INNER CONTRADICTIONS AND HIDDEN PASSAGES:
PEDAGOGICAL TACT AND THE HIGH-QUALITY VETERAN URBAN TEACHER
EN VUE DE CURRERE

A dissertation submitted to the
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by

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There is no box
made by God nor us
but that the top can be blown off
and the sides flattened out
to make a dance floor
on which to celebrate life.

(Caraway, 1974, p. 15)
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama has often pointed out, we are all the same “insofar as each of us desires happiness, and doesn’t want suffering.” Yet we live in different places – and in an infinite variety of ways; we each have our unique perspective on and experience of the world. We are the same and yet we are different. We are, as the poet e.e. cummings [1954] so wonderfully put it, “so both and oneful.” (Glazer, 1999, p. 79)

For the urban teacher, there often seems to be much more different than same in the world’s assessment of urban education. The urban school, for most, is the Great Unknown. It is a place to drive by in your car with the doors locked. It provokes fear, accusation, prurience, power-mongering, and finger-pointing. Everyone has an opinion, invited or uninvited. And yet, the urban teacher arrives at school to enter the world of the other each day, where the teacher, herself or himself, is the other, sometimes for a career.

I embody the presence of an incongruous absence. My life’s work is prescribed as the usual remedy to “the passage of a failure” (Jones, 1990. p. 75) that describes urban education over the past century, but my experience remains silent philosophically and only barely recognized numerically. I am a high-quality veteran urban teacher. The adjectives describing/dividing my profession are assigned and acknowledged by location and vocation through coded language from afar. Each fall, America’s teachers checkmark
questionnaires to determine their public status as a high-quality teacher (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). Yes, I have a bachelor’s degree (doctoral candidate); full state certification or licensure (K-12 French; K-12 Library Science; 7-12 English); and a demonstration of competency (more checkmarks on three-part carbonless paper through the years). This technocratic assessment of my life’s work does not illuminate the peculiarities of the rollicking relationship among curriculum, student, and teacher that I have experienced on my passage toward understanding the “thoughtful knowledge of pedagogy” (van Manen, 2002, p. 56). My public story is a fraction on a chart.

Before I learned the vocabulary and named the theories, my decades of work in an urban school demonstrated my belief that “children should experience its corporeal, temporal and spatial dimensions in a positive manner” (van Manen, 2002, p. 70). Did my city classroom “remind children that all is not concrete and plastic…There are organic materials as well” (p. 74)? Intuitively, I practiced pedagogical thoughtfulness and its expression, pedagogical tact. I studied the atmosphere in my room rocking back and forth between the unique and the universal with chalk on my skirt, a book under my arm, an ear for LaKumba/Marquetta/Ozzie/Martina/Kimani/Mai/Jazmin, and an eye on the clock. Hope animated the way that I lived in relationship with the children and distinguished my “pedagogical life from a non-pedagogical one” (p. 81).

As “the child is a human coming into being, ‘be-coming’” (van Manen, 1991, p. 34), so the urban child became my teacher. In my own process of be-coming, through “imitation and creation” (p. 35), I was “reminded of possibilities still open to myself” (p. 35). Thus, I stepped forward into formal study in the evening in order to understand
more fully the orientation “toward understanding the pedagogical goodness of one’s own or other’s past actions with respect to the lives of these children” (p. 41) during the day.

Pedagogical situations are at the same time situation specific and a “reflection on the life contexts of children, and on the significance of the values embedded within them” (van Manen, 1991, p. 55). *Currere* seeks to make sense of the everyday educational experience, in this case, in an urban setting. Through autobiography (Pinar, 1974, 1975; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) centered in hermeneutic phenomenology, the lived experience, including race, class, and gender (Edgerton, 1991; Jackson, 1992), is explored seeking intentionality by cycling life’s temporal moments. *Currere* was appropriate to this research as the teacher invited the body/mind into the classroom through relationship with the past (*The Regressive Moment*), the future (*The Progressive Moment*), and the present (*The Analytic Moment*) toward synthesis (*The Synthetical Moment*). In *currere*, the prize is always an *end in view* (Dewey, 1938), rather than the exit door.

Pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact mean understanding “when to be silent, where to support, and how to phrase a question that helps clarify the significance of the shared thoughts and feelings” (van Manen, 1991, p. 86-87). Counting the checkmarks on the questionnaire provides an efficient evaluation toward the appellation *high-quality*. This codified, standardized evaluation is exterior. The same applies to the racing/pacing guide affixed to lesson plans in order to meet the timed goal of the looming test. While the guides do not prevent teaching, neither do they support pedagogical tact or thoughtfulness. Time is to be filled not resting in silence. Support comes in the form of manuals directing “what problems to assign on each page, for each activity” (Bamberger, 2005, p. 12) notwithstanding who is or is not seated in or standing by the chairs.
Complaining that her days in the classroom “are so scripted and bland that the creative process of really teaching has become a covert operation” (p. 12), Gina Bamberger, a third-grade teacher, summed her frustration, “Sometimes I feel like teachers are viewed as vehicles to deliver curriculum, but we aren’t allowed to drive” (p. 15). Her inability to practice pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact was precluded by “district and state radar” (p. 12) that disrupted the creative process in her classroom.

“Thoughtfulness, tactfulness, is a peculiar quality that has as much to do with what we are as with what we do. It is a knowledge that issues from the heart as well as from the head” (van Manen, 2002, p. 9). Linear regulation does not concede location, urban or suburban, or vocation, job or calling. It does not recognize tenured experience, home experience, community experience, or no experience. “The uniqueness of children, the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives” (p. 8) is supplanted by apprehension in a “place of mismeetings” (Baumann, 1993, p. 157).

In the urban school with its oft disapproving label, there are expanding “attempts by the educational bureaucracy to bring the processes of instruction under increasingly administrative and centralized control” (van Manen, 1991, p. 99). In contrast, Palmer’s (1998) evaluation of high-quality as an interior phenomenon steps outside, even on, the assigned lines. Neither linear nor positivistic, it is an appraisal of pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact. The designation, high-quality, is positioned in the triadic relation of teacher, student, and subject. Akin to currere, this valuation is hermeneutic in interpretation and phenomenological in description.

In these bounded times, students are publicly judged and rated by color and gender on reports from a protected distance. They are classed before they enter the school
and again by the data. Equally categorized are their teachers who arrive to school in as sundry condition as the students. Assessments from the outside are generalized to those of us living on the inside. The collective is safe; the particular is frightful.

What of those who teach the student judged lesser by the world? Mother Teresa (1910-1997), winner of 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, answered, in referencing her care for “the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for” on the streets of Calcutta, “The miracle is not that we do this work, but that we are happy to do it”. It is to this rarity, the high-quality veteran urban teacher who returns year after year to serve when so many others have fled, that I turned as the heart of this study. The expert teacher (Bray, Kramer, & LePage, 2000) in this maligned setting is collectively labeled and uniquely unheard, both within and without the school. Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) suggested that we come to know our world through particularity and place embracing “pieces of love and fragments of community” (p. 7) via complicated conversation based in a “belief that the present is continually instructed by a living past” (p. 9). However, it is challenging, physically, emotionally, and intellectually, for a pathologically busy veteran teacher to deliberate the relation of the curriculum to the knower with other successful senior teachers (Greene, 1991). It is extremely problematical to engage in “authentic and complicated conversation” (Pinar, 1999, p. xi) in an urban environment where the new are overwhelmed and the veteran unvoiced or absent. The pathology is silence (Miller, 2005) both literal and epistemological.

Therefore, this inquiry uplifted the variety, depth, and breadth of the nature of the experience of pedagogical tact (van Manen, 1990, 1991) for the high-quality veteran urban teacher through his/her own voice. The study was centered in complicated
conversation “against the appeal of an orderly society” (Kliebard, 1998, p. 26) and toward a community of truth (Palmer, 1998). Here the particular, so often feared, disregarded, and unspoken/unheard, was sought, even embraced in “the creation of meaning that utilizes all the potential given to each person” (Macdonald, 1971, p. 105).

Statement of the Problem

While state report cards (Warsmith & Byard, 2003) and federal assessments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003) evaluate urban schools as failing and their teachers as the least competent and least experienced (Kain & Singleton, 1996; Olson, 2003), the high-quality veteran teacher remains in service in the urban school. In daunting circumstances (Heller, 2003; Thomas, 2003), the urban teacher teaches where few high-quality teachers choose to stay (Bracey, 2002; Donsky, 2003; Haycock, 2002/2003; Olson). Moreover, once at school, this experienced, expert teacher is pressured to conform in practice to the federally-mandated standardization required of students, teachers, and schools (Rich & Almozlino, 1999; Tye & O’Brien, 2002) by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The practitioner of pedagogical tact is “the most personal embodiment of a pedagogical thoughtfulness” (van Manen, 1991, p. 9). Conversely, “a technological approach to education assumes that teaching can be taught only be means of generalization and general techniques” (p. 9). Here lies the dilemma for the senior teacher who trusts, through his/her own “be-coming” (p. 34), that “experience can open up understanding that restores a sense of embodied knowing” (p. 9) in a recognition “of the past (and present), of tradition and culture” (p. 16). Refusing the theory of tabula rasa either for the teacher or the student, the high-quality teacher manifests pedagogical
tact in small silent episodes unnoticed, unrecognized, and overlooked by the panoptical
eye of the cyberculture (Pinar, 2004).

Suburban schools offer more money, increased status, and desirable
circumstances (Bracey, 2002; Donsky, 2003; Haycock, 2002/2003; Olson, 2003); and
yet, the expert veteran teacher remains to teach the poor. Exercising sensitivity to that
which is unique, the practitioner’s practice of pedagogical tact mediates through speech,
silence, eyes, gesture, atmosphere, and example giving “new and unexpected shape to
unanticipated situations” (van Manen, 1991, p. 187). In a revolutionary act of
autobiography (Pinar, 2004), this research, centered in currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976),
raised the voice of the unvoiced/silent by seeking the essence of the experience of
pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher.

Purpose Statement

Given the contradiction of high-quality teaching as both personal and connected,
as described by Palmer’s spiritual definition (1998), and the federally-mandated
standardization that expects the teacher to conform (NCLB, 2002), the purpose of this
phenomenological study is to reveal the untold story of the lived experience of
pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher and the meaning ascribed to
the experience in professional life.

Research Questions

Research Question I

What is the nature of the experience of pedagogical tact for a high-quality veteran
urban teacher?
Research Question II

What meaning does a high-quality veteran urban teacher ascribe to the experience?

Definition of Terms

Much of the literature interchanges the adjectives high-quality and expert in reference to teachers all the while varying within their definitions. High-quality is a term used by practitioners. Annually, teachers are required to complete a federal form that quantifies the descriptor high-quality for each teacher, school, and school system. This form is freely available to the public; the results are published in the media. In other instances, high-quality is defined at divergent points as illustrated from the positivist, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002), to the postmodern, Palmer (1998).

Expert Teacher:

Steffy and Wolfe (1997) developed a model of the phases of teacher growth: novice, apprentice, professional, expert, distinguished, emeritus. “Most school faculties are composed of large numbers of professional teachers. They form the backbone of the profession. They are competent, solid, and dependable” (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000, p. 7). The expert teacher moves one step further in skilled practice. In reference to the Steffy and Wolfe model, Bray, Kramer, and LePage (2000) defined the expert teacher:

1. “Expert teachers continue to honor their commitment to student learning and to their own learning and teaching experiences. They continue to maintain and create relationships with colleagues, parents, and students” (p. 77).
2. “Expert teachers have reached the highest standards of teaching and often view themselves as members of a profession whose boundaries extend beyond the schoolhouse” (p. 77).

3. Expert teachers are “‘arational,’ in that they have an intuitive grasp of a situation and seem to sense in nonanalytic, nondeliberative ways the appropriate response to make. They show fluid performance” (Berliner, 1988, p. 11).

4. “Expert teachers are characterized by the continual quest for professional growth” (Bray, Kramer, & LePage, p. 78).

5. “Teachers reaching the expert phase have a vast experiential base that enables them to serve as effective leaders” (p. 79).

6. “Ethical behavior is a given with expert teachers. They strive to serve as positive role models to their students and colleagues” (p. 79).

High-Quality Teacher: (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

1. Bachelor’s degree
2. Full state certification or licensure
3. Demonstration of Competency

High-Quality Teacher: (Palmer, 1998)

1. “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10).
2. “Good teachers share one trait: a strong sense of personal identity infuses their work” (p. 10).
3. “Good teachers join self and subject and students in the fabric of life” (p. 11).
4. “Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness” (p. 11).

**Pedagogical Hope:**

“Pedagogy is conditioned by hope for the child” (van Manen, 1991, p. 67)

This experience of hope distinguishes a pedagogical life from a non-pedagogical one. The pedagogical interpretation of hope also makes clear that we can only hope for children we truly love, not in a romantic idealistic sense, but in the sense of pedagogical love. What hope give us is the simple avowal: “I will not give up on you. I know that you can make a life for yourself.” (p. 68)

“Hope felt…by the teacher is a mode of being” (p. 67).

**Pedagogical Love:**

“Pedagogy is conditioned by love and care for the child”


“The pedagogical love of the educator for these children becomes the precondition for the pedagogical relation to grow” (p. 66).

A teacher’s affection for a pupil, like a parents’ affection for a child, is premised to a large extent on the value of becoming and growth, on the value this has for the developing identity, character, or selfhood of the young person (p. 67).

**Pedagogical Tact and Thoughtfulness:**

We should see that thoughtfulness and tact go hand in hand. They complement each other. Without thoughtfulness there is no tact, and without tact, thoughtfulness is at best a merely internal state. Thoughtfulness is the product of self-reflective reflection on human experience. In a sense, tact is less a form of knowledge than it is a way of acting. It is the sensitive practice of heedfulness.
Tact is the effect one has on another person even if the tact consists, as it often does, in holding back, waiting. (van Manen, 1991, p. 127)

Pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact may be seen to constitute the essence and excellence of pedagogy. We might say that thoughtfulness constitutes the internal aspect and tactfulness the external aspect of pedagogy. Pedagogy is structured like tact. (p. 130)

*Pedagogical Tact:*


“Tact is the practical language of the body – it is the language of acting in pedagogical moments” (p. 122).

*Pedagogical Thoughtfulness:*

“Pedagogical thoughtfulness is a multifaceted and complex mindfulness toward children” (van Manen, 1991, p. 8).

“Pedagogical thoughtfulness seems to be a reflective capacity, it is formed by careful reflection on past experiences” (van Manen, 2002, p. 43).

*Urban Teacher:*

The urban teacher is the teacher of the child in the social space described as “high-poverty, high minority, and low-achieving schools” (Olson, 2003, p. 9).

*Veteran Teacher:*

The veteran teacher has a minimum of 15 years of teaching service. Fessler (1992) identified this stage as a time of career stability where one may find patterns of maintenance, stagnation, or renewed growth.
Significance and Potential Contributions

In pondering ways that this hermeneutic phenomenological study based in currere is like to contribute to educational theory, policy, and practice centered in curriculum, I considered who might be interested in the results and with what groups the results might be shared: “Scholars? Policymakers? Practitioners? Members of similar groups? Individuals or groups usually silenced or marginalized?” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 34) My true mission in this study was to illuminate the Everydayness (van Manen, 1984a) of the unvoiced experience of the high-quality veteran urban teacher and his/her experience of pedagogical tact with the student and the curriculum.

Loeb and Reininger (2004) recently published their research on Public Policy and Teacher Labor Markets conducted through The Education Policy Center at Michigan State University. This national study concluded, in particular, that “the inequitable distribution of high-quality teachers” (p. i) away from schools with “low-income and low-achieving students” (p. i) perpetuates “inferior learning opportunities for students in our nation’s highest priority schools” (p. i). High-poverty, low-performing schools have difficulty attracting and retaining teachers “with higher test scores and more prestigious educational backgrounds” (p. ii). Teachers return to whence they came whether suburbia or city. The teaching population is relatively stable. The first teaching position is usually an indicator of a career. Teachers choose to teach where wages are highest, the students achieve like the teacher, and the school is close to their home or similar to the one that they attended as students. In other words, favorable, familiar working conditions attract the highest-quality teachers. Conversely, because of these characteristics, urban schools must be net importers of the most talented teachers.
Urban districts often face a second disadvantage. Historically, the graduates of urban high schools have received less adequate educations, forcing the cities to hire from a less-qualified pool of potential teachers, even when the number of local candidates is adequate. Preferences for proximity thus lead to the perpetuation of disparities in the qualifications of teachers. The local nature of the teacher labor market increases the difficulty of breaking the cycle of inadequate education in schools serving the least advantaged students.

(Loeb & Reininger, 2004, p. 50)

In sum, the best-prepared new and experienced teachers continue to shun high-poverty schools. In a second recent national study, Balfanz and Legters (2004) conducted research toward *Locating the Dropout Crisis*. They cited 2,000 high schools in which the freshman class shrinks by more than 40% or more by graduation. I found the school in which I work listed amidst the other identified *dropout factories*.

I looked for myself in the Balfanz and Legters (2004) and Loeb and Reininger (2004) studies. I am less than 1% of the population. I am barely on the charts at all. I am discernible by a fraction in a table or bar chart. My voice is nowhere. My life’s work and the meanings that I ascribe to that work are absent. I embody the “presence of an absence” (Grumet, 1988, p. xiii). I am that which is required, but my story remains disregarded (Paige, 2002).

To get to my school, I pass through many lines of demarcation marked by gender, race, and class. My school was once renowned as the *High School of the Midwest* (White). Now, the public disparagingly remarks, “Isn’t it too bad about its present condition (Black)?” I drive into the *Great Unknown* that my neighbors have escaped.
Supporting the reconceptualist’s call for the inclusion of disparate voices in curriculum work, *currere*, particularly those of “gendered, racialized, classed creatures” (Pinar, 2002, p. 109), I advocate for the *Lebenswelt* of the high-quality veteran urban teacher in the practice of pedagogical tact as subject and object of research.

I am the oldest of the baby-boomers. I will retire from the public schools in 2008. Already, the very large parade that I lead is exiting America’s schools. Bundled with the chaos resulting from the loss of new teachers who quit and experienced teachers who transfer, the pending retirement of the baby-boomers multiples exponentially the problem of placing a highly-qualified teacher, even with the basest of definitions, in every classroom.

The research that I have reviewed studied why teachers leave, but did not give voice to those who have come, and stayed, where others refused to tread. These studies suggested the usual remedies, money and working conditions or forced compliance through contract (Bracey, 2002; Cymrot, 2004; Donsky, 2003; Haycock, 2002/2003; Olson, 2003); but they did not address how/why the best teacher would choose to transfer to a *dropout factory*, crossing lines of demarcation, within and without the school, and find a home in a third world country/school in *Strangeland*. If we invite the body and mind into the research, we collect the particular toward the universal. Right now, as historically (Jones, 1990), the unvoiced high-quality veteran urban teacher is collectively branded in the label affixed to the school, and school system, through governmental reports, newspaper editorials, and real estate descriptions.

The stories of teachers, like me, initiate truth-telling and theory. We move from the particular to the universal and back again with our bodies and minds in daily practice
and in reflection upon that practice (Kesson, 1999). It is not easy to teach in a poverty school. I practice pedagogical tact (van Manen, 1990, 1991) often to epistemological silence; but I practice pedagogical love to ontological fullness. An illustration of this varied and rich avocation could be an invitation to other high-quality teachers to overcome fear and appraisal and enter into the resonant continuing story of this often veiled world. This study, through *currere*, could affect the theory of the *other*, if there is such an entity (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001), the person standing in front of the class, and curriculum work with the students. Right now, nobody at my school approximates me, despite my repeated invitations to expert faculty within our school district to transfer deeper into the inner city. This research might find another high-quality veteran urban teacher to take my place in 2008.

In addition, an important point to this phenomenological research is the post-structuralist question “about the otherness of the other” (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001, p. 37). Is the notion of the *other* any different than any other hegemonic notion of difference? Does it not encourage collectivism? This research based in *currere* may well “challenge race-based theories of identity that tend to totalize identity and race as fixed in embodied difference, regardless of whether those differences are theorized on constructivist or essentialist grounds” (Luke, 1995, p. 51). Hamilton and McWilliam concluded that categories have been invented “for elaborating education as a field of pedagogical possibility” (p. 39) for three decades in the most august journals. While being useful, these inventions became problematic, permitting and excluding language. Some of the core assumptions about educational research have been called into question. “Our fictive categories are by now well on the way to becoming fixed categories in a
process that we no longer control” (p. 39). An examination of the named categories in this research may support a reexamination of these fixed, fictive categories.

A third potential contribution is found in the question *What knowledge is of most worth?* (Spencer, 1860) and/or, in this case, *Whose knowledge is of most worth?* At Kent State University, on October 20, 2004, Kathy Mellor, National Teacher of the Year, spoke to students and teachers about the *Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations.* She asked, *Is This Social Justice?* Essentially, her speech was about pedagogical tact, the teacher, the curriculum, and the minority student. As a veteran English-as-a-Second-Language teacher at award-winning Davisville Middle School, Mellor works with students who are not the norm in White, wealthy North Kingstown, New Jersey. Her students arrive speaking a different language at home than the language spoken at school. Where her experience is with the minority in a majority school, my experience is with the majority in a minority school.

Mellor referred to her students as not culturally deprived, but culturally different. She set aside the label of the *other* concluding that both separation and its twin segregation correspond to inherent inequality. Therefore, she works with her children all over the school, while maintaining a classroom, a dwelling place, which is peaceful, productive, and safe. She drew a clear parallel between teacher expectations and student expectations. “There are not high expectations for all kids.” For Mellor, that is a self-fulfilling prophecy in America’s schools. “Smart is not something you are; smart is something you get.” In this statement, Mellor valued the knowledge of the students in her classroom. Their knowledge was of most worth. Their experience was the basis from which knowledge grew not onto which it was attached (Dewey, 1902/1990).
Mellor’s speech invited questions of the *other*, teacher expectations of the minority child, knowledge, pedagogical tact, social justice, and separation/segregation.

A fourth potential and related contribution to educational research is the exploration of academic vocationalism rather than academic intellectualism. “We cannot begin to respond to the displaced and deferred racism and misogyny we suffer today until we face the internalized consequences of our decades-long subjugation, namely a pervasive and crippling anti-intellectualism” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). Pinar suggested that we engage in complicated conversation “with our academic subjects, our students, and ourselves” (p. 9). “Teachers ought not be only school-subject specialists; I [Pinar] suggest that they become private-and-public intellectuals who understand that self-reflexivity, intellectuality, interdisciplinarity, and erudition are inseparable as are the subjective and the social spheres themselves” (p. 10). If we link academic knowledge, subjectivity, and society, we realize that for many, schools, teachers, homes, experiences, and talents are disparate. Students and teachers are caught in a waking nightmare, where the teachers, whom Pinar refers to as “sitting ducks” (p. 69), attempt to practice academic vocationalism, while staying within the boundaries of the Carnegie Unit. Silence surrounds the biographic situation, because “academic vocationalism fails to insist on connecting academic knowledge to self-formation and historical moment” (p. 255).

If we refuse the scapegoating of teachers through the authoritarianism of academic vocationalism in favor of complicated conversation that connects the self to society by bringing the private sphere forward into the public sphere, we abandon infantilized positions for the relational chaos of ideas (Doll, 1993). “If theory does not exist to provide practical solutions to everyday problems, why does it exist?” (Pinar,
Perhaps, this complicated conversation, based in *currere*, will work to unite the private and public spheres of the student, teacher, and curriculum as they engage one another at school.

A fifth potentially significant contribution to educational research will be the coupling of theory and experience. Smith and Geoffrey (1968) found fundamental conflicts between theory and the experience of the teacher. Jackson (1968/1990) approached his research “from the standpoint of giving shape and meaning to our lives” (p. 4) in the midst of *The Daily Grind* (Chapter I). This research, like that of Smith and Geoffrey and Jackson, will move from the particular to universal. Universals arise out of curricular activities centered in the experiences of the child during “moments of mutual respect and dignity” (Paley, 1999, p. 64). They appear within and without the classroom as the teacher reflects on the relation of the knower to the known.

Teachers cry they have no time or use for theory, when actually they create and consider theory each day as they practice their craft. This research should help to illuminate and express theory beyond *Storying the Self* (Goodson, 1998). “Narratives or life stories are a vital source for our studies of the social world in general and teaching in particular. But they are singular, selective, and specific (both in time and context)” (p. 10). Goodson found the stories representative of technical competency. They did not address social or political priorities, unless they connected to theories of context in order to “move from commentary on what is to cognition of what might be” (p. 14). Instead, Goodson urged the linkage of teacher stories to “patterns of social relations and interactions which comprise the social world” (p. 10) which is curriculum. He did not deny the men and women, particularly women, who find their “fundamental existential
identity” (Casey, 1992, p. 206) in teaching. Heartfelt statements such as “I’m a teacher at heart. I will always be a teacher” (p. 206) are heard and received respectfully. What Goodson sought was the use of that life history told as anecdotes and stories, “everyday theorizing” (van Manen, 1991, p. 294), as reflective data through which to reformulate and restructure systems thereby embedding the teacher voice in “broader cognitive maps of influence and power” (p. 19). Currere addresses this concern of story and theory in its recursive structure centered in Everydayness (van Manen, 1984a).

A sixth significant contribution to educational research is the hermeneutic act of conversation in which we move from collectivity to becoming “so both and oneful” (cummings, 1954) in a confluence of past, present, and future. Van Manen (1990) regarded conversation as a triad. Here, by moving forward not only the phenomenon, but also the relation with/between the speakers, we connect our public and private spheres toward wholeness. Both body and mind are present. The nightmare of schizophrenia and violence is replaced with the descriptors of Kathy Mellor’s (2004) classroom, that is, safe, productive, and peaceful.

A seventh contribution to practice, policy, and theory could be the move from standardization toward artistic and aesthetic experience, that is to say, from curriculum as object to curriculum as text. A second larger challenge, the issue of democracy/authority, looms over the debate between the experiential curriculum (text) and scientific curriculum (object). Bobbitt (1918) and Thorndike (1924) could form curriculum for the student and teacher based on the numbers. The results will determine the curriculum for the child, with both conceived as object. For Dewey (1938), the experience of the subject, society, and child, and the reflection on that experience determined the curriculum.
Despite the warnings of the prophet of servant leadership, Robert K. Greenleaf (1982), that “no one, absolutely no one, should be given unchecked power over others” (p. 7), federal, state, and academic experts who espouse curriculum as object believe that the righteous practice is to determine what is best for the other’s future and operationalize the objectives. “The appeal of an orderly society” (Kliebard, 1998, p. 26) is codified in law and policy and affixed to lesson plans of teachers across the country as they implement curriculum under the panoptical eye of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Reconceptualism, with its “overt political emphasis, underscoring the ideological dimensions of schooling” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 118), is the birthplace of currere. The questions of race, gender, and politics which fuel reconceptualism may raise the consciousness of practitioners, theorists, and participants in our curriculum work.

Limitations

This was a study of the experience of pedagogical tact for high-quality veteran urban teacher. It was not a study of the average or low-performing urban teacher, new or experienced. It was not a study of the continuing problem of attracting and retaining the very best experienced teacher to the most difficult school. The data in this study was not quantifiable or generalizable; its results are transferable. This study was an illumination and an invitation into a deep, rich tenure in a disparaged setting. The voice and heart of the urban teacher in the practice of pedagogical tact, routinely inaudible, sounded clearly in long experience and meaning making.

Several years ago, John and I were in a graduate education class. The room was filled with many suburban and a few rural teachers. Together, the two school systems in which John and I worked served many more children than all the other school systems
represented in that university classroom. Our travails, quandaries, and experiences were significant individually and collectively; but our stories of practice met superiority, misunderstanding, quick-fixes, dismissal, fear, etc. Urban teachers learn to censor their stories in public. Sitting in a “conspiracy of silence” (Pinar, 2002, p. 103), we overlook “the Secret in the middle” (Frost, 1936/1979) even when we are in the company of colleagues. “Silence surrounds us as teachers” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 247).

This study was written, as much as possible, in the language of practice in support of an *Entry into Everydayness* (van Manen, 1984a) and to avoid the academic “coded, scriptural signaling” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 197) that so many practitioners find exclusionary. The mission of this “practitioner scholar is everyperson. Nurse, teacher, physician, dancer. Postal worker, violinist, and parent” (Pryor, 2002, p. 33). I would like anyone who cares about urban education, and the students, teachers, and their curriculum work therein, to read this paper as “both as a calling and an intentioned sense making” (p. 42). This research bypassed bar charts and tables for the dismissed voices of the best senior teachers and their experience of pedagogical tact in urban schools.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Marshall and Rossman (1999) divided the literature review into two sections. The first section provided the framework for the research, in this case, *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). With the reconceptualist’s point of view centered in race, class, and gender (Edgerton, 1991; Jackson, 1992), this study of the conflicted experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher supported *Entry into Everydayness* (van Manen, 1984a) in a recursive “inward journey” (Slattery, 1995, p. 56) of past, future, and present (van Manen, 1991) in order to realize synthesis, the universal. The assumptions of the curriculum theory reconceptualism centered in phenomenology resting in autobiography (Slattery) were identified toward revealing *The Nightmare That Is Present* (Pinar, 2004).

This discussion of related literature is situated in the theoretical paradigm, interpretivism; the strategy of inquiry, phenomenology; and the intellectual tradition, hermeneutics, all of which fit under the very large postmodern umbrella held in the reconceptualist’s hand (Creswell, 1998; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). As will be exhibited in the review of literature, interpretivists share three conceptions of understanding:

1. They view human action as meaningful.
They evince an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and fidelity to the life world.

From an epistemological point of view, they emphasize the contribution of human subjectivity (i.e., intention) to knowledge without thereby sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193)

As Lebensphilosophers, “phenomenological analysis is principally concerned with understanding how the everyday, intersubjective world (the life world, or Lebenswelt) is constituted” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192). “Understanding is ‘lived’ or existential” (p. 196). Through the practical theory currere, it is the stripping away toward intention in which understanding is centered (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) in the revolving cycle of construction-deconstruction-reconstruction in the lived world. Phenomenology is the opportunity to “reconstruct the genesis of the objective meaning” (Outhwaite, 1975, p. 91). This reconstruction is situated in philosophical hermeneutics as “participative, conversational, and dialogic” (Schwandt, p. 195). Meaning is produced in the dialogue; it is not reproduced by the interpretivist. Assuming a philosophically hermeneutic stance, “understanding is interpretation” (p. 194).

Understanding, like action, always remains a risk and never leaves room for the simple application of a general knowledge of rules to the statements or texts to be understood. Furthermore where it is successful, understanding means a growth in inner awareness, which as a new experience enters into the texture of our own mental experience. Understanding is an adventure and, like any other adventure is dangerous…But…[i]t is capable of contributing in a special way to the
broadening of our human experiences, our self-knowledge, and our horizon, for everything understanding mediates is mediated along with ourselves. (Gadamer, 1981, pp. 109-110)

Responding to Joseph Schwab’s (1969) call for the practical by inviting teachers back into curriculum deliberation, I entered the literature review through the door of practical wisdom. When the field of curriculum theory was diagnosed as moribund (Schwab), dead (Huebner, 1976), and arrested (Pinar, 1978), the prescription was a more practical form of curriculum that might revive the field after the long-term care by Ralph Tyler (1949) and his theoretical partner Franklin Bobbitt (1918) had left the patient “devoid of life and vision” (Quinn, 2002, p. 234). Following the example of Nelson Haggerson’s life as testament (Wolfe & Pryor, 2002), I practice what I preach, and preach what I practice.

As practitioner scholar, *Everyperson* (Pryor, 2002), I embrace the phenomenon of equality of knowledge. Pryor suggested that we demythologize “the more traditional status of the practitioner” (p. 34) in support of practitioner scholarship based in knowledge, rigor, and *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) which is the path of this research. Along with Eisner (1982), Haggerson, (2002), and Pryor, “I happily count myself among those who view knowledge primarily as beautiful and artistic” (p. 35). My reconceptualist practice lends depth, liberation, intensity, goodness, accommodation, creativity, and reality as it interfaces with theory. To set my practice aside in the examination of theory invited, once again, the separation of theory and practice; I assert that the two should intertwine, roll about, and tumble toward sense making.
The second section of the literature review reviewed and critiqued published research that related to the two general research questions toward demonstrating the importance and viability of the research questions in this hermeneutic phenomenological study as a contribution to knowledge.

**Millennial Thinking**

The two major ingredients that made up social efficiency both as a response to social change and a particular way to reform the American curriculum were, first, an effort to inject into the curriculum a stronger element of direct social control than had ever existed before; and, second, an extraordinarily dedicated effort to trim waste in the curriculum by excising studies that had not demonstrated usefulness…The appeal of an orderly society more self-consciously regulated by social control along with the promise of reform effected not by massive social change but by cutting waste proved to be a potent combination.

(Kliebard, 1998, pp. 26-27)

It is very interesting to note that, like today, millennial thinking contributed to the rise of social efficiency. In 1998, I attended a lecture by Pulitzer Prize winning author Tom Wolfe at the Kent State University Stark Campus. Wolfe expressed concern about an absence of millennial thinking nationally or internationally. Historically, such anniversaries have become great periods of reflexive and futurist reflection and writing. Although he was completely wrung out from writing his just-published huge tome, *A Man in Full*, Wolfe (1998) announced that he would take on the task of millennial writing himself, if no such futurist and/or reflexive writings surfaced.
Fortunately, history fulfilled its calling and fine reflexive and futurist books appeared, such as *Ethics for the New Millennium* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV (Gyatso, 1999), the 1989 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. In reference to ethics and society, the Dalai Lama urged nations to reexamine curricula to promote international thinking and morality. Where Bobbitt and Thorndike’s social efficiency movement tried to control differences, the Dalai Lama sought to understand dissimilar experiences.

Here, history repeats itself as we find ourselves at war and in the midst of a social efficiency movement once again promising reform. We seek to reconcile differences through modes of control in national, and thus, state and district, educational policy (*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*). Modernist curricularists continue the defense of scientific and standardized ideologies championed by early 20th century curriculum leaders (Kliebard, 1998). The historical debate is the present debate. The leadership in the debates reflects the sides taken.

Theoretical and Philosophical Framework

Qualitative research as a field of inquiry has evolved through a complex evolution of discipline and practice. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) distinguished seven historical moments that “overlap and simultaneously operate in the present” (p. 2-3): “the traditional (1900-1950); the modernist or golden age (1950-1970); blurred genres (1970-1980); the crisis of representation (1986-1990); the postmodern, a period of experimental and new ethnographies (1990-1995); postexperimental inquiry (1995-2000); and the future, which is now (2000- )” (p. 3).
Narrative Inquiry

The future, the seventh moment [2000 - ], is concerned with moral discourse, with the development of sacred textualities. The seventh moment asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversation about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3)

Within qualitative research, narrative inquiry, both phenomenon and process (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000), “is almost exclusively associated with research on school practice, teacher or student-teacher biographies, and autobiographies” (Gudmundsdóttir, 2001, p. 226). This field of inquiry emerged during the fifth moment (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) in educational research. Denzin and Lincoln explained this moment as a time “where messy, uncertain, multivoiced texts, cultural criticism, and new experimental works will become more common, as will more reflexive forms of fieldwork, analysis, and intertextual representation” (p. 15). Children’s voices rang out; teachers planned interdisciplinary units in team meetings; new teachers found an experienced, sympathetic ear on the way to the faculty parking lot. One could hear the pages in a book being turned and the shuffle of feet at the water fountain.

As “educational researchers are gradually abandoning their search for one great truth” (Gudmundsdóttir, 2001, p. 229), narrative inquiry is emerging in the mainstream of interpretive research seeking “an understanding of school practice as it evolves in context-specific situations” (p. 229). Narrative is writing, inquiry, and a pedagogical tool concurrently (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 1994). In this inquiry, the hermeneutic circle/spiral rested at the heart of meaning making toward understanding in interpretive
research. Recognizing that reality is personal, socially constructed, and multilayered (Greene, 1988), the inquirer sought an *end-in-view* (Dewey, 1938), not true belief. The researcher rocked back and forth between *theoria*, theoretical knowledge, and *praxis*, practical knowledge, hermeneutically embracing democratic human freedom as complex and layered understanding through story.

*Hermeneutic Phenomenology*

“From an interpretivist point of view, what distinguishes human (social) action from the movement of physical objects is that the former is inherently meaningful” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 191). Hermeneutic phenomenology is the interpreted description of human science research (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is the description of lived experience. Hermeneutics is the interpretation of the experience. Hence, “the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 37). Phenomenological description elucidates some aspect of the lifeworld. In a confirming circle of inquiry, “a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience – is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience” (van Manen, p. 27).

Reconceptualism centers in phenomenology resting in autobiography (Slattery, 1995). In espousing a poor curriculum stripped of distractions and embracing experience, Pinar and Grumet (1976) freed researchers to release curriculum from its static, distant, dehumanizing pose, *curriculum as object*, and to locate vision for curriculum within the daily experience of students and teachers, *curriculum as text*. The proposed use of educational experience through autobiography focused “on internal experiences rather than external objectives” (p. 55) and recognized that “reconceptualized curriculum theory
understands time and history as proleptic, that is, as the confluence of past, present, and future” (p. 58). Toward the reconceptualization of curriculum, the theorists offered hermeneutics as the substitute for positivism, so prevalent at the time and in the present, replacing the subject/object dichotomization of positivism for the invitation to “endless problems of interpretation” (Grumet, 1988, p. 60).

Theory enlightens practice; practice enlightens theory. They are twin moments of the same reality (Aoki, 2004). The hermeneutic scholar moves from the particular to the universal and back to the particular while teaching, planning a lesson, or driving home from school. “Hermeneutic activity is simply the ordinary work of trying to make sense of things we don’t understand, things that fall outside of our taken–for–granted assumptions about the nature of experience” (Smith, 2002, p. 183).

A Phenomenological Attitude

Meaning is not found in experience. Meaning is found in the reflection on those experiences private and public, subjective and objective, outside and inside (Dewey, 1938; Grumet, 1992). Curriculum inquiry as currere, in the infinitive form, termed this the “recording/reflecting/distancing” (Doll, 2002, p. 44) of lived experiences. Thus, the first request of a reconceptualized curriculum “is the safe return of my own voice” (Grumet, p. 31). “It is this dialogue of each person, of an idiosyncratic history and genetic makeup with situation, place, people, artifacts, and ideas that we call educational experience” (p. 30). Hegemony and homogeneity are dismissed for the embrace of particularity and the heterogeneity.

In autobiography, there is recognition of a biographic situation located in historical time and cultural place (Pinar, 2004). “Biographic situation suggests a
structure of lived meaning that follows from past situations, but which contains, perhaps unarticulated, contradictions of past and present as well as anticipation of possible futures” (p. 36). This statement illustrates the recursive flow of the phenomenological foundation of autobiography as currere. As a veteran urban teacher, I can hardly speak in the moment. My 28 years of teaching accompany my every motion. I see a scene and paint the backdrop in a moment. My educational experience is temporal in interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938) as I loop through the past, present, and future toward the prize, synthesis.

Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm and Perspective Nesting Framework

**Currere**

What is a poor curriculum? What is currere?

A poor curriculum is one stripped of its distractions. Stripped of video tape, audio tape, fancy books and buildings, values clarification and individualized instruction…
I am experience. With each breath. Experience…experience of the collective curriculum that is the historical present. Regardless of context, I am running a course. *Currere* is to run.

It is active. And it is not. The track around which I run may be inalterably forced, but the rate at which I run, the quality of my running, my sensual-intellectual-emotional experience of moving bodily through space and time: all these are my creations; they are my responsibilities. (Pinar, 1976b. p. vii)

In describing the method of *currere*, Pinar (1976a) took as hypothesis that one is in a biographic situation both of one’s own making and as a result of previous situations. The point of coherence is the biography as it is lived, the *Lebenswelt*. It would be more manageable if biography were linear or logical, but a lived biography is relational, multidimensional, and, often, illogical. In the method of *currere*, there are many questions to be explored, but the principal question is *What has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience?* (p. 52)

*The Method* (Pinar, 1976a, 2004) seeks intention via a four-part structure:

1. *The Regressive Moment – The Past in the Present*
2. *The Progressive Moment – The Future in the Present*
3. *The Analytic Moment – Anti-Intellectualism and Complicated Conversation*
4. *The Synthetical Moment – Self-Mobilization and Social Reconstruction*

In its recursive structure, *currere* eschews presentism for curriculum as place of origin as well as destination. “The autobiographical process is dialectical reflection, designed to challenge self-as-object by requiring that the student see himself seeing” (Grumet, 1976, p. 70), thus revealing intentionality by stripping away habit, convention,
illusion and myth. Hence, the idea of the poor curriculum stripped clean of its artifacts, scheduling, time, and customs. By moving to differing ontological levels from which over time we viewed the biographic situation, we reconceptualized the problem, in this case, the lived experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher and the meanings ascribed thereto.

_Glimpses of Subjectivity_

In _Toward a Poor Curriculum_, William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet (1976) established autobiography, the lived experience, as a method of curriculum inquiry. “Knowledge is skewed when it fails to account for the realities of particularity or collectivity” (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 21). Nevertheless, the present positivistic view disallows the local and autobiography for the “pseudo-neutrality of classifying and ordering” (p. 20) the official advertised curriculum (Eisner, 2002b) dismissing the intrinsic sensitivities of the particular and personal for the extrinsic reproduction of the collective and bureaucratic. “Education always refers to the development of some-body” (Grumet, 1992, p. 36)

Be prepared. Be warned. There are dangers in autobiography. Autobiography reveals the mythology of oppressed and oppressor, the dynamic of the slave/master struggle. It illuminates the social landscape of the classroom including the teacher/student struggle while agitators bear down on the school. It exposes the dangers of radical particularity through which conversation degenerates into lecture breeding the uniformed fascist and his wife, the fundamentalist, and their children, the monological. Uncompromising private space repudiates public space. “Indeed, the oppressor must discover and recreate his or her own humanity” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 84) by making the
familiar strange (Greene, 1973) at a “lived distance necessary for critical social and self-reflection” (Edgerton, p. 80). “Thus, the analyzed sense of place is a window to the Lebenswelt, a vehicle to self-knowledge, and a crack in the structure that allows the archeologist of self to discover the etymology of one’s research act” (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 6). Maintaining the “lived distance necessary” (Edgerton, p. 80) is retreating enough from place as “a product of human creativity” (Kincheloe & Pinar, p. 6) to discern the rows, lines, and cracks for analysis.

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Figure 2. Philosophical Nesting Framework

Existential Foundations

“Whereas education has often been described as acculturation, the initiation of the child into distinctive codes and rituals of the society, a phenomenology of educational experience examines the impact of acculturation on the shaping of one’s cognitive lens” (Grumet, 1992, p. 40), existentially. Realizing objectivity and subjectivity,
phenomenology embraces four fundamental existential themes of life: “lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationality)” (van Manen, 1990, p. 101). This existential foundation supports Grumet’s portrayal of the education of some-body and suggests that “education requires a blending of objectivity with the unique subjectivity of the person, its infusion into the structures and shapes of the psyche” (Grumet, p. 29).

“Curriculum is intensely historical, political, racial, gendered, phenomenological, autobiographical, aesthetic, theological, and international…Curriculum is an extraordinarily complicated conversation” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, pp. 847-848). Beneath the mantle of postmodernism, the fifth historical moment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), we explore the running of the course, currere, with its existential phenomenological roots. Hermeneutics lends an eclectic edge to phenomenology acknowledging that interpretation is based in the lifeworld (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992).

“Thus understanding is always incomplete and one must always be attentive to the lifeworld of the school as experienced by teachers and students. This is the phenomenological moment of hermeneutics” (p. 241).

Shadow and Light

Palmer (1990) defined a leader as “a person who has an unusual degree of power to project on other people his or her shadow, or his or her light” (p. 7).

I’m not talking simply about the heads of nation states. I’m talking, for example, about a classroom teacher who has the power to create conditions under which young people must spend half of their waking hours, day in and day out, five days a week. Have you ever walked into a classroom in which the leader is projecting
light? Have you ever walked into a classroom in which the leader is projecting a huge and ominous shadow? That’s the question, that’s the choice.

(Palmer, 1990, p. 7)

Vivian Gussin Paley (1999) visited classrooms from London to Oakland collecting stories. After her visits, it was the stories of pedagogical hope, love, and tact that remained with her and were retold in her books and lectures around the world. “What if the classroom is the only place left where we are guaranteed a full turn on the stage? (p. 59)” In their stories, which continue in the retelling, “each boy is saved from obscurity” (p. 69). Lessons are prepared; teachers stand poised at the helm. Yet, it is the stories of relational experiences lived in “the development of a spirit of social co-operation and community life” (Dewey, 1902/1990, p. 16) that relieve “the loneliness and isolation inherent in the schoolhouse” (Paley, p. 89).

The curriculum of these classrooms was based in “the natural tendency of a young child to study with great concentrations, that which interests her at the moment” (Paley, 1999, p. 64). Universals that arise out of curricular activities centered in the experiences of the child are “moments of mutual respect and dignity” (p. 64). In the nursery classroom, Teddy arrived helmeted and strapped in a wheelchair unable to speak. Timmy operated in the first grade classroom as a truck. In each case, students in the classroom engaged and interpreted for the child who learned in silence or while shifting gears. The children realized the singular issues of their classmates and, in an exercise of freedom for all, spontaneously worked toward the inclusion of the other in the curricular life of the classroom.
Eschewing “the jailed and the jailor” (Paley, 1999, p. 3) educational syndrome, the classroom culture of learning through experiences was built “layer upon layer” (p. 9). What can be done, and how can it be done, to bring the school into closer relation with the home and neighborhood life – instead of having the school a place where the child comes solely to learn certain lessons? What can be done to break down the barriers which have unfortunately come to separate the school life from the rest of the everyday life of child? (Dewey, 1902/1990, p. 166)

What can be done in the way of introducing subject-matter in history and science and art, that shall have a positive value and real significance in the child’s own life; that shall represent, even to the youngest children, something worthy of attainment in skill or knowledge as much so to the little pupil as are the studies of the high-school or college student to him? (Dewey, 1902/1990, p. 167)

The expert teachers in the classrooms in which Paley (1999) collected her stories taught in the land of Gemeinschaft (Tönnies, 1887/1957). The shared memories, traditions, and rituals of the class helped the members of the class “remain united in spite of all separating factors” (p. 192). Based in friendship, relational exemplars of Gemeinschaft require strong normation in the circle of family, friends, or classmates (Green, 1999; van Manen, 1991). Gemeinschaft teachers recognize the opportunity to create a community of light or shadow in the classroom. Through dialogue and storytelling, they pass through impulses to coercion and dominance into pronouncing that if “one schoolroom recognizes the fact that a classmate wishes to pretend he is a truck and, it seems to me, the heavens must rejoice” (Paley, 1999, p. 81). In classes that practice curriculum as text, “the stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the
homborn among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself” Leviticus 19:33 (Revised Standard Version).

What would happen to Timmy or Teddy in the land of Gesellschaft? Gesellschaft is codified in contracts and laws. Artificial constructs direct how separated “individuals live and dwell together peacefully” (Tönnies, 1887/1957, p. 192). Cronyism, or What Can You Do for Me?, exemplifies Gesellschaft because it requires little if any normation. Consequently, individuals remain essentially isolated except by agreement.

If it be asked, “Why should we teach history?” for example, the question, in the instrumental world, will be readily understood to require an account of the utility of historical studies – “so that we do not repeat the past,” “so that we may be freed from unthinking submission to the past.” But if you ask that question of a Jew and specifically about Jewish education, the question will be greeted with incredulity – “That is just what education is; how could you not teach history?” The question itself will be disallowed. (Green, 1999, p. 52)

When we replace codification, Gesellschaft, with sacrifice, memory, and imagination, Gemeinschaft, thinking is required. “The sacred is usually described as provoking awe or reverence, or absence of mystery…To think of the absence of the sacred, that is, its total absence, is to conceive a condition in which nothing excites horror” (Green, 1999, p. 113). In the absence of thinking, there is the loss of the realization of that which is sacred and that which is horror. Hence, the rule and its ciphered language do the thinking for the mass of individuals (Arendt, 1964, 1971).
The Curriculum

With the reconceptualization of curriculum studies at the cusp of the 1960s-1970s, theoretical thinking widened and theorists studied new and varied, and old and established, forms of inquiry. Theories intertwined and separated. The Tyler Rationale (1949), which had reigned for 20 years, was under assault. Joseph Schwab (1969) called for the practical by inviting teachers back into curriculum deliberation. In *Toward a Poor Curriculum*, William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet (1976) established autobiography, the lived experience, as a method of curriculum inquiry. William Pinar (1974, 1975), who led the charge for the reconceptualization of American curriculum studies through *currere*, still anticipates *The Second Wave*, when elementary and secondary school teachers will stop tatting lace and dusting knick-knacks (Henderson, Kesson, & McCadden, 1999) and enter into complicated conversation. In support of *The Second Wave*, this research proposed to move away from the segregated housework (Miller, 2005) of *The Daily Grind* (Jackson, 1968/1990) in order to lift the unheard voice of the best senior teachers in the morally intuitive, interpretively intelligent (van Manen, 1991) practice of pedagogical tact in urban schools.

Explicit, Implicit, Null

In his famous book, *The Educational Imagination* (Eisner, 2002b), in the chapter on *Reshaping Assessment in Education*, Eisner recommended two books in the tradition of Joseph Schwab (1969). These books returned to “the schools to find out what was going on” (Eisner, p. 199). I bought both books and read them. Even though both books were published in 1968, I could look up in my urban high school library and replicate scenes in the book.
In more recent years, Phillip Jackson’s *Life in Classrooms* (1968/1990) must be regarded as one of the most influential. Jackson’s 1968 study is the result of over a year of observations of how teachers taught. It is rich in description, insightful, beautifully written, compelling. At about the same time, there appeared Lou Smith’s and William Geoffrey’s *The Complexities of an Urban Classroom* (1968). A beginning had been made. Returning to schools to find out what was going on, something Schwab had urged, became important – even stylish.

(Eisner, 2002b, p. 199)

The *Complexities of an Urban Classroom* (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968) is *An Analysis Toward a General Theory of Teaching* by a professor and a teacher. The teacher, William Geoffrey, is co-author of the book. “A middle class teacher [who] copes with a [split] class of [sixth and] seventh graders in a slum school” (inside cover) is regarded equally with/by a professor of education and psychology. The cover of the book reflected the reconceptualization of American curriculum studies. The practitioner scholar (Pryor, 2002) and the conceptual scholar (Steffy & Wolfe, 2002) united in a complicated conversation about urban teaching.

The formal program of the school, the program that is planned, taught, and graded, constitutes the school’s *explicit curriculum*. This curriculum consists of the subjects that virtually everyone acknowledges are being taught in one way or another. This is the curriculum for which teachers are hired, grades are given, records are kept, and the like. (Eisner, 2002a, p. 158)

“*Please stop working and take out your science books*” (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 185).

“Deciding what shall be taught lies at the heart of curriculum theory. In practice at the
Washington School, the textbooks to a large extent determine the teacher’s decisions in this aspect of his work” (p. 184), and that included Mr. Geoffrey’s curriculum, too.

Classroom ambiance, school norms, modes of assessment, and the like teach not explicitly, but implicitly. Thus, we not only have an explicit curriculum in schools, but also an *implicit curriculum*, and it is the implicit curriculum that endures while sections of the explicit curriculum change over time; a unit on printmaking in the visual arts or the westward movement in social studies is here today and gone tomorrow. The features of the implicit curriculum continue.

(Eisner, 2002a, pp. 158-159)

8:45 Timmy and Leonard are late. Geoffrey blows up loudly from hall. Stabs forefinger at Leonard. Won’t accept excuse that he was late because of homework. “You do it the night before.” Kids in class can hear it. Some (Harry and Virgil) tickled over it. Others (seventh graders) apprehensive. Geoffrey comes in, looks exasperated. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, pp. 137-138)

But there is also another curriculum, one that is paradoxical: the null curriculum.

What is not taught can be as important in someone’s life as what is taught, whether explicitly or implicitly. The null curriculum constitutes what is absent from the school program, what students in schools never have the opportunity to learn. When the arts are absent or taught so poorly that they might as well be, students pay a price. Acts of omission can be as significant as acts of commission.

(Eisner, 2002a, p. 159)

Madeleine Grumet (1988) called this the “presence of an absence” (p. xiii).

Although the written, supported, recommended, tested, and taught curriculum (Glatthorn,
is noticeably on display, an untouchable suppressed curriculum of “darkness and light” (Grumet, p. xiii), “belly, whimper, and song” (p. xiii) stalks the classroom. Experience is replaced by reproduction.

