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**Preservice teachers' reflections on professional education: A
synthetic rendition**

Mueller, Marilyn Ruth Kimball, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1988

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PRESERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS
ON PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION:
A SYNTHETIC RENDITION

by

Marilyn Ruth Kimball Mueller

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1988

Approved by


Dissertation Advisor

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The committee wishes to designate this dissertation as one that has been approved with distinction.

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October 26, 1988
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The purpose of this investigation was to do an in-depth case study of the reflections of a select group of students during the first professional component of their teacher education program in middle grades mathematics education. More specifically, this study explored the themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions of their reflections (a) on themselves personally, (b) on themselves as learners, (c) on themselves as preservice teachers, (d) on the learning-teaching process, and (e) on their views of emerging adolescents as students.

Data were obtained from five preservice teachers through interviews, journals, and course papers. A technique of "synthetic rendition" was devised to create a composite interpretation of each series of interviews. The purpose of this technique was to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant.

These preservice teachers stated that as a result of this semester (a) they gained confidence in their ability to become creative effective teachers, (b) they were challenged by the semester's experiences, and (c) they were assured of the correctness of their decision to become teachers.

These preservice teachers seldom reflected upon their experiences in a dynamic fashion: (a) they expressed few perceptions of themselves as developing individuals, (b) they rarely reflected upon themselves in ways that demonstrated perceptions of "self as teacher," and (c) seldom expressed views of the students they observed that demonstrated a developmental orientation.

Implications suggested by the findings of this study for the continued development of a teacher education program were based on the theme of the process of intentional dynamic reflection. This process, when practiced by both faculty and preservice teachers, was presented as the key to gaining greater clarity of understanding of a) personal development, b) the nature of emerging adolescents, c) the learning-teaching process, and d) the planning and implementation of creative lessons.

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CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction

It is more important to make teachers thoughtful and alert students of education than it is to help them get immediate proficiency.

John Dewey (1904, p. 15)

The development of teachers who are "thoughtful and alert students of education" begins during preservice teacher education programs. Preservice teachers who are becoming reflective professionals are capable of freeing themselves from routine activity and demonstrating intelligent purposeful action (Posner, 1985). The time of transition from the role of college student to emerging reflective teacher is critical. Thus this study focuses on the origins of reflective teaching during preservice teacher education.

Wholistic Purpose of Dynamic Reflection

Education is the process through which the individual may emerge as a self-actualized personality capable of the intentional dynamic reflection which energizes the creative professional (Maslow, 1968). Thus personal and professional development are closely related processes in any area of human endeavor. Teacher education programs must address

both the personal and professional development of its students. Being in harmony with oneself through reflection on one's purpose and potential (personally and professionally) is a preliminary phase to being in harmony with the larger transcendent reality of which the world is a part (MacDonald & Purpel, 1987).

Humans have the aesthetic and intellectual sensibilities to recreate the world and themselves in unity with the divine. Education is a sacred process that can lead us to wholeness. (p. 178)

Through purposeful reflection on a wide range of challenging experiences the self-actualized individual can develop transpersonal consciousness (Maslow, 1971). This is described by Maslow as being characterized by an integrative view of the whole, an awareness of richness in all events and phenomena, a full expression of cooperation, growth through cyclic activity, lack of reference to personal needs, and a resolution of dichotomies through a realization of a higher unity. Perhaps this is one aspect of the wholeness of which MacDonald and Purpel speak and toward which the sacred process of education has the potential to lead all of humanity. Encouraging this transpersonal consciousness and harmony with the larger reality may be one of the most important dimensions of teacher education, a dimension that transcends the "skills and art" of teaching.

Dynamic Reflection and Preservice Teacher Education

In recent years there has been a concern for the development of the reflective teacher. Cruickshank (1985) has discussed the "Uses and Benefits of Reflective Teaching." Within Cruickshank's construct the preservice teacher is introduced to the role of the teacher and the tasks of teaching. He is encouraged to experiment with various teaching styles and with the gradual development of his own particular style. Most importantly these preservice teachers learn through immediate reflection on their own teaching behaviors and the outcomes they observe in their students. Cruickshank has advocated many experiences with peer teaching followed by discussions with others who taught the same lesson. A safe psychological environment with no evaluation through grades is provided where experimentation and dynamic reflection is encouraged.

Posner (1985) has stated that reflective thinking, turning a thought/event over in the mind, frees the individual from impulsive and routine action. It promotes intelligent action in contrast to reaction and promotes intentionality. Posner has presented a four-step cyclic approach to reflective teaching. Preservice teachers move from preparation for an experience, through engagement in it, followed by reflection on the event, and on into preparation for the next experience. Such reflective practices keep routine from becoming boring, keep a teacher

current professionally, and make one aware of personal and professional strengths and weaknesses (Posner, 1985).

Preservice teachers can benefit from reflective teaching practices through significant professional and social interactions with fellow students (Peters, 1980). This may be enhanced through laboratory teaching experiences where small groups allow increased opportunities to experiment with teaching and common experiences for group sharing.

Cruickshank (1985) has presented teacher education as the initial phase of becoming lifelong students of the art and science of teaching with reflection and analysis of one's performance being the heart of this process. Schon (1987) has emphasized the artistry of teaching and views reflection-in-action as the artistic questioning of the assumptional structure of knowing-in-action facilitating on-the-spot experimentation.

Dynamic Reflection Defined

Reflection in the physical sense is the act of giving back or showing an image. In the mental sense reflection is attentive contemplation upon a subject. Cruickshank (1987) has elaborated on this saying

reflection is more than merely bringing something to mind.... Teaching can be thought about and considered by means of meditation, musing, contemplation, pondering, deliberation, cognition, reasoning, and speculation. (p. 3)

When incorporating reflection into the process of teaching Dewey (1916) has recommended developing good habits of thought through experiences that initiate and provoke reflection. Cruickshank (1987) has extended this with his view that

rather than behaving purely according to impulse, tradition, and authority, teachers can be reflective -- they can deliberate on their actions with openmindedness, wholeheartedness, and intellectual responsibility. (p. 8)

Dynamic reflection is thus characterized by the intentional and effective action of the thought processes. Dynamic reflection is the vigorously active, energetic, and purposeful use of the mind.

The Unfolding Process of Dynamic Reflection

It is appropriate to consider how the process of dynamic reflection occurs and how it unfolds in professional educators. The process of intentional dynamic reflection needs to begin in preservice teacher preparation programs and extend into staff development programs for inservice teachers. Preservice teachers' experiences during the professional component of their teacher education program have the potential of establishing the foundations of a lifetime of being a student of education. The extent to which they are provided with experiences which intentionally encourage:

1. deliberation about the knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire and

2. critical investigation into the purpose and art of their profession

sets the stage for lifelong learning (Cruickshank, 1987; Dewey, 1916; Peters, 1980; Posner, 1985; Schon, 1987).

Significance of the Study

It is critical to shed light on the evolution of this process of intentional dynamic reflection, as this process is essential to the personal and professional development of the professional who exhibits creative flexibility and purpose in action. The initial exposure to the profession of education occurs in preservice programs, therefore, investigation of the experiences of preservice teachers during the professional component of a teacher education program could provide essential information concerning the development of an intentionally reflective educator.

An integral part of improving the professional component of a teacher education program is the development of an understanding of the role of the teacher education curriculum and planned experiences in developing intentional dynamic reflection in its students. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) have pointed out that

there is an urgent need for research in teacher education to turn its attention to closer and more subtle analyses of the impact of university courses, symbols, procedures, and rituals upon the professional perspectives of prospective teachers.... There has been very little direct analysis of the role that the form and content of university teacher

education plays in shaping the professional perspectives of students. (p. 10)

This study focuses on this need to investigate the nature of preservice teachers' reflections on themselves and the profession of teaching and how they view the role of their teacher education experience in those reflections. The depth of the study's inquiry into the nature of the reflections of a small number of students provides insights which contribute to the body of knowledge needed to provide practical guidelines for the improvement of programs in teacher education.

Context of the Study

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) was chartered in 1891 as a State Normal and Industrial School "to give young women such education as shall fit them for teaching..." (Bowles, 1965, p. 6). Since that time UNCG has become coeducational and expanded to become a doctorate-granting university.

The School of Education at UNCG has a highly visible program. Among other degrees it offers majors in Early Childhood Education, Intermediate Education, Middle Grades Education, and Secondary Grades Education leading to certification for teaching in public school, kindergarten through 12th grade.

Middle Grades Education is a new area of teacher certification in North Carolina. The middle grades are a

reflection of both elementary and secondary level education as in both developmental preparation and content specialization. To provide for continuity of academic experience among the participants, this investigation has focused on students in a portion of the undergraduate program in Middle Grades Education at UNCG.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this investigation was to do an in-depth case study, a form of interpretive inquiry, