changes?
How do we ensure a balance among all the goal areas?
How do I keep up with all this stuff?
How can I digest and internalize the philosophy of the year 2000 without giving up my weekends and every evening?
Where do we find time to evaluate?
Should we be using this course time (Tuesdays 4-7) for reflective thinking?

Collaboration

What do we do to help create a collaborative vision among a staff?
What are some means and methods for obtaining in-school collaboration time?
How do we set up collaborative time?
How do we support teachers' risk-taking?
Should, how, can we be using this course time to collaborate with colleagues re classroom activities?

Appendix I

INITIATING ACTION INQUIRY

- Shaping the chosen *focus* of inquiry

  i) why does this focus interest me?
  ii) what do I expect to achieve through studying this focus?
  iii) what do I bring to a study of this focus?
  iv) what do I look to colleagues to bring?

- Choosing a *question* for collaborative or individual inquiry

  i) why do I think my chosen question is important?
  ii) how will the pursuit of this question affect my classroom practice and student learning?
  iii) how will the pursuit of this question inform my colleagues and affect their practice?

- Developing an *Action Plan* (see handout)

- Engaging in *observation* and *reflection*

  i) keeping a research log (where useful)
  ii) "giving reasons" to student behaviour (trying to think from the student's perspective)
  iii) questioning and reframing "taken-for-granted" assumptions

- Gathering *data*

  i) interviewing students, parents, colleagues, etc.
  ii) surveys, questionnaires
  iii) student work and comments
  iv) records kept by students of classroom actions, e.g., class meeting, etc.

- *Analysis and interpretation*

  i) looking for emerging patterns in the data
  ii) involving students in the analysis
  iii) using pictures, charts, and/or diagrams to make sense of data
  iv) reflective writing

- Deriving *implications* for curriculum change

  i) in my classroom
  ii) in classrooms in general
  iii) further searchings (things I have found out I do not know)

SHAPING THE FOCUS OF INQUIRY
an exemplar

Possible Focus Topics

- Learner-focussed teaching
- Student empowerment
- Assessment
- Parental involvement

(see questions generated first evening)

Refining a Topic into a Question (e.g., learner-focussed teaching)

- Finding a *general* question

  e.g, How does one teach standard spelling in the new curriculum?

- Generating *specific* questions

e.g., questions relating to spelling arising in one project:

a) What connections do we see between the writing process and standard spelling?

b) How do we handle spelling mistakes found in students' writing?

c) What can be done to encourage standard spelling?

d) What influences students to learn to spell in standard form?

e) To what extent do you discuss spelling in reports?

f) What do parents say about spelling?

g) What is the relationship between standard spelling and knowledge?

h) How do students learn to spell?

i) How do we characterize the process of learning to spell: a developmental process,

or memorization task?

j) Is it important that primary children learn to spell in standard form?

COLLABORATIVE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Purposes

1. to depict current working context.
2. to describe current pedagogy and curriculum-in-use.
3. to discover how past personal and professional lives relate to your current professional thoughts and actions.
4. to project into preferred personal/professional future as critical appraisal of 1), 2), & 3).

Questions

1. With respect to my chosen area of focus, what is the nature of my working reality?
2. With respect to my chosen area of focus, how do I think and act in the classroom?
3. How did I come to be the way I am?
4. What do I want to do about it?

Smyth critical reflection cycle of:

- Describing (What do I do?)
- Informing (What does this description mean?)
- Confronting (How did I become like this?)
- Reconstructing (How might I do things differently?)

Supplementary questions

How would you describe yourself? What was the most important learning experience of your life? What events do you perceive served as a catalyst for change? Were there occurrences in your life that you perceive enabled or impeded your growth?

Process

- Tell your own story of practice
- Describe feeling openly and honestly
- All participants should listen attentively to one another in a non-critical manner and attempt to get a deeper understanding of each presenter and assist each presenter in clarifying his or her understandings by asking appropriate questions or by contributing a similar experience or story
- You may interrupt the presenter to share points of similarity and difference but remember to respect who the presenter is.
- You personally have complete control over what is shared and not shared.
- During group sessions, keep notes of anything that triggers a thought, a memory, or a concern that you would like to address in the focus group.

Appendix J

Evaluation Questionnaire

Please help us prepare for the next semester by commenting on your learning experiences during the first half of]Project X]. Your honest feedback would be appreciated, and your responses will remain anonymous. The information will be used to plan the second half of the coursework and to evaluate the effectiveness of this kind of course delivery.

1. What were some of your reasons for joining [Project X]?

2. What were your learning goals when you began the coursework in September?

3. What are some of your important learnings so far?

4. What benefits have you derived so far from working on your action plan?

5. What do you see as some of the problems or limitations of this approach to learning?

6. What aspects of the coursework have been most helpful so far?

7. What aspects of the coursework have been least helpful?

8. What to you hope to gain from the second half of the coursework?

9. What suggestions do you have to make the second half of the coursework most worthwhile for you?

10. How would you compare this type of learning to other university courses you have taken?

    a. In what ways is this coursework like other university courses you have taken?

    b. In what ways is this coursework different from other university courses you have taken?

11. What suggestions would you have for the Faculty of Education regarding this type of cousework?

Other comments...