*The second comment I would make is that there has been, as far as I can tell, a lack of discussion of any of the issues surrounding the racial situation either locally or in terms of the school building itself.* (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 248)

*Third, the norms of the staff are essentially “hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil” regarding religious and racial matters.* (p. 249)

Jackson (1968/1990) illuminated the “hidden curriculum of unspoken expectations” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 43) in his study of the complexity of classroom life. Likewise, in their multi-year study, *The Moral Life Project*, Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen (1993) concluded that “classrooms…are morally charged environments” (p. 173). The class did not have to hear Mr. Geoffrey (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968) yelling and pointing at Timmy and Leonard in the hall to learn that he “won’t accept [the] excuse that he was late because of homework” (p. 137). Classrooms and the players within scream “a framework of expectations” (Jackson et al., p. 171). From the bulletin boards, to the way the teacher enters the classroom, to the playful banter or the directives given, there is a moral significance (van Manen, 1991), explicit, implicit or null.

Mr. Geoffrey’s 6th and 7th grade classroom, as a part of Washington School, clearly illustrated Eisner’s three-part curriculum. I was quick to appreciate Professor Smith’s comment about the “ever present sensational episodes which occur constantly and which make good gossip” in regard to urban education in the slum school as it was
labeled. There is an insensitive prurience on the part of those who love to hear stories about the other. In reality, like my high school library and many classrooms in urban school systems, Mr. Geoffrey, an everyday practitioner of pedagogical tact and thoughtfulness with a middle-class suburban background, is the other in this social space.

*Race and Caste*

Historically and locally, the issue of the schooling of the immigrant child and/or the Negro child, as he was termed at Washington School, has been point of concern for the community, the school, and the child. What shall be done with that which we regard as an *object* or *property*, as one of *them*, rather than one of *us*? Paulo Freire (1970) and Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) insisted on education as a practice of freedom in their teachings to bell hooks (1994). She, in turn, taught her students to transgress in favor of freedom.

Many immigrants came to America seeking freedom, only to find themselves bound by race, caste, and societal norms and the accompanying hidden and overt expectations. “The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum was for fifty years (1888-1918) the home for some 3,500 boys and girls, most of them immigrants from Eastern Europe” (Polster, 1990, inside cover). Cleveland’s acculturated German Jews were embarrassed by the dirty, Yiddish-speaking ethnic relative who mortified the ensconced community with the old ways. In a determination to straight off Americanize the new immigrants, ghetto children were removed from homes and encapsulated in the orphanage for education, discipline and acculturation. The curriculum was designed to produce a well-disciplined work force that was “orderly, punctual, law-abiding, industrious, compliant, sober, reliable, and obedient citizens” (p. xiv). The bars on the basement windows of the orphanage accentuated the law-abiding.
As John Dewey was calling for schooling to reflect the imagination of children and their experiences, Superintendent Dr. Samuel Wolfenstein’s (1841-1921) charge from the JOA trustees was to educate “hard-working, respectable, useful, well-mannered, patriotic citizens” (Polster, 1990, p. 32) with “middle-class values” (p. 32). Released to operate the orphanage with love, kindness, and persuasion, Wolfenstein, superintendent for nearly 35 years (1878-1913), was soon overrun with large populations and resorted to the measures he had hoped to avoid. In all aspects of the children’s lives, they were to accept training that was determined by others to insure their future. The children’s education in citizenship reflected the homeland, that from which they had fled, rather than the new land, the Land of Liberty, outside the orphanage grounds.

While Rose and Louis were locked in the orphanage asylum, Dewey (1900/1990) pronounced, “What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy” (p. 7). Deweyan democracy is highly personal, but the hordes of children assaulting urban schools as their parents immigrated to America or moved to the city prolonged and supported the social efficiency movement. Dewey’s children attended the University of Chicago Laboratory School, even as Julia and Sarah, at the JOA, sneaked “into the washrooms to read their stolen library books under the gas lamps after dorm lights were out” (Polster, 1990, p. 155).

Reflexive Systems

Notwithstanding the critically reflective practitioner, Gough (2002) worried about The Long Arm(s) of Globalization in curriculum work. The context and stratification of explicit curriculum in school, another example of groupthink, is supported in the minutes
of the board of education, their reports to the media, and the large bound curriculum
guides, carefully crafted by curriculum specialists and their invited committees, that
arrive at school at the beginning of the school year, of late, with accompanying laminated
pacing guides to be attached to the lesson plan book. Yet freedom and artistry actualize
when the lesson plan, founded in the curriculum guide, becomes flesh and blood in a
classroom that exemplifies chaos theory. Through the exercise of pedagogic tact and
thoughtfulness, skillful players are able “to tell stories that never end” (Eco, 1984, p. 54).
Nothing is static, day to day, or hour to hour. Curricular life cycles richness, recursion,
relations, and rigor (Doll, 1993, p. 176) despite the bindings on the textbooks and affixed
instruction manuals.

Veronica

During the school year, Veronica entered our inner-city high school library
wearing her coat and thin, knit gloves. I approached her and asked her how I could help.
The library technician, who is, incidentally, very technical in her enforcement of policy
interrupted us to announce, “You will have to take off those gloves. We don’t wear gloves
in school.” There is a good reason for the no-gloves rule. Our students wear gloves for
fighting. I gently asked Veronica, “Veronica, why are you wearing your gloves?” “I have
a baby at home. My mama told me I better not bring no cold home to my baby.”

Veronica is tall and thin, shy, and not very well dressed. She is easily frightened.
Ignoring her gloves and the library technician’s frown, I helped her sign into the library.
Veronica wanted to go through her notebook first, before she began to type her paper. I
watched her watching Ceaira, Constance, and Courtenah, who were already working at
computers. They are the well-dressed, pretty, popular girls with the signature gold chains
around their necks and appropriately coordinated stiletto heels peeping out from the stylish pants. Courtneah is the homecoming queen. It was Constance’s birthday, so she had her gift money safety-pinned to her shirt, as is the custom in inner-city schools. Handsome, well-dressed Kevin was outside the library glass trying to catch Ceaira’s eye. There sat Veronica caught her in her misinformation, with an angry mother and a baby at home, bearing the disdain of her classmates, while she just tried to get through the school day and its assignments wearing the title, the other, and its accompanying contempt.

I situated Veronica at a station where she could experience some privacy. Eventually, she removed her gloves, as she could not type while wearing them. The practical overruled the universal (van Manen, 1991). Curriculum as text supplanted curriculum as object. The curriculum, in its richness, “continually negotiated among students, teachers, and tests” (Doll, 1993, p. 176) illustrated its “indeterminacy, anomaly, inefficiency, chaos, disequilibrium” (p. 76) and “problematics, perturbations, [and] possibilities” (p. 176) in the library that afternoon. In my long experience as a veteran urban teacher, I knew, through recursion, that the gloves would come off in their own way and time. In seeing and helping Veronica as a person (subject) rather than just another student (object), I prided “cultural relations…within which the curriculum is embedded” (p. 179). It was evident to me that the presence of the chosen girls and Veronica’s own abilities slowed the progress of her report. In support of rigor, I walked Veronica to her next class only to find yet another substitute teacher. He agreed to allow Veronica to return to the library with me as he was giving the students a “free day”. By “purposely looking for different alternatives, relations, [and] connections” (p. 183) in an exercise of pedagogical tact, we were able to complete Veronica’s report together.
Field Poem

When the foreman whistled

My brother and I

Shouldered our hoes,

Leaving the field.

We returned to the bus

Speaking

In broken English, in broken Spanish

The restaurant food,

The tickets to a dance

We wouldn’t buy with our pay.

From the smashed bus window,

I saw the leaves of cotton plants

Like small hands

Waving good-bye.

(Soto, 1977/1995, p. 11)

Two Spanish-speaking brothers left the fields, instead of the school, to ride a migrant workers’ bus, instead of a school bus, in an enactment of latent curriculum where “opportunity [is] determined by social class and the replication of labor/management relations in the classroom and the school” (Grumet, 1988, p. xiii) with only the intention of their work to recognize them and acknowledge their story. They are “governed by a
systematic rationality that privileges orderly and predictable processes” (Gough, 1999, p. 54). During an afternoon at school, Veronica experienced “the personal embodiment of...pedagogical thoughtfulness” (van Manen, 1991, p. 9) in the library with an understanding and acknowledgement of her story and an “ongoing confessional comprehension of how meaning is generated” (Knoespel, 1991, p. 116). In appreciating her daily experience, Veronica and I “substituted hermeneutics for the positivism of the social sciences” (Grumet, 1988, p. 60) and refused “the dichotomization of subject and object” (p. 60).

Cultural Criticism

In decrying the entry of private educational ventures such as Disney schools and Channel One into public education, Joe Kinchloe (1999), complained that “students are transformed from citizens to consumer, capable of being bought and sold” (p. 78). In the inner-city high school with its persistently failing label, the number of students decreases in inverse proportion to the installation of EdDs and their accompanying programs to improve the effectiveness of the school. Thomas Schwandt (2002) would ask, “Effective for what and for whom? (p. 32)” Is the purpose of yet another program to prolong the life of the grant or to involve itself in the context and culture of the school? The prize of a quantifiable remedy to academic emergency is eagerly sought in “rational deliberation undertaken from the vantage point of situational distance and guided by principles that are general in form and universal in application” (Pendlebury, 1995, p. 3).

Practical wisdom “is the kind of knowledge required for personal and social action, especially in its ethical and political aspects” (Schwandt, 2002, p.2). In the hegemony of the prize, practical philosophy is replaced by a posture of disengagement, a
rebuff of pedagogical thoughtfulness (van Manen, 1991). “The more that teachers, counselors, administrators, social workers, and other kinds of practitioners look to outside experts to tell them what has value, the more these practitioners become alienated from the evaluative aspects of their practices” (p. 3). Sitting in a “conspiracy of silence” (Pinar, 2002, p. 103), “the Secret in the middle” (Frost, 1936/1979) is the predictable expectation of who will succeed and who will fail as we test “a curriculum unrelated to lived experience” (Pinar, p. 103).

The great issue for the critical scholar, today, is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002). Michael Apple (2001) warned that “a neutral curriculum is linked to a neutral system of accountability, which in turn is linked to a system of school finance” (p. 6). The evaluations required, generated, and publicized under NCLB have revitalized issues of “patriarchy, capitalism [and] modernism” (Pinar, 2002, p. 103) in our American system of education. Those of us who fail are cautioned, “Be good sports, people; don’t make excuses for your educational and economic failures” (Kinchloe, 1999, p. 78).

Economics and American education go hand in hand as illustrated by Lou Dobbs’ (2003) evaluative title, Still Failing the Grade, in his column The Dobbs Report in U.S. News & World Report. The Better Education Through Capitalism economist concluded, “Public schools need a little less Horace Mann right now, and a little more Adam Smith” (p. 40). While Dobbs supported the numerical rating of America’s schools, the critical scholar is engaged in the study of efforts “to domesticate the curriculum and pathologize the problem” (Smyth, 2002, p. 70). Van Manen (1991) defined pedagogy as “a self-reflective activity that always must be willing to question critically what it does and what
it stands for” (p. 10). In this practical discipline, “one must be prepared to stand out and be criticized” (p. 10).

My primary endeavor as a critical scholar has been to unmask the ways in which injustice is made to appear as if it were common sense; then to make the invisible visible, through exploring how hierarchies of power (class, race, and gender) are constructed; and, finally to present alternatives that permit a more democratic ways of life. (Smyth, 2002, p. 65)

Joe Kinchloe (1999), in a harkening back to the call from George Counts (1932) for teachers to resist imposition, urged teachers to oppose “the cult of efficiency and hyperrationality [that] studies the world in isolation” (p. 77) by cultivating transformative practices. Kinchloe advised teachers to adopt “critical democracy as a way of life” (p. 73) through the actualization of three concepts: teaching in a democratic workplace, the creation of democratic classrooms, and teaching for democratic citizenship. As critical pedagogues, these teacher scholars would manifest their right to challenge the economic paradigm by defining “teaching as a form of intellectual labor with a primary commitment to moral and ethical purposes” (p. 71). “Curriculum is not books, but what we do with books” (Grumet, 1988, p. 177).

Place

For Joe Kincheloe and William Pinar (1991), place is founded in Gemeinschaft (Tönnies, 1887/1957), specifically Southern Gemeinschaft, where one experiences “a distinctive way of knowing, an epistemology of place” (Kincheloe & Pinar, p. 10). “The emphasis on the individual, the concern with locale, the literary sense of place are all manifestations of the southern epistemology of place and particularity” (p. 18). Local
ways of knowing differ from national ways of knowing, but the local is influenced by the national through objectivity rather than subjectivity. Actualizing *The Objectivist Myth of Knowing* (Palmer, 1998), the power flow is downward.

The *Particularities of Otherness* (Edgerton, 1991) characterize urban education by race, class, and gender in place and person. Dewey (1902, 1938) replaced *Otherness* with a philosophy of education based in experience. The student’s storied experience must enter the classroom, even the urban classroom, with the student. Dewey rejected the dichotomization of mind and body in favor of a just pedagogy that dared to subvert the mind/body split allowing each to cross the threshold whole and wholeheartedly (hooks, 1994; van Manen, 1991). It is body knowledge that throws a football, sings in the choir, sits in a chair, touches a friend, and navigates a large urban high school. We live in the world through our bodies. Teachers and students come to school with knowledge in our hands and in our feet (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002) to our particular place in the local school.

“We need to recognize ourselves as being, in some degree, strangers” (Greene, 2001, p. 82). Greene (1973) urged us to practice *wide-awakeness*, to see from “a stranger’s vantage point on everyday reality” (p. 267). Recognizing the reality of the stranger, even in the intense social space of the classroom with its multiple realities (Jackson, 1968/1990; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968), begins the process of inquiry into the local and the particular. This exploration may expose “dangerous remembrances” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 78) about past experiences that are contrary to the sanctioned expectations. “The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral, objective facts, facts that are not particular to who is sharing information”
(hooks, 1994, p. 139), but that is not true. “We are all subjects in history” (p. 139) and some of us bring with us knowledge that may be “threatening to the established ways of knowing if acknowledged” (p. 139), but they are part of the humanity of the student or teacher whenever and wherever teaching and learning takes place.

“To step across one’s racial line is to step into a distinctly different culture” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 81). In observing Mr. Geoffrey and Miss Norton discuss curriculum for Mr. Geoffrey’s split sixth-seventh grade class in a “slum school” (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, inside cover), Professor Smith noted, “I keep returning to the very difficult problem of which reality is real – is it the kids, the teachers’ norms, or some blend of these? (p. 195)” “Black and White areas of town are so sharply demarcated that they seemed to be drawn with a chalk marker” (Edgerton, p. 81) in the typical small southern towns of Ruston, Louisiana; Stamps, Arkansas; or the anonymous Big City of Smith and Geoffrey’s study. Lines of demarcation enter the classroom through its players.

Jane Tompkins (2000) suggested that it is time to give up the fear and security of living in rows, visible or invisible, on a municipal map or an architectural drawing. Lines of demarcation refuse the “multivocality, multiperspectivity, and lived aspects of textbooks and of classrooms” (Pinar, 1992, p. 7). Created artificial environments (Jackson, 1968/1990) spread as “alienation is estrangement, a sense of lost connection, displacement in the midst of place” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 95). A nomadic people deemphasizing place and its particularities (Pinar, 1991), thus purging pedagogical tact and its “improvisational resoluteness” (van Manen, 1991, p. 8), we attach ourselves to the official curriculum, instead of each other, lest the unknown or fearful arise from the personal. “Messages and announcements fill the air” (Greene, 1988, p. 3) directing our
collective lives. “A widespread speechlessness” (p. 3) fills the void of “an impassioned and significant dialogue” (p. 3) ignoring intimacies with race, class, and gender.

Delaying life while waiting in the lines to which we are uncommonly habituated (Jackson, 1968/1990) does not erase the autobiography of the urban teacher or student. Autobiography is present, but separated and nameless, as we sit and wait in silence and anonymity. “Induced compliance” (Grumet, 1997, p. 140) leaves much of the teacher in the car and more of the student on the school bus. A “conspiracy of silence” (Pinar, 2002, p. 103) maintains our status as “gendered, racialized, classed creatures” (p. 109). Pinar (1991) believed that “the curricular task becomes to recover memory and history in ways that psychologically allow individuals to reenter politically the public sphere in meaningful and committed ways” (pp. 173-174). Through the revolutionary act of autobiography, currere (Pinar, 2004), we recognize “the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives” (van Manen, 2002, p. 8).

In schools we become civilized by denying attachment. We pretend the Slocums, Maggies, and Millies don’t exist. We pretend they aren’t waiting for the school bus, smoothing Jimmy’s hair, touching Lily’s cheek… We consign primitive feeling, passionate commitments, to domesticity, and then we construct a public space purged of such contaminants. But attachment and difference never disappear just because we declare them invisible. They always seep back in. Schools have never been neutral places. For centuries schools have been places where some people’s children learn to be subordinate to other people’s children. But the same guise of neutrality that permits the meritocracy to flourish also can function to rationalize the most arbitrary and violent self-interest. It is the kind of
dehumanized thinking that finds its ultimate terror in an Adolph Eichmann, who reported that he held no personal antagonism for the Jewish people but was merely effecting the solution to a “political” problem. (Grumet, 1988, p. 181)

Grumet (1988) agreed with Pinar (1991) that “we need to re-create safe places, even in schools, where teachers can concentrate, can attend to their experience of children and of the world, and we need to create community spaces where the forms that express that experience are shared” (p. 90). “How can we bring back the magic of the body, the richness of gesture and music to the community of our schools without reinstating the fascist drama? (Grumet, 1997, p. 140)” Grumet urged the fortification of aesthetic boundaries to allow the teachers and students to bring mind and bodies into school where they will realize particularities rather standardization, creation rather than rationalization, and safe places in public rather than behind the classroom door. Edgerton (1991) suggested that we begin by identifying “inner contradictions” (p. 85), both public and private. These contradictions “serve as hidden passages from the status quo to a more just order” (p. 85). To recognize these contradictions, go within to one’s own place of history and out to the place history of the other, both are found in autobiography.

Experience

This boy is Ignorance.

This girl is Want.

Beware them both, and all of their degree,

But most of all beware this boy,

For on his brow I see that written which is Doom,

Unless the writing be erased…
Have they no refuge or resource?

...Are there no prisons?

Are there no workhouses?

_Ghost of Christmas Future_ (Dickens, 1843/1995, p. 78)

“Unless the writing be erased” warned the _Ghost of Christmas Future_ to Ebenezer Scrooge. This boy, _Ignorance_, and this girl, _Want_, were living their lives _sous rature_.

“Place is place only if it is accompanied by history” (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 8).

The Ghost cautioned Scrooge that history may be predicted, but not predestined. The story of the children hidden under the Ghost’s robes was not written in stone, not even a tombstone. Charles Dickens used story to illuminate the need for social reform in 19th century England. George Counts (1932) and the social reconstructionists used “story in the form of exposé, charging that schools were controlled by the privileged who used the schools to maintain their privilege” (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 1) in the United States. Over centuries, stories have acted as _hidden passages_ (Edgerton, 1991) to “a more just order” (p. 85).

Pinar and Reynolds (1992) proposed that we use phenomenology to “allow to unfold what is already present but not yet seen” (p. 7). _Ignorance_ and _Want_ are present, yet unseen until illuminated in story. Here, “in the pursuit of everydayness” (p. 8), we “awaken to a deeper layer of experience – how we live authentically with our colleagues and students” (p. 9). We embrace the running of the course, _currere_, toward a “deep respect for personal purpose, lived experience, for the life of imagination” (Eisner, 2002b, p. 77). “The truth and competence of teaching [and learning] resides in phenomenological wisdom, not imitation of preestablished behaviors” (Pinar &
Reynolds, p. 8). “The phenomenological method dramatizes that lived experience revealed in story” (p. 8).

Original experience is always interpreted linguistically through the sieve of human motives, stated and unstated. Hiding in the *mist of nostalgia* (Derrida, 1981) are distortions, overlays, and subplots. Yet, in these layers of voices, Aoki (1992) urged, “Let us beckon these voices to speak to us, particularly the silent ones, so that we may awaken to the truer sense of teaching that likely stirs within each of us” (pp. 17-18). It to the *silent ones*, the voices unheard, that I am particularly drawn as evidenced by this research. Derrida’s (1981) notion of trace and absence embodied story as a firmament of stars in which the spaces between the stars are as crucial as the stars themselves. Grumet (1988) called this the “presence of an absence” (p. xiii). Pinar and Reynolds (1992) carried the heavenly exemplar even farther describing “stories that never end, stories in which the listener, the ‘narratee’, may become a character or indeed the narrator, in which all structure is provisional, momentary, a collection of twinkling stars in a firmament of flux” (p. 7). Thus, when we participate in *A Community of Truth* (Palmer, 1998), we must recognize the silent members, seen and unseen, present and absent, still and restless, that engage and influence the *Subject* in the middle, the experience of seeking that *Subject*, and the interpretation of the experience.

**Voice**

In D. H. Lawrence’s (1915) *The Rainbow*, 17-year old Ursula Brangwen has just graduated from high school in an English village in the early 20th century. In an effort to escape her mother who is pulling her down to “the close, physical, limited life of herded domesticity” (p. 334), Ursula flees the home of seven living children with a ninth child
on the way and all the domestic labor that they entail and moves to a distant town where she accepts a teaching position. Ursula dreams of classrooms that would replace the hard, impersonal teachers of her own experience. She “would make everything personal and vivid” (p. 347) and the children “would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth” (p. 347).

Instead, Ursula (Lawrence, 1915) is tortured by the harsh monotony of Brinsley Street School in a poor quarter of Ilkeston. The teachers are cynical. The students are defiant. Her classroom shrinks into a cell as the school wraps its prison bars about her conforming her to the harsh and impersonal in The Man’s World (Chapter 13).

She must become the same – put away the personal self, become an instrument, an abstraction, working upon a certain material, the class, to achieve a set purpose of making them know so much each day. And she could not submit. Yet gradually she felt the invincible iron closing upon her. The sun was being blocked out. (p. 362)

Eventually, after a great desperate struggle for control of the classroom, like the superintendent of The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum (Polster, 1990), Ursula succumbs to the numbers, both physically and philosophically, and “violates her sensibilities” (Grumet, 1988, p. 48).

Ursula would appeal no more to the headmaster, but when she was driven wild, she seized her cane, and slashed the boy who was insolent to her, over head and ears and hands. And at length they were afraid of her, she had them in order…But she had paid a great price out of her own soul to do this. It seemed as if a great flame had gone through her and burnt her sensitive tissue. She who shrank from
the thought of physical suffering in any form had been forced to fight and beat with a cane and rouse all her instincts to hurt. And afterwards she had been forced to endure the sound of their blubbering and desolation, when she had broken them to order…Oh, why, why had she leagued herself to this evil system where she must brutalize herself to live? Why had she become a school teacher, why, why? (Lawrence, 1915, pp. 382-383)

In order to endure the realities of teaching at Brinsley Street School full of street arabs newly arrived from the rookeries of tenements flooding the schools of Ilkeston, Cleveland, Boston, Baltimore, and Little Italy, Ursula severs the connection of her life and teaching. Ursula will remain outside the school. The teacher will enter. “Compliance was the key to success for teachers as well as for students” (Grumet, 1988, p. 43), especially for the working class which included the teacher. The compliant Ursula refused the Cries and Whispers (Pinar, 1992) of the “sense of past being present” (p. 92). In an imprudent survival strategy, she rejects temporality for death in the classroom.

“Human life is never fixed but is always emergent as the past and the future become horizons of present” (Huebner, 1975, p. 244). Nevertheless, in many similar urban areas at the turn of the century, “the role of dragooning and drilling the excluded marginalized children of the rookeries” (Jones, 1990, p. 71) in an efficient education fell to the teacher practicing a received theory of education based in imposition. “The school constituted a technology for transforming ‘wild beings’ into ethical subjects” (p. 65). Ursula was expected to preach a “tense and mechanic” (p. 71) fixed curriculum in the classroom followed by the annual examination to rate the accomplishment of the present, including hers, toward a better working future.
Ursula lived in fear of the appraising eyes of the seasoned faculty members and headmaster who practiced a code of efficiency “which rules ways of doing things” (Foucault, 1981, p. 10) and understood the regimes “which serve to justify, found and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things” (p. 10). Everything she needed to conduct a correctly-functioning, efficient classroom was predetermined. However, she was judged “as a suspicious figure that requires continual examination within an examining technology” (Jones, 1990, p. 75) lest she attempt to convert the objective into the subjective.

“The cruelest aspect of oppression is the ‘logic by which it forces its objects to be oppressive in turn, to do the dirty work in their society in several senses’” (Grumet, 1988, p. 45). “It was no small matter to get a young woman to stand before a gallery of 55 ill-nourished and verminous children and drill them in a series of mechanical exercises” (Jones, 1990, p. 57). The national strategy of schooling “to regulate the nomadic, dissolute, degenerate, and marginal population of the urban slum” (pp. 57-58) was the remedy to the squalor of the cities. The requisite pedagogical machinery included the teacher who was held in such low regard, coming from the lower orders herself, regretfully, that she required extra attention by training, regulation, and observation. The teacher was to be molded and scolded into at best another object in the classroom.

*A Passage of Failure*

Jones (1990), in tracing the career of the urban school teacher from the towering rookeries of Ancient Rome concluded that “the genealogy of the urban schoolteacher is the passage of a failure” (p. 75). In listening to commentators and professors and reading today’s literature on urban education, it is very easy to see that many, if not most, agree
with Jones. The problem in urban education is the urban teacher. A common remedy suggested for improving teaching in poverty schools is money.

One perplexing problem facing local school leaders is the poor allocation of talent within their districts. In many large urban districts, the least experienced and least effective teachers are disproportionately assigned to the poorest schools because transfer rights within the district allow experienced teachers to move to schools with better students and better working conditions. Likely the results of the teacher-assignment system include a wider student-achievement gap between rich and poor and an exit from the profession by young teachers mired in dispiriting situations (Cymrot, 2004, p. 44)

Cymrot (2004) suggested following a model used by the United States Navy to attract sailors to apply for and accept hard-to-fill assignments and locations. The author claimed that this money scheme was different than all the other money schemes that have been proposed to close the teacher achievement gap between urban and suburban school systems. But is money the reason that teachers choose to teach in “a passage of failure” (Jones, 1990, p. 75)?

Ursula chose to teach at Brinsley Street School to escape her parents and the life they expected her to replicate. She arrived at school full of dreams and hopes. Ursula lost her voice in a schoolhouse prison that constrained her. Nicholas Nickleby (Dickens, 1839) arrived to teach at the nightmare branded Dotheboys Hall when he unexpectedly became the sole support of his mother and sister at the death of his father. Synchronicity (Jaworski, 1996) brought together these teachers, in their own misfortune, to teach the less fortunate. Like my own career, Nickleby’s placement offered a chance to see “how
the universe is linked together by a fabric of invisible connections” (p. 149)

acknowledging the spaces between the stars (Derrida, 1981). The greater question in the face of these situations for Nicholas Nickleby, Ursula Brangwen, and me is Are we deeply committed to creating what we truly want for its own sake?

bell hooks (1994) loved her all-Black, segregated Booker T. Washington Elementary School when she was growing up. Almost all her teachers were Black women who in their “devotion to learning, to a life of the mind” (p. 2) committed a counter-hegemonic act. “My teachers were on a mission” (p. 2) to uplift the race through learning that was “always contextualized within the framework of generational family experience” (p. 3). During integration, hooks left segregated Crispus Attucks High School for a bus ride halfway across town to “racist, desegregated, white schools” (p. 3), where “knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved” (p. 3).

The shift from beloved, all-black schools to white schools where black students were always seen as interlopers, as not really belonging, taught me the difference between education as the practice of freedom and education that merely strives to reinforce domination. (hooks, 1994, p. 4)

Later, as university student and teacher, hooks experienced once again the assigned role of interloper. Despite the brand, she continued her practice of education as a practice of freedom. “Teaching can never be innocent” (Brookfield, 1996, p. 1). Even the topic of this research, pedagogical tact, is not a value-neutral term (van Manen, 1991). “Our pedagogical actions are always informed by normative intentions.” (p. 161).

“Pedagogical tact does the following: preserve a child’s space, protect what is vulnerable,
prevent hurt, make whole what is broken, strengthen what is good, enhance what is unique, and sponsor personal growth” (p. 161). Is it possible to move beyond other people (Delpit, 1988) and the accompanying labels in the classroom? I agree with John Goodlad (2003/2004) who suggested that we move beyond the caste system in America’s schools and ask, “What other people? We all belong to one species – humankind” (p. 20).

Ursula Brangwen (Lawrence, 1915) experienced the caste system in her home from her family and as a teacher from her colleagues, headmaster, and students. Nicholas Nickleby (Dickens, 1839) confronted Smike’s illustrative mistreatment as impoverished student in Dotheboys Hall, the fictional school based on Shaw’s Bowes Academy, at the hand of the all-powerful headmaster Wackford Squeers, who was fashioned after Headmaster William Shaw. Through story, Dickens liberated the short-lived Smike from a literal and metaphorical school where democracy was denied and caste maintained.

Goodlad (2003/2004) concluded that, “It would be the height of folly for our schools not to have as their central mission educating the young in the democratic ideals of humankind” (p. 21). Part of democracy sits at the teacher’s desk, like Ursula and Nicholas, with the accompanying opportunity to make or not “morally grounded democratic behavior routine – as John Dewey said it must become” (p. 21).

*The Strangeness of Strangers*

“The city is a place of mismeetings. Urban physical space is so organized that meetings which are not actively sought may be avoided; if unavoidable, they may still remain inconsequential” (Bauman, 1993, p. 157). Dorrell, I know that you live over there in the cognitively mapped social space. I know very little about you. I desire to know even less. Octavia, I recognize that you live in a moral space. I care about you a little.
Actually, I would prefer to care even less. Rayshoun, please continue your fine athletic career. I love to watch your jump shots. In this social/cognitive space, you are “the object of intense curiosity as the source of entertaining experience” (p. 168). “The city space is a spectacle in which the amusement value overrides all other considerations” (p. 168). I am glad to see school security here at the game. The longer the game goes, the more city police arrive to rim the arena. “The beauty of ‘aesthetic control’ – the unclouded beauty, beauty unspoiled by the fear of danger, guilty conscience or apprehension of shame – is its inconsequentality” (p. 169). I decline aesthetic control. I want be able to get to my minivan and return to suburbia safely.

Antonio, thank you for performing for me. I know that your game will help raise a lot of money for my alma mater when you go to college. It is a very large university. We will never meet, but I will express pride in your play and our affiliation through school from a distance. Please remain in zuhanden (in hand) land. I am uncomfortable when you move into vorhanden (out there) land. Then, I have to reach out to grasp you. “Knowledge picks up from the point of breach, disruption, mis-understanding” (Bauman, 1993, p. 148). “In the life-world, proximity and remoteness of objects is measured (indeed, made) by the degree of richness or paucity of knowledge” (p. 148). Please stay put. All I want to know about you is that my car doors are locked. Much of my “daily business is spent in traveling through semiotically empty spaces –moving physically from one island to another” (p. 138). Let us practice the arcane art of mismeetings in the land of Strangehood.

Reproductions of Crispus Attucks High School (hooks, 1994) survive in the land of Strangehood in the 21st century. “Traditionally, public schools have created a common preparation for citizenship” (Orfield et al., p. 16), but now students are experiencing isolation by race and income meeting the other in the sporting arena, but not in the school cafeteria. When the school becomes monochromatically Brown or Black, the reality behind the teacher desk is predictable. The faculty door revolves outward toward the suburbs where good, veteran “teachers’ status flows not from their own effectiveness, but rather from the elite backgrounds of the students they teach” (Haycock, 2002/2003, p. 13).

Master Sergeant Leonard Gordon, Sr., (Mulrine, 2004) was making plans to retire to Georgia after 27 years service in the U. S. Army. M/Sgt. and Mrs. Gordon reviewed the predominantly-Black Georgia neighborhood school to which they would send their 15-year old son, Leonard, Jr., after their retirement move. Leonard is a member of the National Honor Society and the football team. This African American family decided to remain in the military, so that Leonard would be able to remain in his culturally diverse, academically rigorous Department of Defense school from which “99% of seniors graduate and 79% go on to college” (p. 93). Leonard is taking advanced placement world history, Algebra II, and chemistry in his sophomore year at Fort Campbell High School, Kentucky. In assessing the public school, Leonard’s parents were shocked at the “lack of diversity and academic focus” (p. 90). “It was ‘all athletics – almost like a trade school’” (p. 90). The common features of the Department of Defense schools, where 40% of the students receive free or reduced lunch, are rigor, that is “nurturing and demanding across the board” (p. 93), and military policy that enables and encourages parents to attend
school meetings or participate in tutoring programs during school time. Leonard recognized the advantages available at Fort Campbell High School, where half of the population is African American, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islanders, “Here, they expect a lot from me, and I expect a lot from myself” (p. 90).

“The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process. This quality is realized in the degree in which individuals form a community group” (Dewey, 1938, p. 58). In the case of our urban schools, only a portion of the school and faculty community is present to form any group. The social process is diminished “in a ‘monological’ world that promotes one point of view, one ideology, one integrated set of beliefs over other possibilities” (Henderson, 2001, p. 77). The symphony of voices (Henderson) becomes the trumpet section.

John Dewey (1938) wrote on the importance of the teacher in the social process through which individuals form a community group.

It is absurd to exclude the teacher from membership in the group. As the most mature member of the group he has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community. (Dewey, 1938, p.58)

And yet, the inner city child may not have a mature teacher accepting that responsibility. In an arena where the teacher in the classroom has less experience, less subject-matter expertise, poorer exam performance, and less classroom effectiveness (Haycock, 2002/2003), the cumulative effect of the teaching contributes to vastly different academic outcomes. Haycock described the magnitude of the differences as stunning. Senior
African American and Latino students have reading and mathematics skills identical to eighth-grade White students. The former has mastered basic skills; the latter has mastered higher-level skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Even more alarming, are the numbers of urban children “who had substitute teachers for every year of their schooling” (Goodlad, 2003/2004, p. 20) with the predictable results.

As I have transferred deeper into inner-city education, I have witnessed the reluctance of many excellent teachers to accompany me either by application or reassignment. Their distinctive and disparate voices are absent in the classroom that is already monological. “From the perspective of reciprocal dialogue, the validity of an ‘Africentric’ public school, or any form of ‘ethnocentric’ public education, must be seriously questioned” (Henderson, 2001, p. 43). There is a “climate of sanctioned defensiveness” (p. 43), that precludes reciprocal dialogue. “Reciprocity is not for timid and overly protective soul; it is for the brave and courageous citizens of a pluralistic society” (p. 43). Completing the symphony of voices allows the music to reflect the multiple realities of the world, in and out of school.

If “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 2) as an expression of pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact (van Manen, 2002), there must be room for complexities and multiple realities in “complicated conversation across and within culture, class and place” (Pinar, 2004, p. 157). Advocating the theory of teaching as a question of personal reality (Greene, 1991), we refuse to function compliantly “like Kafkaesque clerks” (p. 8) powerless, voiceless, alienated, and pathologically busy. As Vermont English teacher, Kerrin McCadden (Pinar, 1999) experienced, “Classroom teachers have been given too much lace to tat and too many knick-knacks to dust to nurture ideas” (p. xi) putting an
end to “authentic and complicated conversation” (p. xi). The pathology of segregated busyness is silence (Miller, 2005).

*When They Are Young*

Jackson (1968/1990) found teacher thinking to be significant for both theory and practice although, in agreement with McCadden (Henderson, Kesson, & McCadden, 1999), the teacher, particularly the elementary teacher, does appear, on occasion, to be an “inspired housewife” (Jackson, p. 6) spending “considerable time fussing with the room’s decorations” (p. 6). “The teacher’s concern with the here-and-now and her emotional attachment to her world was often accompanied in her conversations by an accepting attitude toward educational conditions as they presently exist” (p. 148).

The job of managing the activities of 25 to 30 children for 5 or 6 hours a day, 5 days a week, 40 weeks a year, is quite a bit different from what an abstract consideration of the learning process might lead us to believe. In the small but crowded world of the classroom, events come and go with astonishing rapidity. There is evidence, as we have seen, to show that the elementary school teacher typically engages in 200 or 300 interpersonal interchanges every hour of her working day. (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 149)

Smith and Geoffrey (1968) called this skill *ringmastership* actualizing Dewey’s trifold experiential theory of “situation, continuity, and interaction” (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 2000, p. 50) within the time and context of the classroom. Van Manen (1991) described this concept of pedagogy as *pedagogical influence*. She flows through the day “recording/reflecting/distancing” (Doll, 2002, p. 44) lived experiences that are “situational, practical, normative, relational, and self-reflective” (van Manen, p. 15). The
most perplexing experiences go home with her in the car, her book bag, and into her family life as she contemplates, considers, and plans for the next day.

The degree to which teachers maintain *continuity* in commenting upon past events and building into future situations seems quite significant. The multiple contemporaneous strands of events demand behavior such as we have called *ringmastership*. The teacher who can keep the proverbial three balls in the air is a very different kind of person from the individual who becomes rattled or disorganized in the face of multiple stimuli. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 235)

“Good teaching is an act of hospitality toward the young, and hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest” (Palmer, 1998, p. 50). The practice of teaching as hospitality is a welcoming of the student and what he/she brings to the classroom community. It is the opportunity to “encounter in experience something we did not know before” (Greene, 2001, p. 82) which affords an opportunity for inquiry. “The humbling phenomena of difference and what might be” (p. 82) arrives in the classroom each day with each student. Here is the opportunity for the teacher to remove himself or herself from the information expert and “learn to let others learn” (p. 83). In a “breadth of vision” (Bonhoeffer, 1963, p. 22) that enables one “to separate the gold in life from the dross” (p. 22), “Be not anxious for the morrow” Matthew 6:34 (American Standard Version). Release the pending homogenizing proficiency test for the singular pedagogical relationship of teacher, student, and curriculum in the particular moment. Arendt’s “enlarged way of thinking” (1961, p. 220), Foucault’s toolbox (1975), Dewey’s pluralistic inquiry (1916), and Derrida’s *différence* (1973) all encourage the “delight in the dance of
difference” (Garrison & Leach, 2001, p. 80) where we make meaning in the movements of the other.

Teaching is about concrete situations. One summer day in Oklahoma, Kathleen Kesson (2003) was gardening at her home. Shaman, her eight-year old son, was sitting on the steps studying a grasshopper that he had found. Using her experience as a teacher, Kesson encouraged her son to explore his questions into a curriculum. The “emergent curriculum” (p. 55) formed spontaneously among the transactions between Shaman, the grasshopper, the environment, newly-gathered knowledge, and his mother (Dewey, 1938). Kesson invited her son’s experience into the investigation. Max van Manen (1982) defined pedagogy as “something that lets an encounter, a relationship, a situation or a doing to be pedagogic…a relationship of practical actions between an adult and a young person who is on the way to adulthood” (pp. 284-285). The problem arises when we leave the family backyard and its relationship or situation for the city with its mismeetings and silent arrangements (Bauman, 1993).

I don’t like to write all that nonsense down from the board. I rather take my own notes and sometimes it’s hard because they stop and start talking about something else, and it’s a mess. I always thought in that class, “What did she ask me my opinion for? There is a right and a wrong. So I try to do it right and I do the wrong thing. All that’s cut and dry as far as that goes. It’s a matter of how a person interprets whatever it is that they’re looking at. When you start telling them they’re right or wrong, that’s like Jesus. So I started thinking like what’s wrong with me here? I don’t see this. (Fine, 1991, p. 47)
In his large urban high school, Leo concluded that there was a right and a wrong in the classroom of which he had marginal knowledge. The “pedagogical rituals of public participation” (Fine, 1991, p. 46) precluded the democratic inclusion of his voice and experience in the place of the classroom. The teacher was also uncomfortable with the “ahistorical and acontextual notes” (p. 47) that Leo was required to copy from the blackboard. However, the teacher “had a standardized citywide exam to administer in the spring, to which she would be held responsible” (p. 47). Democracy was appropriated and perverted, voices were silenced and excluded, by the knowledge on “aging yellow paper” (p. 47).

Silencing at CHS, as in the South Bronx, seemed to affect not only those who left high school prior to graduation. In equally worrisome ways, it disabled many educators and student who decided to stay. And it created a context in which the move to purge talk, notions, and even bodies was well institutionalized.

(Fine, 1991, p. 62)

*Of the Unexpected and of Surprise*

Now, the conversation turns toward The Achievement Gap and the pending crisis in filling the classrooms of America when the Baby-Boomer teachers, like me, retire. How do we get better teachers to transfer to urban schools? How do we get teachers to enter and stay in teaching? Jackson (1968/1990) asked a group of 50 outstanding teachers how they found satisfaction in the classroom. Through their stories, four themes appeared: immediacy, informality, autonomy, and individuality.

All the teachers expressed the senses in describing immediacy through “body, intuition, feeling, emotion, relationship” (Palmer, 1998, p. 17). Their bodies were not
docile or absent, but interactive in the classroom. “And you could just tell from the look on her face” (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 120). “I can tell. You can feel it” (p. 121). The teachers also expressed the importance of freedom and informality. “I have to have a lot of freedom in the way that I teach because each class is different” (p. 127). Many of the teachers expressed experience as the key to informality. “At the beginning of my teaching experience I was very concerned with being able to control my class…After I became more accustomed to the typical behavior of children of this age, why it was easier for me to set less rigid limits” (p. 128).

Even in the late 1960s, teachers were concerned about the loss of professional autonomy.

If I were given a curriculum guide and a series of lesson plans that said “You will teach this way; you will teach this material at this time and take so long to do it,” if they made teaching too rigid or started telling me that I must use this book or that book and could not bring in supplementary materials of my own, and then I’d quit. Forget it! You can hire an orangutan to come in and pass out books. You really can! I’d walk out the door tomorrow. (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 129)

During the spring semester 2004, a third-grade teacher wrote a letter to Education Week still addressing, after 36 years, the question of professional autonomy. William Farrar (2004) blamed “the wholesale implementation of the homogenized, numbing reading programs prescribed for some 2,000 urban schools in the No Child Left Behind Act” (p. 37) as a huge contributor to the loss of highly-qualified teachers in the inner city. “Bright, talented teachers” (p. 37) would no more stay in such schools than a “talented chef” (p. 37) would cook for McDonald’s, no matter what the pay. Most of the remedies
for attracting teachers to the inner city and its failing schools are Foucauldian in nature. Offer bribes. Change contractual transfer. Encapsulate the teacher in a safety net of standardized, teacher-proof curriculum. No thinking required. Do the “homogenized, numbing” (p. 37) work. Collect a higher pay check. Of course, none of the issues that truly provide teacher satisfaction are addressed in these plans.

The theme of *individuality* plays most importantly with outstanding teachers as the teacher is so closely tied to what is happening to individual students. A second major factor in individuality is the age of the students. “The teacher not only helps people, she helps them at the most crucial time of their lives – when they are young” (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 134). The teachers expressed appreciation for the gratification that they derive from their occupations where “elements of the unexpected and of surprise” (p. 136) are prominent. They talked about finding rewards each day at school, cheering for the underdog, and observing a student’s metamorphosis. The intensity of emotional attachment in the classroom blurs and teacher merges with mother.

The little girl whose drawing I just described was colorless and I didn’t have very much feeling for her for a long time. Then all of a sudden when she began to make discoveries, her personality popped out and I loved her. (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 139)

The outstanding teachers clearly relayed through story the nature of educational experience in their classrooms. In *The Complexities of an Urban Classroom* (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968), Mr. Geoffrey experienced the same joys and frustrations with the same intensity. All teaching is hard work, but the students who entered Washington School continued the long line of *street arabs* who descended upon the school from historically
and socially related rookeries of tenements whose infrastructures are crumbling. What is the place of the urban teacher when her experience and voice are dismissed, disdained, or erased? Jackson (1968/1990) discovered the answer years ago when he determined the sources of satisfaction for the outstanding teacher. Haycock (2002/2003) suggested that we “need to restore honor to those who are doing our most crucial work” (p. 15). I am not waiting for others to determine my worthiness. It would be a long, frustrating wait. Instead, I will find my worth in the social place called school where my voice and experience are crucial to others “when they are young” (Jackson, p. 134).

Reconceptualism

In their book, *Turning Points in Curriculum*, Dan Marshall, James Sears, and William Schubert (2000) wrote that “curriculum lies at the heart of an educator’s desire to make a difference in human lives” (p. 2). For me, curriculum work also requires that I “ask meaningful questions about what should be taught and learned” (p. 2). In asking these questions, we begin a conversation about “what it means to enable the growth of human beings and societies” (p. 2). In response to Spencer’s question (1860) *What knowledge is of most worth?*, Dewey, who was also influenced by Darwin, reframed the question to “What adds meaning and direction or purpose to experience?” (p. 2) Marshall, Sears, and Schubert restate the question as “What is worth knowing and experiencing?” (p. 3) and more locally, “Why? When? Where? How? For whom?” (p. 3)

The urban teacher (Jones, 1990), as well as, but more so than, the suburban and rural teacher, has been, by tradition, molded and scolded. Right now, the conversation is codified out of our sight and hearing until the standards, benchmarks, and pacing guides arrive in our mailboxes. *Personalize and localize a little in your classroom, but leave the*
pronouncements to us, the experts who will mold you into a ventriloquist’s dummy, 
denying your professional artistry, and scold you if you do not perform commendably as
determined by your students’ scores (Eisner, 2002a, 2002b; Schwandt, 2002). George
Counts (1932) warned 70 years ago that “the real question is not whether imposition will
take place, but rather from what source it will come” (Chapter 3). The imposition is now
labeled by national, state, district, and school policy and published in the media.

What drew me into the history of curriculum theory as a practitioner scholar
(Pryor, 2002) was the dam-bursting essay, The Practical: A Language for Curriculum,
which Joseph Schwab (1969) delivered to an invited symposium for American
Educational Research Association members. Schwab wanted to bring teachers into the
curriculum conversation in order to collapse the undemocratic and deadening wall
between theory and practice in curriculum work. In 1969, as today, teachers were
working in vulnerable circumstances. They were accountable without allowance for
adaptability.

On October 4, 1957, Sputnik I, the first artificial earth satellite, was launched by
our Cold War arch-enemy, the Soviet Union. In defense of our national security, the
federal government moved to assess and improve our scientific progress against the
triumphant Soviets. On September 2, 1958, curriculum as a local politics was engulfed by
the federal politicization of the curriculum with the very large entry of the National
political and physical football even further in an article, The Soft American (1960),
published in Sports Illustrated. The President-Elect presented his plan in a mainstream
magazine targeting the athletically-minded man. Introducing his concern with the decline
in strength of the American soldier in the early stages of the Korean War and a 50% rejection rate of young American men by the Selective Service due to physical, mental, or moral unfitness, Kennedy stressed the vigorous life as a basis for maintaining our national freedom through defense. In referencing the “regimented society” (p. 23), the reader was clearly shown that the strong, sound body was the basis for the strength and safety of America. The NDEA would guarantee the masculine scientific and mathematical education of that young (White) body away from the feminization of the American curriculum that had led to our loss in the scientific wars (Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000; Pinar, 2004).

“In the 1960s, it was the Cold War from which radiated a multitude of gendered, racialized, and educational anxieties” (Pinar, 2004, p. 89). African Americans and women were ascending ladders of power. While embroiled in war in Vietnam, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the presence of Martin Luther King, Jr., who had been invited to witness the signing at the White House. The next year, Johnson declared war on poverty in America through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). The federal government was promoting a rational and organized system of education amidst rising dissent, political, racial, and sexual, in the country. “Political links between schools and larger political and economic powers” (Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000, p. 88) were evident and evidently in question in curriculum work.

Too many large-scale curriculum projects had failed due to their global orientation, teacher proofing, discipline specificity, and more. Curriculum people themselves had so technicized the Tyler rationale that even the act of curriculum
making had become an empirical science, ushering in an entire new field of study (evaluation) while placing teachers in a vulnerable new state of accountability (for student learning) without adaptability (in terms of what and how to teach).

(Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000, p. 93)

By 1969, William Pinar forcefully objected to the separation of theory and practice, pronouncing that the traditional curriculum field had “lost its legitimacy” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 179). In the 1970s, Pinar (1974) continued writing about *Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory* concluding that the teacher is engaged with others in the art of living in the creative and spontaneous practice of curriculum work. Meanwhile, in 1973, James Macdonald (1974) presented *A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education* at the Rochester curriculum conference where he concluded that curriculum work should be based in cultural realities in which the processes would include centering, releasement, and openness to mystery. These words, echoing from the early 1970s, are not found in present educational policies. Today’s power talk is technical, or as Donald Schön (1983) would term it, technical rationality, the positivist epistemology of practice. Curriculum, including teaching, learning, materials, and evaluation as specialized, firmly bounded, scientific, and standardized, circles back to embrace the mold and scold philosophy with specific aim at certain “gendered, racialized, classed creatures” (Pinar, 2002, p. 109) who are expected to graciously submit (Grumet, 1988; Pinar, 2004).

*It Is More of an Orientation Than a Dogma*

Reconceptualism came to the forefront of curriculum work in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States. Schwab sounded the bugle in his appeal for *The Practical*...
(1969) concluding that “what schools need are curriculum workers who wish to know and understand what goes on in classrooms, who wish to make the teaching-learning process (and curriculum) function better, who are sophisticated enough to anticipate new problems, and who see their work as fundamentally practical or deliberative” (Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000, p. 94). Like Schwab, reconceptualists rejected the separation of subject-matter specialists by calling forth “ideas that had either largely been lying dormant for a long period or had not previously been considered pertinent to curriculum theorizing” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 117).

In the 1970s, along with James Macdonald (1975) and Dwayne Huebner (1975), William Pinar stepped forward as the main spokesman for reconceptualism. Reconceptualism is not an ideology that is complete nor, as Eisner (2002b) wrote, do its adherents want it to be complete. “It is more of an orientation than a dogma” (p. 77). In this orientation, reconceptualists recognize their differences while simultaneously sharing “an overt political emphasis, underscoring the ideological dimensions of schooling” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 118).

Macdonald (1971) foreshadowed reconceptualism in his article *Curriculum Theory* in the *Journal of Educational Research*. Out of his own life exploration, he concluded, that the centering of the person in the world was the aim of education; and further, that centering was the aim of transcendental ideology. Macdonald decried the split between theory and practice, teacher and theorists, and subject and subject. “Centering as the aim of education calls for the completion of the person or the creation of meaning that utilizes all the potential given to each person” (p. 105).
The expression of the reconceptualist incorporates Macdonald’s vocabulary and intention. Reconceptualists consider matters of “temporality, transcendence, consciousness, and politics” (Pinar, 1975, p. xiii). They attempt “to understand the nature of educational experience” (p. xiii), not in terms of observable behavioral changes or processes of classroom decision making, but within “the internal and existential experience of the public world” (p. xiii). This reconceptualization embraces a postcritical stance addressing not only criticism of the old, but creation of the new.

In 1975, with the American counterculture in full riot, Pinar concluded that the final stage, the reconceptualization of American curriculum studies, had just begun. Anxious attention had turned from the past to the present and the future, eschewing presentism for temporality in interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938). “This stage has meant introducing existentialism and phenomenology to the field, in order to provide conceptual tools by which we can understand human experience of education” (Pinar, 1975, p. xiii). Assuredness of behavior and process was replaced by understanding of the nature of lived experience. In sensitivity to philosophical foundations and history, reconceptualism aspired to “a synthesis of contemporary social science and the humanities. It will attempt a marriage of two cultures: the scientific and the artistic and humanistic” (p. xiv).

In 1968, Smith and Geoffrey completed their study of Geoffrey’s split 6th-7th grade class in a slum school experiencing its first efforts toward integration. In their conclusionary remarks to issues of substance in the behavior of teaching, the university professor and the teacher revealed that “much of our effort has been spent in reconceptualizing teaching” (p. 126) toward addressing the fundamental conflicts
between theory, primarily psychological, and the experience of the teacher. At the same
time, Pinar and Grumet (1976) were reconceptualizing curriculum theory toward an
understanding of the daily experience of students and teachers.

The Second Wave

Reviewing the reconceptualization of American curriculum work, Jackson (1992)
described the Reconceptualists as curriculum professors who were actively engaged in
“reconceptualizing the task of the curriculum specialists, particularly with respect to the
role of theory in curricular affairs” (p. 34). Reconceptualists shared common elements:

1) disillusionment with the Tyler rationale (Tyler, 1949)

2) employment of eclectic traditions such as phenomenology

3) left-wing political bias concerning race and gender (Jackson, 1992)

In 1988, Pinar declared victory for reconceptualists in his edited book
Contemporary Curriculum Discourses, although he recognized that it might take years
for everyone to realize that the Tylerian Rationale (Tyler, 1949) was dead. “While the
academic field of curriculum studies has been reconceived, the major ideas which
constitute the contemporary field of study have yet to make their way to colleagues in
elementary and secondary schools” (Pinar, 1988, p. 13).

School bells ring at the same time every day for millions of American students
and teachers. In our “industrialized format” (Eisner, 2002b, p. 78), we “keep them
(primarily women) busy so they will not think” (Henderson, Kesson, & McCadden, 1999,
p. 118). This pressurized rushing around has a purpose. George Counts (1932) would call
it slave psychology. In continuing the metaphor, Pinar (2004) suggested that we need to
escape our own plantations where we are trapped by our “internalized masters” (p. 48)
and “bifurcated into sadist and masochist, one self, at once divided and united” (p. 48) toiling in public schools that “are severed from both the social and the subjective” (p. 27) in *The Nightmare That Is Present* (p. 14).

*The Nightmare That Is Present*

Nor must we become compulsive critics, as some philosophers and historians of education seem to view their task. Curriculum theory seeks to restore the contemplative moment in which we interrupt our taken-for-granted understandings of our work, and ask again the basic questions practical activity silences. In creating and maintaining contradictions between theory and practice, we can reconceptualize the relation between the two domains…Theory must not hang alienated from practice in some timeless realm of unchanging, arrogant truth. Rather, let us play theory and practice against each other so as to disclose their limitations and in so doing enlarge the capacity and intensify the focus of each. (Pinar & Grumet, 1982, pp. 53-54)

In Pinar’s new book *What is Curriculum Theory?* (2004), Part I is titled *The Nightmare That Is the Present*. The *Nightmare* is national. A nightmare is “an evil spirit formerly thought to oppress people during sleep” (Merriam-Webster, 2004), “a frightening dream that usually awakens the sleeper” (Merriam-Webster), or “something (as an experience, situation, or object) having the monstrous character of a nightmare or producing a feeling of anxiety or terror” (Merriam-Webster). A *Nightmare* is meant to produce anxiety or terror. If one does not meet the approved scores, the all-seeing Panopticon Cyborg will publish the exact and detailed data for the world to read with no excuses accepted. Under our present national educational reign, every school, urban and
suburban, is judged and branded. The schools that are expected to be perfect are under intense pressure, too.

_The Nightmare_ has stationed its capital in the urban curriculum. I used to be _Everyman_. I was one journeyman teacher like others working to serve the poor. Now, there is pressure to morph into _L'Homme-machine_ to function and fine tune according to the computer analysis of educational data of decontextualized scores for the day. While I was reading William Pinar’s new book (2004), I was at first mystified by his continuing reference to lynching in the United States between 1882 and 1927. Then, I accompanied theory to school and witnessed a high-tech lynching that severed the intellect from the soul (Musil, 1990).

In the heyday of lynching, there were two types. Bourbon lynching was planned, orderly, and institutionalized, and often led by the town’s leading citizens with some interest in establishing the guilt of the accused. Vigilante or mob lynching was a practice to renew racial subordination and segregation. In each case, there was a margin of unpredictability; however, the accused was in danger regardless of the hands holding the gun or the rope. Reconstruction and integration brought the public schools into the racialized sphere. When the present national policy of reform visits the school in the shape of mandated tests of official knowledge, there is a measure of unpredictability. Everyone in the school has been working so hard to complete the pacing guides, note standards and benchmarks on lesson plans, and align the curriculum. Yet, there is a not too well-kept secret attached to the test. It is predictable who is in danger.

Tyran was in danger. He had not, once again, passed one part of the Midwest Proficiency Test. Notwithstanding our knowledge of Howard Gardner’s (1983) theory of
multiple intelligences, Tyran was only tested by means of his linguistic and logical/math abilities. Tyran was a fine senior athlete playing high school football and basketball. He had been drafted by a NCAA Division I university on a full scholarship to play football for them in the fall after graduation. Tyran did not live with his parents. He had moved about from guardian to guardian, some of whom tried to gain employment through Tyran’s athleticism. There was no big meal waiting for Tyran at school or at home before the big game. On senior night at the end of the basketball season, the football coach walked Tyran out to center court and received the carnation. No one from Tyran’s personal life appeared to honor his success. Despite the world, Tyran made it to school and game. His picture has appeared in the newspaper throughout the year.

We base critical decisions affecting students’ lives on a system that would seek to evaluate whether Roger Clemens or Tiger Woods or Serena Williams is an effective athlete based on a single event rather than by looking at six or eight events over a period of time. This approach virtually guarantees a distorted view of a person’s abilities. Even worse, we would give Roger Clemens a paper-and-pencil test on pitching and baseball because it would be easier to administer and grade such a test than it would be to evaluate several pitching performances over two or three seasons. (Goldberg, 2004, p. 365)

Goldberg (2004) asked, “Are we going to tell students who have done all of the work and passed the required classes that they cannot graduate or go on to the next grade because they failed to meet the standard on one state test? (p. 363)” In Tyran’s case, and the case of other seniors, the answer is yes. Is this nightmare a Bourbon or vigilante

Leonard Gordon (Mulrine, 2004) and Tyran are two high school students.

Leonard, who has traveled the world, is a member of the National Honor Society from an intact family who participates in the life and academics of his diverse high school. His parents are employed, and their employers provide release time for parental volunteering and meetings at the school. Many teachers want to teach at Fort Campbell High School; they have no trouble recruiting the best teachers. FCHS exemplifies Doll’s (1993) four Rs of curriculum leadership: richness, recursion, relations, and rigor. The curriculum is rich in both the sciences and the arts and incorporates the experiences and lives of the students into the school. Academic rigor rests in the arms of caring, able teachers in relationship with the students who attend school daily.

Tyran’s school experience is different; his success in school rests in sports. Sometimes, Tyran has difficulties with transportation to and from school. Because Tyran lives in a different town, he gets home quite late in the evening after practice. He makes sure to do what is necessary academically and steers clear of trouble in school. When there is a fight in the hall, Tyran slips into the library until the police handcuff the offenders. Then, Tyran asks for a late pass to class. Tyran knows that athletics will pay his way through college. The football coach acts as Tyran’s father, agent, and teacher. Unfailingly polite to his teachers, Tyran saves his energy for weight lifting, football practice, basketball practice, etc.

Students in the inner city know famous athletes. A NBA Rookie of the Year is often at Tyran’s games and practices. A recent Chicago Bear is the track coach and a
long-term substitute teacher in the school. James’ uncle is a *Pittsburgh Steeler*. Miesha’s
grandfather was a world champion boxer. Professional sports are a reality for Tyran and
his friends. He knows that his way to college is through his body. Although he cannot
articulate it, Tyran’s quandary is that his autobiography is estranged from the bodies of
knowledge that have been ordained and codified as official. Even as Pinar (2004)
declared that the reconceptualized curriculum is a “complicated conversation with
oneself” (p. 37), Tyran’s “biographic situation” (p. 36) is absent in that which is
quantified in test scores in “the illusion of truth” (p. 38) that misrepresents our nation.
There is a deadening wall between the knower and known.

Tyran attends an urban school that has great difficulty attracting teachers,
distinguished or not, credentialed or substitute (Loeb & Reininger, 2004). There is no one
at Tyran’s home to realize what Tyran is and is not learning. In this time when the public
sector does not invite identification of the personal and the subjective, Tyran is caught in
“this nightmarish historical moment” (Pinar, 2004, p. 47). Like others who have passed
through the school to Penn State, the University of Pittsburgh, and Ohio State and gone
on to the Minnesota Vikings, Buffalo Bills, and Cleveland Browns as college graduates,
it was the remedial efforts of the receiving college football program that helped the urban
student athlete to graduate from college. If Tyran can get to college, he can get academic
help. Despite the fact that only 54% of college football players graduate (Campbell,
2004), the odds of his graduating from college are much higher than the graduation rate at
his urban high school. Fewer than 40% of entering freshman will graduate from the
*dropout factory* that Tyran attends (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). The school is disappearing
philosophically and physically. A victim of deferred and displaced racism, he is caught in
a *Catch-22* by a proficiency test that seeks the data of his race and sex, but not the realization of it.

*Autobiography*

*Currere* is based in autobiography through reflective self-representations, *self-as-agent*, *self-as-object*, and *self-as-place* (Grumet, 1976). These three representations are interdependent parts of the self system (see Figure 3). They represent the physical, emotional, and intellectual part of the being. “The autobiographical process is dialectical reflection, designed to challenge *self-as-object* by requiring that the student see himself seeing” (p. 70), thus revealing intentionality by stripping away habit, convention, illusion and myth. Thus, the idea of the poor curriculum stripped clean of its artifacts, scheduling, time, and customs.

What kind of subjectivity emerges in autobiography? Autobiography is a story that I tell about my experience. *Self-as-agent*, tells the story of *self-as-place*, the body-subject, its movement in the world, and in the process constructs and reveals *self-as-object*, or as a reflective self-representation. As such, autobiography is two steps removed from the prereflective events enacted by the body subject. The first step requires the reflection upon the movements already lived that leads to a conscious grasp of their meaning. The second step involves the presentation of those events and their meanings as they now appear to the story teller in terms of his relationship with his audience. Thus, autobiography barely recaptures the past or even records it. It records the present perspective of the story teller and presents the past within that structure. It employs the past to reveal the present assumptions and future intentions of the story teller, an elaborate detour that
Lebenswelt
Home of the Knower and the Known
Population 4

Entry into Everydayness

Self as Place

Le jet currere

Self as Object

Figure 3. Lebenswelt
travels through once upon a time in order to reach now. Its truth is provided in its fictions. (Grumet, 1976, p. 73)

Autobiography reveals metaphors of educational experience. For teachers, these metaphors take three perspectives. The *subjective* is the teacher’s experience and assumptions. The *objective* is the people, time, and setting. The *discipline* is the literature, symbols, artifacts, and methods. “Self-as-object emerges in the study of subjectivity; self-as-place emerges in the study of objectivity; self-as-agent emerges in the study of the discipline” (Grumet, 1976, p. 74). Autobiography is about the relationship of the knower to the known, the human visage of education. “Self-as-agent transforms self-as-object in projections of self-as-place” (p. 75).

What is actual in the curriculum, is not calculus, social studies, not even gym, but my experience of these structures. It is within my personal, particular contact with these forms on a Tuesday morning, in a classroom that holds thirty movable desks, during a fifty-minute period while I was still chilled by the cold milk from breakfast that the curriculum achieves actuality. Furthermore, it is in that immediate encounter with a form of logical objectivity on that Tuesday morning in my fifteenth year, answering ten questions at the back of the chapter about Bismarck and the unification of Germany, leaning toward the radiator, looking forward to chorus practice in the always overheated music room, that my own thoughts about Bismarck are deposited, a sediment that settles and lodges in among my assumptions about historical descriptions, the satisfactions of seeing all those lives and crises arranged in patterns of cause and effect, the suggestions
about the power of a single man’s actions and intentions, or the ideas that nations
as collective forms enhance or control individual experience.

(Grumet, 1976, pp. 77-78)

Bismarck and the unification of Germany are now part of my world view and may
accompany me into a conversation 20 years from now or change my career intention for
the near future. The relation between the knower and the known is the alert to habit.
What is the intention of the action? Is it based on a poor curriculum stripped bare of
habit? Or is habitual perspective revealed? For the experienced teacher, the traces on
process are yawning and well-traveled. Autobiography reveals intentionality.

The seasoned traveler is oblivious to the danger. The path is well marked. He has
been this way many times before. His knowledge is in his hands, in his feet: they
take him where he is going without his even having to be there. It is not merely a
question of rerouting, adding a rest-stop, revising the itinerary. It is necessary to
review the initial intentions, and destination. (Grumet, 1976, p. 78)

A Contribution to Knowledge

Research is not a static discipline. Qualitative research was born in order to more
fully understand the other, out of which came a crisis of representation (Denzin &
Lincoln, 2000). Who could fully understand the other? Excesses were corrected and
revisited. The question of legitimation addressed the God’s-eye view and the authority of
the text and the author’s place in the text (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). After all the
questioning, birthing, and change, Lincoln and Denzin concluded that “there is no such
thing as unadulterated truth” (p. 1051).
I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth. (Foucault, 1980, p. 193)

With the entry of the 21st century, qualitative research evolved out of the past with “utopian hopes for the future” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1047). Concluding that “writing the present is always dangerous” (p. 1047), Lincoln and Denzin proposed a future for research, the seventh moment, that “connects the past with the present and the future” (p. 1048), a hallmark of currere.

In charting this future,

we group our discussion around the following themes, or issues:

- text and voice;
- the existential, sacred performance text;
- the return to narrative as a political act;
- text, reflexivity, and being vulnerable in the text;
- and inquiry as a moral act, ethics, and critical moral consciousness.

(Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1048)

**Journals and Newspapers**

In early 2003, *Education Week* (Edwards, 2003) published its large annual report, *Quality Counts 2003*, “on education in the 50 states and the District of Columbia” (p. 4). The topic heralding the new century/millennium was “If I can’t learn from you”:

*Ensuring a Highly Qualified Teacher for Every Classroom.* The picture on the cover showed a blurred White woman at her desk, pencil in hand, looking down at her work. In
the forefront was a clear raised Black hand, fingers spread, unnoticed by the teacher. The national report addressed *The Teacher Gap, Ensuring Qualified Teachers*, and the *State of the States*. The research concluded that *The Great Divide* leaves students *Swimming Upstream*. States were pressed to begin *Skirting Tradition* in order to recruit and retain *The Job-Seekers* thereby *Increasing the Odds* for students. Although the report, like former Secretary of Education Rod Paige’s *Meeting the High Qualified Teachers Challenge: The Secretary’s Annual Report on Teacher Quality* (2002) and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, concluded that “students in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-performing schools have less access to well-qualified teachers” (Olson, 2003, p. 9), the voice of that required experienced teacher was disregarded. Even when a representative of the sought-after highly-qualified veteran teacher appeared in a photograph, she was written *about* rather than heard *from*. “Rebecca Malone is a rarity in the teaching profession; a high-caliber teacher who chose to transfer to a disadvantaged school” (p. 9).

The emphasis of the report was first-year teachers, administrators, fleeing teachers, “weary, frustrated” (Keller, 2003, p. 33) teachers, and teacher turnover. The occasional acclaimed teacher was always a model for *Skirting Tradition* (Blair, 2003). “Many poor schools are turning to alternative-certification programs to find teachers to fill their classrooms” (p. 35). Pages and pages of charts summed the absence of that which was sought, but no one asked the prized highly-qualified veteran urban teachers about their experiences and the meanings ascribed thereto.

With the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the turning of the panoptical eye of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* toward the high school,
thus surveying K-12, the issue surfaces *Is That All There Is?* Every question is asked and studied not only to find an answer, but to see it through to completion. In addressing *Equity and Opportunity* in America’s schools, the editor of *Educational Leadership* (Scherer, 2002/2003) published an entire issue that centered on the question of teacher quality without citing a successful veteran teacher.

Where the research at the beginning of the millennium squared on the teacher, the research on the continuing question of urban education is widening its lens. Continuing the discussion in the earlier issue (Scherer, 2002/2003), the editor of *Educational Leadership* (Scherer, 2004) published an issue on *Closing Achievement Gaps*. In this research, the walls of the school became amorphous reflecting its local world. Barton (2004) cited 14 factors to student achievement concluding that “low-income and minority children are at a disadvantage in almost all of them” (p. 9). Eight factors were grouped under *Before and Beyond School* (p. 10). The six *In School* factors were rigor of curriculum, teacher experience and attendance, teacher preparation, class size, technology-assisted instruction, and school safety. The teacher had shifted from being the factor to being a portion of the factors. Yet, once again, the experienced voice of the highly-qualified veteran urban teacher who is so important to those who have the greatest need is absent (Haycock, 2002/2003).

Grossman (2004) worried about the profession of teaching citing “the influx of underqualified teachers into classrooms, the potential dismantling of professional education for teachers, and the trend toward the regulation of teaching practice” (¶1). She concluded that the widespread teacher shortages were not a shortage at all. It was a reflection of “high teacher turnover, particularly in challenging schools” (*Working*
Conditions, ¶1). The problem was “teacher retention, rather than teacher supply” (Working Conditions, ¶1). Grossman did not use the highly-qualified veteran urban teacher who taught in the classroom next to the revolving-door classroom as a reference.

Even the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2003) forgot to talk to the best senior teacher in the school when it addressed The Making of a 21st-Century Educator asking How Do We Get There from Here?

While a top-down approach has its merits, some believe that only educators can fully comprehend the complexity that exists in the classroom. Only educators can truly piece together answers about what is needed to excite the global village of minds in American schools today. (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2003)

Yet, when the anonymous editor(s) wrote the article they approached a president, a chairman, a co-director, a deputy director, a director, and a co-founder and CEO for the answers. The presence of the person actually in practice was the topic but not the source.

Daily in our nation’s newspapers, The Denver Post (Rouse, 2004), The Washington Post (Glod, 2004), The Plain Dealer (Stephens, 2004), etc., reporters publish articles on the achievement gap, the transfer of high-achieving students, low expectations, etc., without conferring with senior urban teachers who serve in the inner-city schools in which the articles are centered. State panels, superintendents, state senators, trusts, conferences, commissions, and state and national reports are cited, but no experienced teachers are quoted. Frequent references to the bottom line, do not include those who are/live/epitomize/actualize/assist the bottom line for the student and his/her relation to the curriculum.
In the continuing discussion of urban education, Larry Cuban (2003) asked *Why Is It So Hard to Get Good Schools?* He excused himself for his lack of teacher voices.

I am continually tempted to focus on only those reforms that improve the lot of the classroom teacher who is the ultimate insider when it comes to putting reforms into practice and the primary gatekeeper to student learning. Yet teacher voices have been largely unheard in policy making circles. (Cuban, 2003, p. 60)

Cuban relied on his own experience, but that experience wore many hats: teacher, teacher educator, director of staff development, and superintendent. Again, the voice of the teacher was limited by the author whose own experience as a teacher was that from whence he started. Someone who left the position determined to speak for the position.

Alex Kotlowitz (1987) studied the lives of Lafayette and Pharoah [sic] Rivers as they negotiated their lives in a Chicago housing project. Kotlowitz, in his bestselling case study *There Are No Children Here*, largely ignored the role of the school in the boys’ lives except for a few rich pages.

Ms. Barone tired of the large classes, which at one point swelled to as many as thirty-four students – they now numbered around twenty-five – and of the funding cutbacks. And she worried so much about her children, many of whom came in tired or sad or distracted, that she eventually developed an ulcerated colon.

The relentless violence of the neighborhood also wore her down. The parking lot behind the school had been the site of numerous gang battles. When the powerful sounds of .357 Magnums and sawed-off shotguns echoed off the school walls, the streetwise student slid off their chairs and huddled under the
desks. The students had had no “duck and cover” drills, as in the early 1960s, when the prospect of a nuclear war with Cuba and the Soviet Union threatened the nation. This was merely their sensible reaction to the possibility of bullets flying through the window. Ms. Barone, along with other teachers, placed the back of her chair against a pillar so that there would be a solid object between herself and the window. (Kotlowitz, 1987, p. 66)

And that was before Ms. Barone began to teach. Long-time urban teachers know that the world surrounds and marches into/pierces through the school. The surroundings enter the curriculum and its relation to the students in depth, breadth, and length. At times, the surroundings build an impenetrable wall between the curriculum and the child and the teacher. The high-quality veteran urban teacher embraces the chaos and its reality in the classroom (Rich & Almozlino, 1999) in her daily practice of pedagogical tact. I recognized myself in those few pages/days in Lafayette and Pharoah’s lives.

Some books counsel the teacher to practice Culturally-Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000). Others advise the teacher to see The Big Picture (Littky, 2004), because Education Is Everyone’s Business. The rather formulaic, alternating victim/champion suggestions bog down for the teacher whose practice cannot be separated from culture, vision, and power. Kozol’s earlier books (1991, 2000) were predictable as the author rocked back and forth between small scenes to the power that surrounded and separated the school.

There are wonderful teachers such as Corla Hawkins almost everywhere in urban schools, and sometimes a number of such teachers in a single school. It is
tempting to focus on these teachers and, by doing this, to paint a hopeful portrait of the good things that go on under adverse conditions. (Kozol, 1991, p. 51)

After the brief accolade for Mrs. Hawkins, Kozol left to find that “problems are systemic” (p. 51). The author stopped to pay homage to those who stayed to teach in the “adverse conditions” (p. 51), but it is Kozol’s evaluation of the teachers and their experiences that were written. The teacher did not voice the professional experience that is so bound with personal experience and meaning-making.

Kozol’s later book (2000), *Ordinary Resurrections*, is much more philosophical than his earlier combative style. *Ordinary Resurrections* is an illustration of pedagogical tact and thoughtfulness by experienced teachers and staff in an urban setting. Kozol has replaced stalking the inner-city streets/schools carrying a protest sign for a more reflective sojourn into a segregated elementary school, St. Ann’s Episcopal, attended by the poorest children in New York. Yet, even in the “bad section” (p. 4) of the city, there survived “the miniature and often healing world that children of their age inhabit everywhere in the United States” (p. 4). Kozol attributed his fresh eyes to his own maturation. As he turned 64, he found himself leaving the race of minutes for the possibility of extended periods of time with these children and their teachers in the stillness and chaos of the classroom.

In reading the almost poetic descriptions of the living curriculum, *currere*, with paths weaving in and out, around and under, bypassing and centering, in the triangle of society, self, and social (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000), I became aware of conclusions that I had already reached. I am reminded of the songwriter/novelist who is sued for a song/novel that someone else has written along similar lines. Kozol (2000) had
complained, as I had, about the establishment and organization of policies for urban education “by grown-ups far away who do not know them but rely on data generated by researchers that are used to justify political decisions” (p. 14).

Sometimes, though, these generalities seem much too big, too confident, and too relentless. It feels at times as if the world of adult expertise is taking hundred-pound cement blocks, labeled “certitude” and “big significance,” and lowering them down onto the shoulders of a six- or seven-year-old boy, then telling him, “Okay, you carry this for ten or fifteen years. Then, if we learn something new, we will come back and give you some new labels you can carry.” Sometimes the size and weight of all of this signification makes it hard to see if there is still a living body underneath. (Kozol, 2000, pp. 14-15)

Through distance and the denial of corporeality, categories, and trends, constructs are affixed through a wide lens renouncing the narrow lens of the actuality of the child, the teacher and the curriculum. The possibility of différence is replaced with the ease of codification and the language rule (Arendt, 1964, 1971). Recalling The Kindness of Children in Vivian Gussin Paley’s (1999) stories, there “is a great deal of this automatic and insightful kindness in the hearts of many of these children” (Kozol, 2000, p. 27). Despite the gentleness and generosity so often illuminated in the classroom, these children are headed for a drop-out factory (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). They will not gain admittance to the best high school in New York City, Stuyvesant High, where the acclaimed Irish author, Frank McCourt (1996, 1999, 2005) taught English for decades. Instead, they are headed for segregated Morris High School where despite an enrollment of 1,900-2000, only 65 of the 90 seniors will graduate.
The theme of Kozol’s books (1991, 2000) is always power and its accompanying entrapment for the poor in America’s schools. The author illustrates power and its tentacles through the stories of the school. While the stories center in the children, there are peripheral adult players in Kozol’s books. As a high-quality veteran urban teacher nearing the end of my career, I was especially touched by Katrice who works in the kitchen at St. Ann’s.

She told me once she never really likes to leave. Even when she’s tired or is struggling against one of those winter colds that spread so quickly in a place where eighty kids and many grown-ups are in close and steady contact for so many hours every day, she says she feels a sense of let-down as she gets her coat and says goodbye to Mother Martha and goes out into the night and makes her way along the darkened streets. (Kozol, 2000, p. 30)

Near the end of 2004, on my birthday, I had my first pre-retirement teleconference with the State Teachers Retirement System. My body tells me that it is preparing to retire. I find bruises on my legs. My fingers split from the books. I drive home with my shoes on the passenger-side floor. I am wearing out. I will not have enough time to do all that I need to do. Like Katrice, I will need to pick up my coat and say good-bye. In the morning as I enter the school, I begin a parade of students. Often, as I am trying to leave, I turn around to get some materials for a student who really needs to be able to finish an assignment at home. Yet, when I personify the presence of an absence, the long line of school will continue as it always has…

Other books center on those who leave, both teachers and students. Miles Corwin (2001) wrote about The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City students. In
And Still We Rise, the emphasis in this best-selling book is the student in South Central. The teachers are part of the systemic problem, mentioned in Kozol’s books, to be overcome, bypassed, and very occasionally, thanked. In GED Stories (Dowdy, 2003), “teaching is ministry” (p. 37) when it is the chosen career of one of the students. These wonderful stories illustrate the value of education within rather than put on a student. They portray curriculum as text rather than curriculum as object, but they do not tell the intimate, intriguing story of pedagogic tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher.

Michael Johnston (2002) titled Part One of his book, You Ain’t Been Here Long. That was my first reaction. Johnston had all the right people offering acclaim for his book, In the Deep Heart’s Core. I bought the book based on Robert Coles’ foreword. The scene that I like best illustrated the immediate, uninvited reaction that every veteran urban teacher encounters whenever employment is discussed.

“Place of employment?”

“Greenville High School.”

…”Oh, you poor thing!”

“What are you going to teach?”

“English.”

This was met with an overwhelming burst of laughter. (Johnston, 2002, p. 5)

Johnston (2002) met his students in person and in his book with respect, but at the end of the year, he left. To his credit, after earning a master’s degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Johnston headed to Denver to be principal of an inner-city high school. I am sure that his excellent education serves his school well, but he is not in the classroom with the students participating in The Daily Grind (Jackson, 1968/1990).
Two other fine books center on students who live on the fringes of society, the children of poverty. *What Happened to Johnnie Jordan? The Story of a Child Turning Violent* (Toth, 2002) took place in Spencer Township, Ohio. It was the local story of foster children, violence, and murder. These nouns are part of the parlance of urban education. Mother Martha, the teachers, and the students at St. Ann’s Episcopal regularly described the *Holy Family* as the *Mother*, the *Father*, and the *Foster Father* and used that terminology in their prayers (Kozol, 2000). We who remain in service to the poor recognize scenes and replay them with our own players. *Lost Boys* (Garbarino, 1999) helped us understand *Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*. When major crime is reported in the newspapers, my husband unfailingly asks me if I know the criminal. One of my middle-school students was the star of Geraldo Rivera’s *Teen Killers*. I saved the videotape of the talk show. I always try to see what the school missed, excused, or complicated in the lives of these very troubled boys. Usually, I find references to school size and difficulties massed together. Teachers and counselors are drained raw and bleeding by the overwhelming needs of the students. “In school again…Johnnie’s behavior grew more erratic and difficult” (Toth, p. 139). “Homicide is the leading cause of death for minority male youth, and each new death creates tremendous psychological reverberations” (Garbarino, p. 2). The reverberations echo into the veteran urban teacher, too, who can name the students who have died on his/her watch. Such soul-shaking aftershocks accumulate but are not addressed in the books.

Another soul-shaker for the high-quality veteran urban teacher is Lisa Delpit (1988, 1995, 1997) who complained that teachers from the suburbs do not speak or form their sentences appropriately for culturally-responsive instruction. Delpit (1988)
concluded that Black urban children are accustomed to the direct, authoritative approach, while Caucasian adults speak in indirect, veiled commands. Cushman (1998) and Delpit (1988, 1995) argued that issues of equity arise in instructional design when students are required to build upon knowledge that they have not already mastered. They criticized progressivism, particularly the open classroom, as a disservice to children of poverty. “Issues of power are enacted in the classroom” (Delpit, 1988, p. 3) through the official knowledge expounded in textbooks (Cushman) and by the inferred knowledge of the teacher. Delpit argued that progressive educational strategies are “imposed by liberals upon black and poor children” (p. 6). Citing a cultural conflict, Delpit (1995) concluded that what is expected by the poor, often Black, student is not that which is supported by progressive education. “The clash between school culture and home culture” (p. 1) is evident in the misreading of students by teachers and teachers by students.

As an example of students’ reviews of teachers, Delpit (1995) included her interview with a young Black male.

One 12-year old described three kinds of teachers in his middle school:

the black teachers, none of whom are afraid of black kids;

the white teachers, a few of whom are not afraid of black kids;

and the largest group of white teachers, who are all afraid of black kids.

It is this last group that, according to my young informant,

consistently has the most difficulty with teaching

and those students have the most difficulty with learning. (Delpit, 1995, p. 1)

Delpit (1988) contended that it is more a question of style than of fear. Inner city students expect direct instruction that is delivered with authority. “She wanted us to
correct each other’s papers and we were there to learn from her” (p. 7). “We had fun in her class, but she was mean…She made us learn. We had to get in the books” (p. 10). Delpit presented these as two examples of misfit and missing needs concluding that “children have the right to their own language and their own culture” (p. 10). Deciding at the end of six years that she was a failure as an open-classroom teacher, Delpit (1988) left K-12 teaching for graduate school. In her graduate studies, she examined the failure of White progressives with the poor minority students that she had left behind in the classroom.

Where Delpit (1988) concluded that Caucasian teachers cannot understand the needs of the students whom they serve, others positioned the heralded achievement gap at the entry of the child to school (Hart & Risley, 2003). America’s youngest children are disparate “long before children knock on the kindergarten door” (Hodgkinson, 2003, p.1). “Poverty is a universal handicap” (p. 2) affecting one-third of America’s entering class of kindergartners, the Children’s Class of 2000 in the study. Other inhibiting factors to success in school are “infant and child health, household income, transience, and quality of day care” (p. 2). Although Jonathan Kozol (2000) was not an experienced, or even recent teacher, it was not difficult for this senior scholar to see that the smallest girl in the group, Mariposa, was very far behind for a six-year old student.

“What’s your mother's name?” I ask her.

“Momma,” she replies. (Kozol, 2000, p. 85)

Miss Rosa, the long-time principal of St. Ann’s, moved Mariposa back to kindergarten from the first grade “because she’s just so tiny and knows absolutely nothing about anything!” (Kozol, 2000, p. 86).
When I point to the potato ball that sits alone now on her plate and ask her,

“What’s this called?” she doesn’t know the word.

She asks me, “Apple?”

She doesn’t know the world “hamburger” either.

She does know “milk” and guesses “bread” correctly. (Kozol, 2000, p. 86)

Miss Rosa evaluated Mariposa with her long-time knowledge of the students who had moved through St. Ann’s under her continuing watch. Mother Martha, the priest, graduated from Radcliffe. Katrice did not graduate from college. Yet, these three women understand “the real work of a classroom teacher in a good but poorly funded and entirely segregated public school” (Kozol, 2000, p. 182). Katrice fuels the bodies; Miss Rosa oversees the education; and Mother Martha keeps the school afloat. Each vocation is interwoven with the others all bound in the lives of the children whom they stay to serve. Like Louis Bedrock, they have chosen to stay.


Many people with competence to teach in college choose to teach in elementary schools, including schools in urban districts like Mott Haven.

(Kozol, 2000, p. 181)

The best books that I have seen chronicle in some way the life of the urban teacher, like Louis Bedrock, and the meanings that are ascribed to the practice of pedagogical tact, are The Complexities of an Urban Classroom (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968), Framing Dropouts (Fine, 1991), and Bitter Milk (Grumet, 1988). Louis M. Smith is a teacher in a split 6th-7th grade class in a slum school, as it is termed, experiencing
integration for the first time. Professor William Geoffrey is seated in the classroom. Together, they wrote *An Analysis Toward a General Theory of Teaching*. Because Smith is a teacher, there is a huge emphasis on teacher experience and meaning. *Framing Dropouts* is primarily about the dropouts, but the silent complicity of the teachers is explored as well.

Grumet’s book was, of course, the most applicable to this research. It followed the path of women in education. As co-author of *currere*, Grumet’s book included part and parcel of the research method. The difference that my research provided is the phenomenon of the high-quality veteran urban teacher. Grumet’s book covered women and teachers, novice and experienced. Many of the issues collided, especially the commonality of synchronistic placement. *How does one end up teaching in an urban school and find meaning in that long-term experience?* Her portrayal of escape and loss as paths to urban teaching are not uncommon, today. Grumet’s striking portrayal of the history of women in education is one that I am pleased to emulate. I hope that my illustration through *currere* will prove as insightful and noticeable as her interpretation.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The Theoretical Framework of the Research Design

In the Chapter I of this dissertation, I began with an overview of the research project including “a discussion of the topic or focus of the inquiry and the general research questions, the study’s purpose and potential significance, and its limitations” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 22). This research was designed as a hermeneutic phenomenological study toward an essence of the experience of pedagogical tact of the high-quality veteran urban teacher based in a theoretical paradigm and perspective nesting framework (see Figure 1) and philosophical framework (see Figure 2). Seeking original intention untainted by the shaping conventions of this world, this study utilized the four-part recursive structure, currere (Pinar, 1976a, 2000).

The figures (see Figures 1 & 2) illustrate the relationships in the theoretical paradigm, interpretivism; the strategy of inquiry, phenomenology; and the intellectual tradition, hermeneutics (Creswell, 1998; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). These theoretical and philosophical frameworks support currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), The Method (1976a), which focuses on biography addressing the individual’s own perception and understanding of experience. In currere (see Figure 3), the epistemological subject and the research subject are one (Grumet, 1976). Centered in Dewey’s continuity of experience or experiential continuum (1938) and reflected in Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) back and forthing in a “three-dimensional narrative inquiry space” (p. 92), currere
emphasizes the individual’s own capacity to *reconceptualize* his or her autobiography in a “complex relation between the temporal and the conceptual” (Pinar, 1976a, p. 51).

Chapter I of this dissertation also framed the research topic in “larger theoretical, policy, social, or practical domains” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 23) in order to “develop its significance” (p. 23). I posed the initial research questions and forecasted “the literature to be discussed in the review of the related literature” (p. 23). In describing the limitations of the study, I was reminded that this research that so freely explored, explained, and described boundaries is not without boundaries itself. “No proposed research project is without limitations; there is no such thing as a perfectly designed study” (p. 42). This study *is and is not*. Its results *will* and *will not* contribute to understanding. The findings are transferable, but “the study is bounded and situated in a specific context” (p. 43). Pedagogical hope, love, thoughtfulness, and tact are universal. Urban life and urban education remain peculiar.

In Chapter II of this dissertation, I situated “the study in the ongoing discourse about the topic” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 22) and developed “the specific traditions to which the study links” (p. 22-23). In reviewing the related literature, I established “evidence for the significance of the study for practice and policy and as a contribution to the ongoing discourse about the topic” (p. 23). I identified “the important intellectual traditions that guide the study, thereby developing a conceptual framework and refining an important and viable research question” (p. 23). Embracing the experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher and the theoretical paradigm, interpretivism, the strategy of inquiry, phenomenology, and the intellectual tradition, hermeneutics (Creswell, 1998; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000) and their interwoven
revelation through *currere*, the first two chapters illustrated the interrelatedness of the “developmental, recursive task” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 24) of this research and its phenomenon.

“In qualitative inquiry, initial curiosities for research often come from real-world observations, emerging from the interplay of the researcher’s direct experience, tacit theories, political commitments, interest in practice, and growing scholarly interests” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 25). For me, that was particularly true, as the experience of my practice was greatly affected by my doctoral studies. I began a “dialectical relationship between theory, practice, research questions, and personal experience” (p. 25). The cycle of inquiry, the hermeneutic circle, became my intimate companion both at the university and in the inner city.

A strongly biographical element drove my research interest toward William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet (1976), through whose work, as a practitioner scholar, I accepted Joseph Schwab’s (1969) invitation to enter the conversation of theory and practice and curriculum work. I sought “to slow down, to remember even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future” (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). Expanded and mobilized in the synthetical moment of *currere*, as an individual and educator, I moved “to awaken from the nightmare we are living in the present” (p. 5). Pinar suggested that autobiography inspires us to “talk back” (p. 5). To talk back means to “engage in ‘complicated conversation’ with our academic subjects, our students, and ourselves” (p. 9).

“Complicated conversation requires the academic – intellectual – freedom to devise the course we teach, the means by which we teach them, and the means by which we assess students’ study of them” (p. 9).
Curriculum theory is, then, that interdisciplinary field committed to the study of educational experience, especially (but not only) as that experience is encoded in the school curriculum, itself a highly symbolic as well as institutional structuration of (potentially) educational experience. (Pinar, 2004, p. 20)

Hence, “the potential research moves from a troubling or intriguing real-world observation” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 29), “to a personal theory”, “to formal theory, concepts, and models from literature” (p. 29), to “coalesce to frame a focus for the study in the form of a research question” (p. 29): *What is the nature of the experience of pedagogical tact for a high-quality veteran urban teacher? What meaning does a high-quality veteran urban teacher ascribe to the experience?* The “introduction, discussion of the topic and purpose, significance, general research questions, and literature review – stand together as the conceptual body” (p. 52). “All of this endeavor is intended to tell the reader what the research is about (its subject), who ought to care about it (its significance), and what others have described and concluded about the subject (its intellectual roots)” (pp. 52-53). Now, we turn from the what to the how of the study.

**Design and Methods**

Marshall and Rossman (1999) advised that the design and methods section of the research proposal serves three purposes.

First, it presents a plan for the conduct of the study. Second, it demonstrates to the reader that the researcher is capable of conducting the study. And third, it preserves the design flexibility that is a hallmark of qualitative methods.

(Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 55)
The qualitative research design plan incorporates “concrete, specific details – while maintaining flexibility” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 55) which is its idiosyncratic hallmark. The research design demonstrates soundness while at the same time the researcher reserves the right to make modifications as the research unfolds (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms first to strategies of inquiry and second to methods for collecting empirical material. A research design situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive materials, including documents and archives. A research design also specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representation and legitimation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 22)

This design method supported currere in disclosing “the Self in its evolution and education” (Pinar, 1976a, p. 51).

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to makes sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.
I am a practitioner scholar. The practitioner as scholar addresses the question of equality of knowledge (Pryor, 2002). I am “teacher scholar, citizen scholar, and student scholar” (p. 33). My call to research was a response to the reconceptualization of American curriculum studies (Pinar, 1975). I wanted to move away from what Brookfield (1995) termed “coded, scriptural signaling” (p. 197) to the smell of the cigarette smoke of the sidlawners at Claremont High School where Bob (Porro, 2002) taught us the game of the low-achiever. I wanted to hear the whoosh of the steaming water running into the barrels as the girls bent over the laundry bins at the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum (Polster, 1990) and the bounce of a basketball in my inner city high school. If we practice democracy, if democracy is a verb and not a noun, the cacophony of voices should include those who wear flat shoes, school shirts, do hall duty, and carry grade books. In the land of Gemeinschaft (Tönnies, 1887/1957), the peculiar is uplifted, not generalized. I wanted to move from the particular to the universal and back again in a hermeneutic circle that embraced the blending of my day job in an inner-city high school and my night job as doctoral candidate at Kent State University. Heeding Goodson’s call (1998) to “move from commentary on what is to cognition of what might be” (p. 14), I linked teacher stories to “patterns of social relations and interactions which comprise the social world” (p. 10) which is curriculum.

The Role of the Researcher

The person I am is partly constituted by my life memories. Past experiences have been consolidated in me such that memories may unexpectedly appear in changing situations and circumstances. The past may have been forgotten, but I
may also suddenly confront us again when the past becomes relevant for the present. The power of childhood and life memory attests to the fact that we are historical beings – we have life histories that give permanence and identity to the person we are. (van Manen, 1991, p. 22)

This hermeneutic phenomenological study of the high-quality veteran urban teacher was based in currere. Currere was articulated in 1976 by William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet. The predominant question in this method is *What has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience?* (Pinar, 1976a, p. 52). “I take myself and my existential experience as a data source” (p. 52). I was invited, even obliged, to speak from whence I lived. My autobiography became the biographic basis of the research. I was encouraged to experiment with *The Method* and make modifications, even alterations, where necessary. In this research, I was advised to bracket “what is, what was, what can be” (Grumet, 1976, p. 60) and thereby lose myself from it/them. I could put it/them aside.

Make it all of a whole. It, all of it – intellections, emotions, behavior – occurs in and through the physical body. As the body is a concrete whole, so what occurs in and through the body can become a discernable whole, integrated in its meaningfulness.

The physical body is the concrete manifestation of all that occurs in and through it.

The Self is available to itself in physical form. The intellect, residing in the physical form is part of the Self. Thus the Self is not a concept the intellect has of itself. The intellect is thus an appendage of the Self, a medium, like the
body, through which the Self, the world are accessible to themselves. No longer am I completely identified with my mind. My mind is identified as part of me. (Pinar, 1976a, p. 61)

“Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of *other*, the *whole*, the *communal*, or the *social*” (van Manen, 1990, p. 7). The eco-logical starting point for phenomenological research is one’s own experience. The gathering of one’s own experience is not for the purpose of explication, but a freeing toward the experiences of others. *Here are my experiences set aside. What are your experiences?* The gathering of my personal story (see Appendix A) at the start was also a basis for a chronicle of my own transformation during the research.

Creswell (1998) termed phenomenology, “a philosophy without presuppositions” (p. 52). In order to suspend personal view on the idea of reality, the researcher, prior to the interviews, completed a self-examining inquiry, *epoche* (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), “to gain clarity from her own preconceptions” (Patton, 1990, p. 408). The preparation of an *epoche*, also spelled *epochè* (Patton), or brackets (Creswell), set aside the prejudgments of the researcher distilling the journey to find the essence of the meaning of the experience (Ely, 1991; Husserl, 1913/1931). An overlay of previously held or expected patterns or themes could have lead to the oversight or exclusion of that which the participant was genuinely sharing. “Structures that underlie the conscious” (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, p. 32) were present in the researcher as well as the participant.
Gathering of and Reflecting on

The goal of this phenomenological research was “oriented to asking the question of what is the nature of this phenomenon…as an essentially human experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 62). The primary thrust was not the gathering of subjective experiences in order to report “from their particular view, perspective, or vantage point” (p. 62). The point of the particular was to move toward the universal. The actuality of the research was the particular to the universal in dialogue or conversational interview. There were essentially two parts to the interviewing: the gathering of and the reflecting on. “The hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project” (p. 63). Their back and forthing was exemplified in Dewey’s trifold experiential cycle of “situation, continuity, and interaction” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50) in “personal practical knowledge” (p. 3).

“The refusal to dwell together is indifference. Indifference is the failure to recognize the other human being in a genuine encounter or personal relation” (van Manen, 1990, p. 108). In hermeneutic phenomenological research, van Manen urged collaborators to search for understanding. He advised the participants, including the researcher, to step out of “the administrative and technological influences” (p. 123) that have penetrated our very blood and caused us to embrace a “nihilistic forgetfulness” (p. 123). Instead, by moving away from hopelessness and reflecting on our consciousness, we were moved toward discernment. “If the description is phenomenologically powerful, then it acquires a certain transparency, so to speak; it permits us to ‘see’ the deeper significance, or meaning structures, of the lived experience it describes. How is such transparency achieved? (p. 122)” By centering, releasement,
and openness to mystery (Macdonald, 1974), our thoughtfulness in response to storied themes “reawakens our basic experience of the phenomenon it describes” (van Manen, p. 122). This phenomenological study described experiences toward the meaning of the essences (Creswell, 1998).

Van Manen (1990) identified three parts of the interview/conversation. There is “the conversational relation between the speakers, and the speakers are involved in a conversational relation with the notion or phenomenon that keeps the personal relation of the conversation intact” (p. 98). “It is talking together like friends” (p. 98). The prize of the conversational dialogue was ontological silence. *We are fulfilled.*

**Storied Lives on Storied Landscapes**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discussed *Writing Research Texts in the Midst of Uncertainty* (p. 144). *Currere* is narrative inquiry into the phenomenon. “We see ourselves as in the mind-set of a nested set of stories – ours and theirs” (p. 144). In these nested stories, illustrating theoretical and philosophical nested frameworks (see Figures 1 & 2), we seek fulfillment epistemologically and ontologically. The researcher through complicated conversation came to know and care for the participants “living storied lives on storied landscapes” (p. 145). Via *currere*, the temporal text was “about what has been, what is now, and what is becoming” (p. 146) in the context of place, in this case, urban schools.

Hermeneutic phenomenology means the interpretation of a description. Experiences were reported in descriptions. The very telling of the experience was an interpretation. There was no scribe scripting the original experience. Therefore, the researcher was actually interpreting interpretations (van Manen, 1990). The question
remained in the written *verstehen* of these provisional and multiple realities. The phenomenon sought was *Who Am I?* not *Whose Am I?* Clandinin and Connelly (2000) concluded that the researcher must maintain balance while living on an edge.

One struggles to express one’s own voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to tell of the participants’ storied experiences and to represent their voices, all the while attempting to create a research text that will speak to, and reflect upon, the audience’s voices. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 147)

Here, the entwining of objectivity and subjectivity played a large role in the text. The researcher did not obscure the field and its participants nor did the participants’ voices through story override the phenomenon.

When narrative inquirers return to participants with text, their question is not so much, Have I got it right? Is this what you said? Is this what you do? Rather, it is something much more global and human: Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others? These are more questions of identity than they are questions of whether or not one has correctly reported what a participant has said or done.

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148)

This research is a public document. “Writing is the method” (van Manen, 2000, p. 126) of making the research public. The prize sought was a description that was so phenomenologically powerful that it became transparent. It was not about this teacher or that teacher; it was a meaning structure. The researcher composed the interpretation based on the thick, rich description that had been gathered from the participants and checked for misinformation or distortion by the participants (Creswell, 1998). It was in
the reflection on the gathered data that the phenomenon moved to the universal from the particular. Through member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1998), the participants review “data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions” (Creswell, p. 203) “so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” (p. 203). The participants shared voice and signature in the language of teachers toward an essence of being.

Poetry in Motion

To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. (van Manen, 1990, p. 18)

Phenomenology attempts to understand “the essence of experiences about a phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 65). Here, we sought to understand the lived experiences of pedagogical tact of the high-quality veteran urban teacher. Phenomenology described; hermeneutics interpreted. Both elements of the research collaborated toward a universal or essence of human experience “as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld” (p. 11).

Studying the lifeworld was “an attentive practice of thoughtfulness” (van Manen, 1990, p. 12). In pursuing the fullness of living, there was, as its ultimate aim, a moral force. We sought “to become more fully who we are” (p. 12) toward “the fulfillment of our human nature” (p. 12). This research worked toward ontological silence. Have you ever heard a great sermon, concert, or speech that was so stunning that the audience/congregation sat in silent stillness at the end? Then, reality/conformity would break through the ontological fullness into applause or the swell of the organ prelude.
Reaching that fullness in the world which is “our home, our habitat, the materialization of our subjectivity” (p. 112) was achieved in our leaving our silence only to return. Our leaving is not a sure, straight path, but translated chaos theory (Doll, 1993), richness, recursion, relations, and rigor, as we witnessed the curriculum “continually negotiated among students, teachers, and tests” (p. 176) in “indeterminacy, anomaly, inefficiency, chaos, disequilibrium” (p. 76) and “problematics, perturbations, [and] possibilities” (p. 176). Jackson (1968/1990) asked teachers what gave them satisfaction in their lives in the classrooms. The group of outstanding experienced teachers valued immediacy, informality, autonomy, and individuality. They tended “to approach educational affairs intuitively rather than rationally” (p. 145). It “felt like the right thing to do” (p. 145). They “knew it to be right” (p. 145). Like Mother Martha, Miss Rosa, and Katrice (Kozol, 2000), they left positivism for the poetry of the moment. They practiced that which Ursula Brangwen (Lawrence, 1915) sought to practice at Brinsley Street School and Smike (Dickens, 1839) never experienced at Dotheboys Hall.

“Hermeneutic phenomenological research reintegrates part and whole, the contingent and the essential, value and desire” (van Manen, 1990, p. 8). We began in silence, the principal of intentionality, responded to “phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness” (p. 9), and returned to silence, “the ontological core of our being” (p. 13). We practiced wide-awakeness (Greene, 1973), as we reawakened to “the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner” (p. 10).

Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a poetizing activity. “As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study” (van Manen, 1990, p. 13). Embracing the existence of freedom in human life, we
acknowledged that we were engaged in a dialogic response with the phenomena which assumed “the progress of humanizing human life and humanizing human institutions to help human beings to become increasingly thoughtful” (p. 21) Human experience is unique. “Phenomenology consists in mediating in a personal way the antinomy of particularity…and universality” (p. 23) through meaning questions. “Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood…but they can never be closed down” (p. 23). Hermeneutic phenomenological research supported currere in the running of the race rather than the completion of the course from its origin of intentionality.

Objectivity and Subjectivity

“Curriculum is the site of political, racial, gendered, and theological dispute” (Pinar, 1999, p. viii). Curriculum work takes place in “a very crowded over-heated room” (p. viii). Swirling in complicated conversation are procedures, commandments, documents, monuments (Foucault, 1969/1972), collective story, autobiography, personal narrative, etc. “People’s visions of what schooling should be are intimately connected with their visions of what constitutes the good life, the viable society” (p. viii). The room is primarily full of women, as teaching is a gendered practice; but professors and school administrators, mostly men, take charge of the microphone. The conversation has reached gridlock; because many of the stakeholders are not present, invited or uninvited. The U.S. and state Departments of Education sent emails with attachments, both literally and figuratively, directing the attendees to the official codified testing and measurement requirements to which the curriculum should be aligned. The professors at the microphone are statisticians not philosophers. The complicated conversation is becoming a notebook of briefs which is regarded as sacrosanct.
A value-neutral orientation rules the conversation. The speakers are positive that *All Children Can Learn* enough to pass the test. The teachers listen dutifully to *sacred theory-practice stories* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). They know that in this setting, it is “often not appropriate to debate the sacred story” (p. 155). This out-of-the-classroom site is a “place filled with knowledge funneled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers; and children’s classroom lives” (p. 2). The teachers speak to one another in hushed tones acknowledging to one another that the child’s success on the test is relative to many divergent factors in a short life. The abilities of the child should be interpreted uniquely and locally exercising pedagogical tact. The angry critics in the room exhibit their values in the signs which they lift higher to expose ways in which values are regarded and disregarded by powerbrokers in attendance (Tom & Valli, 1990).

“In the human sciences, objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive categories” (van Manen, 1990, p. 20). “Objectivity means that the researcher remains *true to the object*” (p. 20).

‘Subjectivity’ means that one needs to be as perceptive, insightful, and discerning as one can be in order to show or disclose the object in its full richness and in its greatest depth. Subjectivity means that we are *strong* in our orientation to the object of study in a *unique and personal way* – while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions. (van Manen, 1990, p. 20).

Objectivity and subjectivity interplayed in *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) in which the individual addressed his/her own perception and understanding of experience. “The lifeworld, the world of lived experience, is both the source and the object of the
phenomenological research” (van Manen, 1990, p. 53). Notwithstanding, the unique experience of the participant teacher with the phenomenon described, both the participant teacher and the researcher gained hermeneutically in the gathering of the data. “When someone has related a valuable experience to me then I have indeed gained something, even though the ‘thing’ gained is not a quantifiable entity” (p. 53).

*Good Talking About Good Teaching*

Creating conversation about education meant finding topics that took the knowers into more truthful, demanding, and productive insight (Palmer, 1993). *Currere* seeks intentionality (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) which meant moving beyond our masks and safe topics toward complicated conversation. Parker Palmer (1993) developed four topics that helped overcome and “understand the fearful condition of teachers and learners” (*Human Condition*, ¶6) and moved the conversation into “a deep reservoir of insight about teaching and learning” (¶1). As an example of the power of this conversation, selections from autobiographical literature illustrate creative conversation:

1. *Critical Moments*

Had I not been right there, driving by the mobs that heckled six-year-old Ruby Bridges, a black first-grader, as she tried to attend the Frantz School, I might have pursued a different life. I had planned until then to enter the profession of psychoanalytic child psychiatry. Instead, I became a field-worker, learning to talk with children going through their everyday lives amid substantial social and educational stress. (Coles, 1990, p. xi)
2. *The Human Condition*

This uniqueness and singleness which distinguishes each individual and gives meaning to his existence has a bearing on creative work as much as it does on human love. When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude. A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the *why* for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any *how*. (Frankl, 1959/1984, p. 101)

3. *Metaphors and Images*

Rely on the message of the teacher, not on the person of the teacher;

Rely on the meaning, not just on the words;

Rely on the definitive meaning, not on the provisional one;

Rely on your wisdom mind, not on your ordinary mind.

(Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, 2000, p. 51)

4. *Autobiographical Reflection*

You have to go to that school, sit in that classroom, eat in that lunchroom, work at that particular job, or put up with that boss, supervisor, or coworker.

Maybe you’re the one who lies awake at night dreading every morning because of the people waiting for you at school or work. They have a name for you – it’s not your real name; it’s the one they gave you, something that labels you as inferior, ugly, or stupid. And there are others whom you don’t even know,
who don’t know you, who call you by that name because it’s fun for them. They have never bothered to ask you what your real name is. It’s their mission to take away your dignity. They spit on you, trip you, knock the books out of your arms, and stomp on your ankles from behind. It doesn’t matter what you wear, they laugh at it. If you own something new, they steal it, spill on it, tear it, and destroy it. There is no particular reason for the torment. (Peretti, 2000, p. 62)

*Storying the Self*

Gudmundsdóttir (2001) concluded that interpretive researchers were “good storytellers in a very traditional sense” (p. 231). This narrative inquiry was situated in “storied lives on storied landscapes” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 145). The landscape of narrative inquiry, unlike the didactic paradigm, was located in a series of nested stories “along the dimensions of time, place, the personal, and the social” (p. 144). In the Deweyan view of experience, narrative inquiry was more about *becoming* than *being* through a three-dimensional framework allowing the researcher and the participant “to travel *inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place*” (p. 49).

As an example of that nested landscape, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) named three types of stories that illustrate professional knowledge. The *secret story* revealed the actuality of the classroom. A secret story is an *inside-the-classroom story* told to other teachers in secret places. It is a *teacher-to-teacher* story (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The *cover story* related the communicated experience of the classroom. A cover story is a story told *out of the classroom* “in which they portray themselves as experts…[in] stories [that] fit within the acceptable range of the story of school being lived in school. Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current
story of school is to continue to practice” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25). The
sacred theory-practice story reported the balance of educational policy (out-of-the
classroom) and the teaching practice (in-the-classroom) (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). A
sacred theory-practice story is an out-of-the-classroom story. In settings outside the
classroom, it was “often not appropriate to debate the sacred story” (Connelly &
Clandinin, 1999, p. 155). This out-of-the-classroom place was a “place filled with
knowledge funneled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers; and
children’s classroom lives” (p. 2). “Researchers, policy makers, senior administrators and
others, using various implementation strategies, push research findings, policy
statements, plans, improvement schemes and so on down what we call the conduit into
this out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape” (p. 2). These
stories accompanied Palmer’s (1993) Critical Moments, The Human Condition,
Metaphors and Images, and Autobiographical Reflection as hidden passages and inner
contradictions (Edgerton, 1991). They were gates through which we reached vorhänden
across “the point of breach, disruption, mis-understanding” (Bauman, 1993, p. 148)
toward synthesis.

A Space of Liberty, of Silence

Currere, which was born out of the reconceptualization of American curriculum
studies in the 1970s and 1980s, is known more as an incomplete orientation than a
complete dogma (Eisner, 2002b). In this orientation, it must be recognized that
reconceptualists share “an overt political emphasis, underscoring the ideological
dimensions of schooling” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 118). This orientation is
exemplified by its proponent/author, William Pinar (2004), who labeled these educational
times as *The Nightmare That Is Present*. In addressing the state of curriculum work, particularly American, in the 21st century, Pinar continues to write about race, gender, and politics in the face of *The Evaporation of the Ego and the Subjectivity of Cybertulture*. “The inescapable truth is that computerization commodifies whatever activities fall under its domain” (Bowers, 2000, p. 8). The ego withers in the collective. Will we, in our data-driven technological educational practice, allow computers to “lead us to substitute decontextualized ways of thinking about the world for the sensory encounters with the natural world that intertwine our lives” (p. 22)? Pinar urged teachers to refuse *Gracious Submission* for the revolutionary act of *An Autobiographics of Alterity*. Commodification refuses alterity, the state of being different; whereas, alterity, the state of otherness, defies commodification in the narrative of the individual.

Thomas Merton (1973) advised us to find a space of liberty, a space of silence. In the freedom of silence, one allowed possibilities to surface anew or for the first time. In the liberty of silence, we enjoyed potentialities and hope. The limits and powers of language urged this research toward silence, literally, epistemologically, and ontologically. To remain in literal silence in a conversational interview invited the more reflective response. In the presence of the unspeakable or the ineffable in life, there was the sense of knowledge beyond our ordinary speaking. This was particularly true for the high-quality veteran urban teacher who has learned to veer away from prurient, disapproving eyes and superior attitudes to protect the relationship with the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

Am I willing to share Bryan’s story? Bryan came to me for help at the opening bell for school. His mother had not been able to let him stay at home the night before.
He was still wearing yesterday’s clothes. Bryan needed to get to Victor to borrow some clothes. Then, he had to get past the substitute teacher in Work and Family to use the washing machine. He always washed his clothes at school. Before we began Bryan’s relation to the curriculum, we had to deal with his ability to attend in/to school. I never tell our stories. Others do not know Bryan. My stories are sacrosanct; I guard their sanctity.

Reconceptualism with its overt values gave birth to currere whose recursive inward cycle led to ontological silence. The telling of Bryan’s story illustrated the many roles that inflict themselves on the experience of pedagogical thoughtfulness of the urban teacher. The stories that circle and wall in the stories for which they are being paid must be penetrated and cleared away before we begin to prepare for the test. Curriculum is affected by race, gender, and politics. Ontological silence is “the silence of Being or Life itself” (van Manen, 1990, p. 114). It is the meaningful experience “that fulfills and yet craves fulfillment” (p. 114). Ontological silence is “being in the presence of truth” (p. 114). Bryan dared to bring “Being or Life itself” (p. 114) into school, so that he might attend.

The Focus of a Phenomenological Study

What is phenomenology? It may seem strange that this question has still to be asked half a century after the first works of Husserl. The fact remains that it has by no means been answered. Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences…it also offers an account of space, time and the world as we ‘live’ them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its
psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002, p. vii)

Phenomenology is “to return to the ‘things themselves’” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002, p. ix). “The real has to be described, not constructed or formed” (p. xi).

Reality was found in a closely woven fabric of name and shape from which, in reflective silence, and then, through language, a primary essence came to light. Primary essence is universality. Its reflection brought the unreflected to the world. Phenomenology has an unfinished nature in an inchoative world. It intersected subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the roiling of my past, present, and future experiences with those of others.

Here, the phenomenon was the experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran teacher serving students described as high-poverty and high minority in low-achieving schools (Olson, 2003). The phenomenological closely woven fabric of that life (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002) entangled place, voice, and experience; the body and the mind; the subjective and the objective; lines of demarcation and circles of truth; and the “multivocality, multiperspectivity, and lived aspects of textbooks and of classrooms” (Pinar, 1992, p. 7). Attachments and detachments ebbed and flowed throughout the day and years. The smell, touch, taste, and feelings (Jackson, 1968/1990) of the physical body were recognized and refused, caught and discarded in webs of power. The balance/imbalance of particularity rather than standardization and creation rather than rationalization identified “inner contradictions” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 85) that “serve as hidden passages from the status quo to a more just order” (p. 85). These identifications toward essence were recognized in reflection on one’s own place of history and out to the place history of the other; both were found in autobiography, currere.
Data Collection Procedures

Brantlinger (1977) named seven categories of crucial assumptions that should be addressed in a discussion of data collection methods:

1. How the researcher views the nature of the research?
2. How does she/he construe her location, her positioning relative to the participants?
3. What is the direction of her gaze?
4. What is the purpose of the research?
5. Who is the intended audience of the study?
6. What is her political positioning?
7. How does she/he view the exercise of agency?

This research was based in William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet’s (1976) currere which was created “to penetrate our public masks, the masks which keep us disassociated from our experience” (p. vii) and looked squarely at “the gendered and racialized domestication of education (Pinar, 2004, p. xiii). We were invited to employ the concept of currere, an autobiographical method, as “a strategy of self-study” (p. xiii), as we sought “synthetical moments of ‘mobilization’ when, as individuals and as teachers, we enter ‘the arena’ to educate the American public” (p. xiii).

That arena (the public sphere) – now a “shopping mall” in which citizens (and students) have been reduced to consumers – can be reconstructed in our classrooms by connecting academic knowledge to our students’ (and our own) subjectivities, to society, and to the historical moment. In so doing, we can regain (relative) control of the curriculum, at least as it is enacted as a “complicated
conversation,” rather than reified as conceptual products on display in a store window, or in the small-group facilitation of “learning” in school-as-corporate office. (Pinar, 2004, p. xiv)

While this research was not intended to espouse a particular agenda or inspire controversy, the very selection of currere as the foundation of the research called for a complicated conversation on the issues of race, gender, and politics through autobiography and phenomenology.

Phenomenology required the preparation of an epoche (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990) by the researcher before beginning the research. The purpose of the epoche (see Appendix A) was not to deny the experience of the researcher, but to release the researcher toward the phenomenon through the participant. In reflecting on the gathered data, the researcher’s gaze moved from the particular to the universal. The researcher was not “intimately involved in the lives of the participants” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 106); however, the choreography of interpretivism expected passion (Janesick, 2000). The search for the phenomenon compelled “passion for people, passion for communication, and passion for understanding people” (p. 394).

While it is true that no one could interpret my data but me (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000), it was not true that I was a soloist. “An analytics of interpretive practice must deal with the perennial question of what realities and/or subjectivities are being constructed in the myriad sites of everyday life” (p. 501). I was surrounded by stories that were attached to living people with whom I consulted to deepen the verstehen of the research. We have moved from objects to subjects in qualitative research. These subjects of the
study were participants in the immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and synthesis of the lived experience.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher and the meaning that is ascribed to that experience in professional life. The language of the research is available to the entire professional community, that is to say, from pre-kindergarten teacher to post-doctoral professor. Urban education is politics. Whether the teacher ties the shoes of preschoolers or addresses national conventions, the political arena in which urban education sits is evident. This was the opportunity for the practitioner, like me, to explore individual practice through biography toward an increased understanding of the phenomenon within and without the practice.

Gaining Entrée

Issues of entry involved both access to the site and/or participant. Kent State University had a formal procedure to secure approval to conduct research using human subjects. The Division of Research, Graduate Studies and Technology Transfer administered the human subjects review for the university. Before beginning a study using human subjects, appropriate forms were completed and submitted to the designated reviewer for the department. The departmental reviewer conducted a preliminary review of the research protocol. The Kent State University Institutional Review Board gave final approval to use human research participants.

In addition, the Department of Testing, Research and Evaluation of the large Midwestern urban school system in question had a formal procedure in order to conduct research in that public school system. It was their policy that if the university required
human subject review, the school system did also. In a brief 2-4 page proposal, the researcher provided a statement of the problem, procedures, and materials to be used in the study. The Proposal Review Team gave particular attention to whether the research was warranted, problems of an educational instructional nature, concerns of a legal nature, particularly rights to privacy, problems of a procedural or logistical nature, and information gathering prohibitions. The researcher was required to conduct the research as set forth in the prospectus including guarding the anonymity of professional staff as well as the integrity of the school system. The school system required a copy of the final dissertation for their professional library.

After gaining approval of the state university and public school system review boards, I sought the consent of the participants. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form that included the following (see Appendix C):

1. Their right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time.
2. The central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection.
3. Comments about protecting the confidentiality of the respondents.
4. A statement about known risks associated with participation in the study.

(Creswell, 1998, p. 115)

Finding the Best

After gaining permission to conduct human science research from both Kent State University (April 13, 2005) and the urban school system (May 6, 2005), Capital City Schools, I began to solicit names of teachers who met the criteria of highly-qualified as defined by Palmer (1998) and experience (Fessler, 1992) and who were affiliated with
one of the 18 schools for which I had approval. I asked individual highly qualified veteran urban teachers to suggest other teachers whom they admired to this research. The teachers whom I approached to suggest nominees to this research were the best of the best. They would have been excellent participants themselves, but I did not invite the nominators to join the research for a variety of reasons. One nominator was at home on extended maternity leave. A second nominator had just become a coordinator. A third nominator was seriously ill and trying to work to retirement. A fourth nominator had become an instructor at a college. A fifth nominator was in danger of being laid off. A sixth nominator was contemplating retirement.

No teacher whom I approached for names by telephone or in person knew the name of any other teacher who might offer names. None of the teachers knew the schools in which I had been approved to conduct the study. The teachers whom I approached suggested teachers throughout the large school system. The requests were received confidentially. The recommendations were held confidentially.

I had originally planned to ask members of the administration to suggest names for the research. I decided to stay within teacher recommendations. The political atmosphere in urban schools is heavy and omnipresent for both administration and teachers particularly at the close of the school year. I received sufficient names of excellent nominees from teachers, so I decided to keep the power level at the participant position. Also, in receipt of my approval letter from Capital City Schools, I read that all the principals of all the schools, as well as executive administrators, and the research review committee knew about the research. In order to preserve confidentiality, I decided not to approach administration.
I listened carefully to the nominating teachers as they described their nominees. I trusted their advice and experience. As the nominating teachers knew the research criteria, the nominees, and me, they were able to help me discern through their long practices as high-quality veteran urban teachers themselves which teachers would be a good fit for both my research and me. The nominating teachers were eager for my research to be a success. They wanted to be sure that the people who joined the research would be able to tell the story of the high-quality veteran urban teacher.

When I was interviewing the nominators, I told them that I sought balance among the participants. I wanted to cross racial and gender lines. I wanted at least one African American teacher and one male teacher. I also wanted to represent the different grade and subject segments of K-12 public education. In sum, I sought a very small cross-section of an outstanding urban faculty.

I thought that participants who were new to me would help me in the same way that completing my epoche before the beginning of the research had helped me. I approached the research with new eyes and ears to join my currere to that of the participants. I did not exclude teachers with whom I had worked as nominees. In the end, all the nominees were new to me; and I was glad for it. Even large school systems have teachers who are known throughout the system. The participants who joined the research were well-known and respected, but I had never personally worked in a school with any of them.

This was not an election. It did not matter to me how many times a participant was nominated. The search for the participants matched the search for the synthetical moment. The defining phrase of the synthetical moment of this research was uttered
once by one teacher in one interview, but it articulated the currere of the high-quality veteran urban teacher. I was looking for participants who were able and willing to tell the untold story of the high-quality veteran urban teachers. Relying on intuition and synchronicity, I trusted the advice and experience of the best of the best in seeking nominees to the research.

There were 20 nominees. Twelve nominees to this research were excluded, because they did not work in the schools that had been approved for the research. I did not approach two nominees, because I had briefly met them previously in meetings. I did not think their personalities were a good fit for long-term interviews with me. Of the final six nominees, one nominee never answered the telephone. I called three times. I thought that might signal scheduling problems. I did not call a fourth time. All the other nominees were accepted by me. The nominees crossed gender and racial lines and represented elementary and secondary education as well as the arts. I concluded the nominations at five participants.

I telephoned the next five teachers who had been recommended as high-quality veteran urban teachers according to the criteria of this research. In order to preserve confidentiality, I called the proposed participants at their homes. The response was amazing. These urban teachers were very glad to tell their stories. They wanted to be included in the research. One teacher said that she would be honored to participate in research on the high-quality veteran urban teacher. A second teacher who had never met me invited me to her home for the interviews. Everyone set a first interview date right away. It seemed that the busiest and the best had time to do one more thing at the end of the school year.
Participant Communication

When I telephoned the participant for the first time, I introduced myself and the research. I described the research and the form of the first meeting. Although the participant had the right to withdraw from the research at any time, I sought participants who seemed genuinely interested in the purpose of the research and who appeared to be able and willing to see it through to completion. During the first meeting, I explained the research consent form and the audiotape consent form and obtained the signatures (see Appendices C and D). I assured the participants that I would deliver a copy of each form to them at the second interview. I explained that my dissertation director would hold the original forms as required by Kent State University. After completing the two release forms, I audiotaped the autobiography of the participant.

After completing the autobiography, I explained currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) as an introduction to the second meeting. The second meeting engaged the participant in a three-part in-depth interview (Creswell, 1998; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Marshall & Rossmann, 1999; Patton, 1990; van Manen, 1990). By clarifying the subject(s) of each interview before the actual meeting, I hoped to facilitate memory, story, and thoughtful responses. The three parts of the second interview were The Regressive Moment, The Progressive Moment, and The Analytic Moment.

1. The Regressive Moment: The Past in the Present

Sample: Tell me a story from your early experience as a student.

As a child in post-war Europe, my teachers would dutifully, each year, march us down to the nearest concentration camp, usually Dachau, to Remember, Lest We Forget. I remember seeing skin stretched on lampshades that resembled the
tattooed arms of the men and women who put a pancake on my plate, helped me button my coat, and walked me to school each morning. My brother John never made it inside a concentration camp. He would become so overwrought at each occasion that he would be excused to vomit in the blood ditch surrounding the camp. I, however, always entered, walking up the crematoria doors, listening dutifully to the lectures, and inspecting the artifacts. I was ashamed that I, too, did not throw up. What was wrong with me that I always marched in and out seemingly intact? Why was my intimacy with history different than my brother’s? We experienced the curriculum differently, but we experienced the curriculum as place.

2. The Progressive Moment: The Future in the Present

Sample: Tell me a story from the future as a teacher.

My school is in the local newspaper at least once per week. There are politicians, school administrators and board members, and members of the neighborhood who would like to see my school disappear. That school is an embarrassment. This week, Education Week (Gehring, 2005) headlined Dips in Enrollment Posing Challenges for Urban Districts. While suburban schools are bursting at the seams, my district has lost 17,000 students in the last two decades of my teaching career. As our system rebuilds/remodels all the schools, will my school conveniently go away? Should I bother to reshelve the reference room? Librarians are no longer mandated by state policy. I am expendable. My school is expendable. Do I matter? Do we matter?
3. The Analytic Moment: Anti-Intellectualism and Complicated Conversation

Sample: Tell me a today story.

Harry had troubles; Harry was trouble. Harry could not walk down the hall of the school. Despite the teacher’s calling to him loudly, Harry always ran way ahead of the class down the hall. One day while running, he came upon Martin, a bigger boy, seated on a bench outside the second-grade classroom. Martin and Harry frequently fought on the playground. Harry asked his kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Paley: “Why is Martin on that bench?” I told him that Martin must have done something to make his teacher really angry. Harry snapped his head up at me, his eyes huge and frightened. “So he has to sit alone in the hall? You do that?” (Paley, 1999, p. 16)

Harry was shocked and grim. He grabbed two oatmeal raisin cookies off the snack table and ran back down the hall to the outcast Martin. Martin laughed and said, “Hey, man!” (Paley, 1999, p. 17) to Harry.

After the interview was transcribed, I emailed the transcript to the participant for clarifications, questions, additions, deletions, etc. School email was not used. Then, I arranged the third meeting for an interview on the fourth and final part of currere: The Synthetical Moment: Self-Mobilization and Social Reconstruction. Again, after transcription, I emailed the transcription via attachment to the private email of the participant for review, clarification, addition, deletion, etc.

4. The Synthetical Moment: Self-Mobilization and Social Reconstruction

Sample: Who are you at school?
“Mrs. Zurava, can you make me a banner? My auntie is getting out of jail this evening, and we are going to have a party!”

“Mrs. Zurava, my mother was going to come see you tonight (at report-card handout); but she got picked up again (for parole violation) after school.”

“Mrs. Zurava, I don’t have my book, because I really didn’t know that we were moving when I left for school this morning!”

“Mrs. Zurava, want to see where I got shot in the knee?”

Often as the faculty leaves my school, someone remarks that they are glad to be going home. Our students are home. Starratt (1996) calls the total life of the student outside of school grounding for education. Ogbu (1992) calls it seeding education. It is neither, if we ignore the experiences the child brings to school (Dewey, 1900/1990). *I will make you a banner and look at your knee.*

*Tiny Chairs*

During my dissertation proposal defense in April 2005, the members of my committee began and completed a discussion about the number of participants that they expected that I would need in order to gain the rich and profound stories that would form the data of this research. They suggested that I reduce the number of participants that I had proposed for the research. In consideration of data manageability, these experienced professors concluded that five teachers chosen through purposive criterion sampling (Creswell, 1998) would set a strong basis for the study. I had not been worried about managing the data. I had been worried about finding the synthetical moment of the experience of the high-quality veteran urban teacher.
Then, I met my first participant. We sat on tiny chairs in a second-grade classroom, both tired and dirty after a long day at school, amidst storybook characters, lice bags on coat hooks, pencil baskets, both sharpened and in need of sharpening, a large display of wooden apples, computers, signs on everything including the light switch, reading rugs, and a piled-high teacher desk while she told me her story of becoming an urban teacher. In a room usually filled with 18 small children and their teacher, it was the personal and connected relationship among the teacher, the student, and the curriculum that sprang to the forefront. Wading through mandates of standardization, the trio zigged and zagged crossing mistaken, tactless barriers labeled principles of equal justice and consistency that were certainly neither just nor consistent. “A tactless teacher treats all children the same way” (van Manen, 1991, p. 169). These high-quality veteran urban teachers believed that “learning is always an individual affair” (p. 155). Our complicated conversation in an aging building in a working-class section of town set the tone for wisdom rather than form and truth replaced banality.

With that first of 15 interviews completed, I knew that because of “the “in-depth nature of extensive and multiple interviews with participants” (Creswell, 1998, p. 117) the experience of the high-quality veteran urban teacher would tell its own story through the lifeworld existentials of hermeneutic phenomenology. I was very grateful that Creswell urged “the researcher to obtain people who are easily accessible” (p. 117). The interviews were original, fascinating, and thoughtful. The process made our urban experience “reflectively understandable and intelligible” (van Manen, 1990, pp. 125-126).
Participants

In this section, I will illuminate the varied lives of the participants by interweaving their stories. Because the slightest information linked to a participant could destroy confidentiality and in respect for the phenomenological goal of *L'Essence* as universal, as well as the *Finale en Currere, The Synthetical Moment*, I will blend and weave the particulars into a high-quality veteran urban teacher rather than *this or that* high-quality veteran urban teacher. It is *the* experience to which this research strives rather than *whose* experience.

Of the five participants, four are women and one is a man. Four of the participants are Caucasian; one is African American. Four of the participants are 53 years old. One participant is 51. Three of the participants are married. Two of the participants are single parents. Three of the participants have grown children. Two of the participants have teenaged children at home.

The two most senior teachers knew right away how many years that they had been teaching, 31 and 32 years each. The other three teachers had difficulty figuring out how many years they had taught. Some had taught as substitutes, long-term and daily, for years. One had been a KISP (Kindergarten Instructional Support Program) tutor. They had taught in the Midwest and the West of the United States. We spent considerable time counting on our fingers as we worked through their years of service to ascertain the total number of years served. There was also the confusion of the number of actual years versus the number of years that were transferred from state to state under the State Teachers Retirement System and/or the urban school district. In the end, the three other
teachers had 28, 16, and 18 years teaching service. Four teachers planned to teach until they had 35 years service. One teacher planned to work to 30 years of service.

Two worked for banks after graduation. Another worked in a management position in the financial aid office of the university during college. One teacher worked in the treasurer’s office of a university, recording payments made by graduates toward their student loans. Another teacher was the part-time secretary to the former president of the university who had returned to teach graduate classes. One worked in a government think tank. One designed theater sets and costumes and even performed on stage. Another had been a camp counselor or camp director every year since elementary school. One teacher baby-sat, cleaned apartments, and worked in the food area of a bowling alley. Another teacher worked in a restaurant. One worked in the university health center. One had been expelled from elementary school for pulling the fire alarm. One had been arrested 11 times for anti-war protests.

Four have master’s degrees. One is almost finished with a master’s degree. One is a member of the BLT (Building Leadership Team) and expected to be president next year, although the teacher would prefer not to be elected to the position. Several had been members of the BLT. No one liked it. One member is the building union representative. In Capital City Schools, the teachers’ association building representative is a very active position. One had been a supervising teacher. A second had been a program manager. One had been a curriculum specialist. Two are National Board Certified teachers.

They are certified/licensed in Visual Arts K-12, K-8 with a preschool endorsement, Speech 7-12, English 7-12, Spanish 1-8, TESOL (Teaching English to
Speakers of Other Languages) K-12, and 1-8. One teacher has taught every grade except kindergarten and first grade. One teacher has only taught third grade. One teacher has taught middle-school speech. Another has taught high school English. One teacher has taught secondary English as a Second Language. One has been a pre-school director.

Forms of Data

The primary form of data gathering was the in-depth interview that took place in a setting that allowed the participant to be informal and spontaneous. This long interview format is typical for phenomenological research. My interviewer role was moderately nondirective. The question format was structured toward exploring the phenomenon (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Additional data was gathered through email; this format is called virtual interviewing. When I delivered my thank you gift, I asked for any follow-up thoughts or questions about the research.

Introducing the interviews really did help facilitate responses. One participant made notes and collected articles and photographs to share. Separating the interviews also gave the participants and me the opportunity to review the transcripts in order to complete any incomplete thoughts or unanswered questions. Two of the participants asked me to deliver hard copies of the transcripts. They preferred to read from paper rather than the computer screen after a long day at school. They made their amendments on the paper. One participant gave me several pages on which she had made small changes. I saved those few papers. Another time she showed me the changes that she had made. There were also a few changes made by email. Almost all the changes were simple clarifications. Most of the changes were made orally during the interview or at the follow-up interview. Because the participants understood the topic(s) in advance,
they had time to collect their thoughts. We were both satisfied with the great majority of each interview.

*Data Recording, Field Issues, and Storage*

Throughout the research, an archival record was kept of all communications, collections, characters, and contexts. Each meeting with a participant was one-on-one with the researcher in order to preserve the anonymity of the participant and to further the depth and breadth of the interview. I met three of the teachers in their homes and two of the teachers in their empty classrooms. I audiotaped the interviews for later transcription. I also took notes during the interviews to supplement the description. Any clarifications or additions to the interviews were completed by email or at the next meeting.

The cassette tapes, field notes, and transcriptions were stored in the home of the researcher. No computer files, disks, or storage devices of any kind were used on public computers. All computer work occurred on the private computers of the researcher and the participants. All email communications were stored electronically and printed for inclusion in the research notebook (see Appendices C and D).

*Data Analysis*

The coding stages for phenomenological data analysis are Step #1 *epoche* or *bracketing*, Step #2 *horizontalization*, and Step #3 *clusters of meaning* (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990). The first step in phenomenological research is completing the *epoche*. It is “a process that the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation” (Patton, p. 407). This setting aside of prejudgment and imposition encouraged a fresh and open viewpoint. The goal was not to eliminate who the
researcher was, but to be more conscious and reflective of this presence that entered the setting of study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Rigor was reinforced by this ongoing attitudinal shift (Denzin, 1989; Patton). Once the *epoche* was completed, the researcher began the process of the phenomenological reduction of the data collected from the participants with the goal of presenting a “narration of the ‘essence’ of the experience” (Creswell, p. 149).

The second step in phenomenological data analysis is *horizontalization*. In this step, the researcher sought and listed significant statements within the data that illustrated “how individuals are experiencing the topic” (Creswell, 1998, p. 147). Each statement was deemed to have equal worth, hence the term *horizontalization* (Patton, 1990). In the third step, the researcher grouped the statements into “clusters of meaning” (Creswell, p. 235) in order to develop “a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (p. 247).

After completing the first three steps in phenomenological data analysis, the researcher wrote a *structural description* (how) and a *textural description* (what). The *textual description* described the textures of the experience, or what happened (Creswell, 1998). In developing the structural description, the researcher reflected on his/her own description and the descriptions of the participants using *imaginative variation*. The *structural description* sought “all possible meanings and divergent perspectives, varying the frames of reference about the phenomenon, and constructing a description of how the phenomenon was experienced” (p. 150). (See Appendix B *Choral Verse en Vue de Currere*)

Finally, the phenomenologist reduced the *textural* (what) and the *structural* (how) meanings of the experiences to a brief description that typified the experience. “This
process is followed first for the researcher’s account of the experience and then for that of each participant. After this, a ‘composite’ description is written” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150). This brief description is called the essence or essential, invariant structure (Denzin, 1989). (See Appendix B Choral Verse en Vue de Currere).

After reviewing a phenomenological study, the reader should be able to say, “I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46). Creswell provided a table that illustrated the steps of phenomenological research: Table 1.

*Data Analysis and Representation by Research Traditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data analysis and representation</th>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data managing</td>
<td>Create and organize files for data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, memoing</td>
<td>Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing</td>
<td>Describe the meaning of the experience for researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifying</td>
<td>Find and list statements of meaning for individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group statements into meaning units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting</td>
<td>Develop a textural description, “What happened?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a structural description, “How” the phenomenon was experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an overall description of the experience, the “essence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing, visualizing</td>
<td>Present narration of the “essence” of the experience; use tables or figures of statements and meaning units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Creswell, 1998, p. 148-149)

*Standards of Quality and Verification*

Creswell (1998) viewed verification as a process that continues throughout the research. Verification has been “reconceptualized by qualitative researchers with a
postmodern sensibility” (p. 198). Using the term verification, rather than validity, highlights qualitative research as an important, legitimate mode of inquiry. Creswell noted eight verification procedures that are commonly discussed in the literature:

1. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation
2. Triangulation
3. Peer review or debriefing
4. Negative case analysis
5. Clarifying researcher bias
6. Member checks
7. Rich, thick description
8. External audit

This research relied on the three interviews completed with each of the participants. Agreeing with Guba and Lincoln (1989), I clarified and verified any incomplete themes, thoughts, or details with the participants via email between interviews. We concluded each interview with a review of the themes that had surfaced during the interview. We began the next interview with a review of the last interview(s). Sometimes, I did not even have to begin review, as the participant would jump into conversation with a deeper, richer reflection on the last interview. When I met the participants for a fourth time to deliver my thank you gift, I asked again for any thoughts or clarifications. Of course, there could be no final thoughts or clarifications in currere. Currere is not final; it is an end in view (Dewey, 1938) still in the process of “be-coming” (van Manen, 1991, p. 34) as is the participant. We were only ending the moment.
During the long interviews, the conversation circled hermeneutically as we fought our way through difficult, sometimes painful, topics that could only be addressed in parts that came to form a whole. We moved in and out and around the topics addressing them and adding detail and significance with each attempt. Themes became more transparent each time we visited them. The autobiography in the first interview came all the way through the next two interviews. Actualizing currere, the regressive, progressive, and analytic moments cycled recursively toward the synthetical moment. Each visit recalled the previous and anticipated the next. We lived currere in the research.

The participant was not a benign subject in this research. The participant was able to email any clarifications or verifications to the researcher. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggested trying out themes with the participants and getting their feedback on these ideas. The participant teachers greatly preferred talking over emailing. They answered questions that I emailed to them, but they favored and were much more generous in their conclusions and evaluations orally. They wanted to talk not write. Currere was alive and animated in our critical conversation, evaluation, and conclusions. We laughed and cried and hollered and yelled. The interviews were soulful and human. Soliciting the informants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations, member checking, is considered to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). On the whole, we member-checked out loud.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) decried the term triangulation, concluding that it confused more than clarified. Triangulation originated in the application of trigonometry to navigation and surveying. When the term triangulation arrived in educational research from the social sciences, it brought with it the idea of multiple verification. “To be
confident that a train arrived in a certain station on a certain day, you need more than the entry from the diary of a person who was on the train” (p. 104). Bogdan and Biklen suggested using the actual research process terms carefully and clearly, instead of the term triangulation, to illustrate the essence of the phenomenon.

In agreement with Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Ely (1991) suggested that “triangulation can occur with data gathered by the same method but gathered over time” (p. 97). We triangulated the data within and across the interviews. At the beginning of one interview with Colleen, I wanted to clarify a previous thought about National Board Certification. Colleen thought I had misinterpreted her thoughts. I had wanted to make sure that I had her thoughts right. We were so careful. Right then, I replayed the tape from the previous visit to make sure that the record was correct. It was. We had her belief about National Board Certification correctly recorded and interpreted. We both wanted the experience of the high-quality veteran urban teacher portrayed accurately.

Literary players walked in and out of the data. Their *currierian* roles provided a perspective over the centuries and, sometimes, over the seas in an iterative experience of the theme. These players were students, teachers, and students turned teachers. The thick, rich description provided by the participants was enhanced by the presence of Frank and Ursula and all the other literary players. They lived and wrote about the themes just as we are now.

I am a member of a peer-debriefing trio. As fellow doctoral candidates, we hold each other accountable both methodologically and philosophically for the research in which we are engaged (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). Each member reports to the other members for review. When I was still taking my coursework, fellow international
doctoral students complained that the writing center was not able to help them with their work, as they did not have the knowledge to help them correct and improve their papers. The international students wanted some doctoral students to volunteer in the lab. That is why I joined a peer debriefing group.

In my group, we take turns sharing our progress, or lack thereof, on our dissertations. We pushed and shoved each other toward completions. After the pacing reports, we began the problem reports. Some of our queries could only be understood by other doctoral students. Most people, even master’s students, do not understand the largeness of the effort physically, mentally, socially, financially, emotionally, intellectually, philosophically, politically, etc. They do not know how many eminently qualified people disappear in the doctoral program. The “presence of an absence” (Grumet, 1988, p. xiii) stalks doctoral studies, too.

I shared my larger questions with these two women. We spent most of one visit discussing the adjective *high-quality* in the title of my dissertation. One member of my peer debriefing trio is a private school administrator. The other is a high-quality veteran urban teacher turned college instructor. I wanted teacher talk in my title. I wanted this dissertation about teachers and the walk they walk and the talk they talk. Teachers use the term *high-quality*. This research was a study of the discord involving that term. We fought our way around the question in preparation for my dissertation defense. The participants in this research assured the data and their issue the themes. The peer debriefing trio helped me with the philosophical questions that threatened to engulf the research. They kept me paddling ahead, even though we were all paddling at very different speeds at very different points.
Teacher talk shines clearly in the themes. Teachers talk about their students. Students talk about their teachers. They both talk about their triadic relationship with the curriculum. Pedagogy is about that forward moving relationship. In the data, the participants talk about their teachers, students, and the curriculum. Their talk affirms pedagogical tact in school. They value the teachers who “preserve a child’s space, protect what is vulnerable, prevent hurt, make whole what is broken, strengthen what is good, enhance what is unique, and sponsor personal growth” (van Manen, 1991, p. 161), either in their own past or in the lives of their students.

The Seventh Moment

Lincoln and Denzin (2000) imagined the seventh moment (2000 - ) as the form of qualitative inquiry for the 21st century. “This form of inquiry erases traditional distinctions among epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics; nothing is value-free” (p. 1052). Currere disclosed “the Self in its evolution and education” (Pinar, 1976a, p. 51). In the seventh moment, the self is embedded “in deeply storied histories of sacred spaces and local places, to illuminate the unity of the self in its relationship to the reconstructed, moral, and sacred natural world” (Lincoln & Denzin, p. 1052). Here, boundaries were loosed for the enmeshing of the student, teacher, and curriculum with human dignity, truth telling, and the sanctity of life. The urban student, the teacher, the curriculum, and their intermingled relationships were affirmed as worthy of dignity. They expected “some say in the world into which they are thrown, they must in some measure choose their own lives and feel that they have a right to be here, to be free to make a difference” (Jackson, 1998, p. 3). The grand master narrative was supplanted by “the safe return of my own voice” (Grumet, 1992, p. 31) in the seventh moment in which “sacred
epistemology interrogates the ways in which race, class, and gender operate as important system of oppression in the world today” (Lincoln & Denzin, p. 1052).

And so we cobble.

We cobble together stories that we may tell each other,
some to share our profoundest links with those whom we studied;
some to help us see how we can right a wrong or relieve oppression;
some to help us and others to understand how and why we did what we did,
and how it all went very wrong;
and some simply to sing of difference.

(Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1061)
CHAPTER IV

A PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

On April 23, 2005, The Very Reverend Samuel T. Lloyd III preached an inaugural sermon on the occasion of his installation and seating as Dean of Washington National Cathedral. There in the great cathedral which had so recently received the body of President Ronald Reagan, and before that President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and in whose halls the remains of President Woodrow Wilson are entombed, Lloyd uplifted *A Voice, A Place, A People*. Three days before he was assassinated, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached his last Sunday sermon from the same Canterbury Pulpit in April 1968. In the house that receives America’s own version of royalty, Lloyd began with a reflection on the words of Dr. King.

In this city, this glorious, wretched city,

where so many live in houses that human beings ought not to have to live in,

and children play where children ought not to have to play… (Lloyd, 2005, p. 5).

Lloyd called for the *Voice* of a generous spirit, a *Place* of reconciliation, and a commitment to serve *People* in a broken and hurting world. The grandeur of the Washington National Cathedral sits in the midst of poverty. Our capital’s schools, like other large city schools, serve the poor. Voices of teachers and students ring through the halls. Angry and hurting words are hurled and tears are shed to be replaced with tender and forgiving hugs, letters of dismissal, or formal/informal truce agreements. The place of school is regular and irregular, timed and timeless, historic and present.
The present and absent life of the poverty school, its teachers and students and their relation with the curriculum, is changing in America. Thirty years ago, 6% of the students enrolled in our public schools were Hispanic and 78% were Caucasian. In 2003, these numbers have shifted to 19% and 58% respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). This shift engages the community and its schools. Numerically and philosophically, *over there* is becoming an increasing part of the national discussion on *The Condition of Education* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). With the rousing of political winds, veils billow and part for inspection, regulation, and evaluation of the out-of-sight world of the school for the poor/children of color. However, often, even cyclically, the winds blow in a different direction; and the veils flutter down to a stagnant wrapping. Geographically, *over there* remains separate, segregated, and apart (Dobbs, 2004; Orfield, Frankenberg, & Lee, 2002/2003). It is the experience of the teachers who have survived and thrived *over there* as a part of the triad of *Subject, Society*, and [Urban] *Child* (Dewey, 1938) with each, teacher and child, morphing into the forward-looking triangle of *Subject, Social*, and *Self* (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000) to which I turn as the subject of this research.

Themes and Variations

I have argued that curriculum, like language, is a moving form;

Conceived as an aspiration,

The object and hope of our intentionality,

It comes to form and slips,

At the moment of its actualization,

Into the ground of our action. (Grumet, 1988, p. 131)
Every lesson has a theme. The variation is sitting in the second row in the third seat. Missing resources, including students, silence the theme. The health and wealth of the student affects the theme. The fire alarm is pulled and abbreviates the theme. A classroom without sufficient heat invades the theme. The world seeps into the classroom and infects the theme. The knowledge and experience of the fearless/fearful teacher illuminates/suppresses the theme. Like teachers across America, Capital City teachers wrangle veils and screens and palls that divide/delight/disengage/disrupt/delay the triad of learning: the teacher, the student, and the curriculum.

As part of the poetizing art of currere, I set a foundation through an exploration and explication of the themes that became animate and intimate in complicated conversation with Bev at Edison High School, Colleen at Hayes Elementary School, Kitty at Miami Elementary School, Paul at Belton High School, and Roslyn at Franklin Africentric School. These five high-quality veteran urban teachers in Capital City Schools explored their experiences and lives through story. These stories provide the themes and variations that help us understand and move through the four moments of currere towards an essence of the experience.

Structures of Meanings

Even while I was engaged in complicated conversation with the teacher participants in this research, there came a clear picture of a voice and voice, a place and place, an experience and experience. The universal and the particular rushed and tumbled over one another onto and into the experiences of these veteran urban teachers. Much of teaching is the same. Nothing in teaching is the same. Over and over I listened to variations on a theme and then variations of the themes. There were codas, choruses,
refrains, and introductions *moderato*. Stories became lyrical and reflected the movements of the day and days. There were even intermissions when ontological fullness and epistemological transparency (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; van Manen, 1990) brought us to silence in this seventh moment.

Today, I found one of my favorite students on the front page of the newspaper. Still wearing his high school football uniform, he was described as *armed and dangerous*. I love/loved this student. I cannot code this student. I cannot code incarceration. Codes recall penal codes, codes of conduct, traffic codes, etc. Codes are tight and bounded and defined. This structure of meaning will be behind bars. Incarceration lives and breathes.

My student will be incarcerated. Raoul’s mother is incarcerated. Ebony’s father is incarcerated. Marquit asked for permission to use the library computer to get his uncles’ addresses in the state’s reformatories. I sat beside him as he slowly copied the addresses of one numbered man after another as I read them aloud to him. Incarceration is a persistent theme in urban schools. There are variations on the theme. Possessive adjectives bring the theme from *over there, his or her*, to *over here, my*. The veils that separate our lives envelop *my* student, and I pass through the veil in a relationship of pedagogical love.

*Capturing the Phenomenon*

In his book on *Researching Lived Experience*, Max van Manen (1990) provided descriptors of structures of meanings, themes, in hermeneutic phenomenology:

1. Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point.
2. Theme formulation is at best a simplification.
3. Themes are not objects one encounters at certain points or moments in a text.
4. Theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand.

(van Manen, 1990, p. 99)

Themes capture phenomenological qualities of experiences as “emerging lived meanings in life” (van Manen, 1990, p. 88)

1. Theme is the needfulness or desire to make sense.

2. Theme is the sense we are able to make of something.

3. Theme is the openness to something.

4. Theme is the process of insightful invention, discover, disclosure.

(van Manen, 1990, p. 88)

As I arrive at certain thematic insights it may seem that insight is a product of all of these: invention (my interpretive product), discovery (the interpretive product of my dialogue with the test of life), disclosure of meaning (the interpretive product “given” to me by the test of life itself).

(van Manen, 1990, p. 88)

Van Manen described how theme related to the concept/notion being studied.

1. Theme is the means to get at the notion.

2. Theme gives shape to the shapeless.

3. Theme describes the content of the notion.

4. Theme is always a reduction of a notion. (van Manen, 1990, p. 88)

In reading and rereading the collected data transcriptions of the interviews with the Capital City teachers, themes rose to the surface and lingered. Voices surrounded and interplayed with and through the themes. In presenting these themes as the subtitles of the choral voices, I relied on the sounds of the urban classroom as portrayed by these
experienced teachers through story. These themes recycled into the universal in the

*Finale en Currere.*

**Currere**

*Currere* focuses on an individual biography, forsaking general structures to
discover the path of experience that has led a particular person to a specific
choice, place, cognitive style. Furthermore, *currere* addresses itself to the
individual’s own perception and understanding of his experience, maintaining that
in reflexive process reside both the energy and direction for continued growth.
(Grumet, 1976, p. 84)

*Currere* continues the Deweyan practice (1938) of an *end-in-view* rather than a
polished product. Grumet (1976) suggested that “we are less interested in what we can
learn about the subject than in what he can learn about himself” (p. 84). The
autobiographical experience “awakens critical consciousness” (p. 84) through which the
participant, researcher, and reader profit. These high-quality veteran teachers agreed that
they had more to learn. “I think a good teacher is somebody who is looking to constantly
improve their craft and not just satisfied with the status quo” (Bev).

In order to explicate the data, I matched philosophical data collection methods to
what became the coordinating moment (Pinar, 1976a) during the research. Before the
research, I had expected to employ Palmer’s *Good Talk About Good Teaching* (1993),
Connelly and Clandinin’s *Stories to Live By* (1999), and van Manen’s *Lifeworld
Existentials* (1990) in each moment during the interviews. I quickly understood that such
a pedantic plan undermined complicated conversation. While engaging in and
encouraging conversation through anecdote and storytelling, metaphors, secret stories,
and lifeworld existentials (van Manen, 1990) popped up to the surface. “So, you moved to Carter; and you talked about moving from the dark into the light? Metaphorically? Physically?” (Rebecca to Colleen)

In reading and rereading the interviews, my presentation of the data plan sorted itself out. The strategy was not overlaid. It emerged from the conversation. Akin to Michelle Fine’s dramatic style in *Framing Dropouts* (1991), the data sounded in the voices of the participants. In the classroom, the teacher moves from the particular to the universal and back throughout the day. This movement is momentary and studied. It is fleeting and remains. These voices mixed *Moments en Currere*, literary vignettes, and coordinating philosophical data collection approaches.

I illustrated *The Regressive Moment* through Parker Palmer’s *Good Talk About Good Teaching* (1993). The topics “take us into realms more truthful, more demanding, more productive of insightful topics that do not deny the need for technical knowledge but that bring us into a community of discourse fed by the richness of our corporate experience” (*Ground Rules for Creative Conversation*, ¶1). The four subjects are *Critical Moments, The Human Condition, Metaphors and Images, and Autobiographical Reflection*.

*The Progressive Moment* was the most difficult for all the participants. Teachers live amidst *The Daily Grind* (Jackson, 1968/1990). They manage the social traffic of the classroom as gatekeeper, grantor of special privileges, official timekeeper, and supply sergeant making decisions at a rate of one per minute (van Manen, 1991). Teachers value autonomy, immediacy, individuality, and informality. It is difficult to look beyond Friday’s test and *Interim Report Card Hand-Out* when Carl “is sauntering there all by
himself...Should I strike up a conversation with him? Or does he need some time alone?” (pp. 51-52), and a little boy who did not speak at all during kindergarten has finally begun to talk, even if it is to come up to tattle to his teacher (Kitty).

The participants circled *The Progressive Moment* during the interviews. They often declined a first attempt only to loop back later to confront the future of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum in the urban classroom. The future is predicted in what teachers can and cannot say notwithstanding the prescriptive, centralized control that surrounds them. They have *secret stories, cover stories, and sacred stories*. *Secret stories* are *in-the-classroom stories* told by a teacher to a teacher. *Cover stories* and *sacred stories* are told *out-of-the-classroom* in order to present the teacher as an expert or to sustain the *sacred theory-practice* that is expected to remain unchallenged.

*The Analytic Moment* was presented through van Manen’s *Lifeworld Existentials* (1990). Although *The Analytic Moment* is now, curriculum is not sliced into segments with impenetrable walls sealing off the sections as would be suggested by today’s controlled times. *The Regressive Moment* and *The Progressive Moment* interplay in the dance of the curriculum, teacher, and child. This moment, through *corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality*, supplied color commentary for the present battle of *curriculum-as-text* (Dewey, 1900/1990; 1902/1990; 1916; 1938) and *curriculum-as-object* (Bobbitt, 1918). Grumet (1988), co-author of *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), wrote, “The danger is that a room of one’s own becomes a bunker” (1988, p. 92). Behind the classroom door, saboteurs work in secret. Their secrets refuse influence by keeping methods and meaning quiet, even hidden. The bunker promotes the privatization of teaching and repeats the public/private life split that accompanies the vulnerable teacher.
I. Regressive Moment
   The Past

II. Progressive Moment
   The Future

III. Analytic Moment
   The Present

IV. Synthetical Moment
   I am experience.

**Figure 4.**
L’Étude en Currere

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*Good Talk About Good Teaching*
Critical Moments
The Human Condition
Metaphors and Images
Autobiographical Reflection
(Palmer, 1993)

*Knowledge Landscape Metaphors*
Secret Story
Cover Story
Sacred Story
(Connelly & Clandinin, 1999)

*Lifeworld Existentials*
Spatiality
Corporeality
Relationality
Temporality
(van Manen, 1990)

*Critical Moments* in the Human Condition
Metaphors and Images
Autobiographical Reflection
(Palmer, 1993)
Nel Noddings (2005) concluded, “The idea is to learn, not be defeated by it” (p. 69).

This research walks the secrets through the classroom door across lines of demarcation.

The *Finale en Currere* is *The Synthetical Moment* (Pinar, 1976a). This moment corresponds to *L’Essence* in phenomenological research (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 1989; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002). A structural description (*how*) and a textual description (*what*) preceded *L’Essence*. The two descriptions involved imaginative variation that included the voices of the researcher and the participants. It is important to remember that what was sought was deeper understanding (*curriculum-as-text*) not a defined event (*curriculum-as-object*).

The Regressive Moment

The person I am is partly constituted by my life memories. Past experiences have been consolidated in me such that memories may unexpectedly appear in changing situations and circumstances. The past may have been forgotten, but it may also suddenly confront us again when the past becomes relevant for the present. The power of childhood and life memory attests to the fact that we are historical beings – we have life histories that give permanence and identity to the person we are. (van Manen, 1991, p. 22)

*Angela’s Ashes: A Memoir*

Mr. O’Neill is the master in the fourth class at school. We call him Dotty because he's small like a dot. He teaches in the one classroom with a platform so that he can stand above us and threaten us with his ash plant and peel his apple for all to see. The first day of school in September he writes on the blackboard three words
which are to stay there the rest of the year, Euclid, geometry, idiot. He says if he catches any boy interfering with these words that boy will go through the rest of his life with one hand. He says anyone who doesn't understand the theorems of Euclid is an idiot. Now, repeat after me, Anyone who doesn't understand the theorems of Euclid is an idiot. Of course we all know what an idiot is because that's what the masters keep telling us we are. (McCourt, 1996, p. 151)

The first step in currere is The Regressive Moment, the return to the past. “One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present” (Grumet, 1976, p. 55). The Regressive Moment is complex. It embraces the literal and biographic past, but it lives on in the conceptual and subjective present. The biographic past, “ignored but not absent” (p. 56), lingers in the biographic present. The unconscious perpetuates itself through the habitual which is an acting out of the past. “As the past becomes present, the present is revealed” (p. 56).

Radio

Director Michael Tollin and Screenwriter Mike Rich, in their movie Radio (Gains, Leibert, Robbins, & Tollin, 2003; Smith, 1996), bracketed a continuing scene in the childhood of Coach Harold Jones. During a period of two years as a paperboy, Harold became aware of the hazardous, even discarded, life of a young mentally-handicapped boy who lived under the open porch of an isolated house in South Carolina. The private awareness of the neglected boy did not overcome the public life of an equally-young Harold. What was hidden from view remained present. This experience
accumulated with others to constitute the Self (Pinar, 1994). Through bracketing and distancing, Jones escaped social and class dislocation to return to his authentic voice. He escaped habit, in the constant diversion of school, to find intention amidst the students.

In his academic workshops, Parker Palmer (1993) worked toward Improving Teaching Through Conversation and Community. He asked faculty to step outside the privatization of teaching. Isolation offers “a mode of self-protection against scrutiny and evaluation” (¶3). A frequent problem that arose in the workshops was the “American cultural bias that every problem we face has a technical ‘fix,’ if only we can find it” (Good Teaching Is More Than Technique, ¶3).

When we frame our talk about teaching only in terms of technique, we may make the conversation “practical” and safe, but we miss the deeper dimensions that could make such talk more real and rewarding to faculty: the challenge of ideas, the exploration of shared practice, the uniqueness of each teacher’s genius, the mystery at the heart of the educational exchange.

(Palmer, 1993, Good Teaching Is More Than Technique, ¶3)

In order to advance Good Talk About Good Teaching, Palmer (1993) originated four topics that were effective in his work with faculty. Theses are topics “do not exclude technique but that take us into realms more truthful, more demanding…that bring us into a community of discourse fed by the richness of our corporate experience” (Good Teaching Is More Than Technique, ¶3). The topics were Critical Moments, The Human Condition, Metaphors and Images, and Autobiographical Reflection (¶4).
Critical Moments

In Chapter III of this dissertation, I included an exemplar of Critical Moments (Palmer, 1993). In that recollection, synchronicity (Jaworski, 1996) placed Robert Coles in New Orleans in 1960 where he witnessed six-year old Ruby Bridges as “she tried to attend the Frantz School” (Coles, 1990, p. xi). The violence of mobs, U.S. marshals, and a small Black girl engaged Coles through profession and person. After the Christmas break, Coles, a child psychiatrist, began visiting Ruby to help her through the trauma of first-grade. Sometimes, Coles’ wife, Jane Hallowell Coles, a high school English and history teacher, visited, too. Mrs. Bridges, Ruby’s mother, also became friends with the Coles. The threads of Ruby’s experience, as well as her mother’s, entwined with Coles’ life and that of his wife. In an exercise of pedagogical tact, the critical moment became a catalyst as Coles “became a ‘field-worker,’ learning to talk with children going through their everyday lives amid substantial social and educational stress” (p. xi).

The critical moments exercise creates what I have come to call a “triangulating” conversation, as in surveying or navigation. It allows us to plot our own locations as teachers by relating to the locations of others. As we listen to others speak about their teaching, we are free to say an inward “yes” to the things that sound like us and “no” to the things that do not. We are free to speak about our own practice in a way that makes us only as vulnerable as we choose to be – a freedom that makes the conversation both possible and fruitful. We can explore our own identities in relation to other teachers’ without every feeling that we are being told to do our work in someone else’s way. (Palmer, 1993, Critical Moments, ¶6)
Bev: *I Became a Representation of the Mistake That She Had Made.*

My mom had been pregnant with me. The father was not a part of her life, so she put me up for adoption. Then, she met my dad – who I call my dad. They got married. My mom found out at nine months that I had still not been adopted. It was the post-World War II baby boom, and there was not a lot of need for girls. She dropped the adoption proceedings. So, I was adopted by my dad and taken out of that legal loophole where they put little children. The problem with all that is that my mom never bonded with me. She had not been part of my life for nine months, and I suffered separation anxiety from the family I had been placed. I cried all the time and this further frustrated my mom. She really had a difficult time being there for me, with me, or anything else. I became a representation of the mistake that she had made. So that was ugly, but school was good. Whatever attention I did not get at home, I could get at school.

Colleen: *That Is What I Said Since I Was a Senior in High School.*

I wrote a letter to the principal about the health teacher when I was a junior. That she was *incompetent.* That she was doing her nails, when she was supposed to be teaching health. She would come in, and she would tell us to read these pages. Then, she would leave; or she would sit at her desk and file her nails and paint her nails. She actually had a hair dryer in the classroom. Yes! I am trying to think of the word that really *pissed* me off that she did not know. It meant unconscious… Comatose! She did not know what that word meant! And she was the health teacher! So I wrote all these things, but I did not sign it...They
knew who it was from. I got called into the principal’s office and suspended.

Yes, for writing an anonymous letter that was insulting to a teacher. And then, I did not get credit for health. They would not give me credit for health. I had to take stinking health the next year. I had to take it all over again...

It just irritated me that she never taught a day in her life…and there she was collecting a teacher’s salary for filing her nails. It just used to irritate the crap out of me. I just could not take it. It got to be spring, and I wrote him this letter thinking to save the future of all these girls. Of course, they were segregated. Health classes were segregated. They were all girls. So, to save the future of my fellow classmates, my fellow underclassmen, I wrote this letter; and I just paid dearly for it.

My parents were so mad. They were furious! First of all, how could I not sign it! That was what was stupid! To make it anonymous. Everything that I said was true…How could I not sign it…It was like telling a lie…If I felt that strongly, I should have stood up and said, “You are completely incompetent.” I should have made an appointment. That is what I should have done…I took the chicken way out. I did the chicken way. I should have just made an appointment and told him. I should have given him my opinion.

Does this say a lot about me as a teacher? I think teachers should teach. I do not think that they should be balancing their checkbook or reading the paper or reading a magazine or just killing time until summer vacation. I think you have a moral and ethical obligation, if you are accepting that salary and you have all
those children in front of you, that you better be teaching. That is what I said since I was a senior in high school.

Kitty: *And I Was Good at School.*

It is funny…I remember when I was in fourth, when I think about here at school, some of the things that the children say and do now; and I was in fourth grade, and I was in line to go somewhere, and my teacher said, “Kitty!” because I was talking. I just burst into tears. I was so sorry that I had made her have to call my name. I felt so terrible.

I think now, I could do all sorts of things; and they still would not cry. Now, it is like, oh, yeah, well, whatever…I loved school. I had a lot of friends at school. School was a social time as well. I felt secure at school. I loved learning. I loved reading. Maybe all of those things put together are part of the reason that I became a teacher. School was a very secure happy place for me. And I was good at school.

Paul: *It Was Brother This and Brother That.*

Having come out of my high school situation, I graduated from Catholic high school in 1971. It was *Brother This* and *Brother That.* It was very strict…We used to make a joke at college – You could always tell the students who had graduated from Catholic high school, because they always wore their hair the longest, because of the fact that when we were in high school, an all-male school, someone would go along with a comb and measure the bottom of your ear and see
whether or not the hair or the sideburns went below the ear…Yes, that was the limit. Or if the hair touched your collar. All these kinds of silly things. Everyday you wore a tie. Throughout most of the year, you also had a suit jacket to go with it… They did not care if you wore the same tie and the same suit jacket. It was just the fact that you had a tie and jacket on… They did not care if the tie matched the jacket. It could be any color or anything… It was the utmost in ridiculous regimen… The jacket and tie went into your locker on Day 1, and you threw it away on… You pulled it out every morning.


In fourth grade, I was in the spelling bee. I got 100% on all my spelling tests, so everyone expected me to win the spelling bee. I was the only Black in my class. I loved all the children, and I had a good time everyday. I felt at home. I felt like everybody else at my school; and there were probably five Blacks in the whole school at that time, 1963.

So, I remember the day of the spelling bee, my first word was anniversary. Everybody else had had a one syllable word before me. When they said the word, anniversary, I remember freezing. I was just in shock. I missed the word. I remember going back to my seat thinking this cannot be happening. At the time, all I knew was that I had a word that I had never been asked to spell; and I missed it, and I sat down.

When I grew up, I looked back at that word and said, “Nobody else got a word like an-ni-ver-sa-ry. Nobody had a word with that many syllables.” Then,
I began to put things in perspective. I was the only Black in the class. I began to think about the word racism as an adult. I did not think about it too much then. I am sure my parents did. I am sure that the teachers did. I am sure that they thought about words like discrimination, because it was the early 1960s. These kinds of things were going on in the world. Desegregation was going on; and so, certainly, these things entered into their mind. Certainly, their actions displayed this atmosphere. My point is at the time, I just thought, “There is no way that I just lost the spelling bee on my first word.” Then, when I grew up and I looked back, I wondered if racism and discrimination played a part in my not progressing at all in the spelling bee that I was expected to win. I was the only one in my class who got every spelling word right all year. Then, on the first word…It was a very devastating moment. It was a very teaching moment for me, because I was sitting there thinking I was equal every day. I was sitting there thinking I was accepted every day. But then, when I grew up, I wanted to go back. I wanted to go back. I wanted to get in this time machine and go back and say, “Was that the word that I was supposed to have? Or was that word chosen just for me?”

These five critical incidents came readily to mind when I asked the participants to tell the story of a critical incident that had affected and continued to affect their lives. Bev, Kitty, and Roslyn, the three most senior teachers, were home at school. They loved school. Bev found at school what was absent at home. Kitty was good at school, so good in fact, that it was the unique instance where she was not good that was recalled. Kitty’s father had left home when she was ten years old. Her parents finally divorced when she
was 15 years old. Like Bev, Kitty found stability at school. In our final interview, Kitty summed her continuing life at school “I have always loved school. I am 53 years old, and I have had a first day of school every year since I was five years old.” Moreover, Kitty will have another first day of school this fall.

Roslyn and Paul’s critical incidents reflected the times. Roslyn wants to enter a time machine in order to find resolution for a long-unanswered question. Moving from monosyllabic words to a five-syllable word for one exceptional student in the spelling bee line, then, returning immediately to monosyllabic words certainly invites questions of equity and justice. Roslyn resumed her successful life at school. At the same time, she began to “look at the reasons why that happened” (Roslyn). Her practice of pedagogical tact in the classroom embraces “those individuals and those single moments. That is what we have to hold on to” (Roslyn). She describes her teaching practice as a thoughtful “look at how we establish relationships” (Roslyn).

Paul left his jacket and tie in his locker on the last day of high school. He shed titles like Mr., too. As he entered the university, the world of education was moving away from the collective and entering what Paul called the Spring Hill Waldorf era. “They were exploring a different way” (Paul). Paul was exploring a different way, too. An excellent athlete, he left organized sports and their scholarship offers. “Yes, it was just the idea of having to go to school and practice and beat yourself up and lift all…It was a job” (Paul). He entered the world of art at the university with not much more than an elementary experience in art.

In the practice of pedagogical tact (van Manen, 1991), “the child may become my teacher” (p. 35). Through the Critical Moment (Palmer, 1993) illustrative of the first
tenet of *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), *The Regressive Moment*, the relationship with
the past, it becomes clear that in the child’s “be-coming” (van Manen, p. 34), it may be
the inner child and/or the child in the third row in the second seat who is in the process of
“coming to be” (p. 33). The *Critical Moment* is neither final nor finished nor finite. It is
rather an *end in view* (Dewey, 1938) still in the process of “be-coming” (van Manen,
p. 34) as is the participant.

*Paul: Oh, You Would Do That, but I Would Not Do That.*

Paul does not have a classroom. He has an art studio. He is not an art teacher. He is an artist who teaches. Paul’s students *do* art in the Eisnerian sense of *The Educational Imagination* (2002b). This art teacher has a “clear sense of himself and of his purpose in the classroom” (Burchenal, 2002, p. 307). He teaches who he is (Palmer, 1998). I asked Paul to remark on his identity as an artist in the school.

It is funny, we were giving an exam today and I asked the students just to respond to two photographs in a part of the exam. It was an advanced level group of students. One girl said, “We do not look at art. We do not look at photographs that way. You may.” I said, “No, I am asking you as a layperson. Does this not give you a sense of any kind of emotion or anything? Do not do it necessarily as an artist. I am not asking you to use all the art terms. Just respond to it. Is there isolation? Is it fear? How is it making you feel?” But it is kind of funny that they would say, “Oh, *you* would do that, but *I* would not do that.” (Paul)
As an artist in their midst, Paul practices Eisnerian connoisseurship (2002b) student by student pushing, prodding, suggesting, praising, listening, consulting, etc. A Deweyan blend (1934) of “continuous interchange of intellectual and aesthetic components of an educative experience” (Catford, 2002, p. 324) are freely functioning in the class. The hidden curriculum in the art class is that student thoughts and feeling are of worth, and that the students are responsible for their art. The art is theirs. “We remember our most influential teachers not primarily by what they did, but by who they were, how they inspired us. It is their qualities as human beings that profoundly affect us” (p. 328).

*The Human Condition*

Palmer (1993) found a second topic for *Good Talk About Good Teaching* in the human condition of teachers and students. Addressing the human condition of the classroom refutes standardization that expects both the teacher and the student to conform. “Tact discerns what is unique and different about a child [teacher] and attempts to enhance this uniqueness. In contrast, a tactless teacher [student] fails to see differences among children [teachers]” (van Manen, 1991, p. 169). Paul’s art students advised him that they did not access art in the way that they had determined that their teacher did. The perceived differences between their ways of viewing, or not viewing, photographs. They acknowledged a difference in the experience of art between the artist/teacher and the student.

An experienced, gifted teacher, Paul was still reflecting on the critical moment at the time of our interview. He did not address the moment as an occasion to adjust his technique. He was considering “the human dynamics of the classroom” (Palmer, 1993, *The Human Condition*, ¶1). “Good teaching depends less on technique than it does on
the human condition of the teacher, and only by knowing the truth of our own condition can we hope to know the true condition of our students” (¶1). *Currere* flows in and around this scene. Its descriptors, race, class, and gender, affect and play in the experiences of the participants taking and giving the exam. The urban children in Paul’s high school art class brought their experience, or lack thereof, into art class with them. Paul was seeking ways to enact and enliven art in the curricular life of the students. His personal embrace of art as a life and livelihood was recognized by the students, perhaps, in itself, offering a portal into the world of art.

*Friday: The First Full Day*

*Afternoon Announcements*

After lunch, at 1:05, Mr. Geoffrey “enters into some genial banter over the loss of the afternoon recess.” The loss of recess follows a directive from the principal and illustrates the influence of broader school policy on the classroom. The Washington School received this year, for the first time, several busloads of children from an overcrowded Negro area of the city. The intent was to lower the interaction between the groups in the hope of preventing overt conflict and incidents. The loss of recess was presented as general policy in many of the schools for the upper grade levels. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 41)

In the 1960s, cultural anxieties centered in race and gender (Pinar, 2004). The Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement upended the era of Cold War tactics. Passive met aggressive on the streets of America. Workers for civil and gender
rights were active and actively seeking to fulfill their goals. The Cold War operated in an agenda of discrete control. Discrete control did not work against protesters. Threats did not stop the marches. The picture of America on television began to include the other who had only recently opened the door and/or mopped the floor. With the entry of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (1965), the national government codified change. Discrete control was replaced by overt control of political, racial, and sexual issues in America’s schools (Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000). The political/economic arm of education marched into the curriculum.

*Bev: You Don’t Date Rich.*

In my senior class (1968-1969), Rich was our senior class president, our football captain, and our basketball captain. He was Black. He lived on the outskirts of our neighborhood, but he was very well liked. I would say loved. When we had our 20-year reunion, he made it; and you would have thought a rock star had walked in…

We were so incredibly sheltered to what the real world was. It was partially the neighborhood we lived in. I grew up in the city, but our population in our school…If I had my yearbook, it would be stunning, because our football team - the front row was White, Black, White, Black, White, Black – and you know like seven kids in the front row. The rest were all White faces. So, we did not know anything about racial prejudice, because those little Black faces in there, they were our friends. We did not think anything of race issues.
But there was also no crossing those lines. Like Rich, as popular as he was, nobody would date him. You don’t date Rich. He could date Black girls, but never Black-White will mix. It was kind of an unwritten thing.

**Colleen: That Might Be the Very Beginning of When I Became So Militant.**

Yes, well, I had a little episode in third grade… I pulled the fire bell. I had to apologize to my third-grade class for stopping to talk to *those* children out on the street. That might be the very beginning of when I became so militant. My father was so mad, because *those* children were Black… They were walking on their little way to the public elementary school… So, I had to apologize to my third-grade class for stopping on the street to talk to *those* children instead of coming *directly* into the school… The principal, Sister Victoria, hauled me in…and made me apologize… My father was active in the Fair Housing Movement… We were always very racially sensitive… My father hit the roof… My father went ballistic. He said, “That is it! This is her last year at that school!”… Well, I took care of that; because Frances and I pulled the fire bell, and that was my last *week* at that school.

**Kitty: Before We Had Been More of a Group.**

In 1968, I can remember when it was the Olympics in Mexico, and the raised fist. The racial climate was a little stretched for a while. Before we had been more of a group. Of course, you had some separation; but we were a group. But at that time, we were separated a little bit more. There were, I do not want to call them
acts of violence because people were not hurt badly, but there was some pushing and different things. There was some disorder that was going on at that time… My high school was at least 75% White, possibly even more than that. Like in our majorettes, there were nine majorettes, one was African American. There were seven cheerleaders; one was African American. I cannot remember ever having anything but White teachers.

I can remember the Kennedy assassination (1963) and where I was and what I was doing. The same with when Bobby Kennedy (1968) was killed, and, then, Martin Luther King (1968). That was a scary time at school, too; because the African American kids were very up in arms about that. There was no problem, not like the Watts riots. I was pretty sheltered. My city was pretty sheltered.

Roslyn: That Was a Moment. That Was an Epiphany.

I remember when there began to be a question with my grades. Then, I remember my parents questioning, “Her papers are saying A and B. Her report card is saying C”…My parents went to the school; and they said, “Something is very wrong.” The fifth-grade teacher then, Mr. Yarrow said, “We grade on the curve. And so, you are right, she is an A student; but she is getting Cs, because that is what the class gets.”

My mother said…I do not know how she had it in her, because there was no one to guide her and my dad, there was no one to guide anybody who had come from the South. They came here on a bus with a hope to get a job and be
able to feed their family and have a roof over their head. They were not coming to make any inroads. They were not coming to change the face of discrimination. They were not coming to be an example. They were coming just to live. So, for my mother, and I think that was probably the second time where she reared her head as this omniscient kind of person who really was not supposed to know anything, she was a cashier, for her to speak up – They spoke up when they got this house - but for her to speak up to an all-White staff and say, “My child is an A student. She should have As on her report card.” That was a moment. That was an epiphany. We did not know it them; but that was an epiphany for our entire family, and I think for school staff, because the teachers said to her, “On Monday, she will not be in this room…” There was another class, Mrs. Ronald’s class…

But here is the child part of it. I remember emptying my desk and walking down the hall meeting all of my friends. They were C and D students. They were loud. They were raucous, but they were fun. I did not exactly mix with them, but I had an affinity with them. I had been with them for several months. I remember crying going down the hall to Mrs. Ronald’s class. No, in fact, I was not crying; but Charles was. While they were moving me, they also moved Charles…Because Charles was also an A student…

This is all stuff I figured out once I got grown...As Charles and I walked along…Charles is a doctor, today, a medical doctor…I said, “Don’t cry, Charles. It will be okay.” We went to Mrs. Ronald’s class. She was a Black teacher…

Yes, Charles is Black.
Footnote

The following year, recess was reinstituted. The Negro pupils were no longer transported, and the faculty, through the clerk, exerted pressure on the Principal. He was reluctant but they desired an afternoon break. He met their wishes. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 41)

Metaphors and Images

Talking about teaching through metaphors can make us available to ourselves, and to each other, in fresh and surprising ways. They are antidotes, if you will to our “theories” of teaching, which – valuable as they may be – are also subject to sophisticated self-deceptions that mask who we really are and what we’re really up to. The gift of honest metaphor is that it comes to us rough and raw and full of psychic energy, unedited by the conventions of the rational mind. If I give you my metaphor, I am likely to be speaking honestly about myself – in ways that even I do not understand until I have listened carefully to what the metaphor is trying to teach me. (Palmer, 1993, Metaphors and Images, ¶9)

Whenever I do a presentation for the School Improvement Plan, I always bring pictures. You cannot talk about educating children without their faces somewhere in the presentation. So, I am a picture fanatic. I have thousands of pictures of students and things happening in my classroom. (Roslyn)
Roslyn’s home reflects her belief in pictures. Her mother’s courage in saving a neighborhood child from a vicious dog hangs near the front door. A large family portrait graces the piano. Shelves hold family pictures in the living room. Stories attach to images. I am a word person. I am certified in three kinds of words: English, French, and Library Science. I see images in metaphors: *Like Living in a Bubble*, *A Million Stars*, and *The Good Girl*. These images illustrate careerism at an early age. The students conform and crawl over one another to get ahead. “But what do I have to do to get that A?” (Paul) Others remain at the edge and refuse the form until they disappear.

*Like Living in a Bubble*

*Bev:* To really understand outside of that bubble – outside of the bubble was outside of the neighborhood. There were things going on in other parts of the city that we also did not have privy knowledge to. We did not talk about it.

*Bev:* Like I said, I was pretty naïve. Grew up naïve, remained naïve. There is a blessing with being naïve.

*Kitty:* No, not where I was. I had pretty much been in a little shell of sorts.

*A Million Stars*

*Bev:* The classroom as I can remember it, we had lots of charts with student names with stars next to them…
Bev: Yes, and I remember that you had to get the stars. You had to get the stars!

Bev: We did that all the way through junior high school. By high school, they did not call it by that but by the courses. In junior high school, it was tracked 1, 2, and 3. I know when I came in, I was listed as a 2. I was just like this can’t be. I can’t be a 2. I had to be a 1. I worked double-time to make sure that I got to be a 1.

Colleen: There were three reading groups, and I was in the top group, Singing Wheels or something. Everybody knew which was the top group. My mother told me that I was in the top group. I am sure that it was important to her.

Colleen: Yes, if I was not in the top reading group that was serious business. The top group was expected.

Colleen: Just like my kids know, today. They know. I have the Eagles, the Cardinals, and the Jayhawks. They know. They know who the Eagles are… I think they know by about Christmas. Because the kids who go to tutoring get pulled out of the Eagles.

Kitty: I remember being in the top reading group; because they did not actually call it the top, middle, and bottom, but you knew you were in the top group…The
group of children that went together for reading circle that we were the ones that
she would always ask to read in front of other people and things like that… Oh,
definitely. I loved reading, so that was just a little pat on the back.

*Kitty:* And what we do with this is, for each time, that their name is not crossed
off at the end of each week; and I have followed that every single week since
school started, I have a basket of chocolate kisses. The first day of school when I
say, “Oh, that was so good, you deserve a kiss.” They learn that they get a kiss for
doing what they should be doing, for doing their best. So, I have a basket of
kisses; and they get their kiss. If they get four kisses, they get a certificate. Once
they have earned three certificates, then we have lunch together. Like, today, they
go down and get their lunch, bring it up here. I get my lunch, bring it in here. I
had two kids, today. I provide the cookies. We sit and chat. I hear all sorts of
things that I would *never* tell their parents that I have heard. So, we have done
that all year. For some of the kids, that is the motivator. For some kids…out of 18,
there are five children that never had lunch with me once. But consider, there are
13, that we had lunch together at least one time, most of them, more often than
that.

*Kitty:* One little girl, I warned her several times throughout the month, “If you do
not get busy, you are not going to be able to part of the picnic.” “Oh, yeah, I will
be fine. I will get it done.” Well, came time, today, today was the last day; and
she did not make it. *She just sobbed.* I had to say, “You made the choice. That
was your choice. You have to live with that choice.” Inside, I was thinking “Maybe, I could let her…” But, I cannot, I cannot. Another little boy, he did not even try.

Paul: I have got kids who now take the class, and the biggest thing they are worried about is whether or not they are going to get that A. Not what they have learned or what they can take away from it or how they can be better – But what do I have to do to get that A?

Bev and Kitty lived in a small-town bubble growing up. Even though they were both raised in cities, the neighborhood was their world. Their world centered in family, however fragmented, and school. A large part of their time was spent in curricular and extracurricular activities in which they both expected and wanted to shine. As an adult, Colleen still participates in summer camping. Paul traded his football for a paint brush which is his vocation and avocation. Roslyn’s life is a one-woman opportunity to study the history of civil rights in the United States. The particulars make the universal.

The individual quest for stars or As or the top reading groups continues in the person teaching in the classroom. The very public star chart has been replaced by the very public chocolate kiss or certificate or picnic/lunch with the teacher. The punishment/reward is wrapped in silver foil on a checkered tablecloth under the tree in front of the school. Kohn (1996) called this “repackaged punishment” (p. 39). The purpose of the chocolate kiss is as much who gets a kiss, with its lifeworld existentials of corporeality and relationality (van Manen, 1990), as who does not. “The goal remains
much deeper than buying a behavior” (Kohn, p. 70). The purpose is “to foster the appearance of participation in order to secure compliance” (p. 72). Conformity is coercion-by-Hershey. The Regressive Moment is remodeled and revitalized.

The Good Girl

*Bev:* Teachers loved me. Everybody in my class loved me. I was a friend to everybody. I was everybody’s buddy.

*Bev:* I never got swatted! My dad had always said that if I got swatted at school, when I got home, I was going to get it worse. So, there was no way that I was inviting that pain. I was not going there.

*Kitty:* There are pictures of the little dresses with the bow, the little short white socks, sometimes, saddle oxford shoes or black *Mary Janes*…You had to answer the teacher *Yes, Ma’am* and *No, Ma’am*. If you did not, she had a little ruler in her hand that she would crack you on the hand…You sat with your hands folded on your desk, when she was asking questions.

*Kitty:* I never got smacked. I was one of those good little kids who did not want to get in trouble. Plus, I knew the rule at my house was if I ever got in trouble at school, I would get in worse trouble at home.
Kitty: I think that was pretty much what most girls did at that time. I think women my age really have been pulled during our growing up years in that we grew up in the 1950s when it was very *June Cleaver* and *Ozzie and Harriet*. Yet, when we became of age, during Kent State (May 4, 1970) and the hippie time and women’s rights, there has been turmoil as far as emotionally how you behave. I was very submissive in the sense that if I was told to do that, I did that. It is not that way now that I am older, but I have really had to struggle with that over the years… I can picture the little girl in the white socks and saddle oxfords, and little skirt, and her little hair perfectly with the little bangs…Just following the rules…Always following the rules.

Kitty: When I was in high school, I had one teacher who was ahead of her time in that she wore slacks or if she wore a skirt. She wore big skirts to where she would sit up on the desk with her legs crossed and her big skirt over her legs. And I thought she was wonderful. I just thought she was the greatest. Most of the teachers that I had…It was the same traditional way. You went in. You sat in your little rows. You answered your questions. You took your test.

Kitty: I went to a major college…It was a big school, and there was a lot going on. There were military bases close by. My thinking started to change. I still was *The Good Girl* who did the right thing. To this day, I am *The Good Girl* who does the right thing. But, at least, it got my thinking going a little bit more, rather than totally submissive…I remember wearing jeans and a silly type shirt. We wore
those flowy Mexican-type shirts that were sort of gauzy. I had several of those. So, I wore that.

*Roslyn:* At the time, and again, with a child’s mind and having a reverence for school, I was told that when you go to school, you will learn what the teacher gives you. You will embrace it. You will master it. You will pass.

*Roslyn:* I do not remember questioning anything about history. That was still early enough where teachers were almost gods and goddesses. Whatever they dispensed, you felt that they were bequeathing you with this knowledge; and you did not question it. I do not know even of any White students who questioned teachers.

*Roslyn:* When I was…in about the fourth grade, I was chosen to be in the cafeteria, to read to the kindergarteners everyday, to work in the office, and I think that is what shaped me. They picked me for everything because…I was an A student. I was this little polite girl, so I was a natural choice. I was bouncing around the school. I guess my work was done. I knew that I got an A, so they just let me go around the school. Just think, I had only been there a few months.

It is the women who identified most clearly with *The Good Girl* syndrome who offered the most detailed descriptions of the women teachers who had played a pivotal role in their early lives. Bev’s teacher in the fourth and sixth grades, Miss Allen, had
been a NASA scientist. She had never married nor had children. Everything in her life went against the *June Cleaver* and *Harriet Nelson* images of the day. Miss Allen was a heavy-set lady who was not afraid to break into the third floor of the elementary school. The third floor was off-limits. It was not safe, but it was large. Bev’s class created the Middle Ages in that great space. They built Egyptian tombs and pyramids. They listened to Miss Allen read. It was their own secret place.

Kitty loved her second-grade teacher, Mrs. Bryan. She was a free spirit who wore long skirts. “She was just not your traditional person. She would speak her mind. It may not be the mind of everybody else, but she would speak her mind. Like I said, I just thought she was wonderful.” *The Good Girl* who portrayed herself with the perfect bangs loved the woman who refused the mold. In high school, a second teacher dared to sit on her desk with her long skirts draped about her. She was ahead of her time in fashion. She stepped out of the snare in which Kitty was caught.

Roslyn, a third *Good Girl*, remembered Miss Berry who taught World History. “She was young. She wore pink lipstick everyday. Frosted pink lipstick. I remember about her talking about things without using her book. She taught us without using her book.” “She had her legs crossed. She sat on top of the ventilator. She would say, ‘Um, interesting, interesting. Who would like to add to that?’”

The women who were always chosen, always succeeded, and always followed the rules remembered the women who accomplished their best in a different way. Kitty talked about her personal struggle to loose the bonds. Kitty still wants to fly freer and higher. Paul freed himself when he set down the pads and walked off the football field. He went looking for that which he had never experienced in parochial school. Colleen
has always been dangerous in the spring of the year. “And again, it must be something about spring; because I did it in spring again!” The Good Girl “has bonded text to class and caste, made it the emblem of authority, the sign of immortality, and a rebuke to the lively imagination” (Grumet, 1988, p. 131).

Women were not asked to create this moral responsibility of the family. Women were not asked to create this moral leadership in either the home or the school, but they were expected to be the medium through which the laws, rules, language, and order of the father, the principal, the employer were communicated to the child. Their own passivity was to provide the model of obedience for the young to emulate. The self-abnegation and submission to universal principles of morality, decorum, and beauty constrained teachers, as they had artists, from developing a style of practice with which they were personally identified and for which they felt personally responsible. (Grumet, 1988, p. 84)

The uniform of The Good Girl constrains. On my first morning as a teacher in an inner-city school, I saw a middle-school girl knock a middle-school boy out cold. As I stood there in my perfectly-matched yellow dress and canvas shoes, I hallucinated that I might have entered another world. I had not even known that girls fought. I found out otherwise quickly. They not only fought, they raced and jumped. They lifted and pushed. They yelled and demanded. They played soccer and ran races with and without the boys. They sweated through their team uniforms. The conforming shell that Bev, Kitty, Roslyn, and I wore had not had the opportunity to harden on these young girls.
Mr. Brucker’s Good Girl

In this telling, too, are vestiges of the ways in which those gendered conceptions of appropriate teaching and learning stances still manifest themselves in my educational work. I struggle still to voice my challenges to representations of curriculum that replicate normative and gendered constructions of knowledge and identities. But now I think that Mr. Brucker also struggled with what he seemed to perceive as artificial and gendered separations of our public and private knowledges about our selves, our worlds, and our relationships to one another…

But I was so embedded in my own already internalized gender role “good girl,” seeking approval and thus replicating his official choices, that I missed, for years, the discrepancies between Mr. Brucker’s official and unofficial enactments of curriculum and learning…John Brucker’s sixth-grade class provided me with a memory site for deconstruction of what, for years, I simply considered to be my own “natural” desires and interests as a young girl, a student, a teacher. But while I still wonder what he might think of this individual account of my sixth-grade year – and how he might construct his own stories of that year – I no longer need Mr. Brucker’s permission to tell this particular tale. (Miller, 2005, pp. 104-105)

Autobiographical Reflection

Sharing something of each other’s stories is a minimum essential for community (the more you know of someone’s story, the less possible it is to hate him or her), and yet we rarely do it in academic life. Perhaps we would do more of it if we
understood how it can help us to do our work better. By telling the stories of our great teachers, we can learn much about the shape of good teaching, and we may reconnect with the passions that led us to teach in the first place – passions long lost in the demands of daily life. (Palmer, 1993, *Great Teachers*, ¶2)

Besides the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement, the third descriptor of *The Regressive Moment* in the lives of these high-quality veteran urban teachers is the Vietnam War (1957-1975). My brother John fought in the Vietnam War. A fellow teacher, Bob, came back from the war and began drinking. Alcoholics Anonymous and the steadfast care of his wife and mother-in-law saved his life. He replaced alcohol with Habitat for Humanity. He sought penance for the houses/huts that he burned/torched in Vietnam.

Tall, dark, and handsome Dale (1947-1967), who sat in front of me in Plane Geometry, was killed as a young Marine shortly after arriving in South Vietnam. Dale had barely graduated from high school. Our teacher/assistant principal had modeled his teaching style after Mr. O’Neill (McCourt, 1996), master in the fourth class of a Catholic school in the slums of Ireland. Our geometry teacher threw erasers and chalk and even the textbook at Dale. Dale never knew his theorems, but he knew how to duck the objects that came his way in the classroom. When Dale ducked, I had to duck, too, or get beaned. Often, I was beaned. The state named a short stretch of highway after Dale. His name hangs on a big green sign by the McDonald’s.

This huge conflicted issue for the United States was absent/present in the curriculum. Teachers looking back on their own teachers in high school find silence or
freedom. The teachers who invited critical conversation are remembered with praising adjectives. Others recall no entry of the Vietnam War into the high school even in the absent face of death.

_Bev_: I graduated in 1969. The Vietnam War was coming on. People were concerned with bigger issues than poor kids and whether they were going on to school or not.

_Colleen_: I was arrested 11 times in Washington, DC, protesting the draft in front of Selective Service… Disturbing the peace. I really thought that that was what was going to happen, that we were going to be able to change the world, that we were going to make a change in this country… We never even went to jail most of the time. They would put us in the cruiser, drive us back to school. But once we were at Robert Francis Kennedy Stadium on the famous Mayday in 1972.

_Kitty_: Our class president lost his brother our senior year. That is as close as it hit us.

_Kitty_: My father was military. So, I am not sure how much of what I did was truly that I was quote/unquote a hippie, or that it was just that I knew that it would bug him. And so I would do some of these things… Yes, I had friends die and saw friends when they came back. They were never the same. From living by the Air Force base, I had friends who had been there. It was not pretty.
Roslyn: 1971. Those were some political years, because the Vietnam War was going on. And so, a couple of the most poignant things… The boy that I had a crush on, that I would die for, I remember that he had to go to the service… As soon as he got into college, Richard had to go. He could not stand it. He was working in a business office in Vietnam. I remember how that brought home to me what war meant. Here is this person that I had a crush on my entire junior and senior high school years. That brought Vietnam right to my face. That is when I started to think politically. That is when I became a politically-active person, because this was someone that I cared about. This was someone I knew who was in Vietnam. It was very eye-opening for me. It almost destroyed him.

We had marches. Yes, we did. We had marches. At that time, our high school had very politically-minded teachers. I know there is a big thing now about they are not supposed to share their political views, but I know they did. I know they did. I can name teachers. I know that we had lengthy discussions. I cannot remember how they said it, if they gave us like opinions or directives or just gave us the freedom to think… I know a couple of them just made us really think.

One female teacher did get us into political stuff… she made us think. For everything she taught us, she asked us what was the answer, and she let everybody answer. Everybody’s answer was different. She would just say Okay, and we felt so validated and intelligent… I think it was teachers like her that just gave us permission to think and to express ourselves and to have opinions. Teachers like her opened our minds to possibilities and to really analyze and
scrutinize things…There is no doubt that she expanded our minds… Teachers like her…There was a speech teacher, the German teacher, and the science teacher. I remember just talking with us and letting us talk, and I think that kind of environment… A lot of teachers across the board, not just social studies teacher.

Roslyn: That is a good question. I think about that often as I teach my students. I think about how restricted were they? I wonder how much of that was them, and how much were they confined to do. It felt like they had freedom. I do not know if they took it, but it felt like they had freedom. It felt like they had paths for us to choose. It felt like we had choices, not from the principals. I did not feel that from the principals. I felt like they wanted us to walk a very tight line. I never felt their influence in a personal way; but in the classrooms, the teachers were trying to give us a more global perspective. Not global like we mean it, today. Being in the 1960s and 1970s, I think they felt kind of revolutionary in their spirits; because how can you not be impacted from the world with the stuff that is going on in the world around you…The factual parts were in there. I remember that she gave us dates.

Roslyn: There was another history teacher who did not use books…I remember that she always had feeling in her instruction. There was always feeling, not necessarily opinion; but there was always feeling in her instruction. And there was another teacher also. It seemed that she was always talking from a world of
experience and not just a textbook. She always gave me that feeling that she had knowledge and wisdom.

Miller (2000) did not write a recipe for a soulful school, but he described conditions that “allow for the development of the soul” (p. 110). Two of the conditions are truth and authenticity.

When we live in an atmosphere where people are not telling the truth, integrity and community break down. In the 1960s, the term “credibility gap” appeared, particularly around the Vietnam War…We should recognize that we are imperfect human beings but also that our integrity comes from our ability to live authentic lives. (Miller, 2000, pp. 111-112)

Silence/Silencing surrounded the official K-12 experience of four of the five participants. Bev, who is always quick to recognize the tremendous load that the school administration and counselors carried in the pre-computer age in a large urban high school, found the effects of poverty but not the Vietnam War in her K-12 experience. The top 25 students went to college. The bottom of the class departed for the factories, and the middle, including Bev, muddled through to graduation. Vietnam was over there, not in here. Vietnam did not cross the lines of demarcation that surrounded the neighborhood school.

Kitty’s divorced father was in the military. Yet, she did not invest in the Vietnam War until she entered a large college. Even when her high school senior class president’s brother died in Vietnam, Southeast Asia stayed off school grounds. Kitty carried a sign, wore hippie clothes, and gently picketed during her college years. She knew men who
had served in Vietnam and returned painfully changed. She even knew men who had died in the Vietnam War, yet she was not sure if she picketed the war or her father. The lack of discussion precluded the development of an integrated system of body/mind, emotion, and spirit and left a mechanical focus as the expense of learning (Miller, 2000).

After high school, Colleen moved to Washington, DC. She “thought that that was what was going to happen, that we were going to be able to change the world, that we were going to make a change in this country” (Colleen). She took her discussion to the streets, to college, to the back of police cars, and to a think tank before she began to believe that “We are not going to change the world…This is not where good things happen” (Colleen). “That is where I really made up my mind that education was where it was going to happen” (Colleen). Colleen, the activist, took her activism back to the classroom.

Before the 2004 presidential election, America’s teachers were advised to leave their political paraphernalia and opinions at home. No buttons. No T-Shirts. No ball caps. No letters to the editor. Bumper stickers were allowed if they were affixed to cars in the faculty parking lot. Political displays were only allowed in social studies classrooms as part of an approved lesson plan on the electoral process. Most teachers ignored the election. As the results were announced over the Internet, teachers huddled near computers and whispered in the hallways.

The library has one large map of Iraq and one large map of the Middle East permanently displayed on the bulletin board by the circulation desk. Students point and say, “My brother is there.” “My mother is there.” The conversation is quiet and quick, tender and incomplete. Some students choose to study under the maps each day.
Roslyn’s teachers were politically-minded. Textbooks were put down. Their information entered into authentic and soulful conversation with teachers perched on ventilators saying *Okay* to answers that were different. Roslyn talked about freedom in the classroom. The students and the teachers talked about the world in the classroom. Students and teachers expressed their feelings. Students “felt so validated and intelligent” (Roslyn). The conversation was truthful, authentic, and “kind of revolutionary in their spirits” (Roslyn).

Roslyn continues the political style of her high school teachers, today. “There is no way that I cannot be political. I think in all fairness to students, I need to be political in a fashion that guides them, but not tells them how to think or live” (Roslyn). One of her favorite teachers in professional development advised her about the question of being political in the classroom.

Do not show them a good government. Do not say *Here is a good government*. Teach them the *standards* of what a good government is. Teach them the *standards* of what a good school is. Teach them the *standards* of what a good teacher is. Do not say *She is a good teacher. She is a bad teacher*. Teach them these are the things that you look for in good government. (Roslyn)

Following that advice and the example of her politically-minded high school teachers, Roslyn told her students, “You look for the truths, and you compare them in your mind; and you go right on” (Roslyn). She sounded very much like her teachers who responded *Okay* to different views of students who felt validated and intelligent.
The Progressive Moment

The pedagogical relation is always…a double intentional relation.

I care for this child – for who this child is

And for who this child may become. (van Manen, 1991, p. 74)

*The Progressive Moment* asks the researcher to ponder the future. This second moment encourages the educator to move out of a posture of gracious submission and “prepare for a future when the school is returned to us and we can teach, not manipulate for test scores” (Pinar, 2004, p. 127). In releasement, the researcher regards the future as fictional where one moves out of the present nightmare into fantasy or dream, even unto hallucination, as metaphorically extended by Pinar 30 years after the inception of the methodology. Pinar paid special attention to the presence of the cyborg in our midst whose voyeurism and penetration produces a cyberculture that is both universal and transparent offering distinction and standardization while eroding the differences between private and public. Cyborgs function not as “inanimate machines, but as enlivened, historically formative, and highly social actors. They are both laborers and boundary transgressors” (pp. 147-148). At the same time, owing to cyberculture, there is the possibility of complicated conversation, including new forms of resistance, across borders foreshadowing internationalization, the releasement of curriculum embedded in national cultures.

I cannot help notice that my child already lives in a world of the future – a world in which the question of what is good for a child is less clearly anchored than the way my parents viewed it, or from the way it was viewed by my parents’ parents.
While the family values of yesteryear were grounded and stabilized in some manner by the church, the community, or secular philosophies, present-day norms and values are much less circumscribed and less clearly actualized in daily life. In these contrasting values, we sense the difference that culture and history makes. (van Manen, 1991, p. 214)

In order to speak to the future, I used Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) knowledge landscape metaphor, because it involves “space, place, and time” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 4) as well as “moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions” (Connelly & Clandinin, p. 2). Teacher stories reflect the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place. These are two fundamentally different places for teachers.

The out-of-classroom place stories are sacred stories. These stories involve “knowledge funneled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers’ and children’s classroom lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 2). The cover story is also an out-of-classroom place story. It presents the teacher as expert. “Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25).

An in-classroom place story is a secret story. Teachers tell one another their stories of practice without scrutiny in secret places. “The lived stories are essentially secret ones” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, pp. 2-3). When the teacher leaves the classroom, the secret story often morphs into a cover story or disappears under a cover or a sacred story.
The participant teachers addressed two topics in referencing the future. The overriding out-of-the-classroom story was *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2002). The discussion included *Public Law 107-110* as well as its tentacles, handcuffs, strait-jackets, peepholes, enforcers, denials, refusals, and repercussions. The teachers derided the *Manifesto of the Cyberculture* as a sacred story told only when the door is locked and listening ears are absent. Their stories turned over fact for flow, restriction for hermeneutics, and dependence for autonomy. The participant teachers spend their days on a bridge trying to join body and text to object and absolute in a tableau of voyeurism.

The second major theme of *The Progressive Moment* was the parents. The first theme, *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2002), surrounded the school and marched in with directives on official paper and a billion worth/worthless labels to be affixed to the projected groups. The second theme was idle, absent, or distant in the homes, lives, and futures of the urban student, both large and small. One teacher lives in a failing neighborhood, like her students, and waits for help. She has no screens on her windows. She has locks on her windows. She has “a crack junkie living next door” (Colleen). At night, “the pimps are yelling at the hookers” (Colleen). She stays, because she loves her house, “I still feel like I am an anchor in the neighborhood” (Colleen).

A second teacher watched her school’s neighborhood slowly change over the decades. The blue-collar parent has been replaced by the no-collar, asleep, away, overcome, disinterested, unable parent. In inverse proportion, the fading family, absent or present, comes to school with the child through the capacity to cope with increasingly difficult work that mounds each day toward graduation. Roslyn noted, “What I taught this year in science was very hard. It was stuff that we had in high school...This is fifth
grade” (Roslyn). “My one friend used to teach fourth grade. Not too long ago, she brought some things in that we now teach in second grade, that she used to teach in fourth grade” (Kitty).

The “presence of an absence” (Grumet, 1988, p. xiii) in the classroom was the parent. Whether the parents did or did not fulfill their roles, the child is linked to the parent. One student wondered about her father’s seven children who lived in the southern part of the state. She only knew the six siblings who lived with her mother. One girl proclaimed that she had no father. She did not know his name. A student found his father on the Internet in the library during his freshman year. It was the first time he had ever seen a picture of him. The assistant principal invariably called a senior football player by his father’s name. The assistant principal had been the boy’s father’s football coach. The son looked just like the father. The son did not know his father.

The order/disorder, presence/absence of the parents wounded the children. Wounds of predictability/unpredictability, love/disregard, selfishness/unselfishness, and protection/abandonment pierced the children and entered the school. Children experienced violence that most people only read about in the newspapers. They lived on the two most dangerous streets in the city. They knew that which they should not and did not know that which they should. Often, their days at school did not match their days at home. They lived schizophrenic lives in small bodies while trying to keep up with the curricular metronome of standardization. Race, class, and gender set hurdles on the course that was predetermined and predictable.
At 1:11, arithmetic begins. Mr. Geoffrey’s introduction replicates his approach to language arts as he comments on the text’s publisher, author, and place of publication. Continuity with their book report format is also established…He tries to conclude, “All right, let’s learn a little bit,” but must squelch Susan’s giggle before he begins reading on page 4 at 1:21.

(Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 41)

It is raining slightly on a cold, damp, uncomfortable evening. I am on my way down to the Washington School for the annual fall open house. I have been told to expect very few people, especially if the weather is bad. The weather is bad… I have been told also that the parents will walk around with a bewildered look, not knowing what they are supposed to do. I was warned that the people will respond in a rather fearful manner for they are with others who they feel are from a higher social class than they. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 158)

Teachers intertwine today and tomorrow. Past events build into future situations (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). All the teachers wanted more help from home as the teaching/learning engine chugged ahead. “If I am telling you there is something wrong with your kid, basically, I am telling you that there is something wrong with you and the way that you raised them” (Bev). Talking to parents was a dilemma for the participant
teachers. In many cases, critical conversation meant talking about parenting which was a practically untouchable subject. Many parents, who had not been successful in school themselves, found *cover stories* replaced conversation in circumstances of unequal power. The truth was shared in *secret stories* out of the hearing of the parents.

*Secret Story*

*Tis: A Memoir*

Still, there was a confusion and darkness in my head and I had to understand what I was doing in this classroom or get out. If I had to stand before those five classes I couldn’t let days dribble by in the routing of high school grammar, spelling, vocabulary, digging for the deeper meaning in poetry, bits of literature doled out for the multiple choice tests that would follow so that universities can be supplied with the best and the brightest. I had to begin enjoying the act of teaching and the only way I could do that was to start over, teach what I loved and to hell with the curriculum. (McCourt, 1999, p. 340)

*Colleen:* I cannot believe that I have to go this many more years with all this stuff…I cannot endure it and that these kids are not going to be able to endure it.

*Colleen:* Your job is to educate those kids not to test them. How much education is being sacrificed in order to *measure* them? How can you measure them when you have not had time or chance to *teach* them? *That is wrong.* And they are only children, especially in elementary school. Are we more worried about they got a 68 on the test than the fact that they have not had
socks in two weeks? Or they have not had socks all year? Or their mom is sleeping with who knows what? Or that they sleep on the couch? They do not have a bed. Those kinds of things. I fear that in the future it is just going to continue. Again, that the individual needs of those kids are going to – Maslow’s Hierarchy of Basic Needs has gone by the wayside.

Roslyn: I was in the classroom when you got it that way, everybody got it that way. If you did not, turn the page, let’s go on anyway. There was not the overhead. There was not multi-sensory approach. No, there was one way... It is my feeling that there is nothing wrong with having children meet standards. That is not what is wrong. We know that children are not all the same kinds of learners. We have done enough research. We have all these ways that they learn. We have the seven styles of learning. There were seven. Then, there were nine. Now, there are 11. Why do we not stop trying to number them? And just say every child learns in his/her own way. Why do we not stop trying to put labels...

Cover Story

Bev: Also, our parents and our community are paying our salary. They have to feel good about what they are doing, and they have to respect the byproduct of their investment. I think that is all part of the performance art that we put on. I think that is true in any profession. If you were an accountant and you were working for a bank, you certainly measure your words when you go into meet with the big boss; because bottom line is he is the deciding factor as to whether you keep your job. It is part of that professional image that we keep. When we are
talking in the public – if we go back to that accountant, if for some reason he was held accountable and had to talk in public or to the newspaper, he is going to be very protective of his bank. We as teachers have to be very protective of our infrastructure of the schools.

Teachers assumed the role of expert in the *cover story* in this progressive look into the future. The *cover story* appeared most often in the absence of the parent, figuratively or literally. While the teachers were trying to help the children move forward in their learning, they often felt impeded consciously and subconsciously by the urban parent. The urban parent did not participate in the discussion of the future of education. Small problems, immediate crises, stilled existence, and silent cries filled the capacities of their lives.

*Bev:* The reality is many kids, not all, but many kids, live in dysfunctional families. Dysfunction is becoming the norm. I have parents who refuse to walk into a ceremony for their child. The parents actually induct their child in a very beautiful ceremony. It is an all-school ceremony. I have had parents who said, “No, I can’t walk into the auditorium, or into the gym, with my ex-spouse.” …I say, “No, you will need to walk in together for the sake of the kids.” I feel sorry for the student. They are in the middle of all this dysfunctional behavior. I have had parents who have refused to come. “Then, I will just sit out”…It is supposed to be beautiful. It is supposed to be the parents supporting the kids. This is what I am dealing with. Things have changed.
Colleen: General America does not live here. General America does not face those issues. They hear about it on the news, and they think we have metal detectors at school and stuff like that; but they do not know about the kid who comes with wet socks and no breakfast and no dinner last night. They are not going to eat all summer, now that school is out. That they are not going to eat now. They are going to have crap from the corner store, but they are not going to have a cooked meal. All summer. And they are probably not going to have breakfast. In the paper, they often talk about what can be done about urban teachers. I do not think that we are perceived well at all. I think we are perceived… Because our kids do not perform. They define us by those test scores. They say, “Those lazy teachers. They are not teaching those kids, because those kids get those low test scores.” Well, you take a test with no sleep and no socks! And no breakfast! And you mom was crying all night long about the Devil. And you get a high score! I dare you to be proficient!

Kitty: I am thinking, this is very minor, but the kids who come in reeking of cigarettes. I know it is not them. It is their parents. My kids are not smoking. It is the situation that they are in. I will be grading papers some days and this one paper will just reek of smoke. If the paper, after so many hours away from that source, still smells, the environment that those kids are in…The couch, the car… I do not say anything, but inside I am thinking, “Oh, gross. That is disgusting.” We do teach about not smoking. I teach that quitting smoking is very difficult; it is an addiction. Just trying to let them know… This one parent said to me one
time, “My kid is really on me about quitting smoking. I just cannot quit. I wish you would quit saying stuff.” I replied, “I do not say it over and over again. I say it during the week that we are learning about tobacco products. I do say that it is difficult to quit.” Hey, I am a former smoker… But it is so dangerous, and quit for crying out loud.

Paul: You are talking about a community that does not have a strong background. You are talking about a school that has no art background. You are talking about homes that have no art background. You are talking in such a way that the beauty that you see in looking at artwork, these kids have not experienced. They have not seen it.

Roslyn: So, I bring all of these numbers; because this is what I have been told to do. Bring the numbers...The father said, “I do not want to see it.” The father talked two hours about his life, the son’s life, and the mother’s life... They are saying to you, that they have such obstacles to overcome during the day. This father went on about the mother is in prison. He is working two jobs. He is sorry that the boy does not have more self-esteem. He accused the mother of having low self-esteem. That is why the son has low self-esteem... Suddenly, he lost his mind; and got irate. I thought he was going to attack me...Yes, and so he did not want to talk about at any numbers. I said, “Well, let’s look at his progress. He has really moved.” He said, “I will look at that another time. I am not interested in that.” I think what he wanted from that meeting was to hear that “You are still
doing an okay job. I like your son. We work to validate him and every other kid in the school every day”…That was an example of why we had to listen. We had to listen to why his mother was incarcerated. We had to listen to why… It was horrendous, because his voice rose about 20 decibels. I was afraid for my life for the first time.

Every participant talked about the parents and about their experiences talking to the parents who were the recipients of the cover story. There were limits in the sending and in the receiving. The cover story precluded critical conversation. Bev was concerned about how many hours her students worked after school. Her students ate junk food and worked too late. They fell asleep in class. They had no time for homework.

Bev: When you conference with a parent, the parents say, “Well, Johnny has to work.” Why does he have to work? “He has to pay for his car and his car insurance.” Why does he need the car? “So he can go to work.” There is a cycle here. How come I am seeing it, and the parents are not? The problem in the urban setting is that the parents are thrilled that their kids are working, and they can afford to have nice things. Johnny has a nice car. Johnny has an X-Box. Johnny has an iPod…but Johnny does not have time for homework.

Urban kids see what suburban kids have. They want the same things. The difference is the role of the parent. The suburban student is supported financially by the parents. Urban students pay their own way and are often obligated to help the family.
Bev came from a blue-collar home. She paid her own tuition to go to community college, “every penny of it” (Bev). Bev knew what it was like to provide for oneself financially while in high school and college. She wanted better for her students.

*Bev:* I worked my way through school. My parents did not give me 5¢ towards my college education. In fact, twice they borrowed my tuition from me and did not pay me back.

Kitty also put herself through college. She cobbled jobs together and had some student loans and small scholarships. She even received her own child support.

*Kitty:* My dad paid the money that he had given to my mother for child support to me. So that covered my rent… My father told me that I got that amount of money for four years. If I was not done in four years, I was on my own totally. So, I went to summer school. I graduated with over 160 hours, because I changed majors and schools, as well. Yes, I did finish in four years.

All the participant teachers wanted more help from homes of their students. They were not asking for great debates on *No Child Left Behind* (2002) or letters to the editor, the superintendent, or state/federal congressmen. They wanted the most basic help in order to enable and uplift the child’s learning.
Bev: So, when the kid gets Cs that is okay. “But he is working, and he is paying his own insurance, and he buys his own clothes.” Wow! But I am thinking, but he is getting Cs or Ds. “But he is passing!” is the response that I get.

Colleen: They know what the finger means. They know all this filthy stuff, but they do not know what cooked oatmeal is.

Kitty: And what about the little boy that maybe did not have breakfast. What is he thinking about that day? Now, I work really hard with the kids. I tell them right from the beginning, if you do not get breakfast, I will do everything that I can to get you breakfast. It is here. It is available to the kids. But I have a couple of kids that are invariably late, because mom did not get up on time over and over again. Not just once in a great moon, but over and over again. They do not get breakfast. I get them breakfast. I go down there. They give it to me. I have the kids sit in the back of the room, and they eat. But what about the kids who do not tell me? Maybe mom and dad had a fight before they came to school that day. You just have to work with what you have got right now.

Sacred Story

Bev: No Child Left Behind, ten years from now, we will say - Oh my gosh, we screwed up. We left kids behind. We will come back and say – You know what we need to do?
The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) is The Sacred Story. Everything pales in the shadow of the Great Cyborg that peers into every classroom and publishes its reports on scrolling marquees that circle the schools. The Cyborg delivers the papers. It collects the papers. It eats the papers. Its shell thickens and becomes more wooden. The Cyborg requires more and more paper to sustain its gigantesque form. Computer impulses animate the Cyborg, but it is the lead and paper combination carefully applied one stroke at a time by any sized hand that fuels its power.

Bev: I think that we are going to find that we leave kids behind, and they are the kids that we cannot afford to leave behind. They are the kids who are the potential dropouts. Not potential, they will be the dropouts. We are going to see an increase in that. I see it already happening in my classroom right now. Unfortunately, there are no factory jobs waiting for these kids. They are going to be in sad and sorry shape…I see that circle happening…

I think the government will continue to dip into our business. We have allowed it to happen. Everybody in government is suddenly an expert in education. Even Bush has made comments when teachers complained about No Child Left Behind. His attitude was we complained because we did not want to do the job; and if that was the case, we could just get rid of people like that. I am thinking…I am one of the complainers, and I like to think that I have been doing a pretty doggone good job for 31 years. I think that the government will continue to dip its fingers into our business, and there is money attached. So, educators
will continue to have to jump through the hoops to get the money to be able to continue to supply the services.

*Kitty:* If you look at all the information that a seven-year old brain is supposed to take in, in one year, if they can take in 60% of it, I am so happy. But developmentally, some of these little guys are not capable of taking it all in this year. Next year, maybe so.

*Paul:* How many years have we had that math has been a required subject for four years? Now, it is going to be science for maybe three, maybe four years, as though by offering it we are going to have more scientists. We are not. We are not going to have more mathematicians just by giving them an extra year. Some of these kids come to these schools, and the only chance that they have to express themselves is in the art classes. When the government comes through, that restricts them right there. You have counselors…I have a kid, my best art student, who was not given an art class, *not* for one of those classes, but he was given a typing class instead. It is like *Hello?* He said, “What do I want typing for?” Typing may be…I learned how to type when I was doing my graduate thesis. It was a necessity then. At this point now right now, if he really wants to go on to college and possibly get a scholarship or something like that, he should be in an art class.
Roslyn: I think what is going to happen… We are going to find out… We look at the child. We observe the child. We format how we teach… Right. We have all this information, now. We have been in this game a lot of years. And then, we format the measurement, the assessment to fit the child. Not the proficiency test!

Radio

Continuing the illustration of the life of Coach Harold Jones (Gains, Leibert, Robbins, & Tollin, 2003; Smith, 1996), where Jones had not acted as a boy bound in his conformity, he acted as the head football coach stepping through boundaries in a small South Carolina town. He stood, to the point of his position, for one who had been hidden from view, not just for the season but daily even through retirement. Jones hallucinated the possibilities of school replacing a history of exclusion with a contagious future of gathering, not only at T. L. Hanna High School in Anderson, but at Greer High School, Belton-Honea Path High School, Easley High School, and more.

The Analytic Moment

‘Tis: A Memoir

All I know of university classes is what I saw a long time ago in the movies in Limerick and here I am sitting in one, the History of Education in America, with Professor Maxine Green(e) [sic] up there on the platform telling us how the pilgrims educated their children. All around me are students scribbling away in their notebooks and I wish I knew what to scribble myself. How am I supposed to know what’s important out of all the things she’s saying up there? Am I supposed to remember everything? (McCourt, 1999, pp. 147-148)
Frank McCourt Took My First Class

They gave me a class to teach, believe it or not, my second year. One hundred and fifty people attended The History of Education at NYU. And that’s when I realized that it is really a challenging, exciting thing to do if you can move just one person to live with more wonder and curiosity and imagination in pursuit of meaning. That’s when I found out I was a teacher. I found out recently that Frank McCourt took my first class and actually felt affected by it. Remarkable! (Greene, 2005, p. 61)

In the third phase of currere, the researcher, biographer-autobiographer analyzes what has been learned in the first two phases with the present. Grumet (1976) suggested that what is present is “woven into the fabric of institutional life” (p. 59). One brackets “what is, what was, what can be” (p. 60) in order to lose oneself to study “the three photographs: past, present, future” (p. 60) carefully listening to the intuitive as well as the cognitive.

Curriculum ceases to be a thing, and it is more than a process.

It becomes a verb…a social practice, a private meaning, and a public hope.

Curriculum is not just the site of our labor,

It becomes the product of our labor,

Changing as we are changed by it.

(Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 848)

The Analytic Moment is the occasion to study the troubled, arranged marriage of curriculum practice in American education which Pinar (2004) described as
intellectualism and institutionalism. Institutionalism ordains jargon, hurdles, careerism, the what, the business of school, the factory metaphor, the social engineering game, colonialism, segregation, vocationalism, etc. Intellectualism urges opportunity, the how, fits and starts, raised voices and calmed silences, accord and discord, the freedom to assault subjugation privately/publicly, etc. Currere, curriculum as complicated conversation, wrestles with the divorce between school curriculum and public life through embedded conditions appreciating that ultimately, “the educational point of the public school curriculum is understanding” (p. 187).

Radio

In the subtitle of the *Sports Illustrated* article about Coach Jones and James Robert “Radio” Kennedy, Smith (1996) highlighted the man who had been marginalized. Many reported that Jones had saved Radio’s life. Analysis through currere, as an active method, would find that Radio saved Jones’ life. Each boundary release freed the other. Institutional boundaries were replaced with the intention of education. A 50-year old man remains in the 11th grade, so that he will not have to graduate. The individual revolutionizes the collective. Even after retirement, Coach Jones continues to take Radio on family trips throughout the year, especially in the summer which wanes so long for Radio. Their relationship endorses autobiography as it “enlarges and complicates the telling subject, and the listening subject” (Pinar, 1994, p. 218). Theory is practice.

*The Analytic Moment* is now. I met the participant teachers at the close of the school year. When engaging in critical conversation with the best teachers, it became
apparent rather quickly, that there is no close to the school year. There is only a pause to reflect before children fill the rooms again to regain the temporality, spatiality, corporeality and relationality (van Manen, 1990) of the children who occupied that space with the teacher before them. One elementary teacher was not really packing away her many supplies. She was washing, sorting, and repackaging materials for the next class. She was scrubbing reading rugs for the next group of children. She threw away the overused and dilapidated and returned in the weeks after the close of school with a new reading rug, sorting bags, etc. for the next class.

School did not stop; it hesitated. Teaching did not stop. Plans were revisited and revised while teachers were filling bins and vacuuming Teddy bears. Plastic crates dried on driveways for return to school to hold newly-sorted free-reading books. In late spring, a high school teacher took advantage of the time while the student teacher taught to organize her assembly files for next year. She made telephone calls and typed ideas for student-directed assemblies in the early fall. The art teacher never put away anything. Easels bearing canvases still stood in his huge room. Art supplies covered the tables and vents and dribbled down to the floor. A few students did not notice that school was over and continued to wander in to art class to work on their craft with the artist-in-residence.

Most importantly, the unresolved remained unsettled. One small sentence in the hundreds of pages of gathered data troubled me: “Another little boy, he did not even try” (Kitty). Kitty’s regret for the little girl who sobbed was evident. The link remained. Kitty knew the little girl had a supportive family who would have listened to her read. That family would have initialed the reading log, if the work had been completed.
Despite the teacher’s regret and in the face of the observing eyes of the rest of the class, the little girl was excluded from the picnic on the front lawn of the school.

“No matter how well I have planned my lesson or how enthusiastic I am about the subject matter, the interactive situation in the classroom is such that I must constantly remain aware of how it is for the kids” (van Manen, 1991, p. 116). In the practice of pedagogical tact, there is a reflection on action. Practical theorizing can be found in the “telling and retelling of anecdotes” (p. 116). We make sense of our experiences by “bringing these experiences into speech” (p. 116). In Kitty’s story, her focus was on the little girl. My focus was on the little boy who “did not even try” (Kitty)? What were his circumstances? Who would initial his reading log? Did he want to go to the picnic?

Layers in and around an urban school are thick and muddy. Bev worried about the students that we are leaving behind in her high school. She observed the bodies disappear throughout the school year. Paul watched his prize-winning art student refuse a college scholarship. She “turned it down because she had a chance to become the manager of the pizza parlor” (Paul). Roslyn ruminated about Alyce who could not/would not turn around and listen to the people from downtown who had come to the school to present the new lunch identification program. “I do not know why I have to do all of that!” (Alyce to Roslyn) Alyce created a very loud scene and had to be placed in the hall. In the little boy, the dropout, the artist, and Alyce, there is the presence of an absence.

“I’m Pursuing Something I Haven’t Caught Yet”

Society bears down so hard on the helpless and does so little for people who are poor and/or come from different places and are made to feel so unwelcome. One
of the challenges is that it is a very unfair and unjust society that hasn’t realized the promise of democracy. It is very hard for teachers to do much about that.

The challenges in schools are, How do you help the children learn to engage with disciplines with a sense of urgency? How do you bring art into the school? Those are educational challenges, but I think we are continually wounded by what lies around us. If the society was more child-oriented and cared more about children, it wouldn’t be so tough. (Greene, 2005, p. 62)

“It is the values part that I want to stress. In No Child Left Behind, I never heard them say anything about appreciating the child” (Roslyn). The relationship of the little boy who “did not even try” (Kitty) to the teacher and the curriculum is found in the lifeworld existentials of the classroom (Greene, 2005; van Manen, 1990). “Appreciating the child” (Roslyn) invites/requires the body and mind into the classroom. Greene advised us to “awaken people” (p. 64) and help “people find their way” (p. 64). Hence, the life world, Lebenswelt, through phenomenological research “offers accounts of experienced space, time, body, and human relation as we live them” (van Manen, p. 184).

“All phenomenological human science research efforts are really explorations into the structure of the human lifeworld, the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations” (van Manen, 1990, p. 101). There are four fundamental existentials:

1. Lived space (spatiality) is felt space.

2. Lived body (corporeality) refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world.
3. Lived time (*temporality*) is subject time as opposed to clock time or objective time.

4. Lived other (*relationality*) is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them. (van Manen, 1990, pp. 103-104)

*Spatiality*

A teacher recently moved from a suburban school, where family support is strong and positive, to an inner-city school where for many children there is little parental support. The teacher is soon touched by the affection she receives from the children at the inner-city school. Every morning some kids come early and wait for her to arrive. They are smiling and waving as she drives up, opening her car door. Then they walk with her, carry her things, and accompany her to the classroom where they just hang around, talking, asking questions, and generally enjoying the chat. After school, too, the teacher has great difficulty getting various students to leave and go home. Do these inner-city kids just enjoy school so much more than the children she used to teach? After a few weeks the teacher realizes the answer. For so many of these children life at home is chaotic and frequently marked by violence, abuse, and neglect. At home there is really nobody to talk to. And many children basically learn to “grow up fast” and fend for themselves. Often the school is the only stable support in their young lives. This school and this teacher whom the children feel close to provide them with some sense of stability, steadfastness, reliability, and general support that they miss elsewhere in their lives. (van Manen, 1991, p. 58)
Paul: Two students were interested in submitting portfolios for a summer program at School of the Arts. They asked if they could do a summer program with me and develop a portfolio. So, we worked at it several weeks together. It is funny, because at first I thought, “Portfolio. That means you guys go up, do what you want, what interests you, and talk to me about what you want to do; and I will be here to advise.” I realized very quickly that these kids… Yes, they needed direction. So we ended up just doing different… We worked from a model. Then, we worked from the window – to do landscape. Did several projects, but they were all very similar projects.

Anyway… they took their portfolios down. Each of the girls, and this is a good thing, each of them would give them to a different judge. There were two judges down there. The one girl’s portfolio was accepted and received a scholarship to the summer program. The other girl did not. The girl, who did not, a very talented young lady, never even took another art class. She said, “I do not have it.” She just dropped it. The other one went on and got a scholarship to a school of design. Went on to work with a popular clothing designer. I am just going, “My God, what would have happened if their portfolios would have gone in different piles?”

Paul: I think for me, I went in knowing that I had probably a lot to learn. I think that for her, she saw it more as a rejection. She had put her best work forward; and at that point, it had been rejected. She felt, I think, that if her best work, at
that point, was not accepted as of a quality high enough to be accepted into that program, “I must not be that good.”

Paul entered a college that did not offer him an athletic scholarship. He entered with little more than an elementary school education in art. Paul’s parochial school education did not value the arts. All through secondary school, art education was incomplete or absent. Yet, Paul knew instinctively that he belonged in Art Space. With no approving word “because of the fact that I really had not had any training at all or any guidance” (Paul), Paul enrolled in art classes at college

Paul: It was just straight Cs. It was a matter of getting Cs and Cs and saying, “Can you tell me why,” and understanding why - where I had to go. Oftentimes, I would get a C and go sign right back up for the same teacher and I would just say, “Okay, now I understand where you are coming from…”

“Pedagogical perceptiveness relies in part on a tacit, intuitive knowledge that the teacher may learn from personal experience, or through apprenticeship with a more experienced teacher” (van Manen, 1991, p. 208). Paul always believed that it was “good to have people look at your work and discuss your work” (Paul). He would take the professor’s critical remarks and move forward. When he began his art work at college, Paul knew that he lagged behind his classmates. He did not reenroll with the same professor in order to get another C. He expected to improve based on his better
understanding. He asked the professors to explain why his work had been evaluated as average. Paul took the why back to his craft and matured in the artistic world.

For the two art students who submitted their portfolios with such disparate reviews, the experiences were as different as the reviews. The successful artist used the excellent reviews to gain an education and employment. The second artist whose work was not received well walked away.

*Paul:* I went back to the same school the following year. We worked on developing the one’s portfolio, while the other one was not taking any art classes anymore. Her mother who was an assistant principal let me know why. She said, “She just kind of folded it up.”

Van Manen (1990) concluded that “we become the space we are in” (p. 102). The lived space, in this case, *Art Space,* “is a category for inquiring into the ways we experience the affairs of our day to day existence; in addition it helps us uncover more fundamental meaning dimensions of lived life” (p. 103). One student moved into *Art Space* and became an accomplished designer. One student declined *Art Space* and entered a pizza parlor. A third student could not even look at *Art Space.* She folded up her easel and put it in the locker with her teacher’s necktie and jacket. She rejected that which had rejected her. Unlike her teacher who kept coming back for more, the rejection was enough. She did not stop to ask why. “I do not have it” (Paul). She took her talent and removed it and herself from *Art Space.*
Corporeality

Corporeality “refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). “To be tactful is to ‘touch’ someone” (van Manen, 1991, p. 142). We touch someone physically, spiritually, pedagogically, personally, etc. We use words and gestures, action and silence. Tact involves our total being whether it is student or teacher. Roslyn talked about tact in three different situations. She described her tactful touch in holding very young children on her lap. Then, she talked about caring for her own being in the practice of teaching.

Your Lap Is Your Curriculum.

Roslyn: That is what you do. You take your lap. Your lap is your curriculum. They come, and they are on your lap. That is where you nurture them, and you tell them why you are here… I was still almost into the bottle and the diaper. My first job was in a preschool. We were doing potty and nap and graham crackers.

I Have Given Too Much This Year.

Roslyn: I have given too much this year. I have given too much… I have got to get my blood pressure numbers down. I felt bad saying that I have given too much this year. I have given too much mentally, physically, and spiritually. I am not saying that I was not supposed to, but I was supposed to give that much; but it has simply taken a toll on me.
Roslyn: And so, I am going to work smarter next year. Do a lot of stuff in advance, and a lot of stuff along the way; because I cannot, nobody, no teacher, no janitor, no cab driver, should give their life for their career. We know about being a martyr. There have been martyrs throughout time, but the greatest martyr should not sacrifice for more than self. So, if I am going all this great work, then I need to preserve myself in order that I can continue this great work. And I believe that I am doing great work. But if I perish in the midst, I do not think anybody can do it like me, so I need to stay here and continue my work.

Roslyn: Yes, martyrdom is not an option for me. I have decided that. I want to be there at the finish line victorious; but if I cannot be, I want to finish. I want to place. I do not have to win, but I do want to finish.

Roslyn talked about preserving herself in the presence of the angry parent at parent-teacher conferences. “For a child to grow up and explore the world in the context of security means that the child feels protected by the love and care of some adult(s)” (van Manen, 1991, p. 57). Parents enter the school, wearing their own life histories and school experiences or lack thereof, to aid or abet life in the school. The presence of unequal power in the educational environment is a threat to some and silences other entrants into the curricular world of the child outside of their control. Tensions and contradictions ebb and flow in the balance of freedom and control.
In the Deep Heart’s Core

Some kids stay with their grandmothers because their mothers work the 6 P.M. to 4 A.M. shift sewing underwear at Fruit of the Loom and don’t want their children to be home alone all night. Some kids move to stay with their aunt because their mother’s boyfriend is growing more abusive, and although she lacks the strength to part with him, she has the good sense to know that it is no place for a child. Some children stay with aunts or grandmothers simply because their mothers can’t find work and the extra mouths are too many to fed right then. And still others stay with Grandma or auntie because Mother has passed away or is having a bout with drugs, Dad is in prison, or Mom just couldn’t take the burden of three little kids around the house all the time. This rootlessness is not a trivial complication in the life of an adolescent. It makes the otherwise difficult tasks of teaching adolescents responsibility almost superhuman. (Johnston, 2002, p. 156)

I Held My Peace In; But Afterwards, I Collapsed.

A meeting with an angry mother in the principal’s office:

Roslyn: I knew at that point, to preserve Rita and my blood pressure, I had to go.

A meeting with an angry father in the principal’s office:

Roslyn: I held my peace in; but afterwards, I collapsed. I collapsed in a puddle of tears, and I am pretty strong. I think it is because part of it was frustration.

Violence in school comes in many forms. There are pitched words, thrown fists, and crushed spirits among students and faculty in a building that itself has suffered
vandalism. The stories of violence in school are real. They are the stories that I keep most secret. Prurient ears scan our stories too quickly with superior and negligent summations. Their retorts are quick and cold and often fixed. The corporeality of the student is replaced with the deficient judgment of the outsider. Too often the violence does not happen in school but walks into school with the child. In this fourth narrative, some of the painfully violent layers of two boys’ lives, Pete and Walt G., are exposed when their mothers come to school for parent-teacher conferences.

The Nonworker: Troubled and Troublesome

9:32 September 16

Pete enters with his mother for a conference. Geoffrey very directly lays it on the line. “He’s done absolutely nothing for me. I know he’s behind.” He explains the paper-tearing episodes. Rules are rules which he illustrates with a traffic example. Pete feels that they don’t apply. Gives Pete a chance to talk, but doesn’t let him after the circumstances about Pete’s error in doing an arithmetic assignment during a history lesson prior to the paper-tearing episode. Mother explains part of the history of the problem: parochial school, working schedules of mother, other family problems, and father’s sickness. Mother enters into discussion of glasses, and so forth. Geoffrey explains the fact that Pete was promoted because of age, but that he gets no special privileges. Geoffrey explains that he has not pressured Pete, even when he doesn’t know the answers. However, Geoffrey states that Pete must do what he can and he must behave.
Geoffrey asks the Mother if that is too much... He raises question with Pete if “that’s not too much.” Pete agrees it is not. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 62)

9:43 September 16

...The mother is concerned about future schooling. She realizes that he “plays hooky.” (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 63)

9:48 September 16

...Afterward Geoffrey comments to me [Smith] that Pete’s father has been in and out of the home and now is gone. The father threw lye in the boy’s face a year-and-a-half ago and Pete has had eye troubles ever since. Apparently it occurred on purpose. The father allegedly cheated the boy of some summer work money, also. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 63)

When Mr. Geoffrey, Pete’s mother, and Pete met in the classroom for a conference, currere was at the top of the agenda. Mr. Geoffrey systematically began the stripping away toward intention in which understanding is centered (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Pete’s mother inserted the family’s autobiographic information excluding a horror-filled image of the tortured homefront. After assessing The Regressive Moment, Mr. Geoffrey confronts Pete in The Analytic Moment, “That’s not too much? (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 62)” Pete’s mother moves toward The Progressive Moment. Despite the continuing problems that have always accompanied Pete to school, she “is concerned about future schooling” (p. 63). She has not abandoned hope for her son. The problem in
this parent-teacher conference and so many like it is that *The Synthetical Moment* is not reached. *L’Essence* is not received. The mighty force of the violent father embodies the presence of an absence (Grumet, 1988). Here in the absence of thinking, there is no assignation of sacred and horror (Arendt, 1964, 1971). “Darkness and light” (Grumet, p. xiii), unnamed and unrecognized, stalk the classroom to “belly, whimper, and song” (p. xiii). Nothing was resolved on September 16. The presence of an absence maintains its seat in Mr. Geoffrey’s classroom.

One of the participant teachers also recalled violence problems in the home. “My mom, that was just her way of dealing with everything. She was always hitting, slapping, pulling hair. She was always doing something. That was her thing” (Bev). Bev’s father, a first-generation American, “ruled with an iron fist, literally” (Bev). With too many children and too little money, the strain showed in the family even into Bev’s young adult years. Like Bev, Kitty paid her way through college. She did not receive tuition from her military father. She received the exact amount of child support that would have gone to her mother. The fatherly role was supplanted by the legal role. The tactful balance of freedom and control was unsteady.

*The Mental Health Problem*

*December 17*

Another issue that arose concerned the father’s treatment of the boy, apparently just the night before last. Geoffrey had originally thought that the father’s punishment was a result of the kid’s skipping school, but apparently this was not so. As Geoffrey informed me yesterday afternoon as we were going out, the
father had told the boy that he could sell his sled so the boy sold the sled, gave one of the two dollars he obtained to his mother and spent the other dollar. The father, apparently for this reason, whipped him severely…Geoffrey commented to me [Smith] that the boy had welts and bruises all over his back. He later demonstrated this to me when Walt [G.] came up to class shortly before recess to stay in the room because “my back is sore.” Geoffrey told him he wanted to see his back again and very artfully turned the boy toward the wall, away from me, where I was sitting across the room, and took another look. In that way, I got a clear view of the boy’s back. I saw approximately one-half of the back from the waist, half-way up to the shoulder. Half of this area looked like a combination of broad, inch-and-a-half wide welts on a background of black-and-blue bruised areas. These welts and bruises were on the lower half of his back; presumably the top half was worse than this lower half. While my experience with bruises has not been wide, it was clearly the worst case I have ever seen. I don’t have more details on what precipitated it, nor on the circumstances at the time the beating occurred. For instance, was the father drunk?

The basic point I would make concerns the issue of involving the parent in the problems of the child. With a number of the children, and how large this number is is not clear, there may be physical repercussions if you pressure the parents to take a more active and involved role with the kids. When you pressure them, you in fact frustrate them, and this can instigate aggressive behavior…

As I have talked with a few of the kids, they have commented that when they do things wrong or bring home a poor report card, they are due for a
whipping from their fathers. Just what the frequency of this behavior is, I don’t
know. Yes, I can remember kids like Irma, Esther, and Walt G. who have told me
this explicitly.

It is important to remember that all of these kids are at least twelve years
old and some of them range on up to fifteen. Just when this whipping stage, if it
might be called that, passes is an interesting question, also. It may well be that it
goes on until the child is old enough to leave the home, either by running away or
going elsewhere to live, or until the child is big enough to retaliate in kind and
curbs it through the fear the parent has. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, pp. 212-213)

The participants worried about their students. All of them tried to make their
classrooms “a place for safe dwelling” (van Manen, 1991, p. 57). These high-quality
teachers sought to “surround the child with intimacy, the relation of closeness wherein
their presence is felt in a protective way, make available space and ground for being”
(p. 57). The teachers told stories that could only be told to another high-quality veteran
teacher. They were the secret stories within the secret stories. Again, violence
maintained control. The Synthetical Moment remained without the classroom door.
Violence was resolved by flight or more violence. Both conditions survived in the
presence of an absence (Grumet, 1988) both metaphorically and literally in school. The
conception of trace and absence is embodied in story as a firmament of stars in which the
spaces between the stars are as crucial as the stars themselves Derrida’s (1981). The
traces on Walt G.’s back are the traces between the stars. When they fade, they persist.

One teacher recalled a student who found his way to her home.
Bev: The very first one was a young man named Keith. He was one of my ninth-grade boys, and he lived at the Children’s Home...He had a scar on his face that was a corner and notch of a belt. He actually had a scar on his face where you could see the notch and the corner of the belt where his dad had hit him with the belt buckle. His mother had died. His father was an alcoholic and very, very abusive. He would tie Keith up with his two brothers. When the boys would complain about his drinking, or whatever, he would pour beer on them and then make them go to school that way; because they had mocked him, he said. Finally, Children’s Services took the kids away and put them in the Children’s Home.

Meanwhile, Dad marries. Keith now has a stepmother. The father wants the boys back. Now, he has a wife and everything will be well. So, the boys come back. The stepmother does not like Keith. She can tolerate the two younger boys, but she does not like Keith. So, Keith becomes abused not only by dad, but by stepmom. Then, dad dies. The stepmother remarries. Now, there is a stepmother and a stepfather. Keith is kicked out. That was the worst story. I was just so upset by all this. I was having nightmares at night.

Keith ran away from the Children’s Home. They called me and said, “We have a runaway. Have you seen him? He talked kindly of you.” I went out to my car to get something. Out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw him. I thought – Oh, certainly not! Here he had run away and walked all the way to the suburbs to where we were living. He knocked at the door. I said, “Oh, my gosh, Keith, they are looking for you. Honey, you have got to go back.” He said, “I don’t want to go back. I don’t want to go back. Why can't I just stay with you?”
“Pedagogical tact is an expression of the responsibility with which we are charged in protecting, educating and helping children grow” (van Manen, 1991, p. 128). When you experience the stories of Terryle, Pete, Walt G., Keith, and so many others, it is difficult to know which layer to address first. The embodied scenario is always new and shocking. These participant teachers brought long practices of pedagogical thoughtfulness into the action of pedagogical tact, hope, and love with the child. In these extremely complex situations that do not fit into four-word educational mottos, “we were living the best answer we could find” (Johnston, 2002, p. 16).

Temporality

When September rolls around and all the little “nobodies” get on the yellow buses to go “nowhere,” we induct them into the “common culture.” It is within the rationalization of the common culture that the content and decision-making processes of the curriculum have been combined to exclude the influence of the family from the classroom. What the common culture usually embraces is any culture other than the one lived by the children in that classroom. Because the common culture is always anywhere other than this world, its curriculum rarely speaks to a world children know, a world accessible to their understanding and action. It is a curriculum that controls through mystification, encouraging placid passivity. (Grumet, 1988, pp. 171-172)

My Father Was a Coal Miner

When I was 5, my family migrated out of eastern Kentucky where my father was a coal miner. When I went to school, the first thing I learned was that it was not
good to be who I was – a hillbilly out of place and out of step with city culture. My parents were sacrificing greatly to move there because they hated every minute away from our Kentucky home. It wasn’t where we belonged. But it was where the opportunities were, and my parents were very big on the importance of education even though they themselves didn’t have much. My father was just marginally able to read and my mother only went to sixth grade; but it was the American dream to them – for us to get a good education and have opportunities not available to them. My parents thought very little of themselves their whole lives; their dreams were not for themselves but for us.

So they had made a great sacrifice. I knew it, but I also knew I was out of place. What the school told me in very direct ways, really, was that being who I was, being from where I was from, and being the child I was, was not good. I needed to become Jane in *Dick and Jane*. My house needed neat rows of flowers, my father needed to wear a suit and carry a briefcase, and my mother needed to wear an apron, not work in a fireworks factory.

I got the message. And since it was so important to my parents that we get an education, to have choices they never had – I gave up who I was. So for a long time I would deny I was from eastern Kentucky. And I worked hard to get rid of my accent. Looking back on it, I see the school’s message to me was that the more I learned to act like the middle-class White people in our books, the more highly my intellectual skills would be appraised…

In my growing up, all of my education was about changing me and separating me from my culture and from my true community. When I started
teaching, I couldn’t verbalize what had happened to me. I didn’t know it all yet; it unfolded over my adulthood. (Starnes, 2005, pp. 92-93)

When Roslyn became a teacher, *The Regressive Moment* of her childhood accompanied her. “I think as adults, we do not understand our childhood until we are adults. We do not have a perspective as a child. We just know that we are alive” (Roslyn). In reflecting on her long teaching practice overflowing with pedagogical tact, she wonders “if I am doing this because of what a teacher said to me or did for me. I think a lot about that” (Roslyn). “If I cannot hear the undertones of the inner life in the child’s speaking then I cannot produce tactful speech myself” (van Manen, 1991, p. 173). Roslyn looks at her elementary students and asks “where the child is coming from in her 9-year old life. In his 6-year old life, what is he bringing to the teacher? What is he bringing?”(Roslyn) She studies the child not to fit him into a mold, especially a *Dick and Jane* mold, but to learn from the child’s experience.

Bobby Ann was indirectly invited to close the diary on her mountain life and open a new travelogue on denying attachment (Grumet, 1988). Like Ursula at Brinsley Street School, she left her person outside the school. The student entered to learn the approved curriculum. The official curriculum was a noun. Its verbs were “sort, stratify, categorize, and identify” (p. 171). The new Bobby Ann had no accent.

Colleen also looked back to the conforming structures of her schools. “Did *Dick and Jane* match anybody except White middle-class?” (Colleen). Although Colleen had moved “from the dark into the light” (Colleen) when she was removed/expelled from her parochial school, the private and public schools were similar in some ways. “No, it was
still White middle-class – just no tuition was paid. It was still middle-class, but there were no Black kids walking on the same street” (Colleen). Both schools looked like *Dick and Jane*. “I never knew anybody who worked in a factory or produced anything. I never knew anybody who was a farmer. I did not know anybody who did anything” (Colleen). Nobody’s father was a coal miner.

Bev went to school with shattered teeth, *Toni Home Perms*, and large pink school glasses. She was very, very thin. “Very, very thin was not attractive then” (Bev). “I looked horrible!” (Bev). “I would always do a lot of things for the teachers’ recognition, but not for my classmates, for fear, that they would make fun or me – or whatever” (Bev). Like Bobby Ann and Colleen, Bev changed schools.

*Bev:* In my senior year we opened a brand new building. It as a wonderful change, in that we had this brand new building, brand new opportunities, lots and lots of clubs. New group of kids. Because now high school brought in another junior high school, so I was now among a whole new group of kids that really didn’t know my past or anything else about me. I was fresh. I could reinvent myself. Boy, did I. I went in immediately with a charge, that I was going to do good things at the school; and I was going to get active… Immediately, a lot of my really good friends became the new kids; because they weren’t doing the judgment of poverty, or anything like that. They really didn’t know where I was coming from. So, that was kind of nice. I got involved in every kind of school activity you can imagine.
In his research Jackson (1968/1990) concluded that “a distinguishing feature of the elementary teacher’s missionary work is, of course, the age of its beneficiaries” (p. 134). The teacher is very aware that “she helps them at the most crucial time of their lives – when they are young” (p. 134). *The Regressive Moment* also plays a present role in the teacher’s life. Bev, Colleen, and Bobby Ann released themselves from “intimidation, domination, and the authoritarian exercise of power” (van Manen, 1991, p. 159). Within their own immature powers, they stepped from “from the dark into the light” (Colleen). The stultifying situations of their youths were temporal. Lifeworld existentials do not evaporate over the years. *Curricular* moments are not bound and segmented. Temporal instances linger in *The Regressive Moment*, *The Progressive Moment*, *The Analytic Moment* and *The Synthetical Moment*.

**Relationality**

If one teaches in this slum school, one finds the sensational, the difficult, the exciting, and the satisfying. We would hypothesize that most schools in lower socioeconomic areas will have similar children. Behind the slogans of wars-on-poverty and the sensational accounts that creep into the newspapers are the day-to-day struggles-in-conflict that face the classroom teacher…

How much of the children’s behavior and personality, are shaped by the school and the teacher who have bureaucratic and short-term demands, and how much of the children’s behavior and personality are shaped by broader social conditions of poverty and by the more intimate interactions of family life, we do not know. Nonetheless, this is how we found the culturally deprived child in school and classroom. (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 227)
The story of the urban child in relation to parent and community is an exemplar of the strata that surrounds and infiltrates the school. The story is not simple. It is profound. What is said is as important as what is not said in the measured passage of the school year. It is the end of summer. Suburban families are heading to Target and OfficeMax lists in hand making sure that their children are ready for the first day of school. Checkmarks trace the careful shopping. *Let’s see, you need a scientific calculator, but you need an elementary calculator.* Other children will not go to the store for school supplies. The veil between the urban child and school will confuse the path to the curriculum.

*It’s a Big Mess.*

During a summer sleepover for three middle-school boys, there was a scalding prank. The host poured microwaved water on the back of the guest who fell asleep first. The second guest interceded in the assault only to have the boiling water splash all over his face. After making a few stops, “including stopping to get gas” (Miller, August 10, 2005, p. B5), the host’s mother drove the two young guests to their homes and dropped them off. At 4 a.m., one boy’s mother answered a knock at the door. On seeing her son’s burned face, she called 911. At nearly 5 a.m., the second burned boy was not so lucky. After her son awakened her, his mother never looked at his back. The mother said that she had been unable to understand what had happened and would get her son help later in the morning. “My car wasn’t running. My cell phone wasn’t working, and I don’t have a home phone” (Miller, August 10, 2005, p. B5).

The last time her family had asked to use the neighbor’s phone in the middle of the night to call 911 – when she had a diabetic episode – they were told to never
ask to use the phone again. So it was her plan to go to another neighbor’s home to get help later in the morning. (Miller, August 10, 2005, p. B5)

“It’s a big mess. Now Children’s Services has gotten involved. They want to know why it took so long for my son to get to the hospital” (Miller, August 10, 2005, p. B5). After hearing the story of the boy with the scalded face, police sent a second ambulance to the home of the boy with the burned back. Both boys suffered second-degree burns and were taken to the hospital. The mother of seven children who stayed in bed has been charged with “child endangering for not seeking medical attention for her son” (Miller, August 11, 2005, p. B4). The boy who microwaved the water and threw it on his two friends is charged with delinquency by reason of felonious assault. He is locked in the county juvenile detention center.

This is not a single incident. This is a complex embodiment of trace and absence (Derrida, 1981). The experience is a tiny portion of a firmament of stars of that which is seen and that which is unseen. In the relational space there are visible players: Children’s Services, paramedics, police, mothers, boys, the court, the detention center, etc. There are invisible players: pain, fear, poverty, loss, devastation, the opening of school, absences from school, etc. There are actors who refuse to participate: fathers, neighbors, telephones, cars, etc. There are human motives, stated and unstated.

Narrators tell stories that are not normal or accentuate the negative or are not really representative or any of the other labels that are put on the history of veteran urban teachers. Hiding in the mist of nostalgia (Derrida, 1981) of the urban family are distortions, overlays, and subplots. There are voices, spoken and unspoken, official and unofficial, silent and missing (Aoki, 1992). This assault endures; it leaves traces on and
spaces *between* the stars. It will enter or not enter the school with the three boys and/or the school’s relation to the family and community. The boys will miss school. The school will miss the boys. The other students will be affected by the loss of their classmates. The boys will lag in their relations with the curriculum. The curriculum will jump and start, twist and turn, while the boys stagger in and out of their classes.

Keith and Terryle are spaces between the stars. They are past and present. Their relations with their teachers continue without their presence (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992). The assault is provisional and irrevocable. It will remain in “a firmament of flux” (p. 7). The lye in Pete’s eyes, the money that was never returned to Bev, the placement of Roslyn and Charles in Mr. Yarrow’s class, the exclusion/inclusion of Rich, the rejected art portfolio, the divorced father an ocean away, the unstable parent, the smell in the back of a police car, the small girl walking to school alone in the dark, the anti-war movement, etc., all take their turn as *The Secret in the Middle*.

*The Secret Sits*

We dance round in a ring and suppose;

But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.

(Frost, 1936/1979, p. 362)

*Institutionalism vs. Intellectualism*

I say and I say it again, you've been had!

You've been took!

You've been hoodwinked, bamboozled, led astray, run amok!

All the participants were waiting for the troubled, arranged marriage of
curriculum practice in American education (Pinar, 2004) to go away. Sacred theory
policies (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) engineered the game, set the hurdles, ascribed the
jargon, codified the business configuration, constructed the factory, and approved the
colonialist atmosphere of K-12 education. Sanctioned slogans penetrate the glossary of
the faculty meeting “employing a classic ‘blame the victim’ tactic” (Pinar, p. 164).

*Teachers, Raise Your Pacing Guides and Recite*

I pledge allegiance to the *Text* of the American Book Publishing Company
And to the Public/State/Federal School System for which it stands,
One nation under God, indivisible (I will adhere only to *The Holy Text*),
With liberty and justice for all,
Especially those with higher socioeconomic indicators.

*Bev:* The sad part is if I were being judged based on pacing guides, I would
probably be an at-risk teacher, because I am not reading this page this day. I am
reading a book which teaches this piece, but I am not reading that book on this
page on this day. I am might not be doing this on this week. It might fall here in
the nine-weeks, but it is being covered. Everything is being covered.

*Bev:* We are ignoring the immediate needs in our schools. Our money would be
better spent really focusing on the support of teachers and really helping them. I
do not see that. I know that they do a lot of meetings downtown…There is a god-
awful pile of meetings, but I do not know that the results of those meetings come back into our classrooms. The people who are down there are not thinking out what we have happening in our rooms. They are too far removed from the classroom to really understand this is not going to work, or we need to rethink this one, or this is actually going to hurt the kids. I think they are being dictated by government more and more and that becomes their focus. I am not an administrator. I just teach in my little classroom. I have to say when I think about what they are doing downtown, I am thinking that a lot of it is just meetings and trying to appease and do paperwork for the money handlers, so that we can get the cash for our schools. I think that is what they are doing. I do not think that they are really focused in on what is happening in our buildings.

All the participants worried about the present life and experience of the students. Like Greene (2005), Roslyn and Bev talked about the importance, even the necessity, of incorporating world events into the daily life of the classroom.

Bev: I think those critical moments are what keep you alive. Not that you look for world tragedies, but sometimes they are teaching opportunities.

Bev: My best lesson, probably in the last ten years was 9/11.

Roslyn: We are doing our kids a disservice, if we do not tell them who the pope is, and why the people are crying like this in the streets. We are doing a
disservice, because this is a real world where they are going to live. They are going to be *dysfunctional* if the pope is walking by, and they have no idea what the pope is about.

A technological approach to education assumes that teaching can be taught by means of generalizations and general techniques. Only recently has anyone recognized that education needs to turn back to the world of experience. Experience can open up understanding that restores a sense of embodied knowing. (van Manen, 1991, p. 9)

The death of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) and September 11, 2001 were significant events in recent history. These events did not appear in any pacing guide. They were not included in approved texts. The school calendar was full. The week’s schedule was posted on the bulletin board. In many schools, especially elementary and middle schools, any discussion of September 11 was prohibited. Televisions were turned off. Computers were shut down. Teachers whispered impounded news in huddled groups in the halls and on playground duty. In some high schools, teacher leaders hurdled sound walls to escort the world into the classroom and even onto the stage in the auditorium. However, in a reenactment of the Vietnam War, collaborators *en masse* in an act of gracious submission obeyed the sign on the entrance door of the school: *All Visitors Must Report to the Main Office.* The child support received through the divorce between school curriculum and public life enforced the silence.
What Goes Around, Comes Around.

Kitty: What goes around, comes around… I would hope, but I doubt it, I hate all the testing. I despise all the testing. I know what my children are capable of doing. I know that when I gave that math test this year, and the fact that there were a large number of kids that did not master that test, I know they know more than what the test showed. But, for whatever reason, some of them on that day did not think. If I had would have stood up here and said, “Now, think about it!” They know it. It is in there. The same you can tell on the reading test. You can tell that on a weekly basis. They start out great, then they are going like, “I am tired of doing this.” You can see where they just started filling in circles, and that is what they are basing this testing on. It is very frustrating, especially in the younger grades… I am afraid that it will not. I would love to see it go away, but with accountability… We used to give the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. That was the test. Then, you just taught. Then, they would take it the next year and however they did…There was not all this – If they missed this, then this is what you need to work on – If they missed this, then this is what you need to work on.

As long-time professionals, Kitty and Bev experienced the modern history of urban education. Both believe that accountability is here to stay. Both hope that testing would disappear as the sole way of evaluating children. When “everybody started making education their cause, their platform” (Bev), politics surrounded the art and practice of pedagogical tact. Bev and Kitty, as well as Paul, Roslyn, and Colleen, prefer
to replace numbers with understanding for the child’s relation to the curriculum in the classroom and a respect for the personal gifts of the child.

_Bev:_ We are data driven. We are all about the numbers now. We never did that before. Nobody sat down and looked at the statistics of what was successful and what was not, and that there is an actual formula that we can look at to determine your success. That is very much different. Unfortunately, that is all test-driven. We have become a profession just filled with testing…It is unfortunate when you have kids who slip through the cracks because of the numbers.

_Bev:_ I think that we are going to see more charter schools and things like that as the way out for the kids who cannot make the data drive. They will drop out. They will get their *Life Skills* diplomas, be done with it, and not be held accountable.

_Education is an Art_

_Paul:_ It is funny because in these urban schools, you would think these kids would be trying to be doctors and everything else. If you go to the suburbs, if a kid has a passion in the arts, that passion is allowed to grow. It is not only nurtured, it is allowed to grow and _encouraged._

_Paul:_ My point is just that…how much are the arts valued?
John Dewey (1929) understood that *education is an art*. Correctly measuring a length of wood is an art. Building a brick wall is an art. Designing the plumbing of a new house is an art. Farming is an art. Art and science intertwine. The participant teachers called for a renewal of the vows of art and science. They want to halt the divorce proceedings.

If there is an opposition between science and art, I should be compelled to side with those who assert that *education is an art*…When in education, the psychologist or observer and experimentalist in any field reduces his findings to a rule which is to be uniformly adopted, then, only, is there a result which is objectionable and destructive of the free play of education as an art. But this happens not because of scientific method but because of departure from it. It is not the capable engineer who treats scientific findings as imposing upon him a certain course which is to be rigidly adhered to: it is the third or fourth rate man who adopts this course. (Dewey, 1929, pp. 13-14)

The Synthetical Moment

“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!” Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. “The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me”…He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions that his broken voice could scarcely answer to his call…“I am as merry as a school-boy.”

(Dickens, 1843/1995, pp. 99-100)
'Tis: A Memoir

My students don't know it but that classroom is my refuge, sometimes my strength, the setting for my delayed childhood. We dip into the *Annotated Mother Goose* and the *Annotated Alice in Wonderland*, and when my students bring in the books of their early years there is delight in the room. You read that book, too? Wow.

A wow in any classroom means something is happening.

There is no talk of quizzes or tests and if grades have to be assigned for the bureaucrats well then students are capable of evaluating themselves. (McCourt, 1999, p. 353)

Pinar (1976a) suggested that the synthetical moment, the fourth and final step of the ever-evolving method, *currere*, is entering into a higher level of being. Curriculum is both origin and destination (Pinar, 2004). Concepts are no longer invisible. One may “take it into one’s hands as it were, examine it, and then see its relation to one’s psychological, physical, ontological condition” (1976a, p. 61). The Self, including the intellect residing in the body, is available in physical form. I am neither my body nor my mind.

My mind is identified as a part of me…

Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation.

I am placed together.

Synthesis. (Pinar, 1976a, p. 61)

He tried to encourage others to learn, in a community so needy of the educational assistance he had to offer, yet at the same time so torn by its own long-standing divisions, doubts, and suspicions…This is…about the vocational hazards that often meet goodwill as it gets carried across barriers of race and class and geography in pursuit of a spell of living expression.

...You come here as an outsider, and in no time you’ll be caught in the middle of things. You’ll get to know us here – and yourself, too.

(Coles, 2002, pp. xi-xii)

Frank McCourt joins the choir. He retired after 30 years service from the New York City Schools as an English teacher. He will sing Irish tenor. When Maxine Greene learned that McCourt, a student in her first class at the university is in the choir, she
arrived with her graduate students in tow. Because of her advanced age, Greene’s graduate seminars meet in her Manhattan apartment, but for this cause they venture out. “In September, Greene’s groundbreaking ideas will come alive in a new Manhattan public school called High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry, where the standard subject for a diploma will be taught with a twist” (Dobnik, 2005, p. C8).

Greene remains a force in education. She insists that students be driven not only by acts and grades, but by passions in literature, music, films, paintings – and today’s news. That includes the horrors seen on television, from terrorism to urban crime to the Iraq war. (Dobnik, 2005, p. C8)

The graduate students join the choir. The principal of the new High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry arrives with 109 ninth-graders who will form the core of the school which “sits on what was the turf of the urban gangs that inspired the hit musical West Side Story” (Dobnik, 2005, p. C8). The teachers and graduate students invite the students to add their voices. There is much scrambling and jostling for position. Everybody introduces themselves to everybody else. Some teachers know some of the students or older brothers, sister, and cousins. Some of the senior teachers taught the students’ parents, uncles, and aunts. The principal leaves the students in the teacher choir and settles down by his mentor/professor Maxine Greene for a few moments of counsel. He waves an invitation to Michael Johnston to join them.

Mother Martha, Miss Rosa, Mr. Bedrock, and Katrice enter from St. Ann’s Episcopal. Katrice, still wearing her apron, looks for a chair and is grateful to sit down.
Professor Smith and Mr. Geoffrey arrive from the Big City. They look around for Coles and Johnston, another pairing of researcher and teacher. People perch here and there. Some stand while others sit on the risers. A few students scoot crab-like across the stage to circle the podium. Imitating school, they face the teachers not the audience. With so many veteran urban teachers, the choral verse will not be short. Each story will separate and merge in long experience.

There is a script, but it is not an official, sanctioned script. All participants are welcome to weave their experiences in and out of the verse. In a groundswell consent, the participant teachers step forward as the prime actors on the stage. The researcher assumes the podium. The texture of the presentation is the what of the research: What is the nature of the experience of pedagogical tact for a high-quality veteran urban teacher? The structure of the presentation is the how of the research: What meaning does a high-quality veteran urban teacher ascribe to the experience? The two elements engage the themes of Greene’s new high school: Arts, Imagination and Inquiry. She will see an idea stream of the future in flow (see Appendix B Choral Verse en Vue de Currere).

Finale en Currere

In the choral verse, the refrain of the poetry revealed L’Essence of the research. That which most needed to be said in order to understand better (Polkinghorne, 1989) surfaced repetitively in solo, duet, quintet, and en masse reflecting the reality of the classroom while announcing the lived experience of pedagogical tact and the meaning ascribed thereto by the high-quality veteran urban teacher.
*Bev:*

I am a provider.

I did exactly what my teachers had done to me.

We bring ourselves into the classroom.

We bring our past to the table with us.

I moved beyond my roots.

There is a little piece of me in their success.

You can reap joy from that.

I love teaching.

*Colleen:*

Real significant social change happens in the classroom.

That is why I teach. I still want to make this world a better place.

Education was where it was going to happen.

I did not have to, but I did. That was the best part of it.

I am going to teach these kids, and that is it.

I am not into coverage; I am into education.

If things do not go right, I want to fix it.

I am a democrat (lower case *d*).

This is where I belong.

We are amazing.
**Kitty:**

I expect his best just like I expect the other kids’ best

You made the choice. You have to live with that choice.

In the curriculum, there is no freedom anymore.

I am like the mother hen. My wings are around them.

I had to be the tough guy, today. It broke my heart.

I know what my children are capable of doing.

I teach a block from where I grew up.

Once they are mine, they are mine.

This is what I am and what I do.

I love teaching.

Kids are kids.

**Paul:**

What do you have to offer me in here today that should make me want to come in here?

Whatever it is that you are trying to do with the art, it has to be heaven.

You cannot teach them how to draw. You can teach them how to look.

Someone will always try to convince you how much they value the arts.

When the government comes through, that restricts them right there.

It is about that time you always think, *Check your back*.

Give it your best effort. Move away from the stereotypes.

I want the kid to understand what they are going to draw.

They are driven by the public perception.
Roslyn:

I thought what they were giving me, I needed that to live, survive, and thrive.

I wonder if I am doing this because of what a teacher said to me or did for me.

You are a child; but as an adult, you can define those things, and you can intuit.

And sometimes it has to be discussed and questions have to be answered.

I did not know that there was a difference between Black and White.

They know that every child is different and unique unto herself.

I think they felt kind of revolutionary in their spirits.

It felt like they had freedom.

I have not had a teaching job that I have not loved.

I need to stay here and continue my work.

Because I believe that racism is taught.

The child is accepted wherever they are.

Pink and Yellow

In my epoche (see Appendix A), I recalled a momentary encounter as I was driving home to the suburbs from my inner-city school. At the corner, a young girl and boy were standing close together in the pouring rain waiting to cross the street at the light. The girl who wore a yellow raincoat and one yellow boot was holding the hand of the smaller boy in a rough section of town. Colleen told a parallel story of a different hue about a girl in a pink raincoat headed to school alone in the dark.
Shayla was walking to school. Her mom worked. She lived over on Gray or Green Street, and I was driving across. This is when I was really miserable. Really unhappy over there. There was Shayla. Her mom worked at a hospital. She was on the 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. shift, so Shayla left at 7:00 a.m. Her mother had to be at work, so she left. She was walking by herself. It is dark. She had her little pink raincoat on and her little pink backpack. Walking to school all by herself. Just marching off to school. She was eight years old. She was a third-grader.

I thought this is why I go to work! And it is those kinds of things! That is why I go to school everyday. I could have called in sick, but I thought, *What is Shayla going to do?* She would have been very upset. They do not like it when the sub comes. She was mine. And there was Shayla walking to school. I thought, *I go to school everyday. Some days it is only for Shayla, but there is a Shayla in every class.* She had a little pink raincoat and a little pink backpack just marching along in the dark and all by herself, going to a safe place, my room.

(Collen)

The “goodness that you are providing is nurturing that child and building that child. It is those individuals and those single moments” (Roslyn). The morning that Colleen spied Shayla heading to school alone in the dark, Colleen was miserable. Shayla was marching; her teacher was dragging. There was a silent unintentional connection between two teachers and two students. The teachers were in cars. The students were afoot. One student was Shayla. A pair of students remained anonymous. In these single
moments, it was the teacher who was renewed through pedagogical hope for the child. Pedagogical thoughtfulness lingered in a wish for the yellow girl and smaller boy. Thoughtfulness actualized into tact for the pink girl. Her teacher arrived at school refreshed.

Radio

In a collaboration of healing (Smith, 2004), in preference to saving, Coach Jones invited the private voiceless boy under the porch through the young man, disregarded through affliction, pushing a shopping cart on the periphery of the official onto the public arena of the football field. Amidst the athletically gifted, the shuffling boy bounds the lines of demarcation for the veiled boy buried on the dirt. Coach returns to his home by disclosing unconscious concerns and integrating their origins with present circumstances (Pinar, 1994). Disregarding rewards and punishments, the football coach finds releasement in this form of immigration into the schools. The form of immigration that brought about the curriculum field in order to standardize education for a fixed American identity writes the autobiography of self through memories and dreams, “visualized, theorized, and told as story” (pp. 216-217) in a healing relationship.

L’Essence

(Bev) I am a provider.

(Colleen) Real significant social change happens in the classroom.

(Kitty) I teach a block from where I grew up.

(Paul) Whatever it is that you are trying to do with the art, it has to be heaven.

(Roslyn) And sometimes it has to be discussed and questions have to be answered.
**Currere** is true. *I teach a block from where I grew up* (Kitty). We all teach a block from where we grew up, even if we grew up across oceans like I did. That world is but a touch, smell, or word away. *Currere* does not mean that we do not grow and change. The temporal cycle enlarges, but the origin is not lost. In reverie and fear, we return whence we came. It is the basis for past, the future, the present, and the essence.

*And I Received Her Feet*

In the late 1980s, I was standing in my room greeting parents who had arrived at our urban middle school for parent-teacher conferences. Because the advanced students took foreign language, while the struggling students studied in the reading lab, there were more parents in my room than most of our teachers expected to receive the whole evening. I taught both seventh and eighth-grade French, so I already knew half the parents in the room. In some of the families, older siblings had already passed through my classroom. It was a pleasant evening for me after a long day at school.

One mother slowly circled the room looking at the displays and examining the bulletin boards. Finally, she fairly fell into a student desk and waited. After the last parent had left, I approached her. I wanted to be sure to exit the school with the other teachers. A police officer would be at the entrance to make sure that we all made it to our cars safely. It was dark in an uncertain part of town.

I began to open my grade book, when the mother interrupted me. She gently but firmly began a long tale of the troubles of her life, particularly her feet. She told me that despite painful infirmities in her feet, she was required to stand all day in her work. It was very grueling and doubled her fatigue by the end of her shift. Time moved slowly
throughout the day. She was a single mother. Her children depended on her as the sole source of their provision. When she arrived home, more duties awaited.

I had long before closed my grade book and leaned back in my chair to give silent thanks for my education. She talked on and on and around and around, and I let her go. She apparently had no one else with whom to share her story. Her story was not unlike others that I had heard in snippet and anecdote as the students talked among themselves. Her life was not simple. The complexities of the interwoven fragments surrounded my student. I did what I could for her mother. I received her feet. I received them *wholly*, because that was how my student was fed, through her mother’s feet. In a moment of anonymity, I practiced pedagogical tact. I let this tired mother lean on me, and I received her feet. We left the building together sharing words of life.

“The essence of pedagogy manifests itself in the practical moment of a concrete situation” (van Manen, 1991, p. 47). The life of the student is recognized in the joining of public and private. The mother’s feet which illustrated the environs of the family entered the classroom. As teacher, I learned more about the corporeal life of my student in relation to her mother. Our temporal relation in the space of the classroom now included her mother’s feet. I knew more about my student. I knew how she was fed, clothed, and sheltered. I knew how her mother continued to labor for her. The experience of the mother joined the student and the teacher in closer relation to the curriculum. It is in these single fleeting moments that the career of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher is centered toward “life in all its fullness” John 10:10 (*New Living Translation*).
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The purpose of this research was to reveal the untold story of the lived experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher and the meaning that the teacher ascribed to that experience. The urban teacher works in dichotomous times. The corporeal, temporal, and spatial relation of the curriculum, teacher, and urban student requires the personal and connected (Palmer, 1998), while state and federal mandates act to standardize the reality of the school (van Manen, 1991). Curriculum guides codify the content. Pacing guides clock the race. All the while, the best teachers in the inner-city stand at their classroom doors in the morning to greet the child in the social space described as “high-poverty, high minority, and low-achieving schools” (Olson, 2003, p. 9). Embracing the personal practice of pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact seeking inner contradictions that “serve as hidden passages from the status quo to a more just order” (Edgerton, 1991, p. 85), the interpretation was hermeneutic and the description was phenomenological.

Summary of the Results

The data was collected following the four-part method of currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Currere does not number or rate. It does not fit into charts, circle, linear, or bar. Currere is a verb, not a noun. What was sought could have been fleeting or repetitive, unseen or on the evening news. It could have been picturesque or plain. Themes arose out of their profundity not their proportion. Every theme, past, present, or
future, was in motion. In recognition of humanity, the themes were not finite or final. As researcher, participant, and reader, we receive the themes, and marking our own entrances, the theme evolves in a private currerian cycle.

