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THE GIFTS AND GRACES OF TIME:

A LIFE INTERRUPTED

by

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B.A., Carleton University, 1974.

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

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ABSTRACT

This is the story of how I came to claim the authority of my own experience as a woman, mother and teacher. This text recounts my journey of coming to know my own story -- the story of myself and my child, the story of myself and the students and teachers with whom I worked. It tells of my experience as I lived it out in the context of Simon Fraser University's Professional Development Program; through my work as a co-ordinator and teacher in this teacher education program; through my relationships with the student teachers whom I taught; the colleagues and faculty members with whom I worked. It was in this context that my understanding of myself as a woman, mother and teacher, of myself-in-relation, was challenged and ultimately strengthened and deepened.

In my search for a form to give voice to my experience, it was the work of T.S. Eliot which seemed to capture most strongly the sense of my journey as it had been lived. In his poem, Four Quartets, T.S. Eliot speaks of beginning, explorations and, in the end, arriving "where we started to know that place for the first time" (Eliot, 1942, p. 222). It is this narrative pattern, this pattern of beginning through some event or initiation, followed by a time of exploration and finally, discovering that place from which we first started -- of returing home -- that serves as the framework for my thesis.

My progression through this narrative pattern was not a linear path to be followed but rather, a cycle, a circling through at different levels of depth and breadth, to return and begin again. Beginnings, as I interpret them, are those times, those moments when we approach our experience with a sense of innocence, with a receptiveness, an openess to receive the other. For me, these others came in the form of the educational philosophers and their courses, the theorists I read, the teachers who taught me and colleagues,

students and teachers with whom I worked. This text tells the story of how I came to a deeper understanding of myself and my work through my interactions with them.

The exploration cycle of my journey represents my experience teaching a university course and completing my research to fulfill the requirements for my Master's degree. This section of my thesis documents my thinking about the concept of the double-entry journal, a form I used initially as a teaching strategy in my course, and, subsequently as a research tool for my study. It is here that I tell the story of the student teachers with whom I worked, creating a picture of their experience in Simon Fraser University's teacher education program. And yet, as I speak to my understanding of the experiences of these students, I also give voice to my own experience as a teacher. It was through my insights into the story of these student teachers that I came to know my own. The dialogue that emerged from reading and responding to my students' writing in their double-entry journals provoked me to work out my own thinking about what was important to me. It was through this dialogue that I began to understand the importance of relationship, of care and community in teaching. In doing so, I came to see my research was not really about the use of the double-entry journal, nor about the integration of theory and practice, nor even about the importance of dialogue and community in teaching. Certainly these notions were central to my work and the development of my understandings, however, what lay at the heart of my research were questions about my being-in-the world.

What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? What does it mean to be a teacher -- a teacher of teachers and of children? What does it mean to be woman who teaches children -- to be a mother who teaches teachers? These are the questions that are at the heart of my study. And yet

it is only upon my return that these questions find voice. These questions echoed through my experience, emerging from a felt, embodied response to the world around me -- from a deeply felt sense of myself-in-relation. To question what it means to be-in-relation is at the heart of understanding my life as a woman and as a mother, but it is also, I now see, at the heart of understanding my work as a teacher. For it was through my lived sense of my relation to my child that I imagined a way to be-in-relation with the students whom I taught.

Storytelling is the most fundamental way we have of organizing our experience and claiming meaning for it. Writing this thesis has been my way of doing just this: making sense of my experience as it is interrelated with the experience of others, claiming meaning for what I care most deeply about. And in doing so, my work as a woman, as a mother and as a teacher has come out of hiding -- for my students, for my colleagues, for my thesis committee -- but most importantly for myself.

For my son B.J.

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We shall not cease from exploration
And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
(T.S. Eliot, 1963, p. 222)

PROLOGUE

MY BEGINNING IS MY END

This is the story of how I came to claim the authority of my own experience as a woman, mother and teacher. This text recounts my journey of coming to know my own story -- the story of myself and my child, and the story of myself and the students and teachers with whom I worked. It tells of my experience as I lived it out in the context of Simon Fraser University's Professional Development Program, through my work as a coordinator and teacher in this teacher education program and through my relationships with the student teachers whom I taught and the colleagues and faculty members with whom I worked. It was in this context that my understanding of myself as a woman, mother and teacher and of myself-in-relation to others was challenged and ultimately strengthened and deepened.

In my search for a form to give voice to my experience, it was the work of T.S. Eliot which seemed to capture most strongly the sense of my journey as it had been lived. In his poem, Four Quartets, T.S. Eliot speaks of beginning, explorations and, at the end, arriving "where we started to know that place for the first time." Eliot's words speak to the sense of my journey, not as a linear path to be followed, but rather, as a spiral, a circling through different experiential levels, to return and begin again. It is this narrative pattern, this pattern of beginning through some event or initiation, followed by a time of exploration, and finally discovering that place from which we first started -- of returning home -- that resonated most strongly.

The basic motif of the universal hero's journey exemplifies this cycle of going and returning. The usual heroic adventure begins with "leaving one condition and finding the source of life to bring you forth into a richer or mature condition" (Campbell, 1988, p. 124). Eliot's notion of arriving where we first started expresses what Carol Pearson describes as the essence of the hero's journey.

> It is not so much that we go anywhere, but that we fill out, move back to where we began expanding the boundaries of the place that seems safe and joyful to us only more consciously and thus we are able to make freer choices...now Eden is so much more inclusive and not so limiting. There is room there for more truth about ourselves and about our worlds. (Pearson, 1986, p. 154)

It is this understanding of the hero's journey, to move back to where we began, to return to a place where there is room "for more truth about ourselves and our world," that speaks to my experience. For my story is not simply the story of myself, but rather the story of myself and the world, of myself-in-relation to other people. Indeed it is here that the metaphor of the traditional heroic journey seems to fall short, for to argue, as many would do, that the hero's quest is only a metaphor for an inward, spiritual journey suggests more of a solitary, personal quest than has been my experience. It creates an image of the solitary hero moving out into the world alone and denies what has been at the heart of my experience as a woman and mother, namely, my relationships with others, and particularly my relationship with my child.

In her book <u>Motherself: A Mythic Analysis of Motherhood</u>, Kathryn Rabuzzi describes "the counterpart to the familiar quest of the hero" as "the way of the mother."

> In one sense the way of the mother is the same story as that of
> the quest of the hero, but what makes this familiar story of the
> hero seem so different when it becomes the way of the mother is
> its shift in perspective. In contrast to the singleness that forms
> selfhood as it is ordinarily conceived according to the pattern of
> the hero, selfhood in the mother consists of a binary-unity. It is
> therefore simultaneously two and one at the same time, its parts
> consisting of mother and child in varying degrees of relationship
> to each other. (Rabuzzi, 1986, p. 11)

In the traditional heroic quest the hero leaves his or her condition by moving out into the world, and yet, as I think about my condition of being a mother, it is difficult for me to imagine how I might leave this condition to find the worldly "source of life" (Campbell, 1988, p. 124). I can remember quite clearly the first time I was alone after the birth of my son. I had experienced a difficult delivery resulting in a long recovery process spent inside the house alone with my child. At the urgings of my relatives and friends I left to go to town for the morning. As I set off on my drive it felt quite exhilarating to be alone, however, as I rounded the sharp corners of the familiar road to town I felt an anticipation, a concern about what might be around the bend. I held my breath in a way I did not ever remember doing before. I thought of B.J. at home in his crib waiting. It wasn't just me anymore. In fact, it felt like "I" wasn't just a "me" anymore. It felt as if I were back home with him while still being here on this road at the same time. It is a feeling that remains with me even now, fifteen years later, as he sets off in his friend's car while I am left at home. It is as if I am there with him and home with myself at the same time. It seems to me that this feeling of not being just a "me" anymore represents the shift in perspective referred to by Rabuzzi, the being "simultaneously two and one at the same time". A mother cannot totally move outside her condition. To be a mother means having a child, even in that child's absence, and that fact alone implies living

with a sense of otherness. Perhaps the question we need to be asking as women and mothers is: How can we truly be ourselves? How can we be with our condition of not being "just a me anymore" as we move outwards into the world? The questions have to do with discovering the "source of life" within myself and my relations with the other that is my child.

But what does it mean to be a woman and a mother in the world outside my relationship with my own child? How do I bring this sense of myself as a mother into my relationships in the world outside the home? How do I live as a mother whilst also being a teacher of children? I do not remember ever consciously thinking about this connection. Yet this connection, the resonance between my being a mother and my being a teacher of children was, I now see, always *with* me. It was embodied in the way I wiped the tears from Chrissie's eyes as she struggled over her writing, in the way I rubbed Adam's back as I calmed his angry outburst, in the way I laughed in delight at Ben's "corny" jokes and listened with care as Cheryl read her first book. My condition of "not just being a me anymore" was always *with* me. It was embodied in my actions, in my gestures. It was a deeply felt response to the children whom I cared for.

In the same way I do not remember ever consciously wondering: *How do I live as a mother whilst also being a teacher who works alongside teachers of children?* And yet I now understand this question too was always *with* me. It emerged through my response to these teachers' writing. It was present as I listened to their stories, to their questions, to their hopes for themselves and the children they taught. It was carried in my relationship with the teachers of children with whom I worked.

These questions: *What does it mean to be a woman, to be a mother, to be a woman and mother who teaches children and teachers* lived inside me,

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woven into the very fabric of my being. They echoed through my experience, through my beginnings and my explorations. However, it is only as I return home that these questions find voice. I did not return from my quest with the Holy Grail. There is no definitive conclusion to my journey; instead, my ending has become my beginning, for as I give voice to my experience, I return with a renewed grounding, a conscious awareness of my own true nature as a woman, mother and teacher.

To question what it means to be a woman, to be a mother is, I now see, at the heart of understanding my work as a teacher, for it was through my lived sense of my relation to my child that I imagined a way to be in relation with the students whom I taught. This text represents my reflections on this journey: How I learned to be with my condition of "not just being a me anymore" in the world of work that lay seemingly outside my relation with my child. It is by giving voice to what was unspoken, to what in some sense was hidden, that I now "know the place for the first time" and in doing so, I have returned to a deeper and broader sense of home. Now "Eden is more inclusive for there is room for more truth about ourselves and about our world" (Pearson, 1986, p. 154), and about my truth and my place in the world.

Beginnings

Beginnings, as I interpret them, are those times, those moments, when we approach our experience with a sense of innocence and with a receptiveness or openness to "receive the other into myself and see and feel with the other" (Noddings, 1984, p. 30). My experience has been characterized by many such beginnings. My first beginning, or rather, my initiation, came on that road to town shortly after the birth of my son when I realized I was "not just a me anymore". This was the condition I lived for the seven years I

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worked as a teacher of children. It was also the condition I carried with me as I entered the academic community as a graduate student and as coordinator and sessional instructor for Simon Fraser University's teacher education program. I worked inside the world of academe for seven years: studying, supervising student teachers, and teaching in-service coursework to practising teachers. In that time I encountered many others whose thinking, presence and ways-of-being influenced my work. These others came in the form of the educational philosophers and their courses, the theorists I read, the teachers who taught me, and colleagues, students and teachers with whom I worked. Many of these encounters provoked new beginnings, and while some led me "through the way in which I was not" (Eliot, 1963, p. 201). others drew me closer to home. What remained consistent, I now see, was the openness to "letting myself be altered by every experience" (Von Morstein, 1988, p. 48). It was, I believe, this receptiveness to the other, to the potential of being transformed by the other that allowed me to return home and "see the place for the first time," for there was "something of everyone in me" (Von Morstein, 1988, p. 62) and, as such, home could never look quite the same again.

As I reflect back I see that my encounter with the many others I met along the way often came at a time when my work had been interrupted or when I was at an impasse. During these times when I was unsure of where to begin to give voice to my journey, I reached for a children's book, which for me is a form of literature that embodies the life of the child. In doing so, I often found my beginning. Then, when I was trying to understand my role as teacher of a university course, I reached for the thinking of others and was drawn into a forum for meaning making (Berthoff, 1981, Wells, 1986, Britton, 1975, Vygotsky, 1962) that ultimately drew me closer to what I knew, namely

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the importance of relationship in teaching (Noddings, 1984, Grumet, 1988, Belenky et al., 1986, Ruddick, 1989). As I worked through many different places trying to formulate the elusive research question, I reached for the work of others who helped me to see that my research was about "the search for what it was to be human" (van Manen, 1990, p. 12). And, as I tried to write and give voice to my experience, I was drawn to the work of others (Bateson, 1989, Duras, 1975, Von Morstein, 1988, Rich, 1979, Heilburn, 1988, Christ, 1980) who strengthened my resolve to speak in a language that truthfully speaks the world. Chapter one represents the thinking of those others who have, throughout my experience, been looking on with me and encouraging me through my beginnings, through the interruptions and beyond the impasses as would a trusted friend. It was through the support of these others that I have come to speak what is in my own mind and heart -- to claim my way as a woman and mother who works with teachers.

Explorations

Chapters two, three and four represent the exploration cycle of my experience. They speak to the part of my journey where I assumed that, like the hero, I needed to leave my condition in order to discover the "source of life". This time of explorations represented a "search in ambiguity for my own kind of integrity, learning to adapt and improvise in a culture in which I could only partly be at home" (Bateson, 1989, p. 13). And yet to return home -- to recover the possibilities of the way of the mother -- this journey was essential. In the words of T.S. Eliot, "in order to arrive at what you are not you must go through the way in which you are not" (Eliot, 1969, p. 201). During this period of going "through the way in which I was not," I found myself trying on new ways of thinking and communicating mostly in a

language that did not resonate with my reality. In doing so, I often denied my own experience by deferring to the voice of authority. I took on the voice, the language, of these powerful others and yet never very successfully. My words did not define my world. They did not speak authentically to my experience.

This was a time of disentangling my voice from the voices of others. As I reflect back, I now see that the opportunity to claim my own voice, to find my own way informed by the experience of others, came to me often in the form of seeming interruptions to my work. When I was headed in a particular direction with my thinking and my work, an interruption or an impasse was often created, calling me back to my own experience, provoking me into new beginnings. So while the overarching framework for this study is the pattern of beginning, exploration and returning home, it is in practice more complex, for within each chapter this cycle of beginning, exploration and returning home is somehow evident. Many of the insights I gained from this exploration of the work of others became integrated into my own thinking. However, there is throughout, an as yet unarticulated knowing of how I am in relation to others. The chapters in this study show, as opposed to merely tell, this process of my returning home. They show the process of my taking on the language and the thinking of others in order to find out "who I was not."

In thinking of my progression through this exploration cycle of my experience, I realize that dialogue is integral to the sense making process that was generated through reading and responding to my students' writing in their double-entry journals. As dialogue, the double-entry journal became the living example through which I worked out my thinking and understanding about what was important to me. It became a forum for my meaning making.

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In these three chapters I explore the dialogical concept of the double-entry journal. In chapter two, I examine the double-entry journal initially as a heuristic, whereby the student teachers with whom I was working could make meaning of the course content. It is also in this chapter that I begin to examine, for myself, the relationship between teacher and student. In chapter three the double-entry journal becomes a research tool for me to investigate the student teachers' development, allowing me to examine how they made sense of the relationship between theory and practice. In this chapter, I am no longer the students' teacher, but rather take on the role of researcher. What strikes me as I review these two chapters is the difference in voice. My voice in chapter two seems to resonate more strongly. This is when I am speaking as a teacher working intimately with my students. In contrast, chapter three represents my thinking at a time when I was trying to take on the more objective, distanced role of the researcher and does not ring as true. In chapter four the strength of my voice, my convictions, can again be heard. Here I revisit my discussion in chapter three, bringing new observations and insights informed by my readings of the feminist literature. It is in chapter four that I find myself moving closer to home for here I begin to articulate my understanding of the importance of relationship, of care and of community in teaching.

Returning Home

Throughout my period of exploration something held steady. It was a commitment, a resolve, to return. And yet for me, home, that place of deep knowing and being, was not articulated; it was, rather, a felt, embodied sense of myself in the world. It was that which held steady -- my sense of being-in-the-world, my sense of being-in-relation to others in the world. Indeed my

understanding of this sense of home may not have been possible without the interruptions. The exploration was a necessary part of the return home and through it I came to understand that my research was not really about the use of the double-entry journal, nor about the integration of theory and practice, nor even about the importance of dialogue and community in teaching. Certainly these notions were central to my work and the development of my understandings, however, what lay at the heart of my research were questions about my being-in-the-world.

The child is, in some sense, the hero in this journey, for it is the child -- my own child -- who enabled this mother to return home. It was the child who enabled me to become and *to be* what it was not possible for me *to be* on my own. It was through my relation with my child that I came to kn w who I was in those relations Levinas (1985) speaks of as relations "beyond the possible" (p. 71), relationships which call forth a response that enables me to see "the possibilities of the other as my own possibilities" and that calls me out of my singleness "to escape the closure of my own identity" (p. 70). It was through the child that I found the words to give voice to what I care most deeply about. It is through the child that I have recovered the possibilities of "singing the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 13) as a woman, as a mother and as a woman and mother who is a teacher of teachers.

The theory of narrative tells us that our sense of our lives is embedded in what we make and remake of what happens to us. We live and invent our lives through our texts, writes Carolyn Heilburn in <u>Writing a Woman's Life.</u> Wayne Booth in <u>Rhetoric of Fiction</u> says, who I am now is best shown by the stories I can tell, and who I am to become is best determined by the stories I can learn to tell. Storytelling is the most fundamental way we have of

organizing our experience and claiming meaning for it. Stories are the means of personal inquiry providing ways of exploring issues we care about.

Writing the story of my involvement in teacher education has been my way of doing just this: making sense of my experience as it is interrelated with the experiences of others, claiming meaning for what I care most deeply about. And in doing so, my work as a woman and a mother has come out of hiding (Grumet, 1988) -- for my students, for my colleagues, for my thesis committee -- but most importantly, for myself.

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning
The end is where we start from.
(T. S. Eliot, 1963, p. 221)

CHAPTER 1

BEGINNINGS & INTERRUPTIONS:
THE CIRCLE AND LANGUAGE OF INQUIRY

<u>Beginnings</u>

"Oh Mommy," Sara said. "I was going to paint the earth and the
sky and the day and the night, and the summer and the winter
and the whole universe. But I can't."

"The universe is very big Sara," her mother said.

Sara and her mother sat together by the window. The sky was
just darkening. There was a bit of a bit of a moon.

"Remember Sara," her mother said, "you can only begin at the
beginning."

"But I don't even know where that is," Sara said.
(Schwarz, 1983, p. 22)

This conversation between mother and child in the children's book

<u>Begin at the Beginning</u> speaks strongly to me as I am about to sit down and

begin. I want to write about the "whole universe." I want to be able to

capture the transformative process of my work, to take what has been lived,

and somehow, find words for it. So I search for a beginning "but I don't even

know where that is", for this work has had many beginnings. As I say this, I

find encouragement in the words of Mary Catherine Bateson whose insight

into women's lives as lives of "improvisation," not lives of questing after a

single grail, but rather lives with multiple beginnings and endings, seems particular true for me.

In her book Composing a Life Bateson speaks of women discovering the shape of our creation along the way, observing that our insights into our work and our lives not only take new directions but are subject to repeated redirections. She says that:

> the circumstances of women's lives now and in the past provide examples for new ways of thinking about the lives of both men and women. In lives of discontinuity and multiple commitments it provides the opportunity to explore the creative potential of interrupted lives where energies are not narrowly focussed or permanently pointed toward a single ambition... This is part of a life whose theme is response rather than purpose, response that makes us more broadly attentive, rather than purpose that might narrow our view. (Bateson, 1989, p. 237)

My thesis work extended over a period of several years and was subject to many of what Bateson refers to as "interruptions". In my life of "multiple commitments" and "divided energies," writing this thesis provided an opportunity for me "to explore the creative potential" of my interrupted life, to determine for myself the meaning of where I have been and why I chose to venture there. Mine, too, is a life whose "theme is response," yet in my commitment to this responsiveness through the time, care and attention I have given to others in my life -- my child, friends, colleagues, the students and teachers with whom I work -- I continually found little room for myself and no "room of my own" (Woolf, 1977) to write my thesis.

As I watched colleagues, friends, students complete their graduate work, I felt resentful of these "interruptions" and of a necessary "responsiveness" that seemed to always get in the way of my writing. And yet, the pulse of my own integrity, the desire to speak to my own reality, to

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pull together for a moment, at least, the multiple strands of commitments and discontinuities into a singular purpose -- writing my thesis -- created the space to write. Yet, as I stepped back from my experience, to "just do it" as my friend says, to begin the work of translating what has been lived into words, I felt voiceless.

What is this experience of voicelessness? Why is this writing such a struggle for me? When I read the words of Marguerite Duras I begin to understand something of my struggle. She says:

> Women have been in darkness for centuries. They don't know themselves. Or only poorly. And when women write, they translate this darkness. Men don't translate. They begin from a theoretical platform that is already in place, already elaborated. The writing of women is really translated from the unknown like a new way of communicating rather than an already formed language. (Duras, 1975, p. 174)

I am attempting to give voice to my lived experience, to "translate" the unspoken feeling, emotion, and action by imposing a structure, a language, that doesn't feel my own but seems necessary in order to communicate my story. Carol Christ suggests "the simple act of telling a woman's story from a woman's point of view is a revolutionary act. A new language must be created to express women's experience and insight, new metaphors discovered, new themes considered" (Christ, 1980, p. 7).

My study of the writing process theorists lends support to my act of writing my way into understanding. The work of Anne Berthoff was particularly important when I undertook my first semester of teaching a Designs for Learning: Language Arts course. The idea of using the double-entry journal as a forum for my students to work out their thinking by inviting them to use writing as a means of discovering what they wanted to say, to "translate the blackness", was inspired by Berthoff. She suggests that

"students, when they have been taught anything at all about writing, have often been taught some very wrongheaded things, such as outlining as a first step; not writing at all until you know what you want to say, casting so-called thesis statements into the form of simple assertions." She goes on to say that "it is far easier I think to teach those who had no training in writing than it is to unteach the anticomposing that so many have learned" (Berthoff, 1982, p. 43).

"To translate the blackness" for me means writing to find my voice by giving words to the unspoken. It is through the writing that I will discover what it is I want to say. To write in this evolutionary manner publicly, however, feels rather vulnerable for it runs contrary to the more usual academic practice which is "to withhold ideas until they are complete and polished, clearly defensible" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988, p. 87). I realize that in my experience as a woman in academe, I never really learned to write for myself. What I did learn was to paraphrase the words of others, believing that my words did not carry the "clear, fluent, assured articulation of thought displayed by the great professors who are the models for the public presentation of ideas" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988, p. 87). My own thoughts were tentative and exploratory, often not fully or clearly worked out. There did not seem to be a place for this tentative kind of conceptualizing, so my voice, my experience, remained silent.

Carolyn Heilburn suggests that all women are trained to silence (Heilburn, 1980). The feminist poet Adrienne Rich titled her book of essays On Lies, Secrets & Silence because she perceived these three aspects of women's communication (or their withholding) to be the real choices available to women. Because women's experiences have traditionally been described and explained by men, from men's perspectives, the language used

was based on men's experiences of women's experiences. Their language, then, can at best, only approximate and never truly express women's experiences. Women entering into the realm of self-expression go forth without a map, armed with a language not really their own, ambitious to describe their unarticulated truths, only to find their words fail them. As Heilbum concludes, "muted by centuries of training, women writers especially have found when they attempted truthfully to record their own lives, language failed" (Heilburn, 1988, p. 23).

There is, in my view, an urgency to honour a language that does not fail women, a language that does not silence us as we attempt to record our lives in education. As Madeline Grumet points out: "Women constitute the majority of all public school instructional personnel; nevertheless, our experience of this work is hidden. You will not find it articulated in teacher education texts or administrative handbooks. It is hidden from our students, our colleagues, even from ourselves" (Grumet, 1988, p. xi). Bringing these experiences "out of hiding" is, I believe, essential if we are to work with what Grumet calls "the wider surround, our seeing, honouring the moral and spiritual journey of the pedagogue" (Grumet, 1987, p. 324).

This thesis also represents the journey of my coming to know and understand how the self develops and finds meaning in the context of relationship. As Martin Buber writes, "the innermost growth of the self is not accomplished, as people like to suppose today, in man's [sic] relation to himself [sic], but in the relation between the one and the other" (Buber, 1966, p. 71). This thesis embodies the living out of this dialogue between self and other, between myself and the multitude of others in my life's relations. It is by virtue of one's articulated experiences that a self can be interrelated with other selves. As I tell my story, as I give voice to my experiences as an

educator, I also speak to my understanding of the experiences of others: the novice and experienced teachers with whom I worked and the educational theorists, philosophers and teacher educators I encountered along the way. As I write I claim the story of how I came to a deeper understanding of my self and my work through my interactions with them. My intent is not, therefore, to present the work of others in a self-contained chapter, traditionally the literature review, but rather to show how these readings were embedded in the process of my work. As I speak to the thoughts and ideas of these others my purpose is not to engage in a conceptual analysis of their work. On the contrary, I hope to show how I used their thinking to come to new understandings and insights into my particular experience, to show how my return home to "know the place for the first time," was informed by my encounter with these others.

It is the human science literature that provides me with a starting place for understanding and interpretating my work. I read van Manen and his words resonate:

> phenomenological research is a search for what it means to be human. As we research the possible meaning structure of our life experiences we come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be a man, a woman, a child taking into account the sociocultural, the historical traditions that have given meaning to our ways of being in the world. For example, to understand what it means to be a woman in our present age is also to understand the pressures of the meaning structures that have come to restrict, widen, or question the nature and ground of womanhood. Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a search for the fullness of living, for the ways a woman possibly can experience the world as a woman, for what it is to be a woman. The same is true, of course, for men.... So phenomenological research has as its ultimate aim, the fulfillment of human nature: to become more fully who we are. (van Manen, 1990, p. 12)

My journey has been characterized, I now see, by a thoughtfulness, "a minding, a heeding, a caring attunement and a wondering about the project of life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 12) as it has been lived out for the past seven years in the context of Simon Fraser University's teacher education program. My search has been to come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be a woman, a mother, a teacher, and a woman and mother who also teaches teachers. My task has been to research the meaning structures of this experience as it was interrelated with the experiences of others: principally my child, and then the teachers, students and colleagues with whom I worked. And yet this search was not driven by a singular purpose, rather, it was subject to repeated redirection as the questions emerged over time. Indeed, as I attempt to reconstruct my experience, I return to a passage from one of my many thesis proposals and read: "I find myself in the midst of an experience even while I am attempting to describe my way out of it. My own evolution as a teacher is so interwoven with this study that it is difficult to remove myself or to even step back and create the distance and the perspective necessary to make a start." In my words I hear my concern for "objectivity". When I wrote this, I saw the fact that "there was so much of me in this study" as a limitation that would bring into question the validity of my research. And yet, as van Manen says:

> is not the meaning of research: to question something by going
> back again and again to the things themselves until that which is
> put to question begins to reveal something of its essential
> nature? I can only genuinely ask the question if I am indeed
> animated by the question of the nature of pedagogy if I am
> indeed animated by this question in the very life I live with
> children. (van Manen, 1990, p. 43)

Once again I am drawn back to the work of Anne Berthoff and see a resonance between her thoughts and van Manen's. As Berthoff discusses her

notion of research, she suggests "it helps to pronounce research the way the southerners do REsearch. REsearch, is like REcognition, a REflexive act, it means looking and looking again. It does not mean going out after new data or in search of the elusive research question but rather it means REconsidering what is at hand...looking and looking again at what happens in our work" (Berthoff, 1981, p. 31).

And what is "at hand" for me in my work as teacher educator, as mother, friend, colleague? For, as van Manen suggests, "to be oriented as researchers or theorists means that we do not separate theory from life, the public from the private. We are not simply being pedagogues here and researchers there -- we are researchers oriented to the world in a pedagogic way" (van Manen, 1988, p. 450). What are the pedagogical questions I have lived with? Throughout my thesis work I have struggled with formulating the "elusive research question". It somehow seemed limiting. "The essence of the question says Gadamer (1975), is the opening up and keeping open of possibilities" (cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 43).

> But we can only do this if we can keep ourselves open in such a way that in this abiding concern of our questioning we find ourselves interested (inter-esse, to be or stand in the midst of something) in that which makes the question possible in the first place. To truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being. (van Manen, 1990, p. 43)

As I read these words it strikes me that behind my struggle in formulating my research question was a tacit understanding that the "stuff" with which I was dealing did not lend itself easily to abstract theoretical propositions or established concepts. Mine was a questioning governed not purely by reason. It was not a detached, impersonal, objective questioning. Instead it emerged from "the heart of my existence, from the center of my

being." It was a questioning, a wondering that was deeply felt. There was no linear or hierarchical progression to the living out of my questions. They were shaped by the "validating circle of inquiry....An inquiry that is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience -- is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 27).

As my understanding of the nature of "researching lived experience" developed, I began to see that because this thesis had extended over several years, I have learned from the "interruptions" to which Bateson refers. These interruptions echoed through my experience, always weaving lessons into the weft. An interruption, as defined in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, is "a break in upon some action, process or condition so as to cause it to cease; it is a hindrance of the course or continuance of something; a breach of continuity in time; a stoppage" (p. 1137). This definition affirms the traditional view of interruption as negative, as a hindrance. How many times have I felt exasperated at yet another interruption? How many times have I said to my child, "Don't interrupt me, I am busy"? Interruptions are seen as distractions from the important work, from the continuity. And yet, what has been the continuity and what has been the interruption in my experience, I ask. As I read on, I find another way to think about interruptions. "Interruption: the formation or existence of a gap or void interval" (Shorter Oxford Dictionary, p.1137).

Wendel Berry, in writing about the creative fidelity to form in poetry and marriage begins, I believe, to get at this notion of interruption, or "impasse", as central to the form in a poem. As Berry expresses it:

> Properly used, a verse form like a marriage creates impasses,
> which the will and present understanding can solve only
> arbitrarily and superficially. These halts and difficulties do not
> ask for immediate remedy; we fail them by making emergencies

of them. They ask, rather, for patience, forbearance, inspiration -
- the gifts and graces of time, circumstance, and faith. They are,
perhaps, the true occasions of the poem; occasions for surpassing
what we know or have reason to expect. They are points of
growth, like the axils of leaves. (Berry, 1983, p. 205)

To see these interruptions or impasses as necessary to the growth and
form of my coming-to-know is helpful. Perhaps it is only in these spaces
created by every "interruption", every "impasse," that I could see "the pattern,
the theme half remembered, half foreseen" (Woolf, 1965, p. 269). It is in this
space that I can see "the gifts and graces of time" (Berry, 1963, p. 205). I can see
how the response, the attention I gave to the others in my life, did not get in
the way of my writing but rather enriched it as the circle of my experience and
inquiry widened. These "interruptions" were shaped into transitions as
thread after thread was picked up and woven into my understanding of my
experience. Instead of seeing the hours I spent reading my students' journals
as an "interruption", I saw how they deepened my understanding about
teaching, about women and teaching; the time and care I spent responding to
their writing became a way of learning about the importance of attentive
love, of really listening to people and offering a response of possibility; and
the constant "interruptions" of motherhood became "the still point" (Eliot,
1935, p. 191) of my work for they reminded me daily why it was so important
to find my own voice as a teacher, as a woman, as a mother.

As I write my way into a deeper understanding of my experience and
the experience of others, the challenge, it seems, is to not let "language fail
me" as it has so many women. In order to "truthfully record my experience,"
this text must show, not merely tell, the living out of these questions, the
living out of the dialogue between self and other. The language must "sing
the world", the text must embody Heidegger's notion that we are always on

our way to understanding. My words must somehow capture these experiences as they have been lived.

It seems to me that story-telling offers this possibility, to embody the lived-through. Eudora Welty says:

> Writing a story is one way of discovering *sequence* in experience, of stumbling upon cause and effect in the happenings of a writer's own life....Connections slowly emerge. Like distant landmarks you are approaching, cause and effect begin to align themselves, draw closer together. Experiences too indefinite of outline in themselves to be recognized for themselves connect and are identified as a larger shape. And suddenly a light is thrown back, as when your train makes a curve, showing that there has been a mountain of meaning rising behind you on the way you've come, is rising there still, proven now through retrospect. (Welty, 1984, p. 90)

The resonance of story as a way to articulate this lived experience, however, runs deeper than merely providing "form". Jerome Bruner suggests that there are two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience: the paradigmatic mode and the narrative mode. The paradigmatic, which in my experience represents the traditional academic mode, "seeks to transcend the particular by higher and higher reaching for abstraction, and in the end disclaims in principle any explanatory value at all where the particular is concerned" (Bruner, 1986, p. 13). The narrative mode, on the other hand, "deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place" (Bruner, 1986, pp. 16, 17). Stories, as James Joyce writes, are "epiphanies of the ordinary" (cited in Bruner, 1986, p. 13).

Richard Rorty characterizes "the mainstream of Anglo-American philosophy" as preoccupied with the epistemological question of "how to know truth" and contrasts this with "the broader question of how we come to

endow experience with meaning" (cited in Bruner, 1986, p. 12). This is the question that preoccupies the poet and the storyteller. "If we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives" (Bettelheim, 1977, p. 3). Narrative becomes, then, a way of making meaning, a way of knowing and understanding our world. We come to understand ourselves through our stories. To be a person is not only to have a story and to know that story, it is also to have a story to tell.

One of the most striking facts about most lives, says Bateson, is the recurrence of threads of continuity, the re-echoing of earlier themes. As I look to my journey for these themes, these threads of continuity, I ask: *What are the questions I have lived with? What are the questions that have come from the center of my being, the questions that go to the heart of my existence? What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? What does it mean to be a teacher -- a teacher of teachers and of children? What does it mean to be a woman who teaches children -- to be a mother who teaches teachers?* These are the questions that are at the heart of my existence. These are the questions that are at the heart of this study.

Dawn points, and another day
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides. I am here
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.
(T.S. Eliot, 1963, p. 197)

CHAPTER 2

THE BEGINNING: AN INITIATION

<u>Beginnings</u>

This beginning came as an opportunity to teach a Designs for Learning:
Language Arts course to student teachers in the Professional Development
Program at Simon Fraser University. In preparation for this course I began
reading the theoretical literature on language learning, in particular the work
of James Britton, Lev Vygotsky, Gordon Wells and Anne Berthoff, all of
whom speak of the power of language to generate meanings: meanings that
are dynamic, dialectical and dependent on context and perspective. This
literature speaks to the connection between thought and language, suggesting
that when people write about new information and ideas, in addition to
reading, talking and listening, their learning and understanding is deepened
(Britton, 1975). Lev Vygotsky explores this notion of how we use language to
express and modify our thinking. This he describes as a recursive interaction:

> The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a
> continual movement back and forth from thought to word and
> from word to thought. Thought is not merely expressed in
> words: it comes into existence through them.
> (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 125)

As we draw our underlying thoughts and feelings into conscious awareness
by tying them to our language, we can potentially bring about the elaboration

and interrelation of previously unconnected ideas. Writing, as one mode of representing experience, can then be a powerful heuristic. It can help us to both muddy the waters and clear them up again by creating distance between ourselves and the experience in which we are immersed. It enables us to formulate a commentary upon our experiences so that we can return to them and assess them, thus enhancing our ability to make sense of our world.

I was searching for a meaningful assignment for my students in this course, one that would generate meaning and ground those meanings in context and perspective. Berthoff's concept of the dialectical notebook or double-entry journal captured my attention as a possibility for my students to make sense of their experiences with children. The essential point of the double-entry journal, in Berthoff's view, is that meaning is being made from the first: as one lives, experiences, thinks, talks, reads, writes. In whatever is being lived through, the individual is interpreting and composing: he or she is making meaning. She describes the dialectical notebook in this way:

> What makes this notebook different from most, perhaps, is the notion of the double-entry: on the right side reading notes, direct quotations, observational notes, fragments, lists, images -- verbal and visual -- are recorded: on the other (facing) side, notes about those notes, summaries, formulations, editorial suggestions, revisions, comment on comment are written. The reason for the double-entry format is that it provides a way for the student to conduct that continuing audit of meaning that is at the heart of learning to read and write critically. The facing pages are in dialogue with one another. (Berthoff, 1981, p. 43)

The double-entry journal, as Berthoff suggests, facilitated the dialectic:

> the back and forth movement between the concrete, the observable and the reflective, the more abstract. This constant movement between the two was concretized through the double-entry: the two pages facing one another were in constant dialogue. (Berthoff, 1981, p. 45)

This idea of the double-entry journal facilitating the dialectic intrigued me. It connected with readings I was doing as part of my graduate work in the area of "theory/practice". As a result of these readings I had become interested in the notion as put forward by Richard McKeon (1952) of theory/practice as a dialectic. According to McKeon, theory and practice are inseparable; indeed, he suggests practice is theory in action. This dynamic view of theory and practice made sense to me. It fit with my own experience as a teacher. Theory was not something I gave any real conscious thought to in my own practice, rather it was embedded in action, in the day to day particularities of the classroom, of my interactions with children. As I considered possible assignments for the students I was about to teach, I saw Berthoff's double-entry journal as a means of engaging students in this "dialectic". It could, I thought, provide an opportunity for the students to make sense of the theory of language learning in light of their own practice.

The purpose of the double-entry journal assignment as I presented it to my students was:

> to provide you with the means to begin to reflect on and make
> sense of the readings, the concepts, the principles, the processes,
> the ideas, the strategies, etc. that are presented throughout the
> course; and to enable you to begin to examine your beliefs, to
> question your assumptions regarding learning and teaching
> language in light of your experience of teaching.

Working through such a journal would, I thought, help the students keep track of the development of their ideas throughout the course as well as provide a means of monitoring their work in progress -- to provide what Richards calls an "ongoing audit of meaning" (cited in Berthoff, 1981, p. 42).

The forty-two participants in this course were student teachers who were in the second semester of their three semester teacher education

program at Simon Fraser University. All had successfully completed their initial semester which was offered as an integrated program aimed at developing the "students' knowledge and skills in both the theory and practice of teaching" (Professional Development Program Handbook, 1989). In this semester they had experienced alternating blocks of classroom teaching and on-campus instruction designed to introduce them to the basic curriculum and methodology appropriate for the age/grade level which they expected to teach. After completing their second semester of coursework, of which my course was a part, these students would move into their third and final teaching semester. This would be a full semester of classroom experience in which they were expected to "demonstrate their competency as a classroom teacher before certification was granted" (Professional Development Program Handbook, 1989). This was the common background each student teacher brought to my Designs for Learning: Language Arts course.

As I reconstruct my experience of that summer, my first memory is not about their journal writing, but of the students themselves. I see their faces in front of me: Debbie, who called me last week to discuss a project she was working on for the Ministry; Grant, who has since taken one other course with me and will this year be taking one of our student teachers into his classroom; Laureen, who has left teaching because she could not find a space for her particular kind of voice; and Linda, whom I saw last year at an inservice I was doing and who, in our conversation, reminded me of the sense of community in the class that summer. Other names, other faces, come readily to mind. I am struck by how easily they come. I think of Don as I re-read his first comment in his journal: "I am not sure why you are asking us to do this, it seems like a lot or work to me, a lot of writing for me and I am

not a very good writer. I know I am not going to like this assignment at all."
Don articulated what I am sure many other students felt, for as I write this, I remember staring out at the sea of faces and seeing the look of panic as I spoke about the journal. It is the same look of panic I see now whenever I first say that writing in a journal will be the central focus of my course. It is a panic that somehow I understand.

During that summer I read journal after journal and through their writing I found a window into the students' thinking. As I read I became increasingly excited and intrigued, for I was seeing the theory, what had for me been only words at the beginning of the course, come to life. I saw Berthoff's view of the composing process as one in which everything happens at once: forming/thinking/writing. I began to see writing as she had described it, as a "nonlinear, dialectical process in which the writer continually circles back, reviewing and rewriting" (Berthoff, 1981, p. 44).

The journal enabled the students to keep track of the development of their thoughts and ideas. It provided a means of representing their ideas so they could return and assess them, question them, hold them up for scrutiny. This looking and looking again became the *sine qua non* of their inquiry. And it was through this looking and looking again that the students made sense of the theory of language learning in light of their classroom experience. They grounded their response to the theoretical readings in the context and through the perspective of their first teaching practicum:

> I think back to what I was doing in my practicum with my
> students' spelling. As I read Lucy Calkins work on emergent
> spelling I wonder how much more my students may have
> written if I had not insisted on correct spelling first time around.

And in anticipation of their next and final teaching practicum in the fall:

When I move into my next practicum I am going to try and not focus on the spelling as much, to let the students write and get their ideas down on paper first without worrying about whether the word is spelled correctly or not. It will be interesting for me to see if there is a difference.

I saw reflected in my students' journals Vygotsky's notion of "inner speech" (Vygotsky, 1962). Vygotsky suggests that in infancy, children take over external speech from those about them by discovering the value of talking to themselves about what they are doing. "Speech for oneself" is, he believes, a form which is at first spoken aloud but eventually used silently. It is as though, in developing inner speech, children were building a bridge between external, communicative language on the one hand and thought on the other. Thus, in Vygotsky's words, "inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings: it is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing fluttering between word and thought, the two more or less stable, more or less firmly delineated components of verbal thought" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 89). Inner speech then becomes a regulatory process that provides a means of sorting one's thoughts about the world. In their journals the students were engaged in this meaning-making through the writing down of their "speech for oneself". As one student teacher expressed in her reflections on the work of Gordon Wells in his book The Meaning Makers:

> So what does this mean for me now? Partly I guess it means that I need to look more at how I listen to and encourage my students to share who they are. Rather than concentrating on the tricks of the trade (the method) I want to look more at the reasons for the methods -- the children. It means taking time to listen to their stories as they come in to start their day, taking time to ask and find out what is important to them, taking time to listen to them more. Again, this is easy to say or write -- but perhaps not as easy to do. I need to be conscious of it and think of ways to make the belief practical; ways of setting aside time for what I know is important.

At the same time the students also entered into a dialogue with me as their course instructor. At the time I didn't realize the importance of my responses to their writing, at least not at a level I could articulate. I spent a great deal of time and gave a great deal of thought and care to my responses. My commitment to this practice did not come from any theoretical text espousing the importance of responding in this way, rather it was a felt, intuited response. I look back to my response to Don and his anxiety about writing:

> Yes, I know writing is hard and a lot of work for me too, and yet if we are asking our children to write then I think we too should really understand how tough it can be. This understanding I believe can only come from experiencing it ourselves. In getting started I would encourage you to write down whatever comes into your head in response to your reading, discussions in class, something I say in my writing to you. Try not to think it over in your head too much at first, don't worry about my or anybody else's response to start with. Just try and get whatever these first thoughts are down on paper.

For many of the students their struggle with the journal came, like Don's, in the form of the writing itself. My role then became one of encouraging them to write down their thinking in whatever form it came to them, to write down this "speech for oneself". I could sense that their confidence in themselves as writers was tentative, vulnerable even, so my responses were affirming, encouraging them to keep going.

This writing for one's self must be, according to James Britton (1975), the first stage in any worthwhile writing. Through their study on the development of writing abilities, Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod and Rosen (1975) examined the writer's sense of audience and then developed a scheme of audience categories under the broad divisions of "self, teacher, wider audience and unknown audience" (p. 117). It is their discussion of "self" and

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"teachers" that furthered my understanding of the double-entry journal. Britton et al. describe the category of "self" as "writing from one's own point of view without considering the intelligibility to others of that point of view; a written form of speech for oneself" (Britton et al., 1975, p. 121).

Their writing was for themselves, yet they were also writing for an audience: me in my role as teacher of the course. While Britton et al. examined different pupil/teacher relationships, it was their discussion of one particular interpretation of this relationship that captured my interest. In their description of the "child to trusted adult" relationship, they articulate what I seemed to have known intuitively about my responses to my students writing. They compare this relationship to the relationship between mother and child as the child is learning to speak. They suggest:

> Only a mother understands the egocentric speech of the infant and clearly the talking relationship with the mother is the general incentive that makes the infant talk. We transfer this to writing that can only go on because there is this teacher, this particular human being, who will understand what it is you are trying to say. It is writing that accepts an invitation because it comes from this particular person in whom there is confidence. (Britton et al., 1975, p. 118)

Through my responses to their work, the students came to believe in my commitment to "understand what it was they were trying to say" and this engendered a certain confidence, a certain trust. As one student said: "I trust that you will be able to make sense out of this babbling."

Britton et al. continue by saying that "because writing is a way of committing oneself and because it is at first a difficult process, young children may rely upon the trusted adult reader in even the simplest piece of work" (p.119). Once again their description of the relationship between the young writer and trusted adult fit my context. Writing was a difficult process for

many of these students. They relied upon my support, the trusted adult reader:

> This seems so ridiculous. What you are asking me to do is so easy, to write down what I think about chapter seven in Wells' book, but this still seems hard for me to do, your words of encouragement seem so important. Is this how it is for children too?

Britton et al. further suggest, "the fact that this particular adult wants to hear anything you have to say may operate as a strong incentive and a liberator, so that children who haven't written begin to do so simply because they now feel free to say what really matters" (p. 121). Or, as Alice wrote:

> It has been important for me to experience this freedom,
> knowing that my thoughts, however scattered they may be,
> will be really read and not be scoffed at.

While encouraging students to say what really matters for themselves is a necessary beginning, it also becomes important for students to examine what really matters to others -- to broaden their perspective and to learn from the experience of others. The double-entry journal provided the students with the means to do this as they reflected on the thoughts of the others in the literature of language acquisition:

> I had a totally different understanding of oral language before I began this reading. I was thinking primarily of group discussions. I was not thinking of tradition, I never realized that of course preserving knowledge in an oral culture would require different skills and also that many of those skills are the same or similar to skills possessed by young primary children. Not only do these suggestions present wonderful opportunities for exploring stories but also they are something important and meaningful to do before everyone can read and write. And perhaps more important, by talking about them the children are then able to think about them in ways that weren't possible before, including all their understandings of good and bad, power and weakness.

The journal provided the forum. However, through its use I have come to understand the significance of the role of "trusted adult" in the process. I think of a group of students who did not believe or trust their own words, the words of the self. In one way or another they were always deferring to the words of others in their writing. They had learned to paraphrase the words of others. Mary wrote:

> As Wells would say, this child is learning to make meaning through stories. He is bringing his own prior experience to the text, using this experience to negotiate understanding.

My response was one of encouraging them to speak in their own voices to their own experiences:

> Can you tell me more about what led you to this observation? What did he (the child) actually say or do that helped you to see what was happening? What was your response, how did you guide him through this?

> Once spoken, their own words, their own thoughts, were guarded, cautious and tentative. My role then was one of continuing to link what they were saying about these others back to their own experience, by asking how does this fit with your own experience as a student, as a teacher, as a parent, and thus helping them to use this experience to come to new insights and understandings.

There was also another group of students who had a great deal to say about themselves and their experiences. Often their writing took the form of diary-like entries describing a particular event or experience. For some, these entries tended to stay on the surface:

> I have been wondering how I could give the kids a choice in the morning time after opening and calendar. If I was free to circulate during the morning time I could perhaps have a better feel for what the kids could be doing then. I would like to set up some kind of a mailbox system for messages.

My response with these students was to encourage a deeper analysis, often connecting their thoughts to the thinking of others through the literature we were reading:

> Your idea of circulating during the morning to get a feel for things makes good sense and really fits with the whole notion of child watching that we have been discussing in class. I am sure it will give you some insights as to how you might provide more choice for your students. You might want to refer to Lucy Calkins and her ideas on the importance of choice.

The role of the teacher, then, is critical. "The dialogue journal works," according to Jana Staton, "only if the teacher is committed and fully engaged, for it is the teacher's responses which create the motivation and provide the models of thought and reflection, of unpredictability and honesty, which students need" (cited in Fulwiler, 1987, p. 49). In the words of Debbie:

> I am beginning to see how necessary it is to acknowledge my own experience as a teacher and student. My experience has taught me a lot about what should and should not happen in classrooms. It has been your constant nudging that has done this for me.

My role was, I believe, to use Vygotsky's term, a role of "lending consciousness" to my students -- lending consciousness to those learners and enabling them to perform in this relationship tasks they could not achieve if left to themselves. Vygotsky suggests that learners must "borrow" the knowledge and consciousness of the tutor, the teacher, or a competent peer to enter a language. This opens up for the learner the "zone of proximal development". "Human learning," Vygotsky says, "presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). The zone of proximal development

is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Thus the notion of a zone of proximal development enables us to propound a new formula, namely that the only good learning is that which is in advance of development. (Vygotsky, 1978, p 86)

Jerome Bruner, in his essay "The Inspiration of Vygotsky", asks "How can the competent adult "lend" consciousness to a child who does not "have" it on his own?" As I ponder this question, I think back to my own recent experiences as a graduate student when the teachers or "competent peers" were in possession of knowledge that I was not. How was I encouraged to "borrow" this knowledge to enter the discourse? Or perhaps the question is not *how* but, *was* I encouraged to "borrow" this knowledge, for as I write this, a very strong memory returns to me.

As a Master's student I had enrolled in a doctoral symposium to learn more about the great thinkers, the great professors of educational thought. I wanted to be able to write with the clarity, the assurance, the articulateness of these great writers. I was determined to learn to play the conceptual ballet of these philosophers. In class, I spoke very little, feeling I was not yet ready to speak with this new language. I remember very clearly, however, one occasion when I did speak and, as I revisit that incident with the lens of experience, I realize this speaking out was the unarticulated knowing trying to find voice. "And what are the qualities of a good teacher?" our professor asked. The responses were called out. "Knowledge of content; expertise in subject matter; strong theoretical background; educated in the forms of knowledge." I listened and thought of my own experience as a "good teacher" and with "good teachers," and while I could agree that this knowledge they were speaking to was important, there was also something missing. I knew I

had to speak and yet the inner dialogue in my head was so strong I was sure everyone seated around this table could hear me groping for language, for the words to say what I knew. I asked "What about caring? It seems to me if we're talking about good teaching that caring and a teacher who cares, *that*, is what is important." There was a pause. "Of course," said one person in the group. "I don't think it's central," said another. "Well," said a voice, "I don't know about the rest of you, but I can certainly say those kind of teachers never taught me anything. They were not demanding or rigorous enough. i could do anything I wanted with them. It was all soft, fuzzy warm. There was no structure, no substance. I could wrap them around my finger. In my view that's not a teacher you learn anything from." I had no response. These words silenced me. I retreated back to my safe place of not speaking, for this, I thought, was indeed a demonstration that I was not yet ready to join, in Virginia Woolf's words, this "procession of the sons of educated men" (Woolf, 1938, p. 62).

As I reflect back on this incident I ask myself how my experience would have been different if, when I had spoken, the response had been one of trying to understand -- a response that opened to the zone of proximal development. What if, rather than hearing assertions that said "I know more than you do; aren't I the knowledgeable one," I had heard questions asking for further elaboration, or for an example from my own experience. Or what if I had been guided in the direction of another philosopher, someone who had grappled with the very issue I had raised, someone like Nel Noddings, Madeline Grumet, Carol Gilligan, Sara Ruddick, Mary Belenky or Adrienne Rich, someone from whom I could "borrow consciousness"? How would this kind of a response have helped me on my return home? These have become only rhetorical questions as they relate to my experience. However,

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these questions help me to understand the experiences of my students as they heard my response to their writing, a response of possibility, a response that was ever "loaning consciousness".

Bruner ponders the question of what it is that makes possible this implanting of vicarious consciousness in the child by his adult tutor, by suggesting that "it is as if there were a kind of scaffolding erected by his adult tutor" (Bruner, 1986, p. 76). While nowhere in Vygotsky's writings is there any concrete spelling out of what is meant by such scaffolding, Bruner himself begins to articulate this notion based on his own empirical research.

It is, once again, studies of the interactions between mother and child that resonate with my own intuitive understanding of the nature of this relationship. Bruner suggests that in these studies "one durable regularity" is revealed. "It is the mother who establishes little formats or rituals in which language is used. It was she who controlled the focus of attention" (Bruner, 1986, p. 74). He uses the example of a mother reading a book to her child, where the mother phrases questions to her child in a regular sequence. It is through this sequence that Bruner believes a "scaffold" for teaching reference is provided. At the start, the infant may understand little. The child's response to the query may then develop and take the form of a babble. And once that occurs, the mother will thereafter insist on some response in that slot of the scaffold. Once the child alters a babble to word-length vocalizations, she will again raise the ante and not accept a babble, but only the shorter version. She remains forever on the growing edge of the child's competence.

The double-entry journal, I believe, provided the means for this scaffolding to be developed. It opened up the dialogue between a self and an other. It afforded the students the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the

others they were encountering through their readings, through discussions with peers in class. The "focus of attention" was mediated by me through the variety of literature I asked the students to read and respond to. In addition to their ongoing responses to these readings, I would often begin our classes with an excerpt from an article, a text, a conversation, and ask the students to write or discuss their responses:

> After you have read "Teaching Reading to Teach Writing"
> reflect on these questions in your double-entry journal. How
> does your experience fit with what Murray is suggesting here?
> How, in your view, can the ideas he puts forward be translated
> into practice? How can we help students to be more effective
> readers? What implications does this have for your role in the
> reading conference?

As the students wrote down their reflections and responses to these questions they came to understand the self in relation, particularly, to a deeper understanding of what they felt and believed in relation to the others they were encountering. As Wendy put it:

> Reading works by Wells, Booth and Calkins, for example, are
> enjoyable and provide assurance that I am heading in a positive
> direction in my work with children in the classroom. Other
> authors we have read and discussed can be challenging. It is
> with some of the work of authors such as Aoki, Egan and
> Clandinin that I have struggled, trying to understand my work
> in relation to their ideas, asking myself questions that have
> challenged some of my own ways of thinking.

It was through their writing that this dialogue between themselves and others was concretized. It was through their writing that they committed themselves to this ongoing conversation. As Jana Staton discovered in her research on dialogue journals, "a dialogue journal involves an implicit commitment of self, an engagement with the other" (cited in Fulwiler, 1987, p. 47).

As I reflect on Bruner and his insight into the interactions between mother and child, I come to a deeper understanding of myself and my role as "trusted adult" with my students. I revisit my responses with this new insight: as the relationship with each student developed, I too would "raise the ante," asking for further clarification, asking how this particular author's views fit with their own thinking about teaching, what insights had they gained from their own observations of the children, etc. It was through these questions, through, in the words of one student, "my constant nudging" that I was developing a scaffold for teaching reference. I was coaching this dialogue between self and other, thinking along with the students, providing another voice, "remaining forever on the growing edge of the child's competence." For instance, my response to Laureen's journal entry when she was questioning her role as teacher in a student-centered classroom:

> This is an issue I too have been grappling with, what is the role of the teacher in a more child-centered classroom. I would agree with you that the term facilitator is so very overused right now and while it creates a picture, it doesn't begin to get at the complexity of our work. It seemed to me you were beginning to get beneath the surface of this term when you were discussing the integration and planning of learning experiences, the development of concepts. I would encourage you to explore this further. You might want to reread Egan's work on teaching as storytelling. I could also put you in touch with a teacher who has used this kind of model in her own planning.

In my role as "trusted adult" I believe I was attempting to educate what Mead refers to as the "internalized other". "Our work is," Mead suggests, "to help students internalize a generalized other. They must learn to carry out a procedure of self-editing, to internalize their audience" (cited in Britton et al., 1975, p. 69). My questions, my constant nudging, helped the students to internalize their audience. These questions were in some respects fairly predictable, moving them back and forth between their own experience and

the experience of others: How does this fit with your own experience as a teacher, as a student, as a parent? How do your experiences fit with those ideas put forward by Wells or Vygotsky etc.? How might this influence your classroom practice, your work with children? When asked once by a student if they were meant to respond to all of the questions I asked, my reply was, no, it was not necessary, the questions were meant as a frame, a "scaffold" for their thinking and writing. And over time, for many of these students these questions did exactly that. As Katherine wrote:

> I find I am asking myself questions you might ask of me as I am writing. I keep asking myself how what I am saying fits with this or that article we have read or how I experienced this issue as a learner. I seem to go back and forth between my experience and the texts I have read.

As writers, they began to do what Mead suggested is necessary for all thinking, "to be able to call out in himself the responses which his gestures evoke from others" (cited in Britton et al., 1975, p. 68). The writer begins, Mead explains, by being able to internalize individuals. In this instance the individual, the voice they were internalizing, was me through my responses to their writing. "It is like you are sitting beside me, asking me questions as I write." This then leads to an "internalization of a generalized other who speaks for society at large" (cited in Britton et al., 1975, p. 69). For these students this society at large was represented by the others they encountered in their readings, in classroom conversations, in staffroom discussions and how these others thought about their work with children. As Mary wrote in her journal, connecting her readings from the course with her experience listening and talking with teachers in the school setting:

> As I think about Wells' and Rosen's thinking on the importance of story I am struck by how much their ideas sound like the ideas I heard at the primary meeting in our school last week. As the

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teachers talked about sharing time in the morning, I heard in their discussion of the children bringing their stories from home into the classroom, the words of Wells and Rosen.

And she goes on to say:

> I had never really thought of stories in this way, to see stories as an avenue for children to make meaning, to make sense of the events of their lives, of their days at school providing a new way for me think about this. Perhaps as I begin to use this form in my classroom, I will be able to reach children in a way I have not before.

As they wrote their own thoughts and responses to the ideas of these others, the words of the others, their thinking, became integrated into their own:

> It is hard for me to tell anymore whether these are my words or the words of Lucy Calkins. It is like our ideas have become one.

It was through these conversations between self and other that these novice teachers were drawn into "the wider surround" (Grumet, 1987). As they reflected on their own thoughts, their own experiences in light of those of others, they began to move toward a vision of what education might be. Elizabeth's journal entry reflects this vision:

> I wish to awaken the student inside the person. I hope to assist children in becoming questioning beings. I see the classroom then as a place for interpretation. The classroom experience should provide opportunity for the reflective action, the right of self-expression, the creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in the society of the classroom, their world.

I reflect back to the look of panic I saw when I first asked my students to write in a journal. It is a panic I recognized from my own experience as a panic brought on by fear of what is not known and fear that I will have nothing to say. But it is also, I believe, fear of the critical other, fear of revealing the self to that other, a fear of how the other may respond.

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Therefore, the other must, I believe, accept the responsibility for responding as the "trusted adult". The tone of that response cannot be one that delivers knowledge through hierarchies, from those who know to those who do not know, after all, my own experience had told me that for many this only leads to silence. It must be a response that carries with it a tone that, like the relationship between mother and child, embodies a desire to understand what it is the self is trying to say. It must be a response that opens to the "zone of proximal development," the "growing edge of competence". And yet, it must also be a response that draws the student out of the self to examine the insights, the ideas and understandings of others.

As I reflect back on this beginning, this time of exploration within the broader context of my experience, I listen to the unarticulated knowing finding its voice. As I speak of the students' writing in their double-entry journals and the care I gave in my response to their work, as I hear my words about the trusted adult relationship, about trying to understand what it was the students were trying to say, and offering a response of possibility, I now see that it was in my relationships with these students that my sense of being, the ground on which I stood, held steady. I listen to my voice as I speak of the mother/child relationship, being "forever on the growing edge of the child's competence" and in doing so I hear the questions that have echoed through my experience: *What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? What does it mean to be a teacher -- a teacher of teachers and of children? What does it mean to be a woman who teaches children -- to be a mother who teaches teachers?*

In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
(T.S. Eliot, 1969, p. 201)

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORATIONS: CREATING DISTANCE

Beginnings

It seems somewhat ironic to me that this chapter feels so much "the way in which I am not." This irony comes from knowing, at least from where I now stand, that if all of the interruptions had not come my way, this chapter would represent my thesis. It speaks of a time in my journey when I moved away from the beginning awareness of home that had come through in my relationships with the students I taught and into a more distanced exploration. It was a time when I embraced the other, the voice of authority on teaching, on teacher education and research. I tried on the language, the thinking of "experts", in order to make sense of my experience and the experience of the student teachers whom I taught. Trying to make sense through their eyes, through their frameworks of understanding -- led me through "the way in which I was not".

After my experience working with the double-entry journal in my course, I became interested in exploring its use in more depth. I did not have a clearly articulated research question, but my intent was to follow the group of student teachers whom I taught in my course into their final thirteen-week teaching practicum. I was interested in seeing how the journal might serve as a tool to facilitate the students' reflection on their classroom practice and help them make sense of the relationship between theory and practice. The

double-entry journal became both a vehicle for the students' reflections and a source of "data" for my study.

Simon Fraser University's Professional Development Program has as one of its overarching aims, "the development of autonomous professionals who are able to articulate and justify the reasons underlying their practice" (Dawson & Leyland, 1989, p. 3). There is, therefore, a good deal of emphasis placed on developing the student teachers' reflection-on-action. Support for this notion of reflection-on-action is provided by much of the recent writing in the field of teacher education (Schön, 1983, 1987; Shulman, 1987; Grimmet, Riecken, MacKinnon & Erikson, 1987; Clift, Houston & Pugach, 1990; Newman, 1991). As Schön says:

> our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action
> and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems
> right to say that our knowing is in our action. (p. 49)

Several of the elements in the design of the student teachers' professional year were aimed at providing a medium for them to reflect on and understand the knowing in their day-to-day actions: seminars; formal and informal support groups; the clinical supervision model, to name but a few. It seemed to me that the double-entry journal might support this process of reflection-on-action.

As part of my review of the literature on teacher education, I came upon the work of Freema Elbaz (1981, 1983) and Jean Clandinin (1986, 1989). After reading their work, in particular their conceptualization and discussion of teachers' "personal practical knowledge", my insight into my own practice and the practice of others took on new meaning. The studies by Elbaz and Clandinin give rise to a view of teachers as professionals who actively use knowledge to shape their work situation and guide their teaching practice.

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Their work provided me with an awareness of how teachers use this "personal, practical" knowledge in personally meaningful ways to order and understand the world of the classroom. This knowledge, they suggest, is practical, experiential, and shaped by a teacher's purposes and values. Elbaz believes that "the predominant conception of knowledge as empirical and analytical tends to place a relatively low value on experiential knowledge; thus teachers themselves may be unaware of the value of their own knowledge" (Elbaz, 1981, p. 49).

This assumption certainly seems consistent with my experience. In my own teacher education experience there was little or no encouragement to see myself as an originator of knowledge. I had always assumed that knowledge just was -- given and unquestionable. A particular body of knowledge was transmitted from the "experts" at the university, and my role was to receive this knowledge and apply it to my practice in the classroom. To think of myself as holding and constructing knowledge was a new way to reflect on my classroom practice. As a teacher, I had knowledge of classroom practices and I could conceptualize curriculum content. However, it was the "personal, practical" dimension of my teaching practice that was difficult to apprehend. It was the work of Elbaz and Clandinin that gave me a place from which to begin to think about my own "personal, practical knowledge". Elbaz suggests that this knowledge is:

> not merely a set of theoretical concepts and models; rather it encompasses every dimension of understanding by which a person organizes and interprets his or her experience. It is a knowledge embodied in and manifested through practices, routines, spatial orderings and aesthetic dimensions of experience. There is a practical aspect to the teacher's knowledge: teachers have knowledge, derived from practice, of instructional routines, classroom management, student needs and the like. There is a personal aspect; i.e., teachers have self

knowledge and they work toward personally meaningful goals
in their teaching, and finally there is an interaction aspect, which
refers to the fact that teacher's knowledge is based on and shaped
by a variety of interactions with others in their environment:
teachers, students, administrators, all part of the social ethos.
(Elbaz, 1981, p. 47)

As I read their work, I began to see how, like the teachers described in

their studies, my intuitive decisions as a teacher were actually deeply rooted

in a knowledge base. And yet, this knowledge base extended far beyond

knowledge of what to teach, of how to teach and of when to teach. It was a

knowledge that emerged from my own experience as a teacher, from myself-

in-relation with the children I taught, the colleagues and parents I worked

with, the theorists I read, and from the sense I made of these experiences in

the ongoing world of the classroom. The work of Elbaz and Clandinin

acknowledges that the experience of being a teacher extends well beyond the

classroom context. Indeed, the perceptions, beliefs and values that inform

good teaching do not necessarily derive from the schooling context at all,

even though they are certainly related to it. They are rooted in our personal

history, in our recollections of our own childhood, in our hopes and concerns

for the children with whom we now find ourselves living alongside.

As I think about my relationships with the children I have taught,

about my understandings of how to teach, of how to respond to my students'

thinking, their questions, I realize that much of what I now know has come

through my experiences as a mother. It was through my relationship with

my own child that I came to know, at a deeply felt level, what an adult-child

relationship ought to be. I now understand that it was through my sense of

this relationship that I imagined a way to be with those children whom I

taught, and yet this understanding that now seems so evident was not always

known. The insights I gained from my reading of Elbaz and Clandinin and

their conception of "personal, practical knowledge" helped me on my journey for they opened a window into my own experience provoking me to ask myself: *What are the connections? How do I bring my sense of myself as a mother into my work as a teacher? as a teacher of children but also as a teacher of teachers?*

Explorations: Widening the Circle of Inquiry

Elbaz and Clandinin's notion of "personal, practical knowledge" made sense to me in light of my recent experience reading and responding to student teachers' double-entry journals. In their writing, the students were building on their diverse experiences, both personal and professional, to come to a deeper understanding of their experiences in the classroom:

> For me, this really challenges the idea of purely experiential learning -- on its own -- as an isolated phenomenon. It's all very well to create masses of experiences for children, but unless they are given opportunities to reflect upon, make sense of, and articulate their reactions to the experience, it will have relatively little effect on their education. Children need to have ownership over what they experience. They need to be debriefed -- to figure out what is important for them. (Laureen)

Through my responses they were linking these insights to "past experience and to ongoing practical expressions" as they were lived out in the world of the classroom. Typical of my responses was my reply to Laureen:

> Yes, for children, for all of us, to make sense of their experiences, to figure out what is important is at the heart of our work and yet I wonder who does the "debriefing" and is this "debriefing" always necessary. Is it always necessary to articulate the meaning you have made from an experience? Can you think of times in your own experience as a child or even now when you have been through an experience and on your own came to a deeper understanding of that experience and how did you do that? And have you been through an experience that needed no articulation, no words to express the learning that took place?

And if so, how do we create this kind of experience for the children in our classrooms?

In her discussion of "personal, practical knowledge", Clandinin suggests that teachers should be equipped with an awareness of the nature of the knowledge that shapes and guides their classroom practice. They should come to understand how they use this knowledge and how they might extend it to further their own judgment, thus clearly grounding their role as "autonomous knowledgeable decision makers in their classrooms" (Clandinin, 1986, p. 174). Once again, it seemed to me that the double-entry journal may serve as a valuable process to assist these student teachers in coming to this awareness and understanding. It may serve to extend these understandings in light of the theory from the methods courses they had just completed. My prior experience with the journals offered support for this hypothesis. The process of writing down their responses to the theoretical readings in light of their own personal knowledge and experiences had, for many of the students, helped to clarify their beliefs about teaching. It seemed to me that by documenting what happens in their classrooms, especially when the practice itself includes thinking about their thinking, as seems to be the case with the double-entry journal, these student teachers could develop insight into the "personal practical knowledge" that shapes their classroom practice.

The Inquiry

With these thoughts as a beginning, I asked a group of fourteen student teachers to continue using the double-entry journal through their final teaching practicum. These student teachers were part of a larger Early Childhood Education module of twenty-eight students, all of whom were

keeping some form of a journal as a requirement for their practicum experience. For the purposes of this study, however, I followed only the fourteen students who had taken my Designs for Learning: Language Arts course. At this point, I stepped back from my close involvement with these students and was no longer involved in any supervision or evaluation of their work. These were the tasks of the two faculty associates and the faculty member assigned to their student group. I adopted the more distanced stance of researcher, reading the student teachers' journals twice over the three month semester and collecting them for analysis at the end of their practicum. Unlike my own course, I did not respond to their writing in depth but gave a brief summary comment back to them after each reading. At this point in my work, I was still deferring to much of the positivist thinking, which assumes that "the inquirer will have no effect on the phenomenon being studied and that the phenomenon will have no effect on the inquirer" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). I was therefore concerned that there was already too much of me in this study and I did not want to complicate this even further by giving in-depth responses to their work.

The readings I had been doing to gain insight into methods of research had been focussed in the area of qualitative research. Qualitative research seeks understanding or <u>verstehen</u> rather than questing for validation of <u>a priori</u> hypotheses. It was this paradigm that fit most strongly with my own thinking about the nature of research. Qualitative methodology assumes the stance that in order to develop this <u>verstehen,</u> the beginning point of the research must be the experience of the persons being studied. Douglas (1976) makes the point that in everyday life the most important test of truth is direct experience:

First, we use direct experience of things. "Seeing is believing." "Experience is the best teacher." People sum it up in many ways even in everyday abstractions. Most importantly, they use it all the time, commonly without saying anything about it. Direct experience seems to be the most pervasive, fundamental test of truth. (cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 191)

With this point of view in mind, I saw my task as one of observing the experience of the participants of my study, the student teachers. It was the thinking of Guba & Lincoln in particular, that provided support for my research stance as one of participant observer:

The basic methodological arguments for observation may be summarized as these: observation (particularly participant observation) maximizes the inquirer's ability to grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviors, customs and the like; observation (particularly participant observation) allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment; observation (particularly participant observation) provides the inquirer with access to the emotional reactions of the group introspectively -- that is, in a real sense *it permits the observer to use himself as a data source* [emphasis mine] and observation (particularly participant observation) allows the observer to build on tacit knowledge, both his own and that of members of the group. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 193)

I was not, however, at this point in my journey acknowledging in any real way, myself as a "data source". I saw my role as one in which I strove to know the participants more fully in order to understand their experiences from their point of view (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Indeed, I now understand, "knowing the participants", "understanding their experiences from their point of view" was at the very heart of my work. As I revisit my summary comments to these students, I now realize that despite my concern that there was already "too much of me in this study", there was a strong commitment to maintain the connection, to continue the relationships I had built with these students.

It was a delight to read your journal, Laureen, to see how you were making sense of the "theory" we worked with this past summer in your own personal way. As I read how you are implementing a writer's workshop in your classroom and then see you working your thinking about this process through in your journal, it becomes very clear to me how valuable writing becomes as a way to make sense of our experience. The issue of control you speak of is one that many have struggled with; you may want to return to Lucy Calkins to get some insight as to how to work through this...your observations into how your own present experience as a student helps you to see through the "eyes" of your students are insightful. I experienced this sense this past summer when I was teaching and also being a student, I felt, as do you, that I was living the challenges of learning and that helped me to better understand your situations. This notion of "teacher as learner" is one that is tossed around a lot. What do you think is the reality of this in the long-term? What can we do to ensure that we continue to live that passion for learning, continue to see the students' concerns from their perspective? Another theme I saw emerging in your writing was the "safe environment" in which you are learning. There is, you say, lots of room to try out new ideas and to make mistakes with your learning. You speak about how the connection with your school associate makes you feel safe. What does that say to you about your work as teacher in the classroom with children?

As I read my response to Laureen's journal, I begin to see the connections. I begin to observe myself. I see in my words my commitment to maintain my relationship with Laureen, building on the work we had done together in the summer, sharing my own personal experiences, delighting in her development as a teacher. It was here, in my relationship with Laureen, and the other students, that I lived *with* my condition as a woman and mother in the world that lay seemingly outside my relation with my child.

The Context of Inquiry

I was very much a part of the culture of the participants -- these student teachers -- the culture of the Professional Development Program. During the

time I was working on my own study I was also involved in research assistant work for the director of this program. The Early Childhood Education module, from which the fourteen students I was following in my own study came, was one of the four "cohort groups" I was investigating as part of my research assistant work. These student "cohort groups", as are all student groups in the faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, were led by a faculty member and two faculty associates. [Faculty associates are practising teachers who are seconded from local school districts to supervise student teachers.] My role as research assistant was to interview all members of the instructional team of these four "cohort groups" as well as a random sampling of students twice over the semester, once earlier on in the term and then again, closer to the end of their practicum. Therefore, this research entailed interviews with several of the same student teachers and their instructors who were involved in my own study.

In addition to this research assistant work, I also taught several workshops on language learning for this and several other groups of students. I was both professionally and socially involved with the faculty associates who led this particular student group as I, too, had held the position of faculty associate. I was immersed in the daily comings and goings of the student teachers, faculty associates and faculty members, and in the social interactions, the climate and ethos of their world. I was living "the dynamic tension" between the separate stance of the observer and the connected, "subjective" stance of a participant, being "neither one entirely" (Wilson, 1977, p. 250). Living in this way afforded me many opportunities for formal and informal interactions which shaped my understandings about this particular study, but also about my own work, my own living. As anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson says:

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those resonances between the personal and the professional are the source of both insight and error. You avoid mistakes and distortions not so much by trying to build a wall between the observer and the observed as by observing the observer -- observing yourself -- as well, and bringing the personal issues into consciousness. (cited in Belenky et al., 1986, p. 226)

My role as interpreter of the students' journals was informed by these experiences in teaching and teacher education and by my theoretical readings in the field of teacher education and language learning. My eventual analysis of their journals derived meaning from my living in all of these other contexts. Even when I was not formally collecting or analyzing data through interviews, through the student teachers' journals, or writing in my field notes, I was always generating data. As I watched, as I listened, as I read, I was always asking myself: What was this experience like for these student teachers, for these faculty associates? Just as there is an interplay between an individual's biography and interpretive framework, so too is a researcher's orientation to investigation related to her frame of reference. Indeed, I have now come to see that biography cannot be separated out. The research is embodied in a person. It is connected with the individual's past, present and future. The researcher brings herself quite full of history and preoccupations and dreams and hopes. It is through REsearching the experience of others that one can, as Bateson suggests, "observe yourself -- bringing the personal issues into consciousness" (cited in Belenky et al., 1986, p. 226). As I reflected on the nature of the experience of others, as novice teachers and as teacher educators, I came to a deeper understanding of my own experience. In the words of Reinharz, "I can never truly know the experience of others, but I can know my own and I can approximate theirs by entering their world" (cited in Belenky et al., 1986, p. 113).

Explorations: Some Initial Observations

The student teachers gave me their journals at the end of the semester. They had completed their professional teaching year and my work was just beginning. I first read the journals to get a sense of them as a whole. I then followed up with a second reading to begin to determine common thematic elements. As I began the process of identifying themes the "mud" seemed less dense. Barrit et al. (1979) suggest that there is no formula that we know to identify themes "objectively." We read the written accounts and allow them to speak to us. This is precisely what I did. I searched the text of the journals for phrases, descriptions and themes which seemed to capture their situation as experienced. This process of sense-making led me to some initial observations.

Building on my previous experience with the double-entry journal, I began by looking at themes in the students' writing that spoke to the process of writing their thoughts down, asking myself if this process had helped them to reflect on their practice and to articulate connections between theory and their classroom practice. Once again, I saw what I had observed in my own course the previous summer, that writing down their thoughts in their journals had provided a forum for the student teachers to reflect on their own understanding, for thinking through dialogue with themselves, for engaging in dialogue with Mead's "internalized other" (Britton et al., 1975, p. 62). As Gail writes:

> I am less confident now than I was last summer. How do previews, unit plans evolve into "children learning"? The teacher obviously has ideas of where the class should go and the vehicles to be used in getting them there. Is being flexible enough -- having a certain theme in mind, introducing it, going

through the initial activities, but if the children go off on a tangent (eg. circus theme -- teacher plans to focus on circus animals -- kids take off on clowns, tricks, etc.) should you go with them rather than restricting them to stay within your plan?

This writing had fostered the habit of questioning and of re-evaluating assumptions -- a habit which is at the heart of reflection-on-action:

> Why is it so hard for us to be non-judgmental? Why do I often feel the urge to evaluate a student's work and label it on a scale from one to ten? Why do I want to say that this is good and this is not. I find it so hard sometimes to restrain myself. I need to slow my responses down, think about the child, so I do not respond automatically with judgement. (Alice)

These student teachers were each, in the words of Shulman, "not only capable of practicing and understanding his or her craft but of explaining why, of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others" (Shulman, 1986, p. 13). As suggested in Catherine's journal entry in response to a conversation with a parent:

> Today I had a parent questioning my use of discussion after the children had read a story and before they answered the comprehension questions. She seemed quite upset and didn't see how this was helping any of the children. Afterwards I explained to her that by talking through their ideas, by sharing their thoughts together, the children's understanding of the story was significantly increased because their initial ideas had been broadened by hearing the views of others. I used an example from my own experience to explain how often through informal discussions, a new thought on the topic is triggered. I think she went away feeling like her concern had been addressed.

Not only were they able to articulate the assumptions underlying their practice, but they clearly saw the importance of being able to do so.

> You can just go out and teach great, what's the point. There's got to be some reason, some overall picture of what's going on. And, as professionals, we need to be able to communicate this overall picture. (Mary Alice)

As the student teachers responded to an excerpt from a text, an observation from their practice in the classroom, or as they read a response to their own writing, they learned to interpret and articulate connections between new information and what they already knew. They were engaged in the process of constructing, or reconstructing, knowledge:

> As I read the questions that Mary (faculty associate) has written in response to my writing, I realize how much they have helped my growth. And as I see that, I wonder again about the connection that has with the children's learning processes. I think a lot of teaching has to do with being able to see what the important questions are; being able to ask questions that are appropriate and will provoke the learner to reach her own conclusions. As I look back on some of the writing conferences I've had with some of the kids, I can remember some questions absolutely falling flat. Even though I was asking a question, it was more to affirm my perceptions of the child's writing than to really ask for their perceptions of their writing. So that tells me something about what kind of questions work. Hopefully I'll be better able to tell what questions will guide and encourage the learner's thinking. (Sharon)

Through this process they developed an awareness of the broad range of knowledge that guided their classroom practice. They began to see how this knowledge was, as Clandinin suggests, "embodied in a person and connected with the individual's past, present and future" (Clandinin, 1986, p. 379). Fran's response to one of the children in her class was connected to her own past, to her insight into her own childhood:

> Why should she speak? Nobody expects her to. She doesn't answer at roll call, but I know I have heard her speaking out with her friends on the playground. When she is put on the spot in the classroom she won't say a word, or if she does, it is a one word answer, very quietly spoken when coaxed out of her. How I know what this feels like, as a child, even now sometimes, it was so hard for me to talk, to risk speaking in front of others. It was only with my friends and usually when I was playing or involved in some kind of a game that I would speak more easily, more naturally. What does this say about her, about

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me? What can I do to support her, to make her feel better about herself as part of the group, to take the risk to speak?

These students had come to see their classroom practice as theory in action:

When I read Egan's book last semester I was quite excited by the possibilities. Kids love stories, I love stories, everyone loves stories. What I have learned is that stories are much bigger than just a way to motivate, to interest kids. It is the big issues that the story deals with, the problem of the story. Children are concerned about big issues. They come up in any discussion and cannot be pushed under the carpet. By allowing children to work through the problems with the character of the story, to talk and think about it together, it gives them more understanding and a chance of working on a solution. When these big issues are met in life they are not as frightening because they have been met before. (Gail)

These initial observations suggested that the student teachers were able to articulate why they do what they do in their classrooms. Their insights, interestingly enough, were often thoughts that ran contrary to the established norm. According to Giroux and Popkewitz, the effect of the university on teaching perspectives is essentially conservative. "By focussing on how things were to be done without asking students to consider what was to be done and why, the university initiated discussions which tended to encourage acquiescence and conformity to existing school routines" (cited in Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981, p. 9). The words of these student teachers suggest that their experiences had been different. They had examined the whys of their own and others' teaching practices:

Everywhere around me teachers are talking about and using themes. I'm not sure of people's rationale for this, for instance, doing an apple theme because teachers have all of the curriculum goals related to them in a fancy format to be displayed at a curriculum night. Does this warrant doing a theme on apples for three weeks? When does the theme end up being more important than the children's learning?

In their writing the student teachers were making sense of theory to which they had been introduced through their coursework and seminars in light of their classroom practice:

> I am trying to translate the underlying theory of emergent writing process into practice. I encouraged the children to write about their picture and I made it clear that spelling didn't matter, a few children were hesitant but the majority printed letters. As the enthused children printed freely, the apprehensive children became interested also and began to write. It really allowed room for the children's ideas. It all became real for me.

What, then, were the conditions that facilitated this reflection, I asked? What was it that helped them to develop this insight into their work as classroom teachers? Was it the journal? Was it the writing down, concretizing their thoughts, ideas and beliefs? Had the format of the double-entry journal created the scaffold for this dialogue between theory and practice? Perhaps all of the above since there were so many influences that I could not even begin to separate them out. It seemed impossible to attribute the students' ability to reflect and to make connections between theory and practice solely on the basis of work in the journal. Indeed, the journals provide only one perspective, and while they opened a window into these student teachers' experiences, it seemed important to recognize that the students' "account of their worlds will never exactly coincide with the experience themselves, as the individuals decide what events and feelings to include and to disregard in their account" (Grumet, 1987). The task, it seemed, was to somehow broaden my observations and look inside the students' experience as a whole, attempting to gain insight into their experience-as-lived.

Widening the Circle of Inquiry: An Interruption

The journals were, for my study, the central source of data. However, in what seemed like an interruption from my thesis, it was my work as research assistant for the Professional Development Program that widened the circle of inquiry, broadened my lens by going beyond the journals, and thus provided deeper insights into the nature of the experience for the student teachers in my study.

The Professional Development Program at Simon Fraser University was restructured in terms of the time students spent between the school practicum experience and the university seminar experience. The intent of this new structure was to weave the two experiences together in such a way that the students' understanding of the relationship between theory and practice would be deepened.

Four student "cohort groups", each comprised of twenty-eight student teachers led by an instructional team of two faculty associates and a faculty member, were involved in this restructuring. (As previously mentioned, the fourteen student teachers in my study were drawn from one of these student "cohort groups" of twenty-eight students.) This team had the responsibility of working collaboratively in the development and delivery of a program for their student group. There was a good deal of autonomy in the design and implementation of this program and therefore the philosophical orientation of each team reflected the interests and experience of the team as well as the team's own particular interpretation of the theory/practice relationship. This research was designed to examine the extent to which the student teachers in four different "cohort groups" were able to articulate their understandings of the relationship between theory and practice and to begin to examine the conditions that facilitated this particular understanding.

My task was then to interview all members of the instructional team for each of the four 'cohort groups' and a random sample of student teachers, with equal representation across the four groups, twice over the semester. The data from these interviews was analyzed in terms of differing relationships between theory and practice.

McKeon (1952) suggests there are four possible relationships that have characterized historically the way theory and practice have been viewed: logistic, operational, problematic and dialectic. In the logistic, operational and problematic conceptions, the world of theory and practice is seen as distinct, whereas in the dialectical conception, theory and practice are inseparable. Theory, according to the dialectic mode, is much less fixed and is assumed to change in order to resolve the tension between theory and practice. Practice is theory in action.

In the summary of my work I suggested that the student teachers from student "cohort group A", which represented the Early Childhood Education module and the module that students in my study were part of, held a dialectical view of the relationship between theory and practice: seeing theory and practice as inseparable.

Returning to my own study, I wondered if it was this dialectical view of theory and practice that facilitated the student teachers' reflection-on-action and their ability to articulate the connections between the theories they were studying and their practicum experience. Certainly it would seem that this perspective is best suited to the ongoing dialogue between theory and practice, as the task of the dialectic, by its very nature, is to resolve oppositions. This explanation however, was on its own too simplistic and raised the question: Why is a dialectic view of theory and practice desirable?

For some insights into this question, I looked to my own experience. I had always felt that my own teacher education was not "practical". This is a view shared, I would suggest, by many teachers. It was a necessary step to certification, but not an experience that I felt really helped to make sense of my work in the classroom. The theoretical literature we read seemed so disconnected from the experience of teaching that I often dismissed it. Like many student teachers I now listen to, it was the classroom experience, the practicum, where I felt the 'real stuff' was happening. This is where it seemed I was really learning, from my living with children. So I had left my own teacher education anxious to leave behind the world of theory and move forward into the practical realities of the classroom. I viewed my practice as quite distinct from theory. Practice was the proper domain of teachers; theory belonged to the experts at the university.

As I reflect back on this experience in light of my readings of Clandinin and Elbaz, I ask myself: What if my teacher education had created an awareness of the "personal, practical knowledge" that shaped my classroom practice? What if I had been encouraged to develop an understanding of myself as actively engaged in constructing knowledge rather than passively receiving it? What if I had been introduced to theorists who have made explicit their observations of children as the foundation for the conceptual framework of their work, thus connecting it to the world of the classroom? How would my experience have been different, I ask?

These are for me only rhetorical questions. And yet, reflecting on my own experience in this way helps me to understand why for these student teachers the dialectical view, which sees theory and practice not as distinct but rather as inseparable, was desirable. These student teachers did not dismiss theory. They saw theory and practice as necessarily related. They understood

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the importance of reading the work of others in order to gain insight and understanding into their own experience. In the words of one student:

> If the two are not integrated one does not have the opportunity to test the theories that have been presented at the same time. Practice, without the infusion of new theory, becomes stale. (Elizabeth)

If these understandings had been part of my own teacher education, I do not believe I would have dismissed that experience as not practical. Rather, I believe I would have, like these student teachers, left the university with a sense of how the work of others can inform and enrich my work in classroom.

The second component of my research assistant work was to examine the conditions that support the differing views of theory and practice. As before, this exploration began to shed some light on, and deepened my insight into, the experience of the students who were part of my study. "There were," I suggested in my summary, "two essential differences in the programs of student cohort group A which perhaps explain why the dialectical view of theory and practice was predominant in this module" (Dawson & Leyland, 1989, p. 17). First, the instructional teams worked collaboratively within a commonly understood conceptual framework over the three semesters. The student teachers' curriculum showed evidence of the varying perspectives of the team members. The interaction of all three perspectives could be seen, for example, by the manner in which the theory and practice of play was made an integral strand of the student teachers' program. The study of play that was a focus in this group represented the research interests of the faculty member, the practice of the faculty associates in their classrooms with young children, the theoretical readings discussing the importance of play in a child's development, and the student teachers' experiences with play in their

practicum settings. In this way, play as a theoretical construct was connected to play as a practice.

Second, there was continuity of the instructional team -- the two faculty associates and faculty member -- as well as continuity of the student group itself. This consistency seemed to have built a sense of trust between the students and their instructional team:

> There really was a strong trusting relationship that developed over the year, I really felt safe with Mary (faculty associate) and trusted that she was there to help and support me with my teaching. (Gail)

This trusting relationship meant that the faculty member and, in particular, the faculty associates in their supervision of the classroom experience, could, in the words of one faculty associate, "move into the role of critical questioner" at the onset of the student teacher's second and final teaching practicum. In this way, they "encouraged the students to examine and question the assumptions guiding their practice" (Dawson & Leyland, 1989, p. 18) in light of the theoretical constructs of their program. This facilitated a climate where theory and practice were in constant dialogue.

> It was her questions. In our conferences but also in her responses to my journal, she was always asking me to think about why this was important, asking me to think about what I had said or done in the classroom and how it related to my reading of Viviane Paley. How was I creating the kind of environment she spoke of in her book? What was my role as the teacher when children were at play? These questions pushed me. Sometimes it felt like too much to ask, but I think it really helped me to see other ways, other perspectives. After all, Viviane Paley has years of experience with children, years of observation. I can benefit and learn from her experience. (Elizabeth)

These two factors, continuity of instructional team and a coherent conceptual framework over the course of their three semester experience,

seemed important elements in developing the students' understandings of theory and practice as inseparable. And yet, as Eva suggests:

> I don't think you can say it's any one thing. Yes, the fact that we knew our faculty associates so well was critical as was the program design; however, it is more complex than just that. It's the impact of our school associate (sponsor teacher). It's the children that we work with, it's us too, trying to make sense of it all. They all work together.

In this way, the student teachers began to see their experiences with the university, represented for them by the faculty member and faculty associates with whom they worked, interwoven with their experiences with the teachers and children they worked alongside in the school.

These insights from my work as research assistant broadened my understanding of the experience of these student teachers. However, it also brought me closer to my own experience. While I was still, at this point, deferring to the voices of experts, trying to see the world of teacher education through their frameworks, I now realize that through this period of exploration a window was opened into my own world, into my own understanding. As I listened to these student teachers' understandings about the nature of the theory/practice relationship, I began to think about and question a framework that I had previously thought of as unquestionable. As I looked to the experiences of these student teachers and the conditions that supported a dialectic view of theory and practice, my understanding of language as a way to generate meaning, to know our world, was deepened and broadened. I heard in their voices what I seem to have known intuitively from my own experience -- the importance of community, of working with others to interpret and understand our experiences. It was through my observation of the experience of others that I began to give voice

to the unarticulated knowing, to my understanding of the centrality of relationship, to my understanding of myself-in-relation.

Revisiting the Students' Experience

As I continued to reconstruct the experiences of the fourteen student teachers in my study, I returned to their journals where the phrases "learning community," "support group" and "collaboration" were repeatedly mentioned. These phrases were also repeated many times in my field notes that documented my informal conversations with student teachers over the semester. Another connected group of phrases that emerged was "dialogue", "discussion", "sharing" and "teacher talk". This language was so familiar to me. It seemed that every piece of literature I had read in preparing my Designs for Learning: Language Arts course -- on the centrality of language to knowing and to the power of language to generate meanings -- had used the words "dialogue", "discussion", "talk" and "community". The connection was too strong to ignore.

As I revisited the journals, I began to see how "dialogue" had, for these student teachers, provided them with a process. It was this process of dialogue that was the thread that wove the strands of their experiences in the school and the university classroom, together with their own knowledge, understandings, beliefs and values.

> The talk was really important. I would often come up to the university for our days on campus somewhat resentful that I had to leave the classroom and yet once we all met all that resentment went away. To have the time to talk about our experiences with our friends was so important. It helped me to see that I was not alone in all that I was feeling. I learned so much from listening to the experiences, the disaster lessons and the great lessons of other students, it was so centering. We inevitably, sometimes through Darlene's questions, would discuss our experiences as they related to the work of the authors

we had been reading. That, too, was helpful. You sometimes forget to look back to those texts once you're in the classroom and yet they provide a lot of good things to think about. This time to get together and talk about all of this always sent me back to the classroom invigorated. (Wendy)

In his article "Teaching Alone, Learning Together," Shulman (1986) responds to his own question, "What then is knowledge?" by suggesting that "it is a process of continuous debate, dialogue, deliberation and reasoning" (p. 18). In this sense the student teachers were generating knowledge through their ongoing dialogue. The students saw their role not as one of "storing the information which the teacher considers to constitute true knowledge" (Freire, 1971, p. 63), but rather, as one student teacher puts it, one where "we're in there too, trying to make sense of it all". To approach knowing through dialogue is to acknowledge Polanyi's view that "knowledge is an activity which would be better described as a process of knowing" (Polanyi, 1969, p. 32). It assumes that knowing is a transactional process in which students are constantly thinking about and interpreting the meaning of their experience. It is through dialogue with themselves and with others that this meaning-making became, for these student teachers, an ongoing, articulated process exemplified by Laureen's journal entries:

> Knowing what I feel about how to be with my students is much less frustrating than trying to articulate, clearly to others, such developing beliefs. In our course this summer we talked about whole language and it feels to me that this view of learning fits with my beliefs, but I can't speak really clearly about what it means to me yet.

Later on in her journal:

> As my school associate gets ready for the whole language conference this Friday, it's been intriguing and challenging to listen to some of her frustrations and hopes as to what the conference will communicate about whole language. Talking with her this week has encouraged me to do some more thinking

about the elusive term "whole language". It always felt right to me and yet as I listen to Daphne, I realize I share some of her concerns about whole language being another "cure-all method", the latest, the greatest, etc. To Daphne, whole language is much more a way of life in the classroom, not so much a method but an attitude, an approach to children and to learning.

And still later in her journal, she continued to work out and to make sense of this notion of whole language:

> Although I've heard about these ideas in various theoretical settings, and have read a great deal in the area of whole language, they've taken on new meaning as I work with Daphne and watch how her beliefs are lived out in her classroom. Although there are definitely methods in her teaching (use of pocket chart, reading/writing conferences, story time, publishing, etc.) the thing that has impressed me most about being with Daphne has not been these methods, effective and valuable as they are. The impression she has made upon me as a beginning teacher has much more to do with the way she respects, loves, listens and brings out learning from the children. Her ability to hear her children -- to really know who they are and where they are -- and this gift of really knowing and respecting the children has much more to do with their whole development than any methods of whole language.

> Perhaps this is why the philosophy of whole language appealed to me so much when I first heard about it, when I began to read it. It was not so much the method, but the way to be with children that made sense to me. For me this issue of really listening to children is so important, it feels like it is a belief I have held for a long time, before I got into PDP. As I think about it, I have had lots of experience with being listened to and not listened to. I know how important it is.

And in her reflective summary of her journal at the end of her practicum Laureen says:

> Again when I look at my own learning process, I realize that I can and do challenge myself when I know that I will be accepted and loved no matter how much I blow it -- when I know that I am safe I can make mistakes and learn from them and go on from there. As I see this I realize that this is more and more what I want to be able to give the children I teach. If I respect them as learners, I have to respect their need to feel safe, to feel

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unconditionally loved and accepted so that they too can challenge themselves to take risks, to make mistakes, the knowing that they are safe to do so. I think that is what whole language is all about, I have learned that from watching Daphne, her unconditional love and positive regard for absolutely every child she comes in contact with. This is the kind of classroom I want, where children feel safe. It is the gift I want to be able to give.

This student teacher's journal entries speak to Clandinin's notion of image as a "kind of knowledge embodied in a person and connected with the individual's past, present and future" (Clandinin, 1985, p. 379). Drawing upon the earlier work of Elbaz (1983), who defined image as a brief, descriptive, and sometimes metaphoric statement which seems to capture some essential aspect of the teacher's sense of herself in the classroom, Clandinin extends the concept to include the teacher's actions, practices and "private experiences" that go beyond the merely spoken. In her journal entries, Laureen speaks of "really listening" to children, of "knowing and respecting" their voices. She works toward an image of the classroom as "a safe place for children to be". This image of her classroom, of her actions, practices and "private experiences" -- is embedded in her relationships with her children.

And for Laureen, this image of herself as teacher had been constructed through many different voices of dialogue: dialogue with herself -- her present, past and future; and dialogue with others -- her instructors, her supervising teachers, her students, the educational theorists she read.

One of the critical factors to the strength of this process of dialogue was, I believe, the "personal, practical knowledge" of the faculty associates. My insight into the work of these faculty associates came through my interviews with them as part of my research assistant work, and through my professional working relationship with them. In their work with children, these faculty

associates had moved away from a teacher- dominated classroom to a setting where children could create meaning for themselves. Their experiences in primary classrooms had taught them the value of students working together to interpret experience. These faculty associates saw that "in learning through talk -- as in learning to talk -- students are active constructors of their own knowledge. What they need is evidence, guidance and support" (Wells, 1986, p. 5). As one faculty associate suggests:

> Children come to us with such an incredible wealth of experiences. These experiences have shaped who they are, what they think and believe, and even the negative experiences can become important learning experiences. We have to insure there is time for this experience to be heard so we can all learn from them.

They brought this understanding to their work as faculty associates and provided a forum for the student teachers to build their own meaning from the context of their classroom practice. As teachers, they believed they had to trust each child's experience; as faculty associates, they believed they had to trust each student teacher's experience. They saw their role as one of mediating that experience by helping their student teachers to articulate and expand their knowledge, as suggested in this comment by one of the faculty associates:

> Mary (the other faculty associate) and I have provided the groundwork by giving the students an understanding of the theory that is certainly coloured by our own classroom experience. Our role from here is to help mediate that theory as the student teachers work in the classroom. But in the end, only the students can really make sense of it.

Observers of education have noted that reflection -- time to think and talk and learn from one another -- is rare for teachers. The "teacher talk" that was structured into this module's program was an attempt to counteract this:

Teacher talk is a process. It is an open-ended, flexible, individualized forum for reflection and dialogue. It provides its participants with a psychologically "safe", "non-evaluative" framework in which to think about, analyze and articulate their educational beliefs, understandings and practices. The focus of teacher talk is twofold: first, to engage participating teachers in systematic analysis of their purposes and intentions in teaching, their classroom practices, and their daily teaching experiences; second, to provide them with a mutual support and sharing of understandings, insights and ideas. (Zola, 1981, p. 143)

In the words of one student:

Teaching can be so lonely. You're in there with all those kids all day. It was so important to be able to meet with the others and talk about what I was doing and how I could do it better. (Karen)

The "personal, practical knowledge" held by these faculty associates supported the importance of establishing this community for children. Working with young children had taught them that education is an effect of community. As Jerome Bruner says:

I have come increasingly to recognize that most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. It is not just that the child must make his [sic] knowledge his [sic] own, but that he must make it his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture. It is this that leads me to emphasize not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing -- in a word, of joint culture creating as an object of schooling and as an appropriate step enroute to becoming a member of the adult society in which one lives out one's life. (Bruner, 1986, p. 27)

Bruner's notion of community was very predominant in the thinking of these faculty associates:

I worked with the student teachers in much the same way as I did with the children in my classroom, providing many opportunities to work together in small groups, to talk, and thus deepen their understandings of particular concepts or issues I presented to them.

Through their emphasis on building this community of learners, they created a group in which student teachers nurtured each other's thoughts to maturity. It provided a forum in which teacher and students collaborated in constructing new interpretations, new insights into their experience of teaching. In the words of one faculty associate:

> I am continually amazed at how much happens during our "teacher talk" time. This is where the students do a lot of their thinking out loud, trying to problem solve issues that are arising in their classrooms. They trust the others in the group to listen and try to help them....Our role during this time is really to listen, and to offer possible alternatives and I guess ultimately, to model in our own talk with the students the importance of listening. (Darlene)

Working together in this way -- sharing their questions and thinking on teaching -- helped to broaden the students' base for interpreting further experience.

> Hearing how others are struggling with translating the theory of emergent writing into practice helps me to understand it better; hearing how our faculty associate works with it in her classroom gives me some more ways of thinking about it. I guess there is no one way. We each have to interpret the theory in a way which makes sense to us in our classrooms.

Knowledge, then, becomes something people make as they work and write and discuss together. It is the result of a community making meaning of experience. This view of knowledge is, in some respects, similar to Freire's problem-posing model of teaching in which

> the educator's role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations, and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out, by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the educator. (Freire, 1978, p. 48)

In the words of one student teacher who understood "teaching cannot be done from the top down" and that giving back someone else's answer doesn't insure that learning has occurred "from the inside out":

> I have been doing most of the teaching, but the lessons are not mine. I am teaching someone else's lessons and that is the way it comes across. If I feel really uncomfortable with a particular lesson or idea my school associate will do it. It's not that I'm afraid to try. It's that I cannot see why it is important to do some things with children. I have to be able to see why this is important from my own experience.

This problem-posing extended to the faculty associates' work with the student teachers in their role as supervisors in the classroom. Once again, it was their understandings from their work with children at play that informed their interactions with student teachers. Both faculty associates used the work of Gordon Wells to gain insight into their classroom practice. Embedded in their dialogue with the student teachers was Wells' notion of "contingent responsiveness." "The adult's stance in this sort of talk is to discover the child's topic and purpose, and then make a contribution that will enable the child to extend and develop it" (Wells, 1986, p. 121). The faculty associates extended the students' understanding of their classroom practice by facilitating their reflection on their practice. As one student teacher put it:

> She [faculty associate] would listen to what I had to say and then ask me why I thought this and why I had done that. After a while I began to ask myself those same questions.

Through their "problem-posing" the faculty associates encouraged the student teachers to articulate the reasons underlying their practice:

> I can see that it is my faculty associate's questions that have helped my development as a decision maker. Sometimes she seemed relentless with her questions and yet I now see why she pushed me. I really had to think about what I was saying. A lot

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of teaching has to do with being able to see what the important questions are.

It was through listening to the stories of others that I recovered my own possibilities, for as I reconstructed these student teachers' experiences, I knew that they were leaving their professional teaching year with a confidence in their own voice as classroom teachers. Unlike my own, and I would suggest many other teachers' professional year, this program had created a space in which the student teachers had found words for their own understandings about teaching. Through dialogue, these student teachers had come to an awareness and understanding of the knowledge that shaped their classroom practice. It was language that allowed them, as Coleridge put it, "to know our knowledge" (cited in Berthoff, 1981, p. 40). As they reflected on these understandings, alone and together, they moved away from the view of themselves as passive transmitters of knowledge and toward a vision of teachers as active constructors of knowledge as it comes to be woven into the fabric of classroom experience.

Returning

What are the insights, the learnings in this period of exploration? What is the mountain of meaning that has been rising behind me on the way that I have come? Although this chapter, this experience of exploration felt like a journey into "the way in which I was not", it was a necessary part of my return home. It was through this experience that I was able to step back from my intimate interactions with students and to create some distance. It was through the observation of others, through entering their world, through "looking and looking again" at their experiences, that I have come to a deeper understanding of my self and my work. The distance, the space this work provided, separated me and ultimately united me more closely with my own

experience, and in this way strengthened that which held steady -- my sense of home.

As I reflect upon that aspect of my experience where I worked most intimately with the student teachers, teaching my Designs for Learning: Language Arts course and in light of my insights from observing the work of others, the student teachers and their faculty associates, I begin to see the connections. In Wells' concept of "contingent responsiveness" (embedded in the work of the faculty associates) there are echoes of Bruner's notion of "loaning consciousness" (embedded in my work): lending consciousness to those learners and enabling them to perform in this relationship tasks they could not achieve if left to themselves. These faculty associates entered into a dialogue with the students through their writing, but even more so through conversation, formally and informally, in the classroom and in their university seminars. In the same way, through the journal I entered into a dialogue with the students, and to use Freire's term, "offered [them] the instruments" to look and look again at their writing and their thinking about their work in the classroom.

I begin to see how the "problem posing" model used by these faculty associates, which understands that "teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out" (Freire, 1971, p. 62), was somewhat similar to my role of "trusted adult" in educating the "internalized other" -- "calling out in the student the responses which his gestures evoke in others" (cited in Britton et al., 1975, p. 68). I begin to see similarities in the ways these faculty associates and I brought our insights from our roles as teachers of young children to our roles as teachers of adults. In ways similar to mine, their prior experiences informed this new relation in which they now found themselves. These faculty associates were able to articulate this connection:

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I work hard at modelling for the student teachers the same kind of experience I would hope children would have. Working with the student teachers in much the same way I would with children, for example, the small group discussion through which they make meaning out of the articles we give them. This connects to my work with children. In my own classroom the children worked a great deal in small groups. Talk is an important vehicle for meaning-making in my classroom with children. I speak about this explicitly to the students, working to articulate the connections between my work with them and my work with children. (Mary)

I believe that for me, at least initially, this understanding was intuitive and more tacit. For me, this way of working, bringing my way of being-in-relation with children to my relationship with adults was not a theoretical concept or model to which I consciously made reference; rather it was experiential references, felt metaphors and embodied understandings (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As I listen to my voice speaking of my resolve to maintain the connection, to continue the relationship I had built with these students, as I speak of my commitment to understand the students' experiences from their points of view, I hear the questions I cannot seem to escape: *What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? What does it mean to be a teacher? a teacher of teachers and of children? What does it mean to be a woman who teaches children? to be a mother who teaches teachers?*

CHAPTER 4

EXPLORATIONS: WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF INQUIRY

Beginnings & Interruptions

The previous chapter represents the basis of a paper that I presented at an American Educational Research Association Annual Conference in the spring of 1989. Mine was one of three papers given by a group of colleagues from Simon Fraser University under the umbrella of "Bridging the Theory/Practice Gap". If another interruption had not come my way, I would have returned from this conference and, with some extension and modification, used this chapter as the framework for my thesis. It was as before, a seeming interruption, namely my interaction with another, that provoked me to yet again widen the circle of inquiry. Initially it was the discussants of our joint papers that provided the voice of the other and, with their words, their responses to my work, I was once again presented with an opportunity to "explore the creative potential of interrupted lives" (Bateson, 1989).

I remember all too vividly the feedback I received from the discussants. They asked: How did what I was saying really relate to bridging the gap between theory and practice? They were not sure what I was saying. In my work, they said, I used theory and knowledge interchangeably. What was I talking about? Was it theory or was it knowledge? It seemed I was not clear on the concepts. I had no response. Their words, as once the words of a fellow student had done, silenced me. I left the presentation thinking, once again, who was I was trying to fool? If I could not differentiate between knowledge and theory, clearly I did not belong here with these powerful thinkers, "these great professors of educational thought who are the models

for the public presentation of ideas" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988, p. 91). I was apparently not yet ready to "join their procession" (Woolf, 1986).

After our presentation it became evident that it was not only the discussants of our paper who thought I was not clear on the concepts, but also some of my colleagues. They said it was not knowledge I was talking about, but rather, the process of knowing. Knowing was the process and knowledge was the product written down. The implication of this discussion seemed to be that process was secondary in importance to product. Knowledge was written down "in textbooks", it was objective, it was rational, it was justified truth. It was here that I had my chance to respond. But who determines truth, I asked? Who determines what is important to know? Does what is written down in textbooks represent the only knowledge that is important to know? Is theory not knowledge -- knowledge of someone's experience? And are these notions of knowledge, of theory and truth not dependent on context, are they not embedded in the particular? I left the conference full of these questions: What is knowledge? What is theory? What is truth?

Upon my return I went to see my senior thesis supervisor convinced that I had missed something, wondering where I should go next, what expert I should consult to find the answer to these questions. His response, I now realize, was crucial to the understandings I have developed, for rather than sending me off to the library to review the literature more thoroughly, he asked me more about our presentation. He listened and really tried to understand what I was saying. My work, he said, had been put forward as a paper on theory/practice, and yet, was that really what I was speaking to? Did I need to rethink my questions? What did I want to find out? He then asked me about the structure of the presentation: Was there any opportunity for discussion with members of the audience? Were there many women in the

audience? Perhaps, he suggested, the response my paper received might have been different if there had been an opportunity to present these ideas in the exploratory way in which I was working them through, if there had been some opportunity for discussion about the very questions I was asking. He recommended a book by Kim Chernin he thought I might be interested in called <u>Reinventing Eve</u>.

> <u>Reinventing Eve</u> is a moving odyssey of self-discovery and an analysis of the forces that constrict women's lives. It is a study of how women can re-create a female psyche that will effectively challenge and transform traditional patriarchal culture. <u>Reinventing Eve</u> offers women a means of recreating their image, giving birth to a new sense of feminine power and possibility. (Chernin, 1987)

It was not so much the reading of this book, but rather the message he gave in recommending it, that brought with it new possibilities. The message seemed clear to me. Look to yourself, your own experience as a teacher, as a woman, to make sense of these questions. And, once again I found myself asking: *What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? to be a woman and a mother who also teaches teachers?*

The response of another member of my thesis committee was somewhat different, but carried with it much the same impact. Her response was one of confusion. She wasn't sure what I was trying to say. On the one hand, I had said that in my own classroom practice I gave little consideration to theory, yet on the other hand, I had spent most of my paper trying to justify the importance of it. If integrating theory and practice is a notion I give little or no attention to in my own work as a classroom teacher, then why was I assuming it is important for others to consider? These questions again put me back to my own experience. Rather than looking to my experience as somehow deficient, I was provoked into examining this issue from a different

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perspective, to ask why it was that I gave little thought, at least consciously, to the theory guiding my classroom practice. What does this say, not so much about me and my practice, but rather about the framework of theory and practice itself? Does this notion of theory on the one hand and practice on the other further teachers' real understanding of the world of the classroom, or does it get in the way by perpetuating the notion that these two can indeed be separate?

Explorations: Widening the Circle of Inquiry

During the time leading up to, and throughout my work on this presentation for AERA, I had been reading a great deal of feminist literature. It was an attempt to understand my work, my life as a woman, a way to make sense of the voicelessness I often felt in the world of the university. Up to this point I had not articulated the connection between this literature and my thesis work. It was these interactions with others: the respondents to my AERA paper, my colleagues, and the members of my thesis committee, and the questions these responses provoked that sent me back into this literature. It was in particular the work of Mary Belenky et al., Madeline Grumet, Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings and Sara Ruddick that resonated. These voices, theirs with mine, came together in such a way that I could no longer ignore the fact that all of the student teachers in my study were women. The faculty associates with whom they worked most closely were also women. Indeed, as I think of all of the students I have taught over these past seven years, they are almost exclusively women, not a surprising statistic given that "women represent the majority of all public school instructional personnel" (Grumet, 1988, xi). And while there were also several men who worked with me during this time, the common denominator was that they were all, women

and men, involved in the care of children or "maternal practice" (Ruddick, 1989).

I return to the student teachers' journals and I listen to the students' discussions of theory and practice:

> When I listened to her talk about her classroom [faculty associate], you could tell it came from years of experience in the classroom, but there was more to it than that. It was years of experience combined with years of thinking and reflecting on that experience. It was her own theory, not just theory from a textbook. (Sharon)

I listen again to their words about the centrality of dialogue;

> I think the experience of everyone sharing similar readings followed by discussing them really helped. In our discussions we were really able to talk about those in depth. Throughout the year we would return to them in our talk. As a result we could go in much deeper. This discussion really helped me to develop my own philosophy about teaching. (Wendy)

I hear their voices as they speak of the care these faculty associates brought to their work:

> You can tell she [faculty associate] really cares about each one of us, I feel so supported by her. Even when I've had a disaster lesson, she still finds a way to encourage me, to support me, and yet, it's not like she just makes me feel better by saying "it's ok". She helps me to really look at my lesson so I can be better next time. She wants me to get better, not just for her so she can pass me, but for myself and for the kids. (Gail)

And I witness the feeling that comes through in their language as they talk about the importance of relationships:

> One of the strongest components of the year was the networking with others. It was a very close group and the support of the group throughout the year was very powerful. It's hard today to say goodbye to these people who have become such close friends. (Mary Beth)

All of these comments took on a deeper meaning as I revisited the journals from my own study and the reports and field notes from my research assistant work through the lens of the feminist literature.

The feminist discussions of the theory of knowledge offer another interpretive lens for illuminating the questions of knowledge, theory and truth. In particular, the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986), in their book <u>Womens' Ways of Knowing</u>, stimulated my interest in ways of knowing and provided me with a framework to begin to think about these questions. They put forward a scheme of epistemological development in describing women's ways of knowing. Building on the earlier work of William Perry (1970), their ways of knowing scheme charts different frameworks for meaning-making that women use to organize their thinking about truth, knowledge, authority, and themselves as thinkers. The scheme centers on assumptions about the origins of knowledge. They reveal women's conceptions of these origins by asking such questions as: Does this person imagine truth and knowledge being passed down from one person to another?; or, does she think of intuition springing up from within?; or, are her conceptions of knowing not yet available for articulation?

They develop five categories to describe the epistemological perspectives held by the women they interviewed: silence -- where women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; received knowledge -- where women experience receiving knowledge from the all knowing external authorities but are not capable of creating knowledge of their own; subjective knowledge -- where truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private and subjectively known or intuited; procedural knowledge -- where women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge;

and constructed knowledge -- where women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing. This study settles on constructivism as the epistemology that celebrates the creativity and responsibility of the knower as well as the context and relations within which knowing takes place and comes from.

As I reflect back to my own experience as a student, I realize that I did not see myself as having any responsibility as a knower -- my role was more passive than active. My role was to receive knowledge. In Belenky's terms, I was a "received knower". How different my experience was when compared to the student teachers in my study. As I re-read their journals to gain insight into their relationships to knowledge, to understand more deeply their sense of themselves as knowers, I began to see how, for these women, knowledge was not passively received but was actively constructed. As suggested by Francine's journal entry:

> The term "search for meaning" is one that is attracting my attention a lot in my readings, but I am also hearing it in discussions. I can understand it in terms of scientific principles because I am a science major, but I am not sure what this means in the context of language arts. It is a term that seems to be used by teachers and in the literature quite often but I am going to need to think about this for myself.

And later in her journal she continues to build her knowledge of this notion of "search for meaning":

> As I have been reading aloud with my son over the past few weeks I am becoming aware of his "search for meaning" as he reads and as we discuss together what he is thinking about as he reads. I had never really thought about this "search for meaning" as it relates to reading. But children are always making their own sense out of a story. They identify with the characters in the stories, their problems, their victories, and they begin, or certainly my son does, to apply some of the meaning to

their own lives. This is an intriguing concept for me. I want to spend some time looking at this in my classroom, doing some observations and discussions with the children to see how they "search for meaning".

The women who were interviewed by Belenky and her colleagues spoke of weaving together the strands of rational and emotive thought, and of integrating objective and subjective knowing. Rather than extricating the self in the acquisition of knowledge, these student teachers used themselves similarly in rising to a new way of thinking. In the words of Mary Beth:

> I feel like there is not enough time to do everything I want to do with the children. There is so much I want to do, I left my course work this summer with so many thoughts on what I would do with writer's workshop, literature based reading, math manipulatives and I have done so much, the children are involved in many of these activities. And yet I feel as if the children are not having a good time and neither am I! Am I pushing myself and them too hard to do it all?

And later in her journal, she reflects back to herself, to her own way of being and how that influences her work with children:

> I think I am a fairly calm person. I like to take my time so that I can do things right. I don't like feeling rushed or pressured. When that happens I feel like my "intellectual space" has been invaded -- cut short. When I look at myself in the classroom these days, I don't think I am modelling that calmness, that spirit of gentleness. I am not being very gentle with myself or the children.

Mary Beth begins building an understanding of her work with children using her insights into herself:

> The more I think about myself and my need for time, to not feel rushed, for calmness, I realize that this is the case for many children, for all children, to have some of this time. They need it to explore, create, interpret. In our society of fast everything, it is healthy for children to learn what it means to take time, to persevere through something.

And eventually, she comes to a place where these insights are integrated into her work:

> It seems we are always complaining that there is not enough time to do everything. So how can we make the time we do have worthwhile? In deciding not to do everything and not to let time run our classroom, we free ourselves to use the time we choose to use, usefully -- to make the most of it. Rather than rushing our way through a sea of activities, we can take the time to make the experiences we choose full and rewarding.

This young woman, as did the women in Belenky's study, used herself -- her feelings, her insights, her hopes -- to come to a deeper understanding of her work with children.

Constructivist women, Belenky et al., suggest ,"become aware that questions and answers vary throughout history, across cultures, from discipline to discipline, and from individual to individual. They come to understand that the answers to all questions vary depending on the context in which they are asked and on the frame of reference of the person doing the asking" (Belenky et al., 1989, p. 138). As suggested by this student's journal entry after a parent evening:

> What an exhausting evening this has been. I didn't realize that parents' evenings were so draining, I thought we would say basically the same thing to each parent about our program in general and then speak more specifically to their own child. But it's not that easy, every parent has different questions about our program. Dustin's mom wanted to speak about the philosophy of the new primary program, Sarah's dad wanted to know when the children would be learning to write properly, Kim's mom wanted to know what we were doing to solve the problems on the playground. I guess their questions, their concerns, depend on who their child is, but also on who the parents are, what their experiences with school have been. So the questions are all different and responding to all these different perspectives is what is so exhausting!

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Constructivist knowers feel responsible for examining and evaluating the procedures and frameworks they and others bring to the meaning making process because they understand that context is a vital force in shaping what can be known.

> Working in her (sponsor teacher's) classroom has been
> challenging for me in this way. I came in with a very clear idea
> of what the language arts program would look like, how I would
> set up a literature based reading program, how I would
> encourage emergent writing and not worry about spelling, how I
> would set up a time for storying each day. I walked into a
> classroom with a teacher who used the basal readers, had regular
> printing lessons, spelling lists, and felt very strongly about the
> success of her program. It has taken a lot of discussion to come
> to a middle ground. We found it, and what I realize is that in
> that discussion, I had to take a strong look at my ideal program, I
> don't mean throw my ideals away, but really examine them in
> the context of this particular classroom, this particular school. I
> also had to take a close look at the teacher's program and what
> was successful for her, may or may not be for me, because I am
> coming at all of this from a very different perspective. But who
> is to say that one is all right and one all wrong, it depends on the
> person a lot.

Belenky et al., go on to say that women constructivists are challenged, not daunted, by contradiction. They show a high tolerance for ambiguity, often abandoning the either/or thinking. There were echoes of this thinking in these students' journal entries:

> It seems that now "whole language" is what is important,
> teachers who have been teaching for years are scrambling to
> learn more about it. But, I have learned a lot from one of these
> teachers about phonics, I have seen how important it is for some
> kids to learn language in this way. It's not that you throw out
> one for the other, it's not whole language or basal readers, it's
> both, both are important.

The work of Belenky et al., provided insight into my own questions about theory, truth and knowledge much as the thinking of Elbaz and Clandinin had done previously. The dynamic conception of knowledge that

sees knowledge not as some fixed and static thing, but as an activity negotiated within the context of practice, runs contrary to the conception that in my experience is more commonly held, that is, this notion that knowledge just is, both given and unquestionable. Certainly this was the impression that was created in my own education. Such a view, I now realize, was seriously misleading. In my attempt to become adept at playing the academic game of separate knowing, I denied the importance of my own personal history and experiences. To see that all knowledge is a construction and that truth is a matter of the context in which it is embedded is to greatly expand the possibilities of how to think about anything. Theories become not truth, but words for approximating experience.

What, then, does this say about the theory/practice framework that dominates the thinking of so many educational theorists? Can this framework possibly bring to our awareness the vast web of experiences and interactions that Elbaz and Clandinin speak of -- experiences that I knew from my own practice were central to the lifeworld of the classroom? The theory/practice framework perpetuates the notion that "thinking" and "doing" are separate, and yet when we begin to look at knowledge as constructed through experience, when we begin to understand that knowledge emerges from the particular, the day to day, how can thinking and doing be separate? How can my thinking about a child, about a student teacher, be separate from what I do and from how I respond to that child and to that student? This conception of what we're doing may not be articulated knowledge, and yet my own experience had taught me this knowledge is there. It is in the feel for the stuff with which we are dealing, of the teacher in interaction with students, colleagues, administrators and parents in the ongoing creation of the world of the classroom (Clandinin, 1986). It is a

knowledge embodied in and manifested through practices, routines, spatial orderings and aesthetic dimensions of experience (Clandinin, 1986).

When knowledge becomes more than merely a set of propositions and abstractions, and theories become not truth but words for approximating experience, it seems to me that teachers like myself can then begin to understand how knowledge is negotiated within the context of practice. From this beginning we can begin to articulate our own theories, our own understandings -- our own experience. This gives way to a theory of knowledge that is informed by experience and focuses on understanding rather than justification and verification. And it is from this knowledge of experience that, I believe, we can construct and re-construct new ways of thinking and being in our lived practices.

> The constructivist epistemology alone allows the real to be situated in the middle space. There, what we know is the symbolic expression of our action in the world, and that action requires feeling as well as thought, touch and sound and movement as well as the look. It provides the possibility that in the action and reflection of teachers and students the world that we live and know will change. (Grumet, 1988, p. 109)

As I read these student teachers' journals, trying to step into the students' frame of understanding, thinking along with them, I begin to recognize what my own history had denied. How, I ask, might my own relationship to knowledge, my understanding of myself as a knower, be different if I, too, had learned to question this either/or thinking -- if I had seen knowledge as a construction and truth as a matter of the context in which it is embedded, not something that resides in the mind of an expert? I look and look again to the experience of these student teachers so I might come to know my own.

Once constructivist knowers accept responsibility for evaluating and continually reevaluating their assumptions about knowledge, the attention they might once have awarded to the expert is transformed. As I re-read the students' journals I saw how these student teachers had begun to do just this. Catherine's response to a lecture by the faculty member assigned to their group shows her questioning the voice of the expert:

> While his ideas about play are interesting to me and provide another way to begin to look at it, I can't totally accept it, this analysis of play doesn't fit with my observations of children at play, there are other ways to look at it.

In this way, they moved beyond what Paulo Freire describes as "banking education, in which the teacher's role is to fill the students by making deposits of information which the teacher considers to constitute true knowledge" (Freire, 1971, p. 63). These students made their own meaning and they determined what constitutes true knowledge instead of relying solely on the interpretation of an "expert". Through dialogue with themselves and with others -- their instructors, their colleagues, the authors they read -- these student teachers discovered they had something to say. Their journals enabled them to trace long-term changes in their thinking -- an important exercise, I now understand, for seeing the power of one's mind unfold. As Eva puts it:

> As I reread my journal from the end of the course last semester and now this one, there is so much to say. First of all, I am so much more articulate, able to say what I want to say. I also notice how I am connecting so much of what I am reading. It all seems to be interrelated, I know what a difference the writing makes. I used to think the idea of journals was to record key ideas so that you would remember them. Now I realize that for me just the writing itself, the doing of it makes connections that would not otherwise happen. I still feel like Colleen the question girl -- more questions than answers, but the difference is that I understand why and I am not afraid to talk about it.

When they wrote in terms of their own reactions and responses, the student teachers learned that their knowledge was potentially as powerful as any theorist:

> As I re-read my journal I am surprised. I have learned so much. I sound so knowledgeable about observation of children. I am a bit startled, but my insights make as much sense as any author I have read. (Sharon)

This is not to suggest, say Belenky et al., that these women do not appreciate expertise. However, they believe that experts must reveal an appreciation for complexity and a sense of humility about their knowledge. The experts had to reveal that they listen to people and give equal weight to experience and abstractions. The faculty member who worked with this particular group of students brought with him, by the very nature of his position, the mantle of "expert". However, he seemed to fit the vision of an expert as articulated by the women interviewed by Belenky. He brought to this role an appreciation for complexity. In describing his work in the module, in particular his interactions with the faculty associates as the other two members of the students' instructional team, the faculty member says:

> What we're trying to do here is to help the students feel comfortable with the notion of debate. We would be misleading them if we gave them the impression that decision making for teachers was a cut and dried process...it's just not so. What we want to try and show them are three highly professional individuals with different points of view and how they can work and talk about teaching together. We all don't have to think the same way.

Embedded in his talk was a respect for the faculty associates with whom he worked, a respect for the knowledge and understandings they brought to the instructional team -- understandings that were rooted not in abstractions but rather in experience. Underlying the relationship in the instructional

team was, in the words of the faculty member, "a fierce intellectual loyalty to each other". This was a loyalty built on mutual respect for the divergent views that existed within the team. As one of the faculty associates suggests in this comment about their working relationship:

> While we didn't always agree with David nor he with us, there was strong mutual respect for our experiences: his in the world of academe, and ours in the classroom.

This is not to imply that the relationship was always smooth and conflict free:

> It was tough sometimes. I remember leaving some discussions wondering if we would ever bring a program together for the students. Our views on so many aspects of early childhood education were at opposite ends of the poles. His from a purely theoretical, abstract perspective and ours from a practical...no, it was more than just practical, it was theoretical too, but that theory had been tested in practice. And yet, within all this disagreement on issues we knew he respected our work in the classroom. He worked with us as colleagues and to use his words "honoured academic freedom". (Darlene)

There was a climate of ongoing debate and discussion created within the instructional team. Their dialogue, their thinking, however, was not composed in private. It was not hidden during planning time but rather openly discussed and debated in public with the student teachers in the group as they collectively tried to make sense out of their classroom practice. And this, I believe, had some far-reaching benefits for the student teachers, in terms of examining the assumptions behind their teaching practice.

> When he would talk about his ideas on play, some of them were in direct conflict with what our faculty associates have said, as well as with what I see happening in my practicum. And yet, it made me stop and think and question my own position so it deepened our own understanding of what we believed and wanted to do. (Mary Beth)

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It provided the students with an appreciation and understanding of the complexity of decision-making in the classroom and the importance of knowing why those decisions were being made.

> When our faculty associates presented their views which were often contrary to our faculty member, you listened. Even though they didn't have the Dr. in front of their name, you could tell it came from years of experience in the classroom. But it was more. It was years of experience combined with years of thinking about that experience. It was their own theory.
> (Laureen)

The notions of critical dialogue and debate are certainly not new concepts to the world of the university. In my experience, critical debate was the cornerstone of the learning environment. And yet my experience seems qualitatively different from these student teachers. In my own education I did not imagine myself engaging in this debate, for who, I thought, was I to argue with or question these powerful thinkers? I left my teacher education believing the power resided with the expert. I did not have a sense of the power of my own voice, my own thinking. Why the difference, I ask? What was it about these students' experiences that created this confidence in their own voices as novice classroom teachers? What helped them to see that their thinking was potentially as powerful as any theorist?

Certainly, the assumption that knowledge grows out of one's personal experience facilitated this understanding. However, I believe the voice of expertise they experienced was also a key. This voice taught them to appreciate complexity, to value the voice of experience and abstraction. As they listened to their teachers discuss and, perhaps even more importantly, change their thinking in a public forum, they learned "that their own ideas can be thoroughly reliable, that a theory is something that somebody thought up, and that's all a theory is. It's not this mysterious thing only Einstein

could figure out" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 215). Belenky et al., suggest that "so long as teachers hide the imperfect processes of their thinking, allowing their students to glimpse only the polished products, students will remain convinced that only Einstein -- or a professor -- could think up a theory" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 215). They further suggest that "women students need opportunities to watch women professors solve (and fail to solve) problems and male professors fail to solve (and succeed in solving) problems. They need teachers to think out loud with their students. They need models of thinking as a human, imperfect, and attainable activity" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 216). These student teachers experienced this model of thinking. They learned to "demythologize the expert" (Freire, 1971) and value their own voices of experience.

> Parenting is such a personal thing that as a teacher you would have to be very careful. I think listening would be a good place to start, this would give you an opportunity to receive extra information concerning the child and a chance to give the parent support. I know this goes against what our speaker said today, he spoke about having a clear agenda, items to be discussed with the parent, but having four children of my own gives me a lot of insight into being a parent. I know how hard most parents try and the sacrifices they make to try and ensure their child's success. As a parent I wouldn't appreciate going to a conference where the agenda was already complete. I would want to work with the teacher as a team where my say was of equal importance. (Francine)

Widening the Circle: Weaving Together the Experience of Self and Other

As I move into the final section of this chapter, revisiting the experience of the student teachers in my study through the feminist literature, I find it increasingly difficult to distance myself, to separate myself and my own experiences, from the experience of these others -- for in their

stories, I see my own story, what in history it had denied and the possibilities it now evoked.

> As we study the form of our own experience, not only are we searching for evidence of the external forces that have diminished us; we are also recovering our own possibilities. We work to remember, imagine and realize ways of knowing and being that can span the chasm presently separating our public and private worlds. (Grumet, 1988, xv.)

As I reconstruct the experience of others, I reconstruct my own, and in doing so I begin to see that which held steady. I see that my relationships with the student teachers whom I taught was grounded in an intuitive understanding of "real talk". It required an openness to difference, a commitment to listen. This way-of-being, my way-of-being in relation, was not yet articulated; I had not found the words to speak to this embodied knowing. It is through my insights into the experience of others that this knowing has found voice. It is the weaving together of these experiences -- the experience of self with the experiences of others -- that helps me to return home and "see that place for the first time" (Eliot, 1963, p. 222).

As I reflect on my own experience in light of the experience of these student teachers I ask: Whose voices are heard? Whose are silenced and why? What conditions must be present for students, who have so often felt silenced, to feel safe in dialogue? How might one ensure a place where each person can speak her own mind and heart?

In my experience as a student, these voices that were heard were the voices that spoke with "the clear, fluent assured articulation of thought displayed by the great professors who are the models for the public presentation of ideas" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988). There was little room for the voice of exploration and tentativeness. As I read the words of

Adrienne Rich, I cannot but recall my own experience as a student, "listening to a woman groping for language in which to express what is on her mind, sensing that the terms of academic discourse are not her language, trying to cut down her thought to the dimensions of a discourse not intended for her" (Rich, 1979, p. 243-244).

The work of sociolinguists McConnel-Ginet, Borker, and Furman (1980) suggests that women's talk is, in style, hesitant, qualified, question posing, and in content shows concern for the everyday, the practical and the interpersonal -- this kind of speech, this voice, does not command authority. Its very fragmentation denies certainty and the thoughts it offers are often not fully nor clearly worked out. And yet such exchange is frequently laden with meaning -- not the meaning of certainty, but of questioning. "The participants offer ideas before they are fully formed so that others can add to them and so that others will feel free to offer their own tentative conceptions" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 118). This differs dramatically from what is, in my experience, the more usual academic practice: to withhold ideas until they are complete and polished and clearly defensible.

Reflecting back to my experience with the double-entry journal, I now understand that what I was asking my students to do -- to write their tentative, exploratory thoughts down; to validate these thoughts by making them public; to use a personal voice; to place themselves in the middle of their writing and thinking -- was, in many ways, a revolutionary act. "Telling a woman's story from a woman's point of view" (Christ, 1980) is revolutionary in the sense that it represents a move away from the traditional academic voice. It is revolutionary in the sense that it was an attempt to discover a discourse that was "intended for her" (Rich, 1979), a discourse that was intended for teachers. As Belenky et al. suggest, "the

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pattern of discourse that women have developed, however, may best be considered as an appropriate response to women's work. The care of children, or maternal practice, gives rise to maternal thought and particular modes of relating to the world" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 189). As suggested in Wendy's journal entry:

> It's a personal theory, not one that is pulled out of one of the texts we have read, but one that comes from my own experience, I have learned a lot about teaching from being a mom, so it's not that what is in the text is theory and what I learned from being a mom is practice. I think that you could call what I know about kids from being a mom theory too. It's just a personal theory.

Listening to the Voices of Women: the Voices of Mothers

As she discusses possibilities for the education of women, Adrienne Rich writes, "Suppose we were to ask ourselves, simply: What does a women know? What does a woman need to know" (Rich, 1979, p. 240). Traditional university courses do not begin there. The emphasis on abstract, out-of-context learning seems to run in direct opposition to the kind of knowledge that emerges from maternal practice. The kind of knowledge that is used in child rearing is, according to the findings of Belenky et al., typical of the kind of knowledge women value and schools do not. The women interviewed for their study speak to the same concerns that so many of the teachers with whom I have worked also address:

> The previous courses I have taken do not seem to value my experience as a teacher. So much happens in my classroom every day, so many different interactions with children and parents. I want an opportunity to speak about these experiences. I do not want another course that does nothing but fill me up with empty, meaningless facts. I want to understand what goes on in my classroom every day.

As I read the work of Adrienne Rich, I cannot help but think of my own experience writing this text and how difficult it has been to speak in my own voice. As I think back over my years in graduate school, I realize the questions Rich asks: "What does a woman know? What does a woman need to know?" were seldom heard. There did not seem to be a place to speak to my own experience as a woman, a mother and teacher. There was little room for tentativeness, for working out my thinking about my world in an exploratory manner. And yet, without playing, conversing, listening to others and drawing out their own voices, women fail to develop a sense that they can talk and think things through (Belenky et al., 1986). My experience reading and responding to my students' writing in their double-entry journals helped me to understand the importance of the kind of dialogue that Belenky et al. speak of as central to womens' meaning-making. The dialogue of the double-entry journal moved the teachers beyond responding in abstract theoretical categories, creating possibilities for them to speak to their experience of teaching in a manner that remains faithful to the lifeworld of the classroom.

My understanding of the importance of dialogue was deepened by the work of many others: Nel Noddings (1984), who talks about the centrality of dialogue to developing an "ethic of care", Belenky et al. (1986) who speak of "real talk", Sara Ruddick (1989) who, in her study of mother's practice, refers to the importance of "coffee conversations". The literature on language learning also speaks to the importance of these "conversations around the dining room table", as Nancy Atwell (1989) refers to them, claiming them to belong to our meaning making, our knowing and understanding the world around us.

In dialogue, each individual must stretch her own vision in order to share another's vision. "What is essential to this language of dialogue," says Stephen Smith (1989),

> is that we are open to difference, that what we hear from others becomes an occasion for deliberation, for deferral, for thinking. Real dialogue carries with it the possibility of recognizing shared commitments, in spite of the fact that such commitments may be spoken of in quite different sorts of ways. (p. 3)

As Noddings notes, the "purpose of dialogue is to come into contact with ideas and to understand, to meet the other and to care" (Noddings, 1984, p. 186).

> In contemplating the education of women, Adrienne Rich writes:

> In a woman-centered university more classes would be conducted in the style of community, fewer in the masculine adversary style of discourse. (Rich, 1979, p. 193)

Rich's words lead me to once again think about and question the role of authority. By the very nature of our role as teacher in the classroom we represent authority, an authority that carries with it a certain responsibility to our students. For what purpose, I ask myself, should this voice of authority be used? What is the role of the teacher in dialogue?

Constructivism reminds us that order exists only in the minds of people. So when we as teachers impose our order on students, we rob them of the opportunity to create knowledge and understanding themselves. As I looked to the experience of the student teachers in my study, I saw that their teachers, representing this voice of authority, did not impose but rather helped their students to articulate and expand their latent knowledge. Again and again, in their journals, in their conversations, in their interviews with me, these student teachers, these women, spoke of being listened to and being heard.

I know it was hard for Darlene [faculty associate] to hear what I was saying today. It took a lot of courage for me to speak about the number of assignments and how I, how we all, were feeling overwhelmed by them. But she heard me, she listened to what I was saying and then spoke about it with the entire group. I guess that's why I had the courage to speak to her, because I knew she would listen.

Their instructors "created the conversational environment for teachers to articulate and expand their notion of their own power, their own values, their own dreams," all of which, according to Hollingsworth,"are often devalued in the educational system" (Hollingsworth, 1990, p. 12).

Our teacher talk time was what kept me focussed. It reminded me what was important. It was during that time, not in the staff room at school, that I could talk about what I really wanted to be as a teacher of young children...and find the support to do it.

In thinking about this conversational environment, Belenky et al., discuss the notion of "real talk". They draw a distinction between real talk and didactic talk in which a participant may report experience but there is not an attempt among these participants to join together to arrive at some new understandings. Really talking, they say, requires careful listening; it implies a mutually shared agreement that together you are creating the optimum setting so that half-baked or emergent ideas can grow.

The first precondition of real dialogue, says Bollnow, is the capacity to listen to the other.

Listen in this sense means more than to pick up the acoustic signs, also more than to understand what the other says; it means to recognize that the other wants to say something to me, something important to me, which I have to think about and may oblige me, if occasion arises, to change my opinion...that means the first thing is not that we talk to each other and try to convince each other, but that we are ready to listen to the other. (Bollnow, 1988, p. 16)

Wells describes a conversation sequence between mother and child that begins to get at this notion of real dialogue:

> In this sequence we see how the mother adjusts her speech to take account of the child's capabilities and helps him to build a conversation with her about a topic that is clearly of interest to him, as it is one that he initiated. In her turns she encourages Mark to extend his initial topic and then takes what he contributes and extends it still further so to provide evidence for him as to how to express more fully what it is he has invited her to look at with him. (Wells, 1986, p. 48)

Wells concludes by surmising that:

> learning to talk should thus be thought of as the result of a partnership: a partnership in which parents and other members of the community provide the evidence and then encourage children to work it out for themselves. (Wells, 1986, p. 51)

The student teachers experienced this real talk, this real dialogue, of which Belenky, Noddings, Smith, Wells and Bollnow speak. "She helped me to say what I wanted to say", "she listened to me on my terms" and "she worked alongside me helping me to understand my own teaching" were phrases that occurred repeatedly throughout the student teachers' journals. These faculty associates understood the importance of talk in constructing knowledge. They saw question posing and problem posing as prominent methods of inquiry in this constructivist way of knowing:

> It was through our questions, building on the issues, the concerns that the student themselves had raised, that we could really work with them to extend their thinking about their work with children.

Just as the faculty associates who worked with these student teachers understood this notion of "real talk" through their work with young children, I now see that I, too, understood this notion of "real talk" from my experience with young children, with my own child. And it was through my

understanding of this relationship that I found a way *to be* in relation with the student teachers whom I taught. Through their journals I found my role as these teachers' teacher. Together we entered into "real dialogue" about teaching -- sharing, expanding and reflecting on each other's experience. It was here, in relationship with these student teachers, that I came to a deeper sense of: *what it means to be a woman and a mother in the world outside my relationship with my own child.* It was through our dialogue, through our conversations about the day-to-day experiences of classroom life that I came to understand: *how I bring this sense of myself as a mother into my relationships in the world or work that lay seemingly outside my relation with my child.* It was through relationship that I found a way to speak in a voice that felt authentic, and in doing so claimed my experience as a woman, mother and teacher.

I believe that both the faculty associates and I were working, in Belenky's words, as "connected teachers", "midwife teachers", as opposed to "banker-teachers":

> While the bankers deposit knowledge in the learner's head, the midwives draw it out. They assist the students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it. They do not do the students' thinking for them or expect the students to think as they do. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 217)

They support the evolution of their students' ideas, strengthening the latter's own voices. As suggested by this student's journal entry:

> It was through my discussions with my faculty associate that I really learned I had a lot to say about children from my experience as a parent. She worked with me to help articulate my knowledge.

And this student's comment on my response to her work:

I have learned so much from your responses, Sue. You really read every part of my journal and your comments were not superficial like "good idea", you took what it was I was saying, or trying to say and extended it or asked a question that built on my words. I think this is where the power of the journal is, in the dialogue back and forth, in the way in which you can build on the students' words.

Once again, Wells speaks to this same notion in reference to the teacher/child relation:

By listening attentively in this way, giving the children her full attention, she indicates that what they have to say is important -- that they have expertise that is of value. When she asks questions, it is in order to be further informed, not to check that the child's answer is in conformity with her knowledge about the topic. And by inviting other children to listen and ask questions in the same way, she builds up in each child a feeling of self-respect and confidence in what he or she knows and can do, and at the same time, a feeling of respect for others as well. (Wells, 1986, p. 113)

There are in Wells' description of the teacher-child relationship echoes of the thinking of Belenky et al. as they describe the teacher-adult student relationship:

Midwife-teachers focus not on their own knowledge but on the students' knowledge. They contribute when needed, but it is always clear that the baby is not theirs but the students'. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 218)

And, in Freire's thinking about this same relationship:

The object of knowledge is not the private property of the teacher. Rather, it is a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students... through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new team emerges: teacher-students with students-teachers. (Freire, 1971, p. 67)

Connected teachers, it seems, whether working with children or adults, understand that they must accord respect and allow time for the knowledge to emerge from first hand experiences. They do not impose their own

conceptual framework; instead they encourage the students to evolve their own patterns of work based on the problems they are pursuing. They encourage the children [or students in their care] to work it out for themselves (Wells, 1986).

Essential to supporting and sustaining the evolution of the student teachers' construction of knowledge was a sense of community, the sense of community that Wells implies when he speaks of the teacher creating a feeling of respect not only for self and the knowledge one holds, but also for others. Certainly the centrality of community came through in my previous reading of the student teachers' journals. Their faculty associates emphasized building "a community of learners." In the same way, the students who have worked with me as their instructor speak often to the sense of community that is created in our work together. It is through this community that the teacher and the students worked together: drawing on each other's narratives; building on each other's ideas; entering into each other's view.

It was my readings of the feminist literature that moved me beyond thinking of "a community of learners" working together to share their questions and ideas about teaching, to a deeper insight into the notion of community; in particular, "a caring community." These student teachers, working both with their faculty associates and with me as the instructor of their summer course, had experienced being deeply heard, listened to in the way that Bollnow speaks of as, "recognizing that the other wants to say something". "When people talk and listen to one another in this way, trying to understand each person in the person's own terms, they tend to develop caring relationships," says Noddings (Noddings, 1984). This dialogue sponsors the growth of friendships and community in the way that Rich

speaks of in her call for a "women-centered university" and in the way that this student speaks also:

> It is the friendships that I think I will remember the most, friendships with other student teachers, but also with my faculty and school associate [sponsor teacher], I learned a lot through these friendships.

In a community, unlike a hierarchy, people get to know each other. They do not act as representatives of positions or roles but rather, as individuals with unique viewpoints. Nel Noddings would refer to this kind of community as "a caring community". "Caring", she says, "means seeing the other, the student, in his or her own terms." She gives an example:

> Suppose that I am a teacher who loves mathematics. I encounter a student who is doing poorly and I decide to have a talk with him. He tells me that he hates mathematics. I do not begin with dazzling performances designed to intrigue him or change his attitude. I begin as nearly as I can with the view from his eyes: Mathematics is bleak, jumbled, scared, boring, boring, boring; from that point on we struggle together with it. (Noddings, 1984, p. 15-16)

This same thought can be heard in this student teacher's experience:

> I remember the time when Darlene came in after my horrible lesson. She hadn't been there to see it so she couldn't really talk about it, but she didn't say "Oh, I'm sure it wasn't that bad" or "it's ok, we all have bad lessons" which is how I think I might have responded to someone else. She really understood how bad I felt about this lesson. She acknowledged my feelings and then we sat down and figured out where to go next.

And in my response to a student's struggle with writing in the journal:

> Yes...I know writing in this way is hard, it feels risky writing down our initial responses to something and then sharing with your teacher without having a chance to edit and revise. All I can say is that I will be working through this process with you.

An ethic of caring, according to Noddings, is:

an ethic that has fidelity to persons and the quality of relations at its heart. To care as a teacher is to be ethically bound to understand one's student. From the perspective of an ethic of caring, development of the whole person is necessarily our concern as teachers....Caring involves promoting the growth of those for whom we care and teaching requires caring for the individuals we teach. (Noddings, 1986, pp. 498, 499)

Returning

As I read Nodding's work I cannot but recall that graduate seminar, which now seems so very long ago. I reflect on how strongly, how passionately I felt about the caring relationship Noddings so eloquently ascribes to good teaching. And yet, I could not find the words, the confidence, in my own voice to articulate this felt knowing. It is through the work and the stories of others that I have recovered those words. As I immersed myself in their experience, in their writing and thinking, I began to understand how, like many women e.g., Miller, Gilligan, & Chodorow, I had come to define myself in terms of my relationships and connections to others. As I read their words, their stories, I began to see how deeply women's thinking about themselves as knowers is rooted in their relationships. I think back over my own experience and realize that much of what I know and understand about my own experience I have discovered through relationship. Much of this I have discovered from dialogue, from talking to friends and colleagues about my experiences, my ideas, my thinking, and from the sense they made of what I said. I have come to understand that, in the same way that it was for the student teachers in my study, it is through this process of dialogue with others, through reading, observation, conversation, and dialogue with self through writing this text, that I can now articulate the understandings I have come to on my own terms. I now see one enduring quality in my experience

was dialogue: the dialogue with "a trusted adult"; the "real talk"; the "coffee and corridor conversations"; the "dialogue that understood", that "met the other" and "that cared".

This encounter was not always with an other whose work, and thinking resonated. The dialogue was not always dialogue "that understood", that "met the other" and "that cared." There were times when I was confronted with the other at its most radical, times "wherein there was no ecstasy". And yet, many of those encounters with the other who seemed so radically different provoked new beginnings, created opportunities to widen my circle of inquiry, and brought me closer to home. As I reflect back, I recognize that it was in my receptiveness to these others, my openness to going "through the way in which I was not," that I was able to return home and "know the place for the first time". My return home would not have been possible however, if I had not had the opportunity for interactions with others whose conversations resonated. It was only in these conversations that I was able to make sense of my experience with the radical other. It was in these encounters, others with whom I experienced "joy" (Noddings 1986) that I heard the echo of home, thus affirming and strengthening my resolve to continue on my journey -- claiming my own way as a woman, as a teacher and as a mother.

Belenky et al., discuss the ways in which women's self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined and how hard women often have to work to "claim the power of their own minds." As I reflect back to my experiences as a student, to the times when I tried to speak, to give voice to what I now know as so much a part of my work, so much a part of my being-in-the-world, I remember what it feels like to be silent, to feel voiceless. I think of where I am now and I remember how hard it has been to claim this power. How hard

it will continue to be to speak in my own woman's voice for "the simple act of telling a woman's story from a woman's point of view is a revolutionary act". As I write this I realize that my return home is not just about claiming the power of my own mind -- it is not just about self knowledge and the knowledge of others. To speak of my experience solely in terms of the intellect no longer makes sense to me, to ground my understandings within an epistemological framework seems to deny the very "questions of living" (Rorty, 1979), to deny the essence of home.

Home for me does not reside in the head alone; it is a matter of the depth of soul, spirit, embodied knowing and being (Bollnow 1974). Returning home is bringing that which I care deeply about "out of hiding", giving voice to that which is felt, to understandings that are embodied. "Home is where one starts from", where one lives -- it is a deeply felt, embodied sense of myself in the world.

We shall not cease from exploration
And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time
(T.S. Eliot, 1963, p. 222)

CHAPTER 5

RETURNING HOME: MATERNAL THINKING

As I move into the final section of this thesis, I arrive to that place

where I started, to the questions that have animated my living, the questions

that go to the heart of the very existence of my work in education and in life.

What does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? What does it mean to be a

teacher of teachers and of children? to be a mother who teaches children?   to

be a mother who teaches teachers? This place was not a place that initially

had words, this questioning did not emerge as an abstract research question

and yet this questioning, this place -- this deeply felt, embodied sense of home

-- was, I feel, inside me all along. My living as a woman, a mother and a

teacher makes this questioning possible in the first place. It holds this

questioning steady at the very center of my being, through my beginnings,

through my explorations and now, as I arrive where I started and know the

place for the first time.

"The essence of the question is the opening up, and keeping open, of

possibilities" (cited in van Manen, 1991, p. 43). As I read these words, I am

reminded once again of Bateson's notions of interruptions in women's lives

and how these interruptions can be points of growth, "occasions for

surpassing what we know or have reason to expect" (Berry, 1983, p. 205). In a

sense, the interruptions and the impasses that came my way as I moved

through my explorations have served to keep open possibilities and in doing

so has moved this thesis beyond "what we know or have reason to expect" (Berry, 1983, p. 205). The journey has enabled me to return home to "see the place for the first time", to give words to the embodied knowing and being. The original study I initiated to fulfill the requirements of my Master's thesis was completed seven years ago. Without the interruptions and the impasses this thesis would look very different than it does today. It would not represent that which is felt and that which I care deeply about.

After my orginal study was completed I continued to live inside the teacher education program at Simon Fraser University. I continued from my work with this original group to work with many other groups of students. Some of these students were in their professional teacher education year, in the Professional Development Program, as were that first group of students. But even more of them, particularly in the past three years, have been practising teachers. I have taught ten different courses which amounts to my having read some four hundred double-entry journals, and thus to my having lived, albeit vicariously, through some four hundred lives of teaching. I have responded to their stories -- to the delight, the hurt, the frustration, the exhilaration, the ordinary moments -- of these teachers and their students' lives. And as I have responded to the stories of these teachers and their children, I have come to know my own, the story of myself-in-relation, the story of myself and my child.

Once again I find myself asking but where are the words that will "sing" this story? Where are the words that will speak to the heart of my experience? I return to the place that gave me my beginning, the children's book Begin at the Beginning:

Sara started one painting after another "These painting are not wonderful at all" Sara moaned."painting the whole world is harder than I thought.

"Maybe this paper is too small", she thought. "Or maybe this brush is too large. Maybe twenty-four watercolors are not enough!" "Maybe", thought Sara, "I could change my rinse water."

And she took her green glass into the bathroom. Sara emptied the water into the sink. She frowned into the mirror and saw Miss Weinstein frowning back. "I am expecting a wonderful painting, Sara! Everyone is depending on you."

Sara's little sister appeared at the door.
(Schwarz, 1983, pp. 10-13)

It was Jamie who appeared at my door, with his final semester project in hand. As he stood there he spoke of his work with me over the past two semesters, of the books he had read, of the discussions he had had with colleagues in the class and of how writing a rationale for a literature based reading program had given a focus to his teaching for the fall. As he turned to leave, he stopped, hesitated for a moment, seeming unsure of where to begin, then he cleared his throat:

> I'm not sure what to say here, but I guess I just want to thank you, my teaching has really turned around these past few months and a lot of that has to do with you, for pointing me in the right direction. You never pushed or shoved, just pointed the way, by asking questions. I remember the question you kept asking me when I began my cooperative learning with my class was how was this going to feel for them, for the kids in my class. It wasn't long before a lot of the other teachers in my group were asking the same thing. You must have been asking them the same question. It's a question I'd kinda forgotten to think about. I think we all do sometimes but you reminded me how important it was.

He stopped again, looking almost uncomfortable as he continued:

> But it wasn't just your questions. Asking the right questions that's easy. It's how you were with us in class too. I mean you

listened to us, you trusted us. I really believed you thought a lot about how all this was feeling for us, how hard it is to take on all this new learning. You really cared, so thank you, I'm looking forward to September.

Nel Noddings in her article "Fidelity in Teaching, Teacher Education and Research in Teaching", says

> ...caring involves promoting growth of those for whom we care, and teaching requires caring for the individuals we teach. Aristotle said of the teacher-learner relationship that it is a "moral type of friendship, which is not on fixed terms: It makes a gift, or does whatever it does, as to a friend." Further, Aristotle says, we wish for our friends that they should be good persons and we wish this for their own sakes. (Noddings, 1986, p. 499)

Noddings concludes that "teaching requires fidelity to persons" (Noddings, 1986, p. 499). As I read this I think yes, my work as a teacher who works with teachers does require fidelity to persons and commitment to the quality of relations, and "to be good persons" is what I want for Jamie and for the other teachers of children with whom I work, but it is not "just for their own sakes". It is also for the sake of the children with whom they work -- for my child, and for the children of other women and men. Schools, as Madeline Grumet says, "offer us the opportunity to care for other people's children (Grumet, 1988, p. 182). The teacher who cares

> is *present* in her acts of caring. Even in physical absence, acts at a distance bear the signs of presence: engrossment in the other, regard, desire for the other's well-being. Caring is largely reactive and responsive. Perhaps it is even better characterized as receptive. The one-caring is sufficiently engrossed in the other to listen to him and to take pleasure or pain in what he recounts. Whatever she does for the cared-for is embedded in relationship that reveals itself as engrossment and in an attitude that warms and comforts the cared-for. (Noddings, 1984, p. 19)

I think of my son B.J. and his years of elementary school life and the teachers he encountered along the way. During this time there were many

teachers, but one in particular stands out. Since the divorce in our family, my son had drawn inside himself. His hurt and anger with the world seemed more internally directed, particularly at school. He didn't "act out" nor was he a child who was always trying to please the teacher. He was one of those children that I hear teachers speak about -- those who easily "slip through the cracks". He was the kind of child who I too remember was easy to forget amidst Johnny's temper tantrum, Adam's tears and Sally's twentieth question in the space of half an hour.

As I watched him, as I listened to his stories (or perhaps lack of stories about school describes it best) I worried, for it seemed like school and he were on a collision course. I watched, I encouraged, I nudged, yet always careful not to push too hard for fear that I would lose him. I talked about school being important, but reminded him that there was much more to life than school. I spoke of his friendships, his physical talents and skills, I recounted stories of him showing these talents at an early age, like the time he was two and climbed onto the neighbour's roof. He was always delighted to hear these tales, and I believe they helped him to see that as individuals we have many diverse talents, talents that are not necessarily valued in the school environment. As I spoke, however, I often had a sinking feeling in my heart, for I knew B.J. had many talents and skills that *should* be valued in the school environment: the creative energy he and his friends showed in the midst of their imaginary games; the problem-solving skills when trying to put together a model airplane; the caring, sensitive interactions with those boys who did not share his skill on the basketball court; his delightful sense of humour. These were talents that were not always readily visible. To see them required the attentive love (Weil, 1972) of a mother, the commitment to listen and a belief in the potential of every child.

B.J. was eleven when he entered Mr. Jones' class. It was a few weeks into his year before I began to notice a growing sense of confidence. He began to initiate conversations about school and, as I think about it, I heard more about school in those first few weeks than I had in the past two years. He continued to struggle with his academic work, yet this did not seem to weigh him down as it had previously. There was a lightness, a spark -- he seemed really present when he talked about school. November came and it was time for the obligatory teacher-parent interview. His teacher, Mr. Jones, seemed a bit apprehensive with my visit, knowing I worked in the Faculty of Education at the university. He began the interview by talking about his teaching, seeming almost to defend his work in the classroom. He described himself as not always up on the most recent research in teaching. "I am just beginning to look at whole language", he said, knowing this was the course I taught at the university. "I suppose," he said, "what's most important to me is the kids and the relationship I build with them. I really care about kids. I had my own struggles with school you know so I know how hard it can be for some kids in particular. B.J. is one of those kids." He then moved on and began to discuss the different subject areas they had covered this past term and his observations of B.J.'s progress, the areas they would be continuing to work on at school and how I could support him at home. He asked me if I had any questions and when it seemed like our interview was drawing to a close he said:

> I'm probably not telling you anything new, but B.J. has some incredible qualities. I watch him in the gym with others, you know he has a lot of talent. But what is different about B.J. compared to many kids who shine in sports, is his compassion for others who don't do as well. He's always there helping them out, but never putting them down. The kids really respect him, he shows real leadership in this area. He also has an incredible sense of humour, very dry and witty. I wouldn't have known that because he doesn't say all that much, but if you really

listen to him, you hear these one-liners come out that tell you this kid is really on the ball.

As I listened to this teacher speak of my child, I felt tears come to my eyes -- tears of relief, tears of gratitude, for he had seen him, he had listened, he had "met the other and cared" (Noddings, 1984).

These stories, the story of the teacher and the story of the child, are where I start from, where I live as I give voice to my experience, as a woman, as a teacher, as a teacher of teachers, as a mother. As I pull together the threads of my experience, I see the re-echoing of many themes: writing as a way of knowing; knowledge as construction; the centrality of dialogue; the style of language; subjective as opposed to objective knowing. All are themes that are central to my work, and yet, as I have narrated my experience, I have come to see one theme that speaks most strongly, echoing through my thinking, my very being. This theme did not emerge as an abstract concept nor as a procedural framework that informed my thinking; rather it resonated as a deeply felt, embodied sense of myself in the world. It is through my writing that I have been reunited with what I know, with what I seemed to have known all along.

Returning

As I read through the pages that represent my experience up to this place, I begin to see the mountain of meaning that has been rising behind me. I read of my resonance with the work of Bruner, Vygotsky, Britton and Wells, all of whom use the mother/child relationship to support their thinking; I hear the imperative tone in my voice as I speak of bringing my lived experience as a mother into my living as an educator; I see the attentive love of a mother in my words as I speak of the teachers with whom I work and

live; I feel the emotion as I write about my relationship with my child. It was, it is, this relation between mother and child that I know. It is the home of my existence.

Sara Ruddick helped me to see that it was my practice, my living, as a woman and mother that oriented me to understanding the world in this way. In the introduction to her book <u>Maternal Thinking</u>, Ruddick asks, "What is the relation of thinking to life?" "Here", she says "I turned to the men I had studied, particularly Wittgenstein, Winch and Habermas. All thinking, they had seemed to teach me, arises from and is shaped by the practices in which people engage. What then, I asked, is a woman's practice, a mother's practice?" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 9) What then, I ask, is the practice of a woman and a mother who is also a teacher, a teacher of children and of teachers? How is my way-of-being in one relationship connected to the other? Can they ever be separate? Is it even possible to separate out who I am as woman and mother from who I am as teacher?

<u>The Practice of Mothers: The Practice of Teachers of Children</u>

Ruddick's description of the practice of "good mothering" describes, for me, the practice of "good teaching". "Good mothering," she suggests,

> requires adaptive responding to constantly changing
> phenomena; it is tuned to the concrete and particular. A
> response that works with a particular child at a particular
> moment may not work with a different child or with the same
> child at a different moment....Mothers expect change, and change
> requires a kind of learning in which what one learns cannot be
> applied exactly and often even by analogy to a new situation.
> (Ruddick, 1989, p. 90)

This is so very much like good teaching as described by Marion, a teacher who was a student in one of my courses:

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When I sit down at the end of the week to write in my journal, I am not even sure where to begin. Every day is different. I begin each day with a plan of what is going to happen, and yet it never looks the way I thought it would. Victor brings in his new turtle from home and we move into a discussion of pets. The children are so engaged I do not want to rush them through just because I have planned a different activity. When we finally move into our writing activity, I see that many of the children are still struggling with getting their ideas down on paper, so I need to step back and spend some time brainstorming together as a group. By the time we finish this activity, it is already recess and I didn't accomplish half of what I intended. Then Sarah, who only yesterday seemed to be feeling so much better about playing with her classmates on the playground, begins to cry and tell me she doesn't want to go outside today. I take some time to talk with her and a couple of the other girls in the classroom and, before I know it, recess is over. My day continues like this, and the next day is not much different and before I know it, the week is over. I am always responding to the needs of the children and those needs are not only different for each child, but each day can be different for that child. It depends on what happened at home the night before, or how they are feeling that day, or if the work we are doing is too difficult or too easy for them. Things are never the same, so my plans are always just a guide for the day because I am never really sure what is going to happen to change them.

Like good mothers, good teachers embody change. They live change in the way they learn from and with children. Their reality of change is understood through the relation between themselves and the children under their care. It is through their responsiveness to children, a sense of the eventfulness of children's lives, and a mindfulness of what particular events might mean to them, that a mother, a teacher, learns to welcome change. In the words of Jean Baker Miller:

> People who are most attuned to psychological growth are those most closely in touch with it, those who are literally forced to keep changing if they are to continue to respond to the altering demands of those under their care. For an infant and then a child to grow there must be someone who can respond to the child. As the child grows, one's responses must change accordingly. What sufficed today will not suffice tomorrow. The

child has come to a different place, and the caretaker must move to another place too. If you are the caretaker you keep trying to do so. Thus in a very immediate and day-to-day way women *live* for change. (Miller, 1973, p. 54)

As Miller suggests, mothers and, in my view, teachers, *live* for change. For them, a sense of change is embedded in their day-to-day interactions and their relationships with children. However, it is not only children who change and grow. We all might grow if we remain mindful, in touch with this dynamic between adult and child. Yet to do do requires an insight, a trust in one's own sense of this relationship. For everyone's benefit, "women must now face the task of putting their vast unrecognized experience with change into a new and broader level of operation" (cited in Ruddick, 1989, p. 90).

And yet, according to Ruddick, advice from experts can lead women, who frequently have never been encouraged to trust their judgement, to relinquish control to others. She says that:

> mothers have been a powerless group whose thinking, when it has been acknowledged at all, has most often been recognized by people interested in interpreting and controlling rather than in listening. Philosophically minded mothers have only begun to articulate the precepts of a thought whose existence other philosophers do not recognize. Surely, they should have time to think among and for themselves. (Ruddick, 1989, p. 26)

I hear in Ruddick's description of the experience of mothers, the experience of the teachers with whom I work. As a group teachers have felt powerless.

> It fees like we have no say, no power in our own profession. We are presented with a mandated curriculum and then expected to deliver the goods. Even though teachers were involved in the design of the new program, we still have to implement it in our own classrooms and no one is listening to us, to our concerns and questions. What other profession is controlled in the same way teaching is? The ministry mandates these changes without giving us the necessary support and then when it isn't working

quite the way they think it should be, the blame is sent our way. It is teachers' inability to implement the changes that are seen as the reason for the new programs not working. It is the same with the university. They give us the theory and if it doesn't work, it's because it fell down at the implementation level, that's us, the classroom teachers. When are we going to be listened to? When is our experience working with children in classrooms going to be valued? (Gail)

While recent educational research has, for the most part, moved away from the view of the teacher as an "object" to be studied, much of this work continues to see the teacher, like the mother, as deficient. It focuses on what the teacher should know, how the teachers should think, what the teacher should be rather than listening to what it is that teachers' know and think and care about. Even in the research of those like Clandinin and Elbaz, who speak to the importance of listening to teacher narratives, it would seem that the voice of the researcher is necessary to give voice to the teachers' experience.

Teachers have begun to "think among and for themselves and in doing so articulate the precepts of a thought whose existence others do not recognize" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 26). This has evolved through an alternative research tradition. It goes by various names: "teacher research", "classroom inquiry", "naturalistic research", "action research". This tradition acknowledges that "in a sense, we have all been engaged in classroom inquiry since our earliest experiences as teachers, for we have listened, observed, questioned and hypothesized, all to the hoped for end of improving the quality of learning in our classroom" (Goswami & Stillman, 1986, preface). This quote from a recent text on teacher research moves me to wonder about the thrust of teacher research. It seems that it is all too often caught up with improving the quality of learning in our classroom. An important goal and yet to what end? As teachers who work alongside teachers of children we

share a common end with our students, namely the education of *the child*. It seems to me that we must be asking ourselves: Where does all this theorizing and research still connect with the lifeworld of children? Can we find the child? Can we hear the voices of the children, the voices of teachers in relation to children? Like mothers, teachers do need time to "think among and for themselves"(Ruddick, 1989). They need time to REsearch -- to look and look again at their practice. Teachers need time, not necessarily to formulate the elusive research question or to go out after new "data", but to consider and REconsider what is at hand for themselves and for the children under their care.

The Practice of Mothers: The Practice of Teachers of Teachers of Children

How then do we, as teachers of women and men teaching children, support this REsearch, this looking and looking again at their practice? How do we work alongside them as they ask: What is my lived practice? As my student Jamie said, "to ask the question is easy". It is how we live out the question that speaks most powerfully. It is through my interactions, my relationships with others, with my child, with the children of others, with my colleagues, my instructors, my friends, with the authors I read, with the ideas they present, and the process of sense-making this text represents that I am now able to give voice to my understandings of this question.

And yet to speak of myself-in-relation, to speak of what I care deeply about feels, once again, rather vulnerable. As women in teaching we simply have not learned to speak about the quality of relation comfortably outside the private domain. We remain silenced...

> ...convinced that we are too emotional, too sensitive, and that
> our work as mothers or housewives is valued only by our
> immediate families, we hide it, or like Eve, forbidden to know

and teach what she has directly experienced, we keep that knowledge to ourselves as we dispense the curriculum to the children of other women. (Grumet, 1988, p. 28)

Carol Gilligan suggests that the study of women may bring to psychology, and I would say education, this language of relation that Grumet speaks of. The study of mothers, Gilligan says,

is of particular interest for the psychology of love, holding in it the promise of elucidating a love that combines intensity and wisdom, a love that is neither exclusive nor finite but at once constant and changing. In contrast to the image of women as either self-absorbed or self-effacing, the study of women may bring to psychology a language of love that encompasses both knowledge and feelings, a language that conveys a different way of imagining the self in relation to others. (Gilligan, 1984, p. 91)

The work of Nel Noddings speaks to this "different way of imagining the self in relation to others", a way that does not repudiate, but rather validates the intimacy of nurture in education. "Teaching", she suggests, "requires fidelity to persons, fidelity to the quality of relation, to a way of being that supports affection and steadfastly promotes both the welfare of the other and that of the relation" (Nodings, 1986, p. 497). "Caring", she says "involves stepping out of one's own framework of reference into the other's" (Noddings, 1984, p. 24). "As I think about how I feel when I care about, what my frame of mind is, I see that caring is always characterized by a move away from self" (Noddings, 1984, p. 16). "Caring finds its foundation in relation...how good *I* can be is partly a function of how *you* the other receive me" (Noddings, 1984, p. 6).

Therefore, Noddings suggests, the primary aim of all education must be nurturance of the ethical ideal of caring for another.

While an ethic of caring cannot provide specific answers to ethical or educational questions, it can provide steady, rational guidance in the form of questions to be asked and directions to be taken. An ethic of caring guides us to ask what effect will this

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have on the person I teach? What effect will it have on the caring community we are trying to build? (Noddings, 1986, p. 506)

Noddings' words give voice to my sense of myself-in-relation, to my way of being with the students whom I taught. I reflect back to my work with these students, to those first student teachers with whom I worked, and to the many groups of teachers I have continued to work alongside. I revisit my experiences with them and I remember the time and care I gave in my responses to the stories of their experiences. I think back to my commitment to listen to these stories and to understand their experiential points of view. I remember the resolve to continue the relationships with my students even when the voice of authority told me I should be stepping back from these relationships. It is in this process of reflection that I recognize what was at the very heart of my work. It was fidelity to the quality and welfare of relationship.

The strength of this commitment came from a lived sense of the mother/child relationship that enabled me to *be with* the students whom I taught in a different way and to work with them in a manner that represented a different way of imagining the teacher-student relationship. Rather than delivering the concepts and content of the course through hierarchies from instructor to the student, from those "who know" to those "who don't know", I entered into a relationship with them by working and thinking alongside them and exploring ideas together. Together we were engaged in a real dialogue about teaching: a dialogue that began not with the teacher's knowledge, but rather, with the students' knowledge of their experiences with children as they were lived out in the world of the classroom. It was from this point of departure that we entered into a

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conversation, exploring ideas as together we came to a deeper understanding of our own practice as teachers.

If my way of being-in-relation as mother with my child enabled me to imagine and hold steady to a vision of the self-in-relation as teacher, it was responding to my students through the double-entry journal that provided the forum for me to work out my thinking and understanding about this relationship. I reflect back over the evolution of my thinking about the double-entry journal. In the beginning I saw it as a way for the students with whom I was working to make meaning of their coursework. As my work with this progressed, however, I began to develop an awareness of the importance of my response as "trusted adult" in the process of the students' meaning making.

As I reflected on the nature of the discourse in the double-entry journal in light of my readings of the feminist literature, I began to understand how this discourse created a space for the voice of exploration, for the voice of tentativeness. It moved the teachers beyond speaking in abstract terms and created possibilities for the teachers with whom I was working to speak to their experiences in the classroom as they were lived: to speak of their actions and their observations not only from an intellectual stance, but also from a felt, intuitive place. My response to their work acknowledged this feeling.

"The world that mothers and children see and name together is constructed by feeling" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 69). As mothers we first respond to feeling. "We do not begin by formulating or solving a problem but by sharing a feeling" (Noddings, 1984, p. 31). As I listened to the voices of the teachers with whom I worked, as I responded to their writing, my first response was often a felt response, one of sharing a feeling of delight, of frustration, of

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concern, of hope. I think back to the look of panic I so often saw when I spoke of journal writing, I think of the anxiety, the vulnerability students expressed when they began to reveal themselves to me. I realize now what I knew intuitively then, that in this meeting, the other must accept responsibility for responding with care, that "the moral response is a caring response" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 149). It is a response that embodies a desire to understand what it is the person is trying to say.

At the heart of this response, of knowing when and how to respond to a student, to their thoughts, to their words, lie the notions of intimacy and and empathy that are discussed in the feminist literature. Noddings speaks of this as she describes her view of empathy. "Empathy does not involve projection but reception. I do not project. I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other" (Noddings, 1984, p. 30). She writes that when a "caring teacher asks a question in class and a student responds, she receives not just the "response" but the student (Noddings, 1984, p. 176). As I responded to my students' ideas, their words, their journal entries, I was always responding to the student, opening up to receive, to be receptive to their experience while all the time thinking, asking myself, how does this teacher experience this situation. I was always moving away myself to enter and embrace the reality of the other.

What began for me as a forum for my students to make sense of their readings, the double-entry journal, had become so very much more. It became a place where we met, where I could enter and embrace the reality of the other, where the other could enter and embrace my reality. As I responded to my students, to their feelings and thoughts through the double-entry journal, I came to understand the significance of creating a space for "a meeting between the one-caring and the cared-for" (Noddings, 1984, p. 11).

"To care", says Noddings, "is to be ethically bound to understand one's students...to be asking what effect will this have on this person I teach" (Noddings, 1986, p. 499). To ask Noddings question -- What effect will this have on this person I teach? -- is essential as we nurture an ethical ideal. However, as teachers who work alongside teachers of children we must, I believe, also be asking what effect will this, my response to this teacher, have on the child -- on the children this teacher teaches -- on my child?

How then do we meet them both? How do we enter and embrace the reality of the teacher and of the child? How do we, in our work as teachers of teachers *of children* respond to teachers' thinking, to their words, their ways of being in the classroom in such a way that also meets the child? How do we offer a response that speaks to the possibilities of both the teacher and the child?

As I consider this through the lens of my own experience, I see how the "real talk", the dialogue that was represented in the double-entry journals is an essential beginning point for this dialogue enables teachers to explore their thinking and feelings about their own ways of living with children. It is dialogue that, like the relationship between mother and child, embodies a desire to understand what it is the other is trying to say. And yet the work of a teacher, like the work of a mother, is more complex than sharing and listening and responding to a child's thoughts and feelings.

Being-in-Relation: As a Mother: As a Teacher

I return to Sara Ruddick, whose work illuminates the complexity of a mother's practice, and through her thinking my understanding of my work, my being-in-relation is deepened and affirmed. Ruddick suggests that "these three demands -- for preservation, growth and social acceptance constitute

maternal work" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 17). "In any mother's day", she says "these three demands of preservation, growth and acceptability are intertwined....To be a mother is to be committed to meeting these demands" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 23). The primary concern of maternal thinking is preservation of the vulnerable child. "To be committed to meeting children's demand for preservation does not", says Ruddick, "require enthusiasm or even love. It simply means to see vulnerability and to respond to it with care" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 19).

I see this vulnerability in my child -- a vulnerability that seemed especially evident just after our family divorce as he struggled to find his place in the world outside. As I listened to his teacher describe him as not appearing to be interested, struggling with completing his work, avoiding interaction with others, as I heard the soccer coach talk about his fear of "getting right in there", of "getting the ball and going for it", it seemed so unlike the child I knew. As I watched my child at play, alone and with his friends, I did not see a lack of interest or a child who struggled with "getting right in there". Rather, I saw his engagement -- his determination, his playful interactions, his delightful sense of humour. And yet when I watched him, when I listened to him as we talked, or tried to talk, about school or joining the soccer club, I saw a different child. Here I saw a child who avoided my eyes, who shrugged his shoulders, who ignored my words and turned away. I saw a child full of vulnerability. I recognize that vulnerability.

Vulnerability in a child is perhaps more recognizable since we have all been children. We have all lived through the vulnerability, the powerlessness of being a child. To see this vulnerability in an adult is not as easy. It requires what van Manen describes as a watchfulness. It requires a deep and abiding commitment to see.