After completing the lengthy task of transcribing the 15 interviews, I began the expected spreadsheets. I looked for words, phrases, and themes that replicated inside and through the interviews. The process became very tedious and avoided discernment. I did not have to understand, I only had to count who said what, when, and how many times. Sometimes, I even noted the degree of force with which the participant had spoken. Although, I dutifully listed themes, I slowly realized that my qualitative study was becoming a pedantic positivistic study. The charts would determine the truth rather than my own understanding of the experience of pedagogical tact and the high-quality veteran urban teacher. The intimate conversations that I had with the participants as we reviewed, reviled, and reconsidered were being replaced by distance. I had swapped ontological fulfillment for stilled silence. The transcripts sounded less. Voices were losing ground to color-coded, numbered squares. The spreadsheets morphed into the Panoptical Cyborg controlling and checking the data. The accuracy of the data became numerical rather than spiritual, philosophical, historical, or tangible. I was becoming Dewey’s (1929) “third or fourth-rate man” (p. 14) “who treats findings as imposing upon him a certain course which is to be rigidly adhered to” (p. 14).

I let them go. I dutifully saved my spreadsheets in case anybody wanted to see them and put on the scholarly robes of the hermeneut. I displaced codification for discernment. Using imaginative variation, my primary challenge became how to explicate or better illustrate the rich story of the high-quality veteran urban teacher so that
others could realize the practice of pedagogical tact in the inner-city. Once I moved into the data rather than around the data, the practice of my research more clearly aligned with the method. In currere (see Figure 3), the epistemological subject and the research subject are one (Grumet, 1976).

Themes

The themes were very clearly explicated throughout Chapter IV. In the first telling, the themes, both literary and literal, intertwined. In the second telling, the themes were separated by participant. Finally, the themes were presented as an essence. Reenacting Lloyd’s (2005) inaugural sermon, A Voice, A Place, A People, the themes replicated the past, present, and future experiences of pedagogical tact for these high-quality veteran urban teachers and the meanings that these experiences have brought and continue to bring into their lives.

The literary players traced the themes through the decades, even centuries. The confluence of the themes at the participants’ practices reenacted Jones’ (1990) foreboding words that the urban teacher was judged “as a suspicious figure that requires continual examination within an examining technology” (p. 75). The participant teachers refused the generalization that “the genealogy of the urban schoolteacher is the passage of a failure” (p. 75). In their urban schools, the “marginalized children of the rookeries” (p. 71) came through the classroom door to find the best, Bev, Colleen, Kitty, Paul, and Roslyn, ready and waiting.

The Regressive Moment

In The Regressive Moment, two teachers remembered the past. Frank McCourt (1996) recalled the smell of the apple peel dangling above his head in Plane Geometry.
Oh, to be the fortunate boy to taste “the length of it, red or green” (p. 154). Hunger rumbled around the classroom. Coach Jones (Gains, Leibert, Robbins, & Tollin, 2003; Smith, 1996) sat in the front seat of his pick-up truck with his only child and explained to her why he invited Radio onto the football field and into his life. As a child, he had not acted. He had not acted when there had been hopelessness. He had accepted lines of demarcation. He had lived behind barriers which, now, as a man, he lifted aside to escort another into community. What had been hidden remained in view.

Critical Moments

Bev lived an incomplete/complete adoption. She was neither here nor there. She was Cinderella displaced and unsolicited. She lived that which had been set aside. Colleen acted for others. She leapt over the hurdles to promote an education of excellence only to be slammed back. No name. No power. No credit. She brought forward that which was more easily overlooked. Her presumptuous action was not overlooked. Kitty was never presumptuous. She cooperated by wearing a chain mail that held her carefully in her place. Paul played the game of football and the game of high school. He left both uniforms in his locker. He returned to the urban classroom as an artist-in-residence to practice the opposite of Brother This and Brother That. Roslyn spelled all the words right all year, except the last one. She sat down peacefully, but she began a journey to justice for her students and herself.

The Human Condition

Times were changing. Some of the changes rode buses to the school. Some of the changes crept into the school. Others peeped into the windows. Some marched right down the street into the school and back out again. Rich was senior class president, but
his dating opportunities were restricted. Casting a vote did not mean getting a date. Colleen crossed lines of race and religion. She jumped up and down on the lines. She emulated her father and “went ballistic” (Colleen). When fists were raised at the Olympics in Mexico (1968) after the triple assassinations of the Kennedys (1963, 1968) and King (1968), there was some pushing and shoving at Kitty’s high school. A boy who would become a medical doctor and a girl who would become a teacher walked down the hall together to Mrs. Ronald’s fifth-grade classroom. A mother and father came to school to stand for their daughter. They had moved north to get a job, feed their family, and put a roof over their heads. In an epiphanic moment, they stood up and spoke up. These reminiscences of the human condition of the day walked and talked in the participants’ classrooms. The past visited the present.

Metaphors and Images

Roslyn brought the bright images, and I brought the philosophical metaphors to the discussion. Kitty told quiet stories. Colleen howled adventures, and Paul painted the panoramic scenes. Bev’s long, renowned career of words completed the roundabout toward the l’essence. We blended words and pictures to realize the experience of pedagogical tact for the high-quality veteran urban teacher.

School, neighborhood, and family, and sometimes an omniscient God, consumed the young lives of the participants. They were aware of the world, but they lived estranged from even the other side of the city. It was Like Living in a Bubble where naïveté surrounded and walled in the student within the school. The curriculum, as well as the faculty, remained secluded. The school did not address that which was not admitted or acknowledged.
What was acknowledged almost from entry was the race. School was a K-12 race. The prize was stars or numbers or labels. *I am in Track 1. I have 14 stars in World Geography. I am in the Singing Wheels reading group.* I have earned the prize. I am prized. It is there on the chart on the wall for all to see. I am worthy. I am so glad that I am not in the *Eagles* reading group. They do not even try. They will not get a chocolate kiss or lunch with the teacher on a blanket in front of the school where all the other children can see us.

I was able to sit still.

I was able to listen.

I was able to take notes, and I was able to study.

I was able to do that, therefore I was successful.

But the kids who could not sit still,

And the kids who did not know what to take a note on

And did not know how to study,

Or if they were not disciplined to go home and then study,

They failed. (Bev)

The student who won the prize was *The Good Girl.* “I will not take time now to recount the history that has bonded text to class and caste, made it the emblem of authority, the sign of immortality, and a rebuke to the lively imagination” (Grumet, 1988, p. 131). The teacher “was hired to proclaim and maintain the order and the innocence of that vanished household in the face of industrial urbanization and the centralization of authority in the state” (p. 39). Replicate. Reproduce. Maintain the stereotype.
At this point, one of my major things here is not to have kids fall back on what they call visual stereotypes. You know a tree looks like a lollipop upside down. A house is simple square with a triangle on top...I tell you that as much as I say that though, I could be teaching someone for a year, if I asked them right now out of their head just to draw a house and landscape and anything else, what I would get would be, it would be right back to the stereotypes. It is really typical to instill in them the idea of looking at what things actually look like and try to draw them that look like that without… (Paul)

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” Proverbs 22:6 (King James Version). Kitty recalled the days and weeks and years that the little girl with the perfect bangs, black Mary Janes, and folded hands waited for her beloved teacher to call on her. She was “just following the rules…Always following the rules” (Kitty). Like Kitty, Bev knew that she would be chosen. She was always chosen. “I was this little polite girl, so I was a natural choice.” Both girls understood the code of success. They still struggle its corseted containment.

Ursula Brangwen tried to overstep the sanctioned code of force and fright at Brinsley School. Her dream that she “would make everything personal and vivid” (Lawrence, 1915, p. 347) shattered with her person. She became The Good Girl who performed the teacher’s duties efficiently, effectively, and impersonally. She locked away her values, put on the uniform, and taught to the beat of the metronome appended to the top of her desk.
Autobiographical Reflection

The dominant focus of the times in the autobiographies of the participants was the Vietnam War (1957-1975). The Vietnam War did not appear in the high school social studies texts of the participants. The war was not predictable, datable, outline-able, or report-able. Most of all, it was not discussable. The war was not safe or orderly or over. Only Roslyn’s teachers promoted discussion in the school. Their Okay invited others to step in. It was Okay to take one’s Mary Janes across lines of demarcation and express opinions about the major conflict of the time. For the other teachers, even in the schools where students were dying in Vietnam, the war was the presence of an absence (Grumet, 1988). We are civilized. We deny attachment. That happened over there.

We consign primitive feeling, passionate commitments, to domesticity, and then we construct a public space purged of such contaminants. But attachment and difference never disappear just because we declare them invisible. They always seep back in. Schools have never been neutral places. (Grumet, 1988, p. 181)

The Progressive Moment

The two major descriptors of The Progressive Moment were the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) and the parents of urban children. To the participants, the parents played the dominant role in the future of the children. Were the children fed, clothed, and sheltered? Were they nurtured and loved? What was stable in their lives? Were they safe? Did anyone listen to them read? Why were they late to school? Who cared? Would the parent be able/willing to help the teacher help your child?

Once the children arrived at school, the major player was No Child Left Behind. All the participants rejected the boundaries and codification placed on the lives of their
students. All the participants said their practice of pedagogical tact was hampered by the race-to-the-finish guides. Bev ignored the pacing guide. She relied on her professional expertise to make sure that her students covered the curriculum, but her lessons remained creative. They flowed one into the other. Kitty tried to keep up with the pacing guide, but she found extra time for review. She made sure her students had one step before proceeding to the second by circling around to reteach addition and division. Colleen thought the pacing guides did not match her kids. The curriculum was nice, but the pacing guide went too fast. The teacher and the students were scrambling to keep up. Roslyn and the faculty in her school worked extra periods to make sure that everything in the pacing guides and the curriculum guides was covered. *The Penetrating Eye of the Cyborg* was watching their school predicting failure.

Colleen was willing to speak publicly. “I speak for myself, but sometimes, I have the following or the backing of my fellow teachers” (Colleen). She was careful to say that she did not represent her school; but she added, “My colleagues…are very supportive. They are always like – *Go for it!* (Colleen)” Roslyn has continued the political life that her high school teachers taught her during the Vietnam War. As an example, there was a civic meeting about education to which many important people were invited. The Secretary of Education was there. The mayor was there. The advocate/owner of many charter schools was there.

It was a room full of *everybody, everybody…Everybody* was there. And when it was over, I wanted to say, “Okay, now we are *done* playing patty-cake with the Secretary of Education. He is gone. Can we have a *real* meeting now…?” I came
so close to grabbing that microphone and saying that. I probably will regret that I
did not. (Roslyn)

Even Roslyn and Colleen, the most public and outspoken of the participants are
careful. Colleen speaks for herself, but she does not use the name of her school or
colleagues. Roslyn “came so close to grabbing that microphone” (Roslyn), but she did
not. Her concluding remark reflected the regret of the participants.

All the participants believed that the curriculum guides were mechanisms rather
than materials. None of the teachers was afraid of high standards for their students. All
the teachers believed the worth of their subject(s) under the No Child Left Behind Act
determined the amount of money, hence faculty and course offerings, applied to the
department. If there was not a test to measure improvement, there was no purpose to
improvement. Paul worried about the future of the arts in America’s public schools.
There is no multiple-choice test to measure illusion, dimension, or space.

There was no open discussion of the two Progressive Moment topics in the
school. The No Child Left Behind Act sat in a seat in the classroom and the faculty
meeting. It was discussed in whispered secret stories in the parking lot. Urban parents
heard cover stories, How can you help us help Johnny? or sacred-theory stories, Johnny
has not passed two parts of his mathematics which he must pass to graduate. Parents
with little/poor educational experiences struggled with the expected answer. During my
20 years in middle school, I met many, many parents who were visiting their alma mater
when they came to school. They never made it down the hill to high school.
The Analytic Moment

*The Analytic Moment* is now. It is *The Daily Grind* (Jackson, 1968/1990). It is classroom windows open on a hot day and tapping sneakers on the floor after recess. *The Analytic Moment* is Frank McCourt (1999) sitting through his first university class at New York University and wondering “How am I supposed to know what’s important out of all the things she’s saying up there? Am I supposed to remember everything?” (pp. 147-148). Likewise, *The Analytic Moment* is Maxine Greene teaching 150 students in her first university class at New York University and discovering that she loved teaching. Two teachers meet. One is accomplished and stands in front of the class. The other is bewildered and sits with students who are furiously taking notes all the while thinking, “I wish I knew what to scribble myself” (p. 147).

The student lost in the newness of the college experience went on to write about poverty and childhood, squalor and misery, exuberance and forgiveness, humor and compassion. After a career of teaching in the city, Frank McCourt stopped to write the stories that he had been telling his students for decades in his classroom. The person of his life became the person of his stories in his memoir.

The professor [Maxine Greene] is saying the Pilgrims left England to escape religious persecution and that puzzles me because the Pilgrims were English themselves and the English were always the ones who persecuted everyone else, especially the Irish. I’d like to raise my hand and tell the professor how the Irish suffered for centuries under English rule but I’m sure everyone in this class has a high school diploma and if I open my mouth they’ll know I’m not one of them. (McCourt, 1999, p. 148)
A teacher in training at the university learned silencing without speaking a word. Colleen was careful how she presented herself. Roslyn almost grabbed the microphone. McCourt (1999) worried that “if I open my mouth they’ll know I’m not one of them” (p. 148). If I speak, they (the parent, the principal, the superintendent, the government, etc.) will know. They will know that I am not one of them (Clance & Imes, 1978). More than 30 years later, after a lifetime in the classroom, McCourt spoke. He spoke about the English rule and the Irish suffering and the lack of a high school diploma. In an act of pedagogical tact through story, he engaged us in his world. We walked in and sat down and stayed a while. His first professor, Maxine Greene, took one of the seats in his classroom to learn from her student. The Analytical Moment is about those true, complicated moments as opposed to those arranged, scripted moments.

*Spatiality*

Three high school girls entered Art Space. One walked away, and one moved in. A third went out the back door to work. Their teacher entered Art Space as an elementary student in a university setting. There was no art in his secondary school. Where he had left formal art lessons at a very young age, the other students in his college classes had continued. He was like one of those blow-up punching dolls. Punch him, and he popped right back up. Only the second time, he knew what to expect. He knew that he belonged; and, like Frank McCourt, he stayed. The artist/teacher, teacher/writer is pursuing something he has not caught yet (Greene, 2005).
Corporeality

Small children sit on their teachers’ laps. According to Roslyn, “Your lap is your curriculum” (Roslyn). The curriculum is the body invited and held close. Kitty had a tender moment in the last day of school.

One of the little boys on the last day of school came over.

I was sitting at the desk checking some things out.

He came over, and he put his head on my shoulder.

And he said, “I just do not want to leave you.”

I said, “And I do not want you to leave me either.” (Kitty)

In these days where accusations fly and threats abound, this tender moment of a second-grade boy with his head on his teacher’s shoulder is an illustration of pedagogical love through the body. A painting of that moment would speak without words. *In my teacher, I find comfort and compassion and remembrance. I will remember second-grade in Mrs. Kitty’s room. I remember standing by her desk on the last day of school.*

A second part of corporeality is the toll on the teacher. Colleen remarked how physically and mentally exhausted the teachers are very early in the year. “Our kids wear us out” (Colleen). On top of the wear and tear in the classroom, teachers feel “abandoned by the state, by the federal government, by the administration” (Colleen). Roslyn had been absent from school on the day of our first interview. Her blood pressure was too high. Although she was rarely absent, she had to step back that day.

A third entry of corporeality is the violence to which we are exposed in the urban environment. I teach near the two most dangerous streets in town. It took me years to realize that I am in the doctoral program, because of my middle-school student Terryle. I
have seen bullet holes in knees. I know people on Death Row. I read the paper, and I have a history with people who have been arrested. Keith remains with Bev. The sexually-molested second-grader sits in Kitty’s classroom. Shayla walks to school while Colleen drives. Ebony’s father is still imprisoned, and her teacher Roslyn shares in that incarceration. Music plays in the art room. Paul has a problem with the lyrics which turns into an issue with two students who admire two rappers who murdered each other.

No, I tell them that I cannot listen to it. I remember there was a song and this guy was ragging on some guy for wearing pink. I said, “Whoa, wait a second! I am not going to listen to that homophobic, gay-bashing kind of thing!” And all of a sudden, it falls back on you. “Are you gay?” I said, “No. First of all, whether it is your business or not, I doubt. I am not going to sit here and listen to some homophobic, low-talent rap star bash somebody or bash a…”

One kid is wearing Notorious B.I.G. T-shirt. Another kid is wearing Tupac. Here are two guys who murdered each other. So, you have got thugs, and I call them thugs…It gets me kind of riled up. We still have Fifty Cent doing a rap song with how many times that he has been shot. You know, glorifying it. It is tough. It is tough. Sometimes, you pick your fights. Sometimes, it will wear you thin and everything else. It is like…Wait a second! Does no one else know who is on this T-shirt? Does no one else see this stuff? I do not think so. (Paul)

Philosophical corporeality addresses the erasure of the body in the classroom. The urban teacher understands the philosophical and physical actualities of the body in
the classroom. Another pregnant girl. The prime athlete with the torn quad that he is trying to hide. The student father who is working 40 hours per week after school saving money for the new baby. The teen mother who has a daycare voucher. The teen mother who does not have a daycare voucher. The student whose mother has returned to her second husband and has left him to live alone. The boy whose mother could not let him stay at home that night. The boy who bags groceries after school to help his sister who is a single mother with small children. She took him in when his mother was no longer able to keep him. The call from the police to the coach instead of the parent. The family that moved while the student was at school. The ex-girlfriend who ended up with the four kids when the father was incarcerated after the mother left. The angry boyfriend who threw away all of the belongings of his girlfriend’s children, including their school books. The cousins who moved in and stole everything. The crack mother in the basement. The boy/girl whose foster father/mother died. Sometimes, it will wear you thin (Paul). So many physical stories that are wrapped in the philosophical tendons of pedagogical love and hope.

*Temporality*

Because the common culture is always anywhere other than this world, (Grumet, 1988, p. 171), Bobby Ann Starnes (2005) did not speak or wear or live the norm at school. Her common culture was near the coal mines in eastern Kentucky. Ursula Brangwen (Lawrence, 1915) fled a common culture that impounded women in “the close, physical, limited life of herded domesticity” (p. 334). She exchanged the first life of reproduction and domestic labor for a second life of reproduction and monotonous violence. Like the other teachers at Brinsley School, she endured the life of the alienated
teacher “with contradictions and betrayals…from our bodies, our memories, our dreams, from each other, from children” (Grumet, p. 57).

Roslyn considered the lasting effects of her teachers on her present practice. “I wonder if I am doing this because of what a teacher said to me or did for me. I think a lot about that” (Roslyn). Colleen recognized the *Dick and Jane* atmosphere of her elementary schools, both public and parochial. One set paid tuition; the other did not.

It was just what everybody did. I never heard of vocational school or vocational track. I just thought everybody was on their way to college… I never knew anybody who worked in a factory or produced anything. I never knew anybody who was a farmer… It was just not my experience. (Colleen)

Even the student who was willing to get herself expelled for *those children* had no experience of them. In her senior year, Bev’s class opened a new high school. With the larger school boundaries, there were students she had not met. She sought friends among those students. They did not know that she bore “the judgment of poverty” (Bev). “They really didn’t know where I was coming from” (Bev). The form of poverty was temporal. She remained poor but was not held by it. “I was fresh. I could reinvent myself” (Bev). Bobby Ann (Starnes, 2005) quickly learned that she would adjust to the class. The class would not adjust to her. She lost her accent only to regain her mountain past at the university. Temporality returned accents, bypassed caste, and breached class to release intention.
Relationality

Student voices presented “the sensational, the difficult, the exciting, and the satisfying” (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 227) in a portrayal of relationality in this research. Two boys were scalded by a third boy. The third boy was incarcerated. Keith hid in Bev’s garage. Terryle came into my class and never left. Roslyn and Charles, who was crying, walked the long hall to Mrs. Ronald’s class. Dale was still alive and sitting and ducking in front of me in Plane Geometry. Pete looked through damaged eyes. They all took a turn as The Secret in the Middle (Frost, 1936/1979, p. 362). Amidst all the movement, state report cards and federal assessments evaluate. Worth and relation, illusion and space, temporality and corporeality are replaced with A Million Stars. What used to appear on bulletin boards in classrooms, now appears in the headline of the newspaper. What the individual student used to seek, now the corporation seeks.

Everyone, Everything works for the stars: Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, Academic Emergency.

The teacher with the most seniority despised the testing. Her expertise was set aside during The Test. If it had been her own test that was being given, she could have said, “Now, think about it! (Kitty)” “I know what my children are capable of doing” (Kitty). Her capable, caring voice is silent during the official test. “They start out great, then they are going like, ‘I am tired of doing this.’ You can see where they just started filling in circles, and that is what they are basing this testing on” (Kitty). Politics invaded the classroom to disrupt the relation of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum. “It is the third or fourth rate man who adopts this course” (Dewey, 1929, p. 14).
Finale en Currere

In presenting *The Synthetical Moment*, my quandary was the form. The participants had already sounded intention. Reconceptualists consider matters of “temporality, transcendence, consciousness, and politics” (Pinar, 1975, p. xiii). *Currere* is the issue of Reconceptualism (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). In the baby book of *currere*, *Toward a Poor Curriculum* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), Pinar’s Preface (1976b) is almost poetic. It swings and sways. The style of the writing foreshadows that which is to come. Pinar opens with the powerful, “I am experience” (p. vii) encompassing corporeality, relationality, temporality, and spatiality.

In the presentation of *The Synthetical Moment*, I moved away from prose into concrete poetry. In Appendix B, this dissertation is presented in choral verse. It could be a play, a novella, a painting, a graphic novel, an opera. The setting could be a stage, an auditorium, a classroom, or the front steps of city hall. The time is temporal. The players, both literal and literary, are not fixed. The voices are not limited.

The Synthetical Moment

*Currere* seeks to make sense of the everyday educational experience. Through autobiography (Pinar, 1974, 1975; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) centered in hermeneutic phenomenology, the lived experience, including race, class, and gender (Edgerton, 1991; Jackson, 1992), is explored seeking intentionality by cycling life’s temporal moments. The stripping away toward intention in which understanding is centered (Pinar & Grumet) is the opportunity to “reconstruct the genesis of the objective meaning” (Outhwaite, 1975, p. 91). This reconstruction is situated in philosophical hermeneutics as “participative, conversational, and dialogic” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195).
Bev is a provider. She does exactly what her teachers did for her. “If there was a need for it or the kids thought it would be kind of cool” (Bev), she would sponsor it. School was her refuge. “It was an escape from home” (Bev). She continues the cycle of providing a space for the poor in her school.

Colleen is a democrat (“lower case d”). She left the streets and the backs of police cars for life among and for her students. She lives among the students. She works tirelessly for her students, because she wants to make the world a better place. “Real significant social change happens in the classroom” (Colleen).

Kitty left her school to travel an ocean and a continent away only to circle back. “I teach a block from where I grew up” (Kitty). In the circle, Kitty closely resembles the little girl who was so good in the changing, disruptive 1960s and 1970s in America. She teaches a block from where she grew up physically, metaphorically, and philosophically.

Paul left teaching for the world of the theater only to return. “It was almost like a play period” (Paul). Paul matured in art and life. It was “the most I ever learned about painting and color and illusion and space” (Paul), but employment opportunities were scarce. “At that time I was probably close to 30, I was just thinking maybe I should get more serious” (Paul). Paul brought his enhanced vocation/avocation back to the classroom. Paul left the stereotypes of his youth for corporeal, relational, spatial, and temporal realms of art. Where Colleen centers in consciousness and politics, Paul espouses the temporal and the transcendent. “In some way, whether it is with your feelings or your thoughts or you are trying to convey a mood, whatever it is that you are trying to do with the art, it has to be heaven” (Paul).
“I have done a lot of reflecting on that, especially being a teacher” (Roslyn).
Roslyn repeatedly said I think about or I wonder or I think a lot about that. And she did.
Her family’s pilgrimage lives in her house. It is the topic of conversation. “And
sometimes it has to be discussed and questions have to be answered” (Roslyn). The
answers are temporal. They evolve. They are corporeal as members join and leave the
family. They are relational as they are passed on one to the other. They are spatial in
that the family saga transcends. It is overarching. It flows and fights. It grows. Roslyn
seeks intentionality as a teacher in a reunification of the public and private sphere for her
students. She disregards the erasure of the body and embraces that which makes the child
extraordinary, historic, and individual.

Implications for Future Research

As soon as I began the critical conversations with the participants, I knew that this
research was only the opening of the door. Opportunities for further exploration had to
be shunted aside as I sought to complete this study. I hope that the door that has been
opened to these new questions will not be closed. I offer some of the further
implications for research.

The Good Girl

Bev, Kitty, and I are Good Girls. Although we are mature professionals, we
continue to fight this syndrome. We could be the core of a study. A very senior middle-
school guidance counselor called elementary school teachers abused wives. No matter
the way the winds blow, no matter the strength of the gale, the Welcome Back bulletin
board will be changed to the Fall Festival bulletin board on schedule. Phillip Jackson
(1968/1990) wrote about The Daily Grind decades ago. He studied the onslaught of
minutiae in life in the classroom. He also reviewed the sources of satisfaction for the very best hard-working teachers.

What has been added to the purposeful busyness of the day (Counts, 1932) is federally-mandated standardization through No Child Left Behind (2002). “Faced with twenty or thirty restless students he has enough to do without worrying about whether his behavior is in accord with the pronouncements of the theorists or the admonishments of the curriculum planners” (Jackson, 1968/1990, p. 166). The curricular race is timed and paced. The race organizers expect that The Good Girls will lead the pack.

A Million Stars

I was very surprised to find remnants of A Million Stars alive and well. One of my university professors said that she had been controlled by love in Catholic parochial school. She lived in fear of disappointing the nuns. That philosophy continued, especially in the lower grades. Hershey kisses control second graders just as detention cards control high schoolers who have to get to work, football practice, pick up a younger sibling, etc.

Reading groups were assigned. One difference was that Kathleen, the democrat, sent all of her students to tutoring. Her students loved to go to the tutor; she was one of their favorite teachers. Yet, Kitty reflected that the students recognized the hierarchy of the reading groups by Christmas. It would be interesting to explore the flashbacks between A Million Stars and Hershey Kisses in the practice of teachers.

How Are the Arts Valued?

Art teachers have tenuous positions. Art is perceived as second class, because there is no official rating system/money for the subject. Teachers see art teachers laid
off, moved around, and unable to find a job. What is the perception of the art teacher caught in this dilemma? What is the effect of artistic limbo on the practice of the art teacher? What could teachers whose jobs are secure do to aid the arts? Are the arts valued more in highly-rated schools than in schools with low scores? Why? There is much to explore in this significant shift in curriculum. Is a portion of the curriculum disappearing?

Two Women’s Lives at School

They are the same age. They grew up in the same school system in the same city. As an adult, each is a renowned teacher in that same school system. One is White; one is Black. Going back and forth between Kitty and Roslyn was fascinating. The perceptions within comparable times were intriguing. A comparison of these two women could be wonderful and insightful. The story could be portrayed in conversation, choral verse, staged biography, or even through music. Who liked which music? What music is remembered? What does that signify?

A major issue could be explored through these two women. The major topics of the time, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, and the Women’s Movement are all possibilities. These two women have vivid memories and the stories to accompany them. I would suggest an artful representation of compare/contrast on these two lives.

There Was No One to Guide Anybody Who Had Come From the South

Roslyn should be the subject of a dissertation. Her story is so rich and powerful, that it should be explored further and recorded for all of us, present and future, to read and study. There should be a play, a biography, a work of historical fiction or nonfiction, a choral reading, or an epic poem written, so that the pictures of her life will be saved.
Roslyn’s experience profiles the march north of so many families from the South in the 20th century.

Roslyn not only has the memories, she has the artifacts. She has pictures and articles carefully saved and marked. She could sit on a stage telling stories and hold an audience’s attention. Her storytelling is magical and lyrical. This opportunity is too rich to let pass.

_The Interloper in a Monocultural School_

Bobby Ann Starnes (2005) was an interloper in her new school where fathers wore suits and carried briefcases and mothers wore aprons and no one had a Kentucky accent. I am an interloper in my school. As the media always notes when they visit my school library, I am the only White person in the room. No matter what I say or present, that is _always_ my qualifier in their reports.

Someone should study the perceived interloper in the school. Our local newspaper did an article on the lone White boy at my school. They overlooked the interlopers on the faculty. There are still surprises and shocks for those of us who have crossed lines of demarcation for decades. We have stories to tell.

_The Effect of Negative Perception on the Urban Teacher_

_That Must Be an Easy Job! They Don’t Read Much Over There, Do They?_

Those of us who teach in school that are publicly labeled as failing hear pejorative remarks repeatedly. We hear the remarks at the Junior League Christmas party. We hear the remarks on the radio coming home. We read the evaluations in the newspaper and see them on television. It takes a toll personally and professionally. I would like someone to study those of us who are never congratulated for the job that we do. I wrote
a small play about the trials of saying that one is an urban teacher in public. The retorts are swift and cutting. It would be interesting to collect the experiences of urban teachers in their relations with the public. What is the effect of continuing negative evaluations?

*Through the Eyes of the Teacher - Teaching the Harmed Child*

Terryle, Keith, Walt G., Pete, the little girl who had been sexually molested are real people. There are many others. What is the effect on the teacher of the harmed child? What do you do when you find Keith in your garage? What do you feel when you let Terryle go home for the summer? What do you do when you have to meet Pete and Walt G.’s parents at report card hand-out? How do you help the grandmother of the sexually-molested girl? What is the effect of child abuse on the child’s teacher?

*The Perception of National Board Certification*

Two of the participants in this research hold National Board Certification. What is the perception of National Board Certification? What is the perception of teachers who hold National Board Certification? Through the eyes of the public? Through the eyes of the teacher? Through the eyes of other faculty? What is respected? The process of National Board Certification? Or the certification itself?

*The Roman Catholic Church and the High-Quality Veteran Urban Teacher*

An almost constant theme in this research was the Roman Catholic Church. When Paul left his jacket, tie, and shoulder pads in his locker at his Catholic high school, he stuffed the Catholic Church in there, too. Kathleen’s act of rebellion at her parochial was pulling the fire bell. She did not have the power to make her mother stop taking her to mass, but she had the power to get herself kicked out of Catholic school. It was a downhill slide from there for her mother in her efforts to engage her daughter in the
Catholic faith. Bev lived in fear of the Catholic Church/her parents. She believed that God/her parents was/were going to get her if she misbehaved or underachieved. She perfected the life of *The Good Girl* as an overachiever. Kitty adopted her husband’s Catholic faith when she married him. He is no longer a practicing Catholic. Kitty is a faithful Catholic. The role of ritualized, formalized faith in the lives of the participants was very interesting. The study of the role of the Roman Catholic Church was incomplete. I hope that someone will complete this portion of the study.

*School Was a My Refuge…* (Bev)

*Going to a Safe Place, My Room…* (Colleen)

*That Classroom Is My Refuge…* (McCourt, 1999)

I hope that someone will study the school as safety and/or the school as refuge for the teacher and/or the student. Bev found a life at school. She is still a participant in every aspect of school life. She continues to offer whatever the students request in order to help them find the home at school that she found. Colleen offers safety in her classroom. She is inspired to surround her students with fun and rigor in her classroom. Frank McCourt brought his broken life to the New York City Schools and stayed until retirement. Like Colleen, he broke the rules that needed to be broken. After decades of requests from his students, McCourt took his stories public. Now, after six years of waiting, McCourt released *Teacher Man* (2005), his third book in the trilogy of *Angela’s Ashes* (1996) and *’Tis* (1999).

I was not cut out to be the purposeful kind of teacher who brushed aside all questions, requests, complaints, to get on with the well-planned lesson...I was already dreaming of a school where teachers were guides and mentors, not
taskmasters. I didn’t have any particular philosophy of education except that I was uncomfortable with the bureaucrats, the higher-ups, who had escaped classrooms only to turn and bother the occupants of those classrooms, teachers and students. I never wanted to fill out their forms, follow their guidelines, administer their examinations, tolerate their snooping, adjust myself to their programs and courses of study. (McCourt, 2005, p. 24)

The role of refuge for student and/or teacher should be studied further. Especially in the urban school where so many arrive at school already labeled by race and poverty, the philosophical discussion of refuge would make a wonderful treatise. Again, an artful portrayal, such as McCourt chose to write, could bring this subject to a wider audience.

I Attended Segregated Schools

I never tell anyone that I attended segregated schools in the United States. My growing-up years are confusing enough for the average American. I have to explain many states and a few countries. Presentism often precludes discussion. Someone should record and study the perceptions of segregation through the eyes of the child. My primary reactions involved the expectations of my family. Of course as a child, they were my primary authority. That should be considered in the research.

Evolution of the Adjective High-Quality

Language is not static. Definitions evolve, enlarge, and explicate changes in culture, meaning, and history. After 90 years of curriculum theorizing, the adjective high-quality illustrates the tensions in the chronicle of problem-solving in American education. As World War I was coming to a close in Europe, America’s school population was increasing. The invitation of universal education elicited questions of
curriculum and a field of scholarly inquiry and professional practice surfaced. In order to educate “an increasingly urban-industrial and pluralistic nation” (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 1), should we administer an efficient and scientific education (Bobbitt, 1918)? Or should we envision curriculum “beginning with the experience of the child” (Flinders & Thornton, p. 4)? These questions linger, today, and are exemplified in the evolution of the adjective high-quality as codified by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) and as experienced by practitioners of pedagogical tact (Palmer, 1998; van Manen, 1991) to describe and define the teacher who works with the children in the classroom.

Bev rebelled at the regulatory pacing guides which scheduled and prescribed the teaching of the day without ever meeting her students in first period who were so very different than the students in second period. She refused the generalized script for her own professional expertise. This high-quality veteran urban teacher chanced being labeled an “at-risk teacher” (Bev) for “democratic emancipation in the context of active meaning making through the facilitation of an integrated subject, self, and social understanding” (Kesson & Henderson, 2005, p. 1).

Bev, Rita, Kitty, Colleen, and Paul all described themselves as high-quality veteran urban teachers. They checked all three boxes in the descriptors of high-quality teacher as stipulated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002). However, in addressing their long tenures in the classroom, their living of high-quality (Palmer, 1998) was evidenced by particular work rather than by universal code. These teachers practiced a disciplined openness (Kesson & Henderson, 2005). Colleen yelled that the code-makers “do not know about the kid who comes with wet socks and no breakfast and no dinner last night” (Colleen). They practiced a deconstructive fluidity crossing boundaries
to feed breakfast in the back of the classroom to children who were late to school (Kitty). They practiced *theoretical inclusivity* in a sophisticated eclectic approach to the arts of the practical. Bev worried about the students who were *missing in action* in her school. Their inability to endure the conforming qualities of an exclusive curriculum culminated in the *presence of an absence* (Grumet, 1988). Moreover, by agreeing to participate in this research along with all the other committees, panels, programs, conferences, institutes, etc., in which they participate, they practiced *public intellectuality*. These teachers chose the eclectic, open, inclusive, practical, intellectual *problem-solving* practice of pedagogical tact (van Manen, 1991) over the one-size-fits-all *problem-solved* plan of *No Child Left Behind*.

In his book *What Is Curriculum Theory?* (Pinar, 2004), Pinar railed against “the documentation and surveillance system known as PASSPORT” (p. 206) at the university. Through the guise of “shared vision” (p. 214) and “intellectual homogeneity” (p. 214), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standard “produces the ‘de-intellectualization’ of schools of education” (p. 214). “The Professional Accountability Support System (PASSPORT) is an elaborate documentation and surveillance system developed in Louisiana to solidify the grip of NCATE on teacher education in Louisiana” (p. 215). In a foreshadowing of *NCLB*, “PASSPORT accustoms prospective teachers to never-ending busywork” (p. 215). Pinar described PASSPORT having been devised to enforce “bureaucratic regulations devised by politicians” (p. 215). The tension between *high-quality* as defined by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2002) and as lived and practiced through pedagogical tact (Palmer, 1998; van Manen, 1991) is a subject for further research from pre-K to university.
I am very pleased with this research. *Currere* was appropriate to the research both as epistemological subject and research subject (Grumet, 1976). The participants and I slowed down to re-enter the past and imagine the future (Pinar, 2004). We sought understanding through experience. We engaged “in ‘complicated conversation’ with our academic subjects, our students, and ourselves” (p. 9). Although this dissertation is but a portion of wonderful possibilities, I am fulfilled.

*After a full belly all is poetry.*

(McCourt, 1999, p. 352)
CHAPTER VI
SYNTHESIS

Now I become myself

It’s taken time, many years and places,

I have been dissolved and shaken,

Worn other people’s faces....

(Sarton, 1974, p. 156)

On a hot summer day in 1972, in a moment of alphabetic synchronicity, I stood at the head of the center of five lines of thousands of graduates at The Ohio State University. Because the center line was the longest, I led the graduates through the tunnel into Ohio Stadium. Little did I know that in the back of my line following my lead marched doctoral candidate William Pinar.

Three decades later, I reached back into the same line as a doctoral candidate myself to walk to graduation with Pinar again. We exemplify currere. Pinar earned a Ph.D. as a young man. I was not prepared for the most advanced degree until I had worked in urban schools for a career. In many ways, we never left each other. In a recurrent meeting, I wandered through The Regressive Moment, The Progressive Moment, and The Analytic Moment to The Synthetical Moment while Pinar took his turn to guide the way.
I Knew Something Was Wrong

I had been teaching school for two decades. I knew something was wrong, but I did not have the philosophical or theoretical knowledge to name it. I just knew that I did not want to do it. The squeeze was on, and my favorite principal was going out the door. Moreover, forms and formulas arriving with our new principal were encapsulating our school. No more introductory jokes at teachers’ meetings. No more Christmas parties or wandering brass instruments. There was a reason for everything. Nothing was new or improvisational, impractical or tactful. Everything was in place or getting into place.

Because I taught in an urban middle school with the lowest scores, the pall surrounding our school was the densest. Guidelines removed the environment. Inside all children could/would succeed. No excuses. Disregard the streets outside. This is your educational world inside. We will determine for you what is best. I was anxious. I did not fit in. I did not agree. I felt excluded and unprofessional.

A Doxology

William Pinar (2004) came forward from the back of my graduation line to join me in a curriculum studies class. He was embroiled in the same battle as I was. The Professional Accountability Support System (PASSPORT) was invading Louisiana State University where he was a professor. It has the uniform anti-intellectual and de-professionalizing agenda that I was facing at my middle school. Pinar fled to the University of British Columbia; I transferred to high school. He left the country; I changed buildings.

The panoptical eye of the Federal Cyborg was just turning its lens toward the high school. Programs arrived with their tempting grants and tortuous tentacles. With so
many new untenured teachers, there was safety in the regimen. Moreover, some of the tenured teachers were *on board*. I was not *on board*. I did not want to *get on board*. Standardization did not meet my standards. I used my seniority and my tenure to resist. I needed more. I found my research question.

The heart of the doxology is the unquestioned faith that there is one straight road, and one road only, to be taken and that every stage along the road must be annunciated – stated on the walls, reiterated by the teacher – in advance.

(Kozol, 2005, p. 124)

With the help of William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet, I decided to seek other high-quality teachers who veered off the straight road to experience the child in his world. How did they experience high-quality? What did high-quality mean to them? *Currere* allowed me to meet the whole teacher: the present teacher, the past teacher, the future teacher, and the teacher.

The Second Wave

I do not agree with William Pinar’s 1988 declaration of victory for reconceptualism. “While the academic field of curriculum studies has been reconceived, the major ideas which constitute the contemporary field of study have yet to make their way to colleagues in elementary and secondary schools” (Pinar, 1988, p. 13). He recognized that it might take years for everyone to realize that the *Tylerian Rationale* (Tyler, 1949) was dead. It is now 18 years since his pronouncement of victory. The Tylerian noose tightens. The teachers, and their relation with the curriculum and their students, are becoming moribund (Schwab, 1969), dead (Huebner, 1976), and arrested
(Pinar, 1978). Teachers slide through cracks in the procedures to their students. Pinar moved on to internationalization.

All the participants in this research, including me, practice professional artistry. We want to flaunt that gift. Right now it is hidden from view. We sneak it in. We hide it. We speak in cover stories, secret stories, and sacred-theory stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Kozol (2005) called our lives “passages of inner insurrection” (p. 126).

We wait for the Panoptical Cyborg to leave or turn away or break down. We dance between the lines with posters covering the glass doors of our classrooms.

We embody Gemeinschaft in the land of Gesellschaft (Tönnies, 1887/1957) under the guise of codification and the language rule (Arendt, 1964, 1971). Principals and their invited committees wait for us to transfer, retire, or at least minimally get on board. My dissertation director assured me several years ago that this would all disappear. All the participants, including me, hope that he is right. Our practice of high-quality (Palmer, 1998) rests in the land of Gemeinschaft. The pendulum is stuck in Gesellschaft.

I Let Him Drift Out of the School and Off to Vietnam

Currere joined us together. Each participant had a Terryle. One of the participants had a Terryle sitting in her classroom right now. She not only had the second-grade girl; she had her grandmother, too. Frank McCourt had Kevin. He seemed like a lost soul, floating around looking for a place to drop anchor, but I didn’t know enough, or I was too shy to show affection...

I let him drift out of the school and off to Vietnam. (McCourt, 2005, p. 99)
Pedagogical tact, practiced or missed, trailed the teacher. Our opportunities remained with us. I listened to the stories of the high-quality teachers. “I realize I’m making discoveries about myself” (McCourt, 2005, p. 28). We joined our past to the present and took it to school with us. We followed Madeleine Grumet’s (1976) advice and awakened our critical consciousness. We remembered some things and some people when they are young (Jackson, 1968/1990) that were hard to remember.

My own stories were affected as part of “storied lives on storied landscapes” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 145). Kozol (2005) hates the timed moment that we are right now. Teachers do not need to cut a child off abruptly when there is often “a bit of hidden treasure at the end of one of these long sentences” (p. 125). In the interviews, I watched the clock respectfully, but I acknowledged the ontological prize of the moment and let the moment find its own end.

Aequinimitas

I listened carefully to my committee. Each member had completed one dissertation and participated in many more. They could presume and predict where I could only wonder and wander. I knew that this work would be vital and ethereal at the same time. The research was on the earth and above the earth. It was existential and tangible in time. I was seeking a treasure with a map, but I was not certain where the key(s) was/were, who held it/them, or if I would be able to find the holder(s). Moreover, I was not sure that I would realize the treasure when/if I found it.

In the very first interview, Kitty told the story of escaping her hometown. She fled as far as she could only to continue to confront her past in the present and the future across the ocean and the country. Eventually, she returned to her hometown to complete
that which was incomplete. She animated *currere* without knowing the word. The longing that brought her back was an incomplete experience with family. She took that yearning to home and school. *I am definitely mother. Once they are mine, they are mine.*  

*Do not mess with my babies.*

In that initial interview, I was scared. Kitty is not talkative. She is not glib or overflowing; she is thoughtful and brief. She is a gentle, steady teacher. She was tired after a long day at school. I was tired after a long day at school. I quickly realized that I was speaking a foreign language in her second-grade classroom. I was afraid that she might not invite me back. Instinctively and immediately, I threw away my triadic interview plan. While perched on a tiny chair, I silently parsed out the three conversations, Palmer (1993), Connelly and Clandinin (1999), and van Manen (1990), to a coordinating moment. I left a design that complicated conversation for complicated conversation. Agreeing with Kozol (2000, 2005), I let the moment govern our *currere.*

What I did not realize at that moment was that quiet, calm Kitty was very deep. In an amazing and profound example of synchronicity, I heard *The Synthetical Moment* of this research of in the first five minutes of our meeting. I love elementary classrooms with all their paraphernalia and particulars. I had just asked her about her books in bags, wooden apples, and the number of children in her class, when out it came: *I teach a block from where I grew up.* It is on the first page of the transcription of the first interview. I did not appreciate what had just happened; although, I did respond, “You made a circle.” The stage was set. The next 14 interviews provided the decoration, lighting, direction, script, actors, audience, etc.
The moment repeated itself over and over. The circle widened and narrowed, wobbled and wandered; but the circle remained. Each moment proceeded to the next and the next to enlarge and simplify *Finale en Currere*. I had to gather all the voices in order to understand what had happened as I had entered the research. “We see ourselves as in the mind-set of a nested set of stories – ours and theirs” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 144). The conversations floated the *L’Essence* to the top.

First, I listened to the participants in the interviews. Then, I listened to their voices as I transcribed the audiotapes. I listened to their voices again and again as I pressed *forward* and *rewind* repeatedly to make sure that I heard their words accurately. I reread the transcriptions looking for typing errors and incomplete thoughts. The more that I read and heard and made notes, the more confident I became that this was important research. We were telling the untold story of the high-quality veteran urban teacher. I immersed myself in the research, and the research immersed itself in me.

Aequinimitas...means “mental stillness” or “inner peace.” Inner peace is an important quality for anyone whose daily work puts them in contact with human suffering. But this is not the outcome of distancing oneself from life, rather it is about knowing life so intimately that one has become able to trust and accept life whole, embracing its darkness in order to know its grace. (Remen, 1999, p. 37)

People ask me how long it took me to write my very thick dissertation. I tell them it is not so much how long it took to write the dissertation, but how long it took me to get to the point that I could write it. This dissertation is not an entity in itself; it is part of a long trek toward understanding. I am at peace with my work now. I have fulfilled the task that took me to the university in the first place. I have reached *aequinimitas*. 
She Helped Me

I tried to hide away to eat my sandwich and my orange. Just a few moments with the newspaper and my shoes off, please. It had been a long week all day at school and after school at the university. Soon, peeping around the corner came a boy/man home from military school/college. He is a wonderful, wild, handsome boy who is trying to find his way in the world. As an athlete, he has a scholarship to a Division I school. He has one foot in military school/college and one foot in the college. He is trying to get both feet onto the football field. He came to share his trials and to ask questions about the world with someone who would not laugh.

Kozol (2005) had the same experience with Pineapple. She had asked him about “where you live...where the other people are...” (p. 16). Wearing my birthday gift Princeton shirt sitting in my inner-city library, we talked about over there. I recognize that there are two over theres. I work in one over there and live in another. I can negotiate both worlds. My student is learning about over there. He has valuable gifts and talents to share. He comes with experience. Right now, he is trying to conform his gifts and talents to the requirements of the receiving world. He is negotiating. I notice the changes. We share our inner contradictions and hidden passages.

The telephone in his pocket rings. His mother needs him to bring the car home. He yells to his mother: “Ma, I am here in the library with Mrs. Zurava. You know, she always helps me...” What else do I need? That is pedagogical tact. My bologna sandwich and a wonderful conversation that is authentic. Sometimes, I am the teacher. Then, he takes a turn. “You face years of experience and their collective truth, and if you insist on hiding behind the teacher mask you lose them” (McCourt, 2005, p. 203).
The Pursuit of Knowledge

There is a sense in which the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake expresses a noble human vocation. The life of the scholar, although it can be tainted with self-serving, nonetheless has a high moral purpose: to push back the frontiers of darkness and misunderstanding so that other humans may enjoy the fruits of new knowledge. The scholar nonetheless participates in the meta-narrative of learning and knowledge, namely, that humanity is on a journey in which we deliberately participate. Learning enables us to understand the journey and to understand ourselves as we engage in the journey. Learning is what makes the journey a human journey, by producing interpretations about who we are and what the journey means. (Starratt, 1996, p. 33)

I read this quote in one of the first classes that I took in the doctoral program. Learning for its own sake is noble. I learn, because there is something to learn. Sometimes, the learning is just for me. Not too many people want to talk about hermeneutic phenomenology, mythopoetics, or curriculum studies. However, although they may not realize currere or reconceptualism, they benefit from the effect of my learning. I have an “enlarged way of thinking” (Arendt, 1961, p. 220). I am higher and bolder and wider and deeper. I understand across the breadth of literature at home, university, and school. I know more, and I am better for it.

I am also dangerous. I fly in the face of the code. I come to an inner-city school each day filled with knowledge that is peculiar and profound. I bring the universal to the particular and the particular to the universal. I came to my doctoral studies to find out why. I have the philosophies and theories to apply to the disease. I may not affect a cure,
but I can at least diagnose the discomfort. I am assured in that which I will and will not do. I will not raise my right arm to silence children. I subvert the language rule. I am not afraid to learn from my students. I have knowledge, but I do not have all the knowledge.

As my doctoral studies come to a close, everyone asks me what I am going to do. There is an expectation that a big change will occur, but the change has already occurred. I am living the change. My learning will continue. I have six books on the school desk in my computer room that I would like to read. I have presented at three conferences. I have sent a portion of a presentation off for consideration in a conference proceedings book. There are other conferences that I would like to attend. There are speakers that I would like to hear. I am open to new opportunities, but I am not applying for employment. If something comes, I will be glad to consider it.

Over the last year at the university and at conferences, people have referred to me as the new Jonathan Kozol. I heard him speak at Kent State University – Stark last month. I tried to talk to him while he autographed my book, but he was more interested in speaking to prospective young teachers. Kozol (2005) spends all his time researching and writing his books. He has not been a full-time classroom teacher for several decades. I marvel how he captures pictures and scenes that allow the world to experience “ghettoized communities” (p. 98) and the teachers and children therein. Frank McCourt is more like me.

In the world of books I am a late bloomer, a Johnny-come-lately, new kid on the block. My first book, *Angela’s Ashes*, was published in 1996 when I was sixty-six, the second, *‘Tis*, in 1999 when I was sixty-nine. At that age it’s a wonder I was able to lift the pen at all...
So, what took you so long?

I was teaching, that’s what took me so long...

When you teach five high school classes a day, five days a week, you’re not inclined to go home to clear your head and fashion deathless prose. After a day of five classes your head is filled with the clamor of the classroom.

(McCourt, 2005, p. 3)

That is me. I am a Johnny-come-lately. I have been a Johnny-come-lately since I took my first step into my doctoral studies. I came when I had the questions and the time to find the answers. I have time still. *Currere* is not finite; it is infinite.

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

(Eliot, 1943/1968, p. 47)
Bread and Wine

“Bless me, Mother!”

“Me too, Mother!”

“Don’t forget me, Mother!”

“Bless me, Mother!”

“Bless me!”

“Bless me!”

“Bless me!”

Mother Martha and the Students

St. Ann’s Episcopal School

Mott Haven, New York

(Kozol, 2000, p. 70)
APPENDIX A

EPOCHE

Autobiography

I do not have a home town. Because of a train accident that was overwhelming the physicians and the emergency room with injured passengers, my great aunt delivered me in the labor room at Fort Hayes Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. The doctors arrived just after I did. Traveling surrounded my birth and my life. Very shortly after my birth, my Air Force father was transferred; and I left what might have been my home town at two months old. Military families understand that it is possible to have no specific geographical root. I grew up within a very large enclave that kept changing and interchanging. I lived literally above my sister-in-law as children in Germany. Shortly thereafter, we lived in neighboring German towns. In the United States, we lived in two towns in the same state. People came and went, only to reappear again. Geography was outside the door, not in a book.

When the oldies play on the radio, someone might say, “Oh, they played that when I was a sophomore in high school!” A military child will remember the song by place, and might remember it more than once. I discovered that California played songs before Florida. If I heard a song on the West Coast, they were just introducing it on the East Coast. It might not hit Europe for six more months. My identity was attached to location.
I thought it was a grand life. I was always ready to move. If my father came home with transfer papers, I scurried into my room to pack my dolls in their traveling cases; and I was ready. We lived where my father worked. The fact that what we did reflected on my father’s career was drummed into our heads. No one was to get in trouble. In America, my brothers had to mow and edge the lawn. We played in our own yard, unless invited into another yard. We answered the telephone properly. We earned good grades and were respectful to our teachers in our military schools.

Saving Private Ryan

One evening, my husband, sister-in-law, and I were watching Saving Private Ryan (Spielberg, 1999), the story of Captain John Miller who leaves his high school English classes to go to war, on DVD. Susan and I were chatting away about the veracity of the sets. What was really Germany… What was really the Netherlands… We recalled our walk to school through the forest with its giant snails, which my brothers loved to hurl at us. Coming out of the forest, we climbed large slabs of bombed buildings and jumped down with our skirts flying as we landed. We lived in the aftermath of World War II. We learned the stories of war from our German and American teachers at the scene of the battle. My husband alerted us to how strange we sounded to ordinary people. What was our childhood was extraordinary to normal people. We had lived curriculum as place.

Like many 1950s families, we had a large family of five boys and me. My sister-in-law, Susan, was my best friend growing up. Her family had five girls. Every year, my mother had a baby boy; and her mother had a baby girl. I loved playing at Susan’s house. Her family lived in a baron’s mansion. It was magnificent. They had pretty things and
fine silver that were used every day. No one slugged anyone. At my house, our arguments were quickly over. The biggest and strongest won. At her house, the fights went on forever with crying and yelling. I kept waiting for someone to hit someone, so it would be over. I still liked to be there with so many girls. We alternated spending weekends at her house or my house. At least, when she was around, I had extra defense against my too many brothers.

Susan and I played hide-and-seek in the abandoned German officers’ barracks across the street. I stayed near the exits, as great cobwebs, animals, and insects had taken over the huge building. Susan and her sisters were braver. They explored deep into the building coming out with artifacts from rooms with names still on the doors. Our large round coffee table, which had been recovered from that barracks, had a swastika branded into the bottom of it. Nothing was wasted. Goods were shared. My piano teacher was paid with American cigarettes and coffee.

In the evening, our fathers carried baseball bats as they walked the family dogs together. There were still wild dog packs roaming the area. Family dogs revert to feral when they are left behind by fleeing owners. I had my own encounter with a wild dog when I tried to take our Springer Spaniel down to the servant quarters under our house. I will never know how I pulled our large dog into a storage room and managed to shut and lock the door with a wild dog on the outside barking and fighting to get to us. I weighed 63 pounds. I remember sitting on the floor and shaking all over until Clara came to find me. Clara and Gertrude, Polish refugees trying to find their husbands, helped my mother take care of the six children.
I loved school and my teachers. I tried to be very good and get good grades. My parents put little pressure on me. Their expectations were clear. We knew what we were supposed to do; and, on the whole, we did it. Our school curriculum matched our home curriculum. My home was very similar to Susan’s home. We lived in patriarchal large orderly families. Susan’s family stayed intact until this day. My family split apart. When my father was retiring from the service, he divorced my mother. Divorce and alcoholism/drug abuse became descriptors of our family, following through the sons into their adult lives.

All the women of my generation in my family, who work outside the home, are teachers. None of our daughters are teachers. Our daughters work in marketing, journalism, real estate, and law. Susan and I played school even after we had been in school all day. We played school in the summer when we were off school. We took turns being the teacher after corralling our little brothers and sisters and making them sit in rows on the hill behind our house. We played Go to the Head of the Class (Milton Bradley) until we had the answers memorized, and it was not so much fun anymore. We never really veered from our chosen careers.

Entries Into America

At the cusp of my junior-senior high school years, I attended school in the United States. I did not understand what I saw or experienced. I did not know all the words. Most of all, I found the culture fearful. We briefly lived in Florida where I experienced what Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) called Southern Gemeinschaft or “a distinctive way of knowing, an epistemology of place” (p. 10). I never tell anyone my southern stories. My memories are shameful, more so for Florida than for me.
Military kids come to school with a hefty tuition paid and loads of replaced scientific equipment for the local school district. They also come with worldly views and ideas. Consequently, the local district placed all of us in the poorest junior high school in the district. Students were not required to wear shoes. Despite our money, we were not expected to be able to stir the culture of Southern poor. We traveled by bus from the Air Force base, past the paper mill, while holding our breath, and the tar shacks with old dilapidated stuffed furniture and washing machines on the porches, to an impoverished educational experience. During the long bus ride, we passed a junior high school for the Black students. We had our own elementary school on the base. We lived and attended school with all military children. Military members of color whose children grew beyond elementary age were conveniently transferred north.

Mostly, I remember incidents that were complicated and miserable during my short stay in Florida. One day, the police descended on our junior high school. There was a city-wide sting that week arresting homosexuals. I remember that a priest and an Air Force captain were arrested. The police came right into our English classroom and attempted to handcuff our teacher, Billy Jo Dannelly. Mr. Dannelly was an odd person. He had a habit of drooling and wiping with his increasingly wet handkerchief. He resembled a very tall, erect Uriah Heep. I did my work and kept quiet in his class. When the police approached Mr. Dannelly, he threw himself to the floor and grabbed the leg of his desk. He bawled and cried, while we sat stunned in our seats. Eventually, the police dragged Mr. Dannelly away. The principal came in to teach the class. When I arrived home, my mother and her friend were reading the list in the newspaper of those already arrested. In the same year that President-Elect John F. Kennedy (1960) decried the
feminization of the America male in an article in *Sports Illustrated*, I never told my parents about my last day in Billy Jo Dannelly’s class.

At the football game, the White students all sat on one side of the stadium. On the other side, the juvenile delinquents and their guards sat on one end. The Black students sat at the other end. On the city bus, my older brother and I headed toward the last row to get the best bounces on the bus. The bus driver pulled us back forward with his fists in our hair. The same lines of demarcation entered the classroom through cultural enactors/enforcers. At the high school, there was fearful talk of pending integration.

My mother’s inability to cope with Southern place hurried our leaving. With so many boys, my mother was always a Cub Scout den mother. When it came time for the Blue and Gold banquet, my mother reserved a dining room in a restaurant in town. As the military families arrived, the confrontation began. My mother was inside putting the finishing touches on the decorations. The owner was outside denying entry to any family of color. My mother rushed to the door of the restaurant and insisted that the owner stand aside so that the Cub Scout families could enter. The owner refused. My mother went nuts. She was on the sidewalk in her Cub Scout den mother uniform yelling and threatening to picket. Finally, all of us went back to the base and surprised the Officers Club who helped us with an impromptu banquet. We left for a visit to our grandparents in Ohio; we never went back to Florida.

We always attended school wherever we were in whatever language was spoken or culture prevailed no matter what time our plane landed. While visiting America in elementary school, my grandparents sent me to the school that my parents had attended.
I loved the American desks, even the ones screwed to the floor. One day my teacher took my hand and held me back as my classmates left. She stood me close to her at her desk and gently asked, “Do you know that there are three there’s?” No, I had not known. I also did not know what tardy or faucet or so many others words meant. I left with complete understanding of they’re, there, and their. In an expression of pedagogical tact, her thoughtfulness helped my transition to my home culture.

The Regressive Moment

I would like to apologize. I would like to apologize to the students in my French and English classes in my first year of teaching in an Appalachian high school. I would especially like to apologize to one girl whose paper was graded as if she were a college freshman. I would like to apologize to the students in my French classes in my first year of teaching in an urban middle school. I would especially like to apologize to one girl to whom I was overreacted. Although I entered urban education with five years teaching experience and a brand new master’s degree, it was like starting all over. I would like to apologize to the man who brought his son to meet me at my father’s funeral last year. I had been his favorite teacher. When he casually asked, “Does my name mean anything to you…still?” I replied, “No, I am sorry. I don’t remember…” I will never do that again. I will lie and say that you are fresh in my mind and heart, as I was in his. I do remember a career of faces. It will not really be a lie.

Everything was stunning to me during my first year as an urban teacher. I had never seen girls fight. I did not even know that girls fought. The pace of the curriculum changed. What I had covered in one year at an Appalachian high school took two years in an urban middle school. I was wary, scared, and unconnected. Everyday I learned
something new, and it was not always something that I wanted to learn. Eventually, a few senior male teachers took me under their wings and guided me through the complicated political environment of urban education.

My second year as an urban French teacher was renewal. I caught on, and everything really improved for the students and me and our relation with the curriculum. Everyday I had new ideas, and I was able to improve the environment in the classroom. Of course, I was not teaching in heaven. The paddle still ruled the school. One student was paddled against the lockers outside my classroom. The metal ricocheted the sound up and down the hall. At my previous Appalachian high school, the athletic director/assistant principal’s office, accentuate athletic director, was on one side of my classroom for five years. The ever-revolving head football coach’s classroom was on the other side. Whenever students were swatted, my teaching came to a crashing halt. I would shake and quake and stand nervously until it was over. I could not bear anyone being struck. I would tear up in front of my class. I refused to witness, even though I had no tenure. I would not help continue a custom of violence in school.

I stayed at my urban middle school for six years. At the end of my sixth year, all my students passed French. It was a great achievement. Refusing committees and extra assignments, I put all my efforts into the classroom. It paid off for all of us. I had not known that that would be my last year teaching at that school. When my transfer to a middle school library came in August, I was glad to have left on such a high note.

I experienced pedagogical love at my Appalachian high school and at my urban middle school. Some students never leave me. Others meld into experience. I sought Gemeinschaft in the land of Gesellschaft (Tönnies, 1887/1957). I offer an Appalachian
tale of *Gemeinschaft*. Rob had been in three of my classes at the high school, English I, French I, and French II. I expected to see him in French III next school year and French IV the year after that. One evening, I strolled down to *Country Maid Ice Cream* stand where I saw Rob standing in the line smoking a cigarette. In the land of *Gemeinschaft*, I walked over to Rob and cleared my throat looking pointedly at the cigarette, which he dropped to the ground. When I saw his grandmother at the market the next week, I let her know that Rob was smoking so that she could tell his parents. The next month, I met Rob’s parents at the park. They thanked me for helping them quell Rob’s attempts to become the next James Dean.

In the land of *Gesellschaft*, I am/was a suburbanite teacher teaching in an inner-city middle school. The school was very large; we had an armed city police officer patrolling the school. LaMarquis was in my French I class, in which he did fairly well. I liked him, and I asked him to register for French II. One summer evening, I drove to a mall, where I normally did not shop, to pick up a particular item. There, I saw LaMarquis hanging with a group of tattooed, loud kids outside the movie theater. They were jumping on the planters and preventing anyone from using the bike racks by using them at seats for themselves. I caught LaMarquis’ eye, as I slowed down in the traffic. He flicked his cigarette at my car. He was too far away to hit it. I did not like the kids in his crowd. I wished he were home away from them, whatever home and whoever is living there... Oh, well, it was summer. It was none of my business what LaMarquis did outside of school. Mall security would run them off, if they kept scaring the patrons. I taught in a big school. Even if he did sign up for French, he might get another teacher anyway. I did not want any trouble when I was alone outside of school.
These two stories illustrate the difference that I experienced in and out of school as a young teacher. I found Gemeinschaft within both Appalachian and urban schools. The difference was outside of school. As an urban teacher, I was wary and stepped back into the land of Gesellschaft. Even after working for decades in urban education, scenes still startle my world.

**Marquetta**

Marquetta’s teacher sent her to the office right after lunch again. She was entirely disruptive, screaming at the teacher, and refusing to allow the class to complete the lesson. The middle-school principal told Marquetta sternly, “Come into my office. We are going to try to call your mother. This has got to stop, Marquetta!” Marquetta, who was already upset, began reeling and wailing; she almost fell down. She pleaded with the principal, “Please, please don’t call my mama! I’m beggin’ you. Please, please don’t call!” Marquetta kept screaming holding her hands together in prayer-like fashion. “Marquetta, it is just a phone call. I just want to talk to her,” replied the principal in a calm voice. “Please, please don’t call. My mama go down to the basement to smoke crack every afternoon after her [television] show. Don’t bother her. Please don’t call. She’ll kill me! I won’t be able to go home! Please...” The principal put an arm around Marquetta and escorted her gently into his office. She was gulping for air. Over his shoulder, he quietly asked the secretary to call the guidance counselor down to his office. Marquetta’s experience outside of school came lapping one wave over another onto her experience at school.
Volunteers

The family/home coordinator asked to schedule the library for a parent/community volunteer meeting. Inviting uneducated adults living in long-term poverty into the school community can be a risky business. Often, their personal needs overwhelm their ability to tend to the needs of others, including their own children. Our principal was willing to take a chance and bring volunteers into the school. We asked and answered questions about the school volunteer code of behavior. How do we give a complement to a 15-year old boy? For what purposes do we use the copier? What should we wear to school? How loudly should we speak? Should I smoke in school? Should I expect to attend the school dance? Who will listen to my problems? Should I bring my CD player? Many members of the school community had dropped out of school right after junior high school. Their memories of school were linked to their lack of success. Our school was stepping forward in a belief in the equity of man and working toward enabling their participation in the life of their children and our school.

John

John was not disruptive in his severe-behavior handicap class; he completed some of his lessons, enough anyway to pass. What John did not do was talk. The teacher tried to draw John into the class. The educational assistant gave John extra individual help. Nothing worked. John sat silently withdrawn as far into the corner as he could get. In the early fall, his exasperated teacher consulted with the librarian to see if John could work as a library helper. The librarian agreed, tentatively. John was glad to go to the library the next morning. He was happy to get away from the pressure of the small SBH classroom where two adults were constantly vigilant to his silence.
John found a home in the library. He liked the tall black chair that swiveled 360° and the orange vest that the helpers wore. He liked the library stamp and the large room. He liked the computers and the magazines. Mostly, he liked it that people left him alone. The two ladies in the library always asked him if he wanted to do something. “John, could you put this in the pony envelope for me?” “John, do you feel like getting the mail?” “John, would you help me push in the chairs?” The library technician showed him how to work at the circulation desk. At first, he was hesitant; but soon, he wanted to show that he could put cards in a large pile of books faster than the technician could get them organized on the library cart.

One day, he walked over to the circulation desk from the computer when the library was swamped and began checking out books. He spoke to his friend who was checking out a book. They chatted while John sat swiveling in the chair. John was never talkative, but he talked from that day forward. The librarian and the technician gave him lots of room and choices. When he would arrive in the library, someone would say, “John, when you get time, could you...” John would order his own jobs in his own time and get them done before he left. John worked in the library all morning for three years. No one asked him back the second year or the third year; he just showed up. John chose to step forward, and the teacher, the librarian, and library technician gave him the freedom to make that choice. John is a sailor in the U. S. Navy.

The Progressive Moment

Jones (1990) summed urban education as “a passage of failure” (p. 75). Kathy Mellor, 2004 National Teacher of the Year, described her students as culturally different. Now, federal and state mandates seek to effect homogeneity out of heterogeneity. They
do not seek segregation or integration; instead, they deny the experience of the child in favor of the appraisal of the Cyborg. Unseen, unknowing, the machine evaluates from afar. Even the human evaluator walks between narrow parameters that may or may not acknowledge Rob, Marquetta, John, or LaMarquis and their varied histories.

I have always found it difficult to leave school. I stay to look out the window at the departing students. I change one more picture on the bulletin board. I swing by football practice, as huge boy/men yell, “Watch me, Mrs. Z!” Lately, I find that I continue my watch while driving home through the neglected neighborhoods in which our children live.

I stopped for the light at the corner. Next to me, in the driving rain, stood a girl dressed in a yellow rain hat and coat holding a smaller boy’s hand. I noticed them particularly because of the rain gear that the girl wore. Children standing on corners in that section of town do not wear yellow rain coats. Then, I looked down at her feet. She wore one yellow boot and one soaking wet sock. Her left boot was missing. The boy and girl were standing in front of a bank. It sounds safe, but abutted to the bank was a notorious strip joint. Across the street, signs screamed Checks Cashed, Pawn Brokers, or Nite Club. Ne’er-do-well men lounged over the benches that the city had screwed into the sidewalks as part of a beautification project. I wanted to scream, too. “Don’t cross the street, little boy and girl! It is safer over here!” The light changed. I turned right passing by the one-boot girl and the smaller boy as they stepped off the curb into the flowing gutter.

What had happened to the little girl’s boot? Had she worn two boots to school? Schools are complicated with layers of this and webs of that surrounding and infiltrating
the reading room, the science lab, and the music class. Situated between the Knower and
the Known, veils spasmodically draw and part. Frank McCourt (1996) concentrated more
on Mr. O’Neill’s peeling of the apple than on Euclid and geometry in mathematics class.
Better to gain the taste of the discarded peel than to prove theorems. Jesse Stuart’s
(1949) students learned the curriculum that their teacher was able to carry their Kentucky
mountain school where he comprised the entire high school faculty.

As I drive through the neighborhoods, I learn about my students’ lives from
outside their houses. I watch the streets. I saw a middle-school boy loping down the
sidewalk in a very bad area. He looked like a country kid; he did not match the environs.
I saw three thugs wearing the insignia of trouble trailing him. I could see that the lone
boy was oblivious to the danger behind him. Thinking I might recognize the gang boys, I
drove straight toward them to get a better look. I did not know them, but they noticed
me. I turned around at the corner and circled back trailing the separated boys. The
solitary boy turned the corner and started up the hill on the sidewalk. At the top of the
hill, a larger version of the boy was washing a car. The boy yelled and waved and rushed
up to hug the man. They began washing the car together. The gang glanced up the hill
and continued down the street. I wanted to yell, “Move! Your son is in danger! Walk
with your son!” Instead, I regained my route and headed home. I never saw the lone boy
or man again.

A complicated walk home from school represents a complicated day at school. A
boy in danger or a missing boot is not recognized within the tight prescriptions of the
Standard. The Standard is regular; it is not irregular. An imperfect urban curriculum
bumps, twists, and turns to greet and meet the child who has made it to school. The high-quality veteran urban teacher embraces the irregular.

He was standing on the corner bent forward under the weight of his backpack. His jacket was tightly zipped. His hands were shoved in his pockets against the crisp autumn air. I was waiting in my car at the light beside him. The boy had to cross five lanes of traffic to reach the other side. I watched him check and recheck the light. He knew what to do. Someone had taught him to cross on the green light. He was careful and tense. So was I. How could this small child be expected to cross such a large intersection by himself? An adult should be holding his hand. The light changed to green. He glanced at me. I nodded at him. Then, ever so slowly, I placed my car beside him; and we crossed the intersection together. I will bet there was a lanyard with a house key under his jacket. The zipper kept the key safe. He needed the key to let himself into the house until his mother came home from work. She was scheduling appointments in a doctor’s office, cleaning offices, or straightening dresses on a rack. She did not make very much money. They lived in a not-so-good neighborhood. Her son had to walk home alone. He was holding up his part of their family.

I am unconcerned about pacing guides, molding and scolding (Jones, 1990), or other such passively violent regulation. I worry more for the boy crossing the street, the one-boot girl and her little brother, and the boy being trailed than the collective of education. In an expression of pedagogical tact, I seek the children one by one.

The Analytic Moment

The role of women has changed during my career in education. When I entered teaching in 1977, *Gracious Submission* (Pinar, 2004) described the female teachers in my
high school. I neither saw a female administrator during my K-12 years as a student nor my first five years as a high school English and French teacher. Our principals were promoted coaches, primarily football coaches. They were good principals, but they were also always the principals.

When I returned to teaching in 1983, salaries had drastically improved and the last all-male administrations were retiring in my urban school system. One assistant principal visited a young single blond female teacher every day to tell her how pretty she looked. She tried to veer away from him, but he knew she would have to return to her classroom. That young blond female teacher is now a high school principal. Now, it is expected that administrative staffs will be mixed-gender and in the inner-city, mixed race. However, as one moves deeper into the inner-city, the most difficult jobs fall to female principals, particularly women of color.

I need to apologize again to the girls at the Appalachian high school where I started teaching. With the anti-war movement going full-blast in the 1970s, the girls wanted to wear pants to school. Fashion was in question, along with many other aspects of culture. Finally, so many high school girls were wearing pants that the administration gave up. They could not suspend all the girls each day. Thanks to the students, the faculty women were able to wear slacks to work.

Fashion changed as teachers took a larger role in the school. Men left their neckties at home. Women came to school in slacks and sweaters. A more egalitarian attitude began to emerge in teacher leadership and voice. Building Leadership Teams replaced Principal Advisory Committees. At the local level, more teachers had more choice and opportunity, if they wanted it.
However, with the advent of *No Child Left Behind* (2002), pressure has increased to conform and perform at standardized mandated levels. Teachers rush to keep up with the pacing guides in order to meet looming testing dates. Urban teachers are expected to catch up students who arrive to school already behind while wading through issues of socioeconomics. Those of us who have passed through annual buzzwords for decades seem to rise above the frenetic activity that hovers around less experienced teachers. After seeking the assurance of my doctoral advisor that *This Too Shall Pass*, I am not investing myself in standards and their accompanying manuals. I work in close contact with the student and the curriculum to better the relationship of the *Knower to the Known*.

The Synthetical Moment

In the field of education, there is no doubt that compassionate motivation is important and relevant. Irrespective of whether you are a believer or non-believer, compassion for the students’ lives or future, not only for their examinations, makes your work as a teacher much more effective. With that motivation, I think your students will remember you for the whole of their lives (Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, 2001, p. 113)

One Saturday afternoon, the day before Mother’s Day, I took my children to the lake to feed the ducks. When we returned, my daughter found a note from my husband on the kitchen island. He had left our family. Like dominos, the form of our life fell away. Because he was a lawyer, things moved quickly. The sheriff came and put us out of the house. As our living world became smaller and smaller, my gratitude for what we had increased. We had less to dust and much less to vacuum, but we survived. We left court without one nickel. We were on our own.
My daughter was preparing to leave for college. I was left with a 10-year-old son and a master’s degree. Seven school systems offered me positions. The urban school system moved the fastest. In fact, they insisted that I sign a contract at 8:00 a.m. the morning after they interviewed me. I had a child to feed and a roof to put over our heads. I signed. One school psychologist laughed at me in front of my children. “You’re crazy! Don’t you know they have a padded room in that school?” No, I had not known that. I needed a paycheck and health care.

My Episcopal priest assured me that I had lost nothing of worth. Before he died in 1991, he pronounced from the pulpit that there was no such thing as coincidence. “There is only the hand of God.” It turned out that he was right. Synchronicity (Jaworski, 1996) had placed me in the land of Strangeland where I found a second home at school.

**Terryle**

Terryle was in the first class of the afternoon. He sat in the middle of the left row by the blackboard. Terryle was terrible. Despite the fact that I was newly arrived to urban education as an experienced teacher, I had no idea what to do with Terryle. Soon after school started, I called his father for help. His father gave me permission to "bash Terryle with anything I had to get my hands on to make him behave." The next day Terryle arrived in class obviously traumatized. While he was standing beside me, I realized his father had beaten him. He shakily stumbled through an apology and asked me to sign a dirty torn piece of notebook paper on which his father had wildly scribbled a note to me. I signed that Terryle had apologized. I told Terryle that all I wanted from him was a chance to teach all the students.
In that revelatory moment, I ended a truthful relationship with Mr. Trovich and started one with Terryle. I signed anything Terryle brought from home. "We have to take into account the overall situation and weigh the benefits of telling a lie or telling the truth and do what we judge to be the least harmful overall. In other words, the moral value of a given act is to be judged in relation both to time, place, and circumstance and to the interests of the totality of all others in the future as well as now" (Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, 1999, p. 153).

In the early fall, I met Mr. and Mrs. Trovich at Open House. They were in full Hell's Angels regalia complete with skull and cross bones caps, leather chaps, studded wristbands, etc. Mr. Trovich was a huge, loud, crude man. Their outfits were so complicated and startling, that I wanted to ask them to just stand there for a minute so that this suburban Junior League teacher could take in the full scene. I continued to lie by omission in our meeting that evening.

Terryle passed eighth-grade French. The high school French teacher threw him out of class during the first nine weeks. Terryle never finished his freshman year. The school administration did not try to get him to return to the high school.

People die young in the Trovich family. Terryle’s older brother had been a teen suicide. Terryle died in the fall of 1999. Before I ever saw his name, I recognized his picture in the obituaries. I have thought about him so many times since he was my student. Not many people in education liked Terryle; but I did, and he knew it. I was Terryle’s teacher, but he taught me so much.

Looking back, I think Terryle was the reason that I entered the doctoral program. His was a presence, or “presence of an absence” (Grumet, 1988, p. xiii), in my life.
Officially, Terryle was part of my life for a finite time. I offered him safety one period per day during the school year. I did not accompany him the rest of the day or to his home after school. I did not help him during the long summer months. I cannot make right that which is wrong. I cannot restore that which is gone. I cannot remove that which was done. I could not save Terryle. I still seek to resolve the irresolvable.

_In Shockingly Intimate Ways_

“God’s providential care is expressed in shockingly intimate ways” (Sulerud, 2005, p. 22). This afternoon, I was holding a tiny baby girl while I introduced the research display to a biology class in our inner-city high school library. One of my favorite students had brought her new baby to school. We rejoiced in the safe birth of a sweet baby who bears a strange name that will trigger mocking asides and whose unwed mother has not graduated from high school. I am still not quite sure how I arrived at my monochromatic school, but I know that I am at home. No one bribed me. No contract obliged me. No one pressured me. Someone asked me. And I said yes.

It all depends on whether or not the fragment of our life reveals the plan and material of the whole. There are fragments which are only good to be thrown away, and others which are important for centuries to come because their fulfillment can only be a divine work. They are fragments of necessity.

If our life, however remotely, reflects such a fragment…we shall not have to bewail our fragmentary life, but, on the contrary, rejoice in it.

(Bonhoeffer, 1937/1963, p. 34)
APPENDIX B

Inner Contradictions and Hidden Passages

Pedagogical Tact and the High-quality Veteran Urban Teacher

Choral Verse en Vue de Currere

Première Partie

The form of this choral verse reflects the classroom.

There is a plan that might be interrupted at any minute.

The players come and go. Nothing is static.

The players take several roles. Voices mingle.

There is unequal power, but everyone has power.

Bev: Textural

She had a way of tweaking our curiosity

And really pushing us,

And she had fun doing that. Bev: Structural

My parents never read to me as a child

Bev: Textural

I got hit a lot,

Accused of things that I had not done,
I wasn’t allowed to do things  

That other kids were allowed…  

I ploughed into school big-time  

And got involved in absolutely anything  

Bev: Textural  

And everything I could get my hands on.  

I had assumed this responsibility  

At kind of a young age  

For developing something at school,  

I loved the responsibility.  

And really loved it.  

I loved the idea that I was afforded that  

Opportunity to be in charge.  

With no strings attached, just in charge.  

Bev: Textural  

That was great.  

I don’t know why.  

That was cool.  

I asked her.  

Sure if you want to,  

Bev: Structural  

Go ahead.  

So, I said, Okay, then.  

It was a lot of work,  

And I did it.  

Bev: Textural  

She thought it was great.  

I got a chance to be a student director,  

That was great.  

As assistant director,
Took care of the music, publicity, props.

I just took care of all these different pieces.  

I put in many hours at school and loved it. It was an escape from home.

Bev: Structural

I have no clue why they let me do this.

I mean, absolutely, none.

Bev: Textual

And I mean, trusting.

They truly trusted that I was going to go out there And do something that was appropriate Which, of course, I was.

Bev: Structural

I put myself through school.  

Because of that, my education was sacred.

Bev: Structural

I worked way too hard for that. I was going to get that degree.

Bev: Textual

He was hoping that we would get married when he graduated.

You need to let me finish my education. This I have to do.
I finished my education and got my degree.

*Bev: Textual* Then I *got married.*

I began every kind of extracurricular club

That you could ever imagine. *Bev: Structural*

I did exactly what my teachers had done to me.

*Bev: Textual* I turned ownership over to my students.

If there was a need for it *Bev: Structural*

Or the kids thought it might be kind of *cool* I would sponsor it.

*Bev: Textual* I was there for them.

Just like some of those teachers who were there for me when I was growing up

*In substitute for my mom.*

*Bev: Textual* I was dusting the furniture.
I was helping with the dishes.

I was five years old, and I was doing housework. And cleaning out my sisters’ dirty diapers. So when I went to school, I thought I was going to keep working on a bigger scale.

As a kid I was thinking school was housework. How funny was that!

My father being first-generation American, he ruled with an iron fist. My mom was always hitting, slapping, pulling hair. Back then, you had church, too. If you do anything wrong, God is going to get you. I never got swatted.

I don’t believe that my elementary teachers were so huge on their content.

I think they were just nurturing moms. Most of them were elderly ladies. I had a very few young women as teachers. They were just the lovable sweet people teaching.

There was that kind of license, too. They would do it out of love for kids.
Bev: Textual

Every classroom was a one-room schoolhouse.  Bev: Structural

I think they just did their thing.

Bev: Textual

Memorize this, this, and this.

Here is the test.  Bev: Structural

Remember questions at the end of the chapters.  Answered the questions.

Tests over the questions at the end of the chapters.  Studied them

Took a test.

Bev: Textual  Bev: Structural

The second year I taught  I was organizing curriculum.

I was designing curriculum.

A lot of freedom in my classroom to plan out and do what I wanted.

I was very fortunate starting off my career at that time.  Respected me as a teacher.

Nobody was really looking over my shoulder, because they saw results.

A little local school there in the neighborhood.

Bev: Textual

Things have changed.

Money driven.

Political

Platform.
Campaigning.

*Why Johnny Can’t Read*

**Lack of money.**

Pull away from downtown.

Involved in meetings.  
Busy doing meetings.  
Dipped their fingers into my curriculum.

I had to teach to a test.

They would be able to spit back the answers on this test.

*Bev: Structural*

We are leaving kids behind just by the nature of what we are doing.

My drop-out rate is probably higher today.

Their frustration level is high.

I have a problem with that as a professional.

There is a cycle here.

*Bev: Structural*

*Bev: Textual*  
I have gone overboard trying to provide at school for kids

**School was my refuge.**  
And make school a refuge for children.

I make sure that I have enough things going on at my school,

*Bev: Textual:*  
So that if a kid needs something,

School provided things for me.  
They can latch onto it.

**I had my place there.**  
*Bev: Structural*

I want that for my students, too.
I am more of a provider.
I provide avenues for them to pursue.

Bev: Textual

The sad part is if I were being judged based on pacing guides

Bev: Structural

I would probably be an at-risk teacher
Because I am not reading this page this day.

Bev: Textual

Oh, poor Ashley, you have got a rotten life.
I do not want her sitting on the curb of life whining all the time.

Bev: Structural

I did it. She can do it.

Bev: Textual

I love the memory of those people
That I honor through scholarships.

Bev: Structural

And I love the idea of who they go to,
Because then we take pictures of the kids,
Who get the scholarships.

Bev: Textual

I think we are in a pattern right now that we are going to be in for a while.

No Child Left Behind

Bev: Structural

We have to let it run its course.
A lot of kids’ lives will be ruined by stupidity.

We have to work double hard to try
To make sure that positive things happen
In our classrooms for all kids Especially those kids who are going to be affected by this.

And they are
They are going to be affected by this.
Bev: Structural

Bev: Textual
To show them your human side and your humanness

I had a student who died of cancer. When I get choked up

I get very teared up

The emotional side of me

Bev: Textual
One of my senior boys wrote me a letter. A moving moment

When you talked about that,

Bev: Structural
It took me three periods to process. You truly touched me.

Bev: Textual
Can’t we have a free day? We never have a free day.

We never have a free day.

You’re not getting one.

Just give that up!

Bev: Textual

We loved your class, Bev: Structural
And we are going to miss it. That is my report card.

We hated all the work you gave us, That is my merit pay.

But we learned so much! I am passionate about what I do,

And the kids know that.

We bring ourselves into the classroom.
I think maybe I am a touch of the rebel  

But even before then Because I know that what I do is the right thing for kids.

Before we had standards I knew what was supposed to be taught.

Bev: Textual

My board of education is now coming out with their racing/pacing guides

They want us all on the same page at the same time.

Bev: Structural

I have a real problem with that piece.

I think it is a mistake.

That is prescriptive.

Professionally, I think it is a mistake.

Prescriptive does not work.

It does not take into account

Who is in your classroom

And what needs to happen.

Bev: Structural

It is a calling.

I think teaching is a calling.

I think you have to have a passion for the information that you have

Bev: Textual

A passion for wanting to share that with kids

Kids are all the same.

And watching kids grow.

It does not matter their money background whatever.

They want to be treated with respect and kindness.
They want to have rapport.

Bev: Structural

The heartbreak stories, you just hear more of that.

Part of it is loyalty.

I was raised with that

Because of the way that I was raised

The work ethic

We bring our past to the table with us.

My father was a Teamster.

He was loyal to the union.

40-some years.

Devoted to that company.

They do not understand that there is a reward in it.

There are rewards with teaching kids.

Those are your rewards in teaching in an urban setting.

Bev: Structural

That is meaningful for me.

There is a great feeling of accomplishment

When you know those kids have moved beyond.

I guess there is a piece of me in that.

When I see kids move beyond their roots,

That is a success story for me.

There is a little piece of me in their success.

I think I was always called to teaching.
I think I was a good teacher.

Bev: Structural

You really need to fit something in that the kids can be successful

That you can reap the joy from that.

If you do not find joy in it,

And it is everyday a struggle,

Everyday a struggle,

Everyday a struggle.

You have to work something into your curriculum

Where you kids can be successful,

And you can derive joy from that.

I love teaching.

I know that I have had an influence.

Deuxième Partie

Colleen: Textual

Oh, every woman.

All of them!

All of my grandmothers,

All of my great-grandmothers,

All of my maternal aunts,

All of my paternal aunts were teachers.

Colleen: Structural

The world needed to be changed.

My father was a labor leader.

Disturbing the peace.
Just wanted to be where the action was
And wanted to make the world a better place.

Colleen: Textual
I had a little episode in 3rd grade.

Colleen: Structural
That might be the very beginning of when I became so militant.

My father was active in the Fair Housing Movement.
We were always very racially sensitive.
Those were the days when you ate dinner with your family.

Colleen: Structural
It was like walking from the dark into the light.

Colleen: Textual
There were all these windows.
She was my 4th grade teacher.

Oh, I worshipped her.
She was so fabulous.
She was kind.
She was not hitting people and yelling.

It is free.
You did not feel so repressed.

You did not feel like breaking all the rules all the time.

Colleen: Textual
All my kids go to the ESEA reading tutor.
Now, ESEA rules state that you are only supposed to take,
and I love this,

Colleen: Structural,
That we are only supposed to be servicing
The lowest of the low.

And I love that, too.

Yes, the lowest of the low.

That we only service the lowest of the low.

That is what they call them – the lowest of the low.

I am a taxpayer,

And I pay my federal taxes,

It is still a democracy.

Every one of my children goes to tutoring!

Colleen: Textural

Real significant social change happens in the classroom.

Colleen: Structural

That is why I teach.

I still want to make this world a better place.

It is corny!

Colleen: Textural

Alternative education.

It was called experiential education.

Colleen: Structural

We were all looking for different ways to reach children.

That is where I really made up my mind that education was where it was going to happen.

Colleen: Textural Colleen: Structural

Then, I got married. Then, I got divorced.

A boy and a girl. I needed to make a living.

Colleen: Textural Colleen: Structural

The teachers that I admired were all women,

But I can remember
Except for one male teacher, All of my heroes
Of course, you just did not have that many. All those years
Were all teachers.

Colleen: Structural

Colleen: Textual
I read,
I will never forget how to diagram a sentence. Because I love words.
I will never forget the importance of grammar. I love poetry,
You know good grammar. Because I love words.

Colleen: Textual
You understand what the job of an educator is. I think teachers should teach.

Colleen: Textual Colleen: Structural
I did not have to, but I did:
That was the best part of it.

Colleen: Textural
From the Big W,
All the way down! Everything pisses me off about ESEA!
I can’t believe he was elected a second time!
Because it is children last, Bureaucracy first!
The students never come first with ESEA.
Colleen: Textural
We never decrease the bureaucracy,

But we always decrease the number of people who have immediate student contact.

Colleen: Structural
I want everything to go right. If things do not go right, I want to fix it.

Colleen: Structural
I am a democrat (lower case).

I am not covering the curriculum. I am delivering it.

I am not into coverage. I am into education.

Colleen: Structural
I am not afraid of meeting high standards. I am not okay with the bureaucracy
I teach to the high. And with the way they use those test scores.

Colleen: Textural
I have an allegiance.

If people like me do not make a commitment to the inner city and inner-city schools,
Then they are going to go down the tubes.
I keep thinking maybe good things are going to happen.
That is wrong!
Your job is to educate those kids not to test them.
How much education is being sacrificed in order to measure them?
How can you measure them when you have not had time or chance to teach them?
And they are only children,
Especially in elementary school.
I fear that in the future it is just going to continue.

No Child Left Behind is about their score, their test score.

It is not about the real child.

Colleen: Textual
That is not who she is.
If a child is not in your building 120 days, How dare you stand in front of me,
Forget about them! A professional,

And say
Forget about them?
Like they are not a living, breathing child

With needs and the right to be educated?
I am going to teach these kids, and that is it!

Colleen: Structural
They are my kids.
They are my little kids.

Colleen: Textural
Colleen: Structural
I just wanted to learn more about public schools because I think knowledge is power.

It sounded so intriguing. The questions were very thought-provoking.

It gave me the credibility or the justification for taking the time

To really sit down and think about my kids
And reflect about other kids
And think about my practice
And reflect on my practice.

**If it is not good for my students, I am not going to do it.**

*Colleen: Textural*

My family is strong union. *Colleen: Structural*

I grew up with a no-bureaucracy tolerance, And that is what it is.

I am tired of being screwed over again.

You are pushing us around,

And it is not benefiting the students.

*Colleen: Textural*

They are exhausted. *Colleen: Structural*

Mentally and physically.

Our kids wear us out.

All the time.

They are exhausted by the second week of August.

Yes, and they feel abandoned.

Abandoned by the state,

By the federal government,

By the administration.
We just keep shouldering on. Even though we are emotional, We are amazing. This is where I belong.

Troisième Partie

*Kitty: Textural*

I teach a block from where I grew up.

*Kitty: Structural*

I can remember 2nd grade vividly. Maybe that is why I love 2nd grade so much.

I loved my 2nd grade teacher.

I loved school.

I had a lot of friends at school.

School was a social time as well.

I felt secure at school.

I loved learning.

I loved reading.

Maybe all of those things put together are part of the reason that I became a teacher.

*Kitty: Textural*

The student teaching that I had done had not prepared me for…the big city.

I can remember thinking *Kitty: Structural*

Why am I doing this?

This is not what I thought it was going to be like.

*Kitty: Textural*
It has changed over the years.

We have fewer children, but they are supposed to do so much.  

Kitty: Structural

It is fine if they come from a home in which they were prepared to come to school;

But for those children who do not know how to tie their shoes

And never had any educational experience at home,

It is tough for them.

Kitty: Textural

It was during the big desegregation time.

The 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students from the African American neighborhood
came over to the Hispanic neighborhood that my school was in.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade Hispanic kids went over to the African American school.

Kitty: Structural

After two years, they concluded that this was not desegregation.

You cannot pair minority with minority and call it desegregation.

So, they fixed it back so it was a K-6 building, both of them.

Kitty: Textural

They were totally neighborhood schools.

Because I was low man on the totem pole,

I was sent to the African American school

Kitty: Structural

Kitty: Textural

They knew I spoke Spanish.

Bilingual certification.

Back to the Hispanic school.

Kitty: Structural
Maria Martinez. She was just a sweet little girl. We wrote to each other for years. She had to quit school. She quit writing. They were becoming migrant workers. We wrote for about six years, at least. I have to quit school. She would send a picture now and then. I have to help the family. I just lost track of her.

Kitty: Textural
We have our pacing guides. Kitty: Structural
That we have to follow In the curriculum,
Which are all based There is no freedom anymore.
On the standards and indicators. There is no time for the funsy, holiday things.
We work with that. Those days are gone.

Kitty: Textural Kitty: Structural
Sped Kids So, when they are here,
ESEA math I have to teach science, social studies, and health;
ESEA reading Because I am responsible for those three grades for the kids.
We have to follow the pacing guide. We finish all that material.

Kitty: Structural
I am definitely mother.
Once they are mine, they are mine.

Kitty: Textural Do not mess with my babies.
I had to be the tough guy, today. It broke my heart.

You made the choice. You have to live with that choice.

**Kitty: Textural**

I expect you to do as well as you can

I do not think that this was your best.

Do you?

**Kitty: Structural**

In that, you are doing your best.

Well, I do not think so.

What can we do to make this be your best?

**Kitty: Textural**

I followed the book in the beginning.

It was just a matter of getting through the book.

**Kitty: Structural**

In that, you are doing your best.

I follow the pacing guide.

Just keep going

And keep moving.

As much as I love my kids

There is that line drawn now.

I have toughened.

It is a shame that

That is going on at home,

But I am not responsible for that.

I am responsible for what is here within these four walls six hours per day,

And that is what we are going to take care of.

**Kitty: Structural**
I think eventually they are going to find that this *No Child Left Behind* is a crock.

*Kitty: Textural*

I have a little boy with a 52 IQ in here.

There is no way that he is not going to be left behind to some degree.

He has come along way this year.

I do not care how much I work with him,

Or his special ed teacher works with him.

It is not going to happen.

He does not have the capacity for it to happen,

But I expect his best just like I expect the other kids’ best.

*Kitty: Structural*

*We just take the little baby steps that he can take and be appreciative of those.*

*I would love to see it go away,*

*But with accountability…*

*We used to give the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.*

*That was the test.*

*Then, you just taught.*

One little girl in this room has been sexually molested.

*What is she thinking about when she is taking that test that day?*

*What is on her mind?*

Maybe mom and dad had a fight before they came to school that day.

*You have to work with what you have got right now.*

*Kitty: Structural*
My kids reflect on me.

I also know what when we take a test
And they do not do extremely well on it,
It is not all my fault.

The government is definitely in this.

We are led by the state without a doubt.

Kitty: Structural

This is what I am and what I do.
You can make some shortcuts in what you do.
You do not have to make it be so hard.
You do not have to spend that much time on it.
I have tried, and I cannot.
It is like I should be with the kids right now.
This is just the way I am, and I am not going to change.

By the end of the year,
They are absolutely fabulous.
I hate to see them go,
Because we worked so hard all year
To get them to be these independent little persons.
And they go,
And someone else gets to enjoy them.
Kitty: Textural

I am not a fancy sort of person.
I do not live in a fancy sort of home.

Kitty: Structural

Everything is simple, just like it is here.

I think it is teaching in general.

I love teaching.

I love teaching.

Kids are kids.

I just do not want to leave you.

And I do not want to leave you either.

Quatrième Partie

Paul: Textural

We had five boys in the family and two girls.

It was very strict.

It was the utmost in ridiculous regimen.

We were exploring the hierarchy of the educational process.

All these kinds of silly things.

It was just the fact that….

The process of how a student learned.

All that kind of stuff was up to question

The idea that everybody had to follow the same regimen.

A lot of the vestiges of authoritarianism kind of diminished.
Paul: Textural

I never had a formal art class all the way through until I got to high school. And that was only like ½ year.
The brother disappeared at semester. It was talked about whether or not he had a nervous breakdown or what. Something happened there. He never came back.

They did not hire another art teacher until I was a senior. Paul: Structural

It was art practice, but it was never… You just did not sign up for art.

Paul: Textural

When I went into the teaching of elementary, I felt totally unprepared. When I did my student teaching, I just had not had any… I went into a middle school.

Paul: Textural

I had started working in a summer theater program. Paul: Structural

I was doing set designs and stuff. Probably the most I ever learned about

Painting

And color

And illusion

And space.

Paul: Textural

They invited me down. Paul: Structural
It was on the coast and on the water. I do not ever feel

Like I was ever really an elementary teacher

I mean the idea of fawning over children’s work

And having the kids excited

And being able to maintain that excitability and control and all that stuff…

I am just amazed,

And I really am in awe of what they are able to do.

Maybe had I gone through that and watched that…

Paul: Textural

I always loved drawing.

I always enjoyed drawing. Paul: Structural

I always felt like a comfort zone in doing it.

I always feel as though it is good to have people look at your work

And discuss your work.

It is so difficult to introduce something

That these kids have really had no exposure to at all.

Paul: Textural

My father was more self-educated.

He was a very well-read man.

He was an executive for the unions.
Paul: Textural
I really did not know what made good art.       Paul: Structural

I felt like I always enjoyed drawing.

But I really had not been trained in the subtleties of art making.

I went in knowing that I had probably a lot to learn.

Paul: Textural
I left teaching altogether and went to graduate school.       Paul: Structural

I think I came back to what I thought would be safest.

It was a bit of a safety net.

Paul: Textural       Paul: Structural
There is a certain part of the naïveté of the youngest child and their mark.

You just become enamored by that

Just the freedom of it.

By the time they are 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade

The have all that time to write and everything else.

It is no longer their primary means of communication.

As they get older                They get more and more uncomfortable with trying to draw.

Visual stereotypes

It would be right back to the stereotypes.

Paul: Structural

I think I identify myself more as an artist than I do art teacher.

What do you have to offer me in here today that should make me want to come in here?
Paul: Textural

Sometimes you had them combined.

I actually had a ceramic and a sculpture class.  

Paul: Structural

There were not enough people.  

I guess the guy thought 3-D is 3-D.  

He thought he could take these 12 sculpture students  

Here is clay.  

And put them in with 12 ceramics students.  

I am going to show the sculpture project.  

I am going to show the ceramics project.  

You can do either one, but you have to do one.  

Some of the kid would do a combination of ceramics/sculpture throughout the semester.

Paul: Structural

Someone will always try to convince you how much they value the arts.  

Oh, believe me,  

This hurts us as much as it hurts you.  

It is about that time you always think,  

Check your back.

Paul: Structural

They are driven by the public perception.  

Even the state is wishy-washy about what they are saying.  

You leave it very open.  

They do not want to specify too much.  

They would have to supply the money.
This is the thing that kills me.

My point is just that...How much are the arts valued?

Paul: Structural

I think that arts have to be way of communication.

In some way, whether it is with your feelings or your thought

Or you are trying to convey a mood,

Whatever it is that you are trying to do with art,

It has to be heaven.

Paul: Structural

Paul: Textual

If the school system or a particular school

Make it a vital part of the school.

Makes a point of it,

Then, I think it is going to be much more important.

Paul: Textual

Some of these kids come to these schools,       Paul: Structural

And the only chance that they have to express themselves is in art classes.

When the government comes through, that restricts them right there.

That kind of stuff just kind of drives me crazy.

The biggest thing for me is that these kids expect a lot from their art;

And they expect a lot from you as a teacher;

But you can also expect it from them.

Paul: Textural
You are talking about a community that does not have a strong background.
You are talking about a school that has no art background.
You are talking about homes that have no art background.  

*Paul: Structural*

You are talking in such a way that the beauty that you seen in looking at artwork,

These kids have not experienced.

They have not seen it.

*Paul: Textural*

The urban part does not bother me at all.  

*Paul: Structural*

I want the kid to understand what they are going to draw.

You cannot teach them how to draw.

You can teach them how to look.

*Cinquième Partie*

*Roslyn: Structural*

*Roslyn: Textual*  

In fact, I have not had a teaching job that I have not loved.

I think it is because I like challenges.

Even if they were challenging, I found a lot of worth in it.

*Roslyn: Structural*

We do not understand our childhood until we are adults.

We do not have a perspective as a child.

We just know that we are alive.

I have done a lot of reflecting on that, especially being a teacher.
I wonder if I am doing this because of what a teacher said to me or did for me.

I think about that a lot.

Roslyn: Textural

Things like racism.

How you go through them as a child. Roslyn: Structural

You walk through them as a child not knowing if you are being inspired or discouraged.

You do not know. You are a child; but as an adult,

You can define those things,

And you can intuit.

I think about those teachers,

And I think about being a child.

You sit there,

And you are learning.

You do not really think about do they care about my whole person.

You think about a word or an action that they do and how it impacts you,

But you do not think about it on deeper levels.

Roslyn: Textural

I lived it.

That is what I mean when I talk about living something as a child Roslyn: Structural

And not having a perspective about the ramifications of those moments.

Then, as an adult, looking back and understanding them with insight
And letting them impact about how I treat my students.

Roslyn: Textural

I came home from school in kindergarten.

I talked about a friend.

My mother said to me

Oh, she sounds so nice! Roslyn: Structural

What color is she? I don’t know,

Is she Black or White? But I will ask her tomorrow.

That is my favorite story of kindergarten.

Because I believe that racism is taught.

That speaks to the kind of parents that I had.

I did not know that there was a difference between Black and White.

Roslyn: Textual Roslyn: Structural

And so I always talk about tolerance.

And I say that sometimes you can just live your life,

And sometimes it has to be discussed and questions have to be answered.

Roslyn: Textual

I do not remember questioning anything about history. Roslyn: Structural

Whatever they dispensed, you felt that they were bequeathing you with this knowledge.

And you did not question it. I thought what they were giving me,

I needed that to live, survive, and thrive.
Roslyn: Structural

That is when I started to think politically.

Roslyn: Textual

That is when I became a politically active person.

This was someone I knew who was in Vietnam.

Because this was someone that I cared about.

Yes, it did. It was very eye-opening for me.

We had marches. It almost destroyed him.

Roslyn: Structural

Roslyn: Textual

That just gave us permission to think

I think it was teachers like her And to express ourselves

And to have opinions.

Teachers like her Opened our minds to possibilities

And to really analyze and scrutinize things.

It felt like they had freedom.

I do not know if they took it, but it felt like they had freedom.

I think they felt kind of revolutionary in their spirits.

Roslyn: Textual

Yes, it is varied.

I think that is what the new hoopla is about.

There are two sides.

There is the sensibility that it has to be varied.

Roslyn: Structural

And then this No Child Left Behind Is stamping everybody

With the same little lines to fill in,

Little blanks to fill in,
And saying that everybody has to have this, this, and this.

According to these standards.

I think there is a real dichotomy there.

Individualized is the approach,

And then every kid has to fall within these guidelines.

I think that is killing a lot of teachers.

Not to mention, how it is impacting students.

They know that every child is different and unique unto herself

They know every approach does not work on every child.

Roslyn: Structural

There is no way that I cannot be political.

I think in all fairness to students,

I need to be political in a fashion that guides them,

But not tells them how to think or live.

Roslyn: Textural

If you do not make teaching personal,

Roslyn: Structural

There is no reason for the children to take learning personal.

With all this bombardment from the pacing guides and the curriculum guides,

If they let us figure out in this simpatico relationship
Where we need to go
Leave some pages blank
We could come up with something far more powerful
Than they did from their think tanks,
Because there are two things that they do not have in their think tanks,
They do not have the teachable moment.
I already believed that the child would show me what she needed to know.

Roslyn: Textural
We are not gathering knowledge.
We are just mastering skills for the moment,
For short-term memory, nothing long term.

Roslyn: Structural
Until we talk about the whole child,
And what it means to value the whole child,
Teach the child to value all the people that she is learning with every day,
The other part is not going to happen.
We must teach our children to value the good in everyone.

Roslyn: Textural
You have two parents at home.
You know where your mother is.
Your father is at home with you.

Roslyn: Structural
She does not.
She does not.
Her father is incarcerated.
The child is accepted wherever they are.
You start where the child is.

If you are not going to do that, there is no reason to be in education.

Martyrdom is not an option for me.

I have decided that.

I want to be there at the finish line victorious;

But if it cannot be, I want to finish.

I want to place.

I do not have to win, but I do want to finish.

I want to finish.

I do not want to go down in flames.

Roslyn: Textural

He worked hard everyday.

Roslyn: Structural

He turned in every single homework.

I hugged him on the last day of school.

He worked so hard.

You are the reason that I came to school every day.

You were the reason that I never gave up, because you never gave up.

I am so thankful that you were in my class.

It is those individuals and those single moments.

(The chorale forms and reforms during the reading.

Players come and go. The set evolves with the players.

Speakers interchange roles toward L’Essence.)
Finale en Currere

Bev: I am a provider.

Colleen: Real significant social change happens in the classroom.

Kitty: I teach a block from where I grew up.

Paul: Whatever it is that you are trying to do with the art, it has to be heaven.

Roslyn: And sometimes it has to be discussed and questions have to be answered.

Chorale: I teach a block from where I grew up.
APPENDIX C

Rebecca Ann Zurava  
Doctoral Candidate  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Kent State University

Inner Contradictions and Hidden Passages  
Pedagogical Tact and the High-Quality Veteran Urban Teacher  
en Vue de Currere

Consent

I am doing research on Pedagogical Tact and the High-Quality Veteran Urban Teacher in order to understand the nature of this experience and the meaning ascribed thereto. Pedagogical tact is the expression of pedagogical thoughtfulness. I am studying how teachers express thoughtfulness through language and actions in pedagogical situations. To examine this, I am seeking key moments that illustrate thoughtfulness in the stories of teacher practice.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in three interviews with the researcher. These interviews will take a total of 3-6 hours. Following each interview, a transcript will be emailed to you via personal email. You will be asked to review each transcript and respond with any clarifications, additions, verifications, etc. As the research progresses, you will be invited to respond to developing, findings, and interpretations via email. Email communication could take approximately 3-6 more hours of your time. From the beginning of the research, the interviews will take place during the first three months. Email communication will continue through a second three-month period, for a total of six months.

Your confidentiality will be protected. All records of the research will be kept in my possession. When the results of the study are written in my dissertation, pseudonyms will be used and your school district will not be identified.

You may refuse to participate in this study.  
If you decide to participate, you may stop at any time without penalty.

A doctoral dissertation is a public document. Beyond that, if I have the opportunity to publish or present my findings, I request your permission to do so. I assure you again that your identity and that of your school district will not be revealed and that your privacy will be respected.

If you have any questions, please contact James G. Henderson, Ed.D., Professor of Curriculum Studies, 404 White Hall, Kent State University, jhenders@kent.edu, (330) 672-0631, who is directing this dissertation. If you have questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call John L. West, Ph.D., Vice President and Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies, (330) 672-2704.  
This research has been approved by Kent State University.  
You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____ I have read the above and agree to participate as a subject in this research,  
_____ I give permission to publish the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX D

Rebecca Ann Zurava
Doctoral Candidate
Curriculum and Instruction
Kent State University

Inner Contradictions and Hidden Passages
Pedagogical Tact and the High-Quality Veteran Urban Teacher
en Vue de Currere

Audiotape Consent Form

I agree to the audiotaping of my three interviews on Pedagogical Tact and the High-Quality Veteran Urban Teacher with Rebecca Ann Zurava in 2005.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audiotapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to hear the tapes.

_____ do not want to hear the tapes.

*Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tapes.*
If you want to hear the tapes, you will be asked to sign after hearing them.

Rebecca Ann Zurava and other researchers approved by Kent State University may/may not use the audiotapes of my interviews. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

_____ this research project.

_____ teacher education.

_____ presentation at professional meetings.

You will receive a copy of this audiotape consent form.

Signature: ___________________________

Date: _______________________________

Address: _____________________________
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