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I think back to the first night of class when I met Jamie. As was the case for so many of my student he was full of questions: questions about what I expected, what I wanted, what he had to do in order to fulfill the requirements of the course. As I watched him that first night, his voice seemed too loud as he asked questions of other members of the class and he spoke too knowingly of "all these new ways of teaching". At first glance he seemed so full of bravado, so full of confidence in himself. And yet as I continued to watch, I saw his eyes dart, his fingers clench. I watched him stick like glue to the one other person he knew in the class, never leaving his side, calling out stories of their experience together. And as I watched, I recognized the anxiety, the apprehension, the vulnerability. It was the same vulnerability I saw when I explained to my students that writing in a journal would be the central focus of the course. It was the same vulnerability I saw in their writing as they wrote about their work with children, as they shared their "speech for oneself" with another. It is a vulnerability I recognize. I see the same vulnerability in the child and in the teacher of the child.

Once we have seen this vulnerability, we must, as Ruddick and Noddings say, respond with care. We are ethically bound to understand the other. It is through the ability to imagine and be sensitive to the interior life of others that the reality of the other is both created and respected. Responding with care begins with an attitude of trust. It assumes the other person has something good to say. The purpose is not to judge but to understand, to look at it from that person's point of view, to see how they could say what they are saying, why it makes sense to them.

I remember the summer my son came to ask me about playing football. It was the summer before he went into Mr. Jones' class, the summer after a very difficult year at school. His friend Johnny had signed up to play football

and he wanted to join too. The first practice was the next week and all I had to do was go to the field and sign him up and he could then get his helmet and pads. As he continued to give more details about the football league I was only half-listening, for as he spoke all I could see was an image of my son fully suited in football helmet and pads -- armored against the world. I was about to share my thoughts on this game, a game that seemed to me too aggressive, too highly organized, too much of an "us against them" way of thinking -- too much, it seemed, of everything I did not want my son to be -- when I stopped for a moment. I saw in my child a spark, a look of hopefulness, and in that moment I began to see why joining football with his friend Johnny made so much sense to him. I began to understand how, after a year that seemed so void of possibilities he was reaching elsewhere -- toward his own possibilities. As I listened and watched, I trusted that for my child something was coming-to-be.

I think of Jamie and our initial discussion about his class project. As he described his interest in implementing cooperative learning in his classroom I was encouraging, suggesting several books he might refer to as a beginning. The next week he returned to class full of enthusiasm for the strategy he had tried with his students. He had read one of the books I had suggested, but it had seemed a bit "too loose" for him. So, on the recommendation of a colleague he had tried another strategy. He had organized his students into cooperative learning groups, assigned them a task to complete within a given time frame, and informed them that the group that finished first (obviously he said that would be the group that cooperated the best) would win one hundred points. As he talked, I listened and despite my concern about the idea that cooperative groups would be competing for points, I tried to understand why this made so much sense to him. I could see in Jamie's face

an excitement, a spark of enthusiasm, I had not seen before. I heard him as he spoke of his success with his colleagues in the course, I saw him talking to others to whom he had not yet spoken, full of pride that "he had tried one of these new strategies and it had worked for him." And as I listened and watched, I trusted that for this teacher something, too, was coming-to-be.

The second concern in maternal thinking is to foster the child's growth. "To foster growth", says Ruddick, "is to nurture a child's developing spirit, whatever in a child is lively, purposive and responsive...It is to see a child hopefully, to welcome his or her hopes; for children hope is as important as breathing"(Ruddick, 1989, p. 74). Hope is having trust in the child. It is the hope that the child will properly develop, will unfold more completely. When a mother believes in the child then her belief awakens and affirms these qualities in the child. This is not trust or belief in some purely romantic interpretation, such as, a child is like a plant and will grow in spite of us. This growth is dependent on what expectations the environment provides. In order to develop properly children, indeed all of us, need to feel trustful of their environment.

"There are many ways a mother makes herself into a trustworthy listener -- one of the most important is that she lets her child knows she wants to understand" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 93). It is only when space is created, when we "recognize that the other want to say something to me, something important to me"(Bollnow, 1988, p. 16) that the other can experience being deeply heard. And it is in this experience of truly listening to the other, not trying to convince, but *truly* listening to what it is their self is trying to say, that we can nurture a child's developing spirit. Rather than forming the child in our own image we can support the child's growing image of himself.

Letting another know we want to understand does not always come in the form of words. Our presence can speak for us, our trust embodied in our actions, in our gestures. My son knew of my concern, my questions about his growing passion for football, not so much by what I said but by what I didn't say. And yet he also knew I wanted to understand and to support his growing image of himself. He knew this as we drove to practice three times a week and as I stayed and watched and listened. He knew this as we awoke on Sunday mornings, brushing sleep from our bodies and as we spoke of what breakfast would provide the most energy for the upcoming game. He knew this as I sat on the sidelines at every game -- as he felt me looking on with him.

It was through my presence that my child came to know me as a trustworthy listener and one day in the car on our way to yet another football game, my son began to talk because he knew I would listen. As he spoke I heard in his words his own understanding of how I could be truly present, how I could support his own growing image of himself. There were some things he thought I should be keeping in mind as I was trying to understand this game of his. He had noticed that I usually brought a book with me, and while I had never actually opened it, B.J. asked me not to read during the game. In his asking I now see was a request from child to mother to attend and to be present to what is happening for him, to keep in view the total existence of this developing child.

It is only in this watchfulness that we can know how to gradually hand over this world to the child so that he or she can make it in their own world. "To watch, to observe has etymological connections to preserving, saving, regarding, protecting" (van Manen, 1986). Children need security and safety so that they can venture a risk. Once children know that someone will be

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looking on with them, they need to know you believe they can do it on their own. They need to trust your response to the changes they might be going through, to believe in your judgement -- in the watchful eye of a mother -- knowing when to intervene and when to look away. "A mother has to judge whether intervention is called for...and many times she schools herself to wait, to listen and to trust" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 85).

As my son continued, he began to speak of the need for me to look away, to trust that he could do it on his own. "I know you get worried when you see me at the bottom of a tackle," he said, "but you can't do anything about it. It's just part of the game, Mom. There will be times that I don't get up right away. I might be winded or have pulled a leg muscle, but I will get up. So no matter what, no matter how hurt you think I am please don't run out on the field." In this request I heard my son saying, let me take the risks. You can't take short cuts for me. Don't prevent me from tasting the struggle. Let me taste what it means to enter into a process of growth and development.

As we pulled into the parking lot by the football field our conversation came to an abrupt halt as B.J. undid his seatbelt, grabbed his football gear from the back. "See you over there," he said as he jumped out of the car. And just as he was about to shut the door, he said, "and oh yeah mom, another thing, if you don't mind me saying this -- please don't dress too weird." As the door shut, I sat for a moment trying to absorb this last comment, trying not to be defensive or offended at the thought that perhaps I did dress "too weird". I realized that in his parting comment was a request to, at least on the surface, fit in with the other moms and dads on the sidelines, to not stand out. He was asking me to give him his own space. With his words came an appeal: I am developing my own identity independent of you. This child is becoming a person in his own right.

Developing this deep sense of hope, of trust in the child's developing image of himself, somehow seems natural with our own child. As a mother I have lived with my child, I have spent hours and days and years living alongside my child. Together we have shared the joys and struggles, the ordinary moments of life. And through it all I have watched my child grow: I watched him learn to sit up, take his first step, speak his first word; I saw him leave the safety of home and enter the world; I watched him make friends, and lose friends; I saw his love for school grow into seeming disinterest. I watch him now as he moves into the world as a young man. And through it all I have learned to trust -- to let grow.

To translate the learning that came from living with my own child to the life of other children seems a natural transition for they are all children. And yet to think of living in this way -- this hopeful way of being -- with adults, with teachers, seems on the surface at least, more difficult. We all too often hold an image of the adult as fully developed, no longer becoming, and yet in the same way the child is coming-to-be, so too is the adult, so too is the teacher. Coming-to-be more fully who they are in the world. It is through living with my child in this way -- full of hope -- that I have learned to trust this coming-to-be in the teacher. I think again of Jamie, of Marion, of Wendy, of Enrico, and of the many teachers of children with whom I have worked over these past years. Many of these teachers worked with me over several semesters, taking one or more of my courses, and many continued to stay in touch with me over the years. This seems an important element as we support the coming-to-be of an other: Time. Time to listen; time to create the space for real conversations; time to watch the other's growth and trust the changes they are going through; time to support the other's developing image of himself. It is, I believe, through this experience of working alongside

teachers over time, looking on with them as they worked through their thinking about teaching, engaging in real dialogue about their lived experiences in the classroom, that I became more open to trusting the coming-to-be of other teachers with whom I might not have the luxury of time.

I think back to the time I spent reading and responding to my students' thoughts and feelings in the double-entry journal and I now understand that it was through listening to their stories of growth, to their stories of their development in relation to the development of the children they were teaching that I learned to trust. As I read some four hundred double entry journals, as I lived through the lives of these teachers, I came to believe in the potential of every teacher in the same way that I came to believe in the potential of every child through my son. It was through the time and care I took with my responses to their writing, through my commitment to listen to what the self was trying to say, that these teachers with whom I worked learned to trust my response to the changes they might be going through. They came to know me as a trustworthy listener and so, like my son, they began to talk. They felt safe in dialogue, to speak their own minds and hearts, because they knew I would listen.

Living full of hope, of trust in the unfolding interacts with dialogue. It is through dialogue that we come to know the hopes, the dreams, the values of those we are working alongside. "As we work, talk, and debate together, we begin to perceive the ethical ideals that each of us strives toward. Then we are in a position to confirm -- to help the other actualize that best image" (Noddings, 1986, p. 505). Confirmation means more than being acknowledged; it means being confirmed as existing as a person and a learner.

> When we attribute to the cared-for the best possible motive consonant with reality, we confirm him; that is, we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts. (Noddings, 1984, p. 193)

It was only through dialogue with my child and with my students that I could see them clearly, not just who they were now, but who they wanted to become. It was only through careful listening that I could hear their best self and "out of what may be a mixture of feelings and motives, I choose the best to attribute to him" (Noddings, 1984, p. 196).

I listen to my son speak of his sense of himself in the world, I hear his words as he describes himself as "not all that great at school", as a somewhat disinterested student who is "never going to get A's". Yet as he speaks of his involvement in the various team sports he plays, he describes his skill, his commitment, his passion, and his voice is full of hope. While I hear pride in his words as he speaks of his athletic prowess, I hear also an uncertainty, a questioning about his schooling, about how his struggle in school might affect his success in life. I respond not by denying his difficulty at school, but rather by looking to the qualities that make a talented athlete and team player, by reminding him of the words different coaches had used to describe him: "determined and disciplined"; "a quiet strength"; "a leader by example". And as we talk I speak of how valuable these attributes are in life; how well they will serve him as he moves out into the world.

I listen to Jamie as he described his teaching to me. He spoke of being "a bit old-fashioned" in his thinking, of not really understanding "all of these new ways of teaching". He admitted to feeling a bit overwhelmed and suggested that many of his colleagues would probably refer to him as "a dinosaur". He talked about how long he had been teaching, about his own children and their love of school, of their involvement in classrooms that

exemplified child-centeredness. While I heard pride in his words as he spoke of his children, of their love for learning, of the classrooms they found themselves in, I heard an uncertainty, a vulnerability, a sense of alienation as he spoke of himself as teacher in relation to his colleagues and the new curriculum he was trying to make sense of. My response was not to deny these feelings, his "old fashioned" ways, but rather to speak about his relationship to his own children, to his understanding of how they learned, to his account of their love of learning that seemed a source of his pride. And as we talked I spoke of how his relationships with his own children and his understanding of their learning would serve him well as he moved the new curriculum into his classroom.

Trust then becomes the building block, the foundation of our work and yet it is not just the other's trust in us, but also our trust in the other, that is so important. There is, there must be, reciprocity. In the same way that my students learned to trust my response, I had to learn to trust theirs. As we work toward nurturing the developing spirit of another we must live what we speak of -- we must trust our own coming-to-be. We must invite the other into our process of becoming. The other, the teacher, the child, needs to see how we go through the process of figuring things out -- not just figuring out in the intellectual sense but to see us make mistakes, to be vulnerable, to take some risks ourselves.

For me the double-entry journal itself was a risk, it went against the grain so to speak. It went against the traditional university assignment, at least in my experience, in both process and content. It moved away from the "clear, fluent, assured articulation of thought" (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988) into a more exploratory way of articulating experience. Rather than abstracting this experience the focus was on the teacher's concern for the

everyday, for the practical and interpersonal. In this way, for me as a sessional instructor, a somewhat vulnerable position in itself, to move away from the university standard represented a risk. Yet, it was a risk that somehow I knew was important to take, for myself and for the other. It was the response of the teachers who took my course, their willingness to enter into a process of becoming -- a process of dialogue, of figuring things out, of thinking out loud, exploring ideas together -- that nurtured and supported my commitment to work, *to be* in relation in this way. As I think about this I realize there was a recursiveness to this process. The more I trusted myself and my own judgement, the more willing I was to take a risk. The more risks I took, the more open the response. The more open the response, the safer my students felt to tell their stories. The more stories I heard, the more I tried to understand. The more I understood, the more I came to believe in their potential. The more I believed in this potential, the more that potential came to be. The more this potential came to be, the more I trusted in both their coming-to-be and the process of growth itself. The need for trust is fundamental.

As I write this I realize it might appear at first glance a rather simplistic, romantic interpretation of our work as mothers, as teachers, as teachers who work alongside teachers of children. And yet, without an attitude of trust, without both holding close and welcoming change, without a response that embodies both an acceptance of what is and an openness to possibilities, the third concern of maternal thinking risks domination and control. It is only from a foundation of trust that we can develop the habits of conversational relation which are central to meeting the concern that Ruddick speaks of when she writes, "the mother must shape natural growth in such a way that her child becomes the sort of adult that she can appreciate and others can

accept. Typically, the mother "takes as the criterion of her success the production of a young adult acceptable to her group" (Ruddick, 1989, p. 107). And therein lies the challenge -- to balance the voice of the child with the voice of what is acceptable.

> At some point a mother will almost certainly hear from her children moral disagreements that she would find discomfiting even in a distantly friendly colleague. She may well have to take pleasure in achievements that to her are no achievements at all. She cannot resort to "cultural relativity" within her home to account for radical differences nor can she simply give up her values or keep them quiet. Her children's differences require the most demanding of a mother's many balancing acts: alongside her own strong convictions of virtues and excellences she is to place her children's human need to ask and answer for themselves questions central to moral life. This means that she has to require of herself an appreciation of alternative excellences and virtues within her own family circle and within her own heart. (Ruddick, 1989, p. 108)

It is through reflective conversation that a mother (a teacher) finds this balance between her own strong convictions and her child's (her student's) need to ask and answer for themselves. Her voice, her values are heard but not in a way that silences the other.

I think of a recent conversation my son and I had about his desire to purchase a VCR for his own room. "The one we have is so out of date Mom. It doesn't have an automatic programmer. We only get twelve channels and with a new one like Alex has we could get up to twenty-four". I listened to his appeal. It was one I had heart countless times before, not necessarily over a new VCR, but is was often about the purchasing of some new entertainment item. At one level, I was concerned about my son and his friends' preoccupation with these "toys" -- computer games, television, video arcades -- and the long term impact it may have on their sense of what was important in the world. Yet at the other level, I deeply trusted the young

man my son was becoming -- a young man with a strong sense of self, sound judgement and real empathy for others. I expressed my concern about the cost, and ultimately, the need for a fancier model. In exasperation he replied, "We are so different, we believe in such different things! I believe in new things like VCR's and pagers and answering machines and computer games. I live in a modern world and thinking about things that will make my life easier and you, you just worry about whether the birds and the squirrels are getting enough food."

I could not help but smile at this picture my son had created of me. He had used a rather apt metaphor for describing my commitment to the care of others in the world around me. "Yes B.J., you are right, we do like different things, we do spend our time worrying about different things, and yet, I think we probably *believe* in many of the same things." He responded with a look of quiet disgust at the suggestion that he might share something in common with his mother. "I don't think so," he said. "Well, let's think about it. You always have a lot of friends. They are always calling and coming over. You spend time with them." "Yeah, so what?" "Well, it seems to me, that is something we have in common, we both *believe* in the importance of friendship. And you think about your friends, sometimes even worry about them, I think. Like the time Johnny's dad was supposed to come to town and didn't. It seemed to me that you spent a lot of time talking it over with him." "So, what's your point?" "Well, we might not like the same things, but it seems to me that we do *believe* in some of the same things. It seems to me that we both believe in being a good friend". Our conversation ended abruptly as he turned and walked away. "I still want a new VCR," he said as he went downstairs to his room.

In my son's parting words he asserts his independence. His own view of the world is heard. And yet, his actions, his way of being, his commitment to his friends, tell me that he has also heard my voice, my convictions, my view of the world. This conversation with my son brings me back to the conversation that began this text, the conversation between Sara and her mother in the children's book, <u>Begin at the Beginning</u>.

> "Remember Sara," her mother said, "you can only begin at the beginning". "But, I don't even know where that is," Sara said. They watched the windows of the houses across the street light up one by one.
>
> "The universe is only people like you and me, and your desk and this room, and those houses..."
> "...and the tree outside my window?" Sara asked.
> Her mother nodded. They watched the leaves of the tree rustle in the evening wind.
>
> Sara smiled. "I think I know where to begin now," she said. Sara's mother gave her a kiss and left her to herself.
>
> Sara pulled her chair up to her desk. She moved her paper a little to the left and a little to the right. She picked up the fat, round brush and dipped it in the water in her green glass.
>
> Sara swirled the brush in a tin of deep-brown watercolour, and she began...with her tree.

Like Sara, when my story began, I wanted to write about the "whole universe". I wanted to be able to capture the transformative process of my work, to take what had been lived and somehow find words for it. And yet, as Sara's mother says, "the universe is only people, like you and me." It is through writing this story, the story of myself and "the universe" that I have given words to the "as yet unarticulated knowing", to the deeply felt embodied sense of myself in the world, of myself-in-relation. And in doing so, I have come to understand how I can truly be myself, as a woman, as a

mother, as a woman and mother who also works with teachers. Like Sara, I too have learned the lesson of beginning with, and trusting what I know. And my beginning -- my home -- the place where I start from, is my relation with my child.

It is my child who enabled me to return home, calling me out of my singleness "to escape the closure of my own identity" (Levinas, 1985), enabling me to imagine a different way of being-in-relation to others. It is through my child that I become capable, in Simone Weil's words, of a "way of looking [that] is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own content in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is in all his truth" (Weil, 1951, p. 115). It was through my living as a woman and mother that I came to know, in a deeply felt embodied way, Weil's notion of attentive love. It was through my relationship with my child that I learned to ask, "What are you going through?" and to wait to hear the answer, entering and embracing the reality of the child.

There is, of course, a fundamental difference between children and teachers. Teachers are not children and therefore how I might teach them is obviously different in many ways to how I might teach children. And yet, despite these differences, there is a strong resemblance in my way of being-in-relation with both the teacher and the child. There was a deeply felt resonance between my relations with children and my relations with adult students. This resonance resided not in the other, but rather, lived inside me. It was embodied in my response to the world as a woman and mother, as a mother who lives with children and who teaches those who teach children. It was through my lived sense of my relation to my child, of being a mother, that I found a way *to be* in relation with the teachers of children with whom I worked: supporting their "growing image" of themselves, the evolution of

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their thinking, their ways of being with children; living with both an acceptance of what is, and an openness to their becoming; and creating the conversation, the environment where they could speak to what was in their own minds and hearts.

My experience, my living in the mother/child relation and my questioning what is a mother's practice was at the heart of understanding my work as a teacher of those who teach children. It was, I now see, through my way of being-in-relation with my child that I came to know, to understand a way to be with teachers. It was through my sense of this relationship that I found a way to *be with* teachers: in the same way that I hoped they would be *with* children. It was through my lived sense of the maternal relation that I was able to offer a response that spoke to the possibilities of both the teacher and the child. As a mother I learned to trust the coming-to-be of my own child. I strove to understand him and respond to his "growing image of himself". And yet, in my relationship with him, I continued to work toward an ethical ideal, encouraging him to care, to step out of his own framework of reference into that of the other.

As a teacher, I also learned to trust the coming-to-be of the teachers of children with whom I worked. I strove to understand them and respond to their "growing image" of themselves. And yet, in the same way as I did with my child, I also worked toward caring as an ethical ideal. I continued to nurture a way of being that "steadfastly promoted both the welfare of the child and that of the relation" (Noddings, 1986, p. 497). Living with the teacher and the child in this way created the space for them both, for the voice of the teacher and the voice of the child, to be heard.

It was in my living with both the teacher and the child that I was always reminded I was a teacher who worked alongside teachers *of children.*

To some, perhaps, only a difference in language and yet to me, it represented a difference in living. To live out my work in this way meant they were both always with me, making it impossible for me to accept any view or interpretation of teacher education that confirmed only one of them.

As I think about my experience, I realize that it is my being in relation to these others that has enabled me to see "the possibilities of the other as my own possibilities" (Levinas, 1985, p. 70). It is through my relationships with others that I have come to know and to tell my own story, the story of myself-in-relation. As I have struggled to give voice to the embodied knowing and being, there have been many others looking on with me, confirming my best self, breathing hope into my words, into my very being, helping me to say what has been, and to imagine what might be. It was through the many others I encountered in my journey that I have found my way home, arriving where I started "to know the place for the first time." In speaking what is in *my own* mind and heart, I have learned how I can truly be myself as a woman, a mother, as a woman and mother who teaches children and teachers. In giving voice to what was unspoken, I have come to see the "truth about myself and my world" (Pearson, 1986). I have learned to *be with* my condition -- to be at home in relationship.

This journey has required the attentive love of a mother, the commitment to listen and a belief in my own possibilities. In the same way that I learned to trust the coming-to-be of my child, of the teachers with whom I worked, I learned to trust my own coming-to-be. If we are to nurture the coming-to-be of others we must, I now understand, first trust our own experience, our own becoming. We must listen to the voices of others, but even more closely, we must listen to ourselves. In doing so, "we are not attempting to transform the world, but we are allowing ourselves to be

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transformed" (Noddings, 1984, p. 79), and in that transformation, the world that we see and know and feel can also change.

EPILOGUE

MY END IS MY BEGINNING

I reflect back to the questions that have echoed through my experience: *what does it mean to be a woman? to be a mother? to be a teacher of teachers and of children? to be a mother who teaches children? to be a mother who teaches teachers?* These are not questions that had voice when I first began my studies for I had learned that the public and the private should be separate, that feeling and thinking could not live beside each other. I denied the importance of my own personal history and experience, and in doing so, did not have words for the deeply felt embodied understandings that lived inside me. However, over the past years as I have moved in and out of this dialogue between self and other, as I have been confronted with the other at its most different and at its most resonant, as I have constructed new understandings from the experiences of others and from my own experience, I now understand that questions of *what it means to be a woman, a mother, a teacher of teachers and of children, a mother who teaches children, and a mother who teaches teachers,* are questions I cannot escape.

Such questions of maternal practice cannot be contained in our private lives. I share the view of Madeline Grumet:

> that by withholding information about the parent/child relation
> from the public discourse of educational theory we deny our
> own experience and our own knowledge. Our silence certifies
> the "system" and we become complicit with theorists and
> teachers who repudiate the intimacy of nurture in their own
> histories and in their work in education. (Grumet, 1986, p. 28)

It is indeed time that the voice of the mother is heard in education (Noddings, 1984). And yet, my own experience has told me that if mothers, if women and men who are responsible for the care of children, are to truly give words to our experience, it must be spoken in a voice that describes the truths of our lives as we know them. If we are to speak in a voice that truly feels authentic, it must be a voice that does not repudiate, but rather, validates the intimacy of nurture. It must be a voice that names the truth of our lives as care-takers and describes the complexity, the struggle of living in the world as one who cares for others. It is when the struggle is denied and rendered invisible that thinking -- living -- becomes unauthentic.

Living authentically as one who cares for others often requires "jumping outside the frames and systems that authorities provide to create your own frame" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 134). It means believing in and finding words to give voice to your own experience. Finding your own voice, midwifing your own coming-to-be, I have learned, asks for the "gifts and graces of time" (Berry, 1983, p. 205). It takes time to "name our selves, to uncover the hidden, to make our selves present" (Rich, 1979, p. 246). Perhaps, in the end, this is the most profound lesson I have learned on my journey. Perhaps, this is the most profound lesson we can all learn from listening to the voices of mothers. For mothers, those who *live with* and *care for* children, *live* the German poet Rilke's words:

> All progress must come from deep within and cannot be pressed
> or hurried by anything. Everything is gestation and then
> bringing forth. (Rilke, 1963, pp. 29-30)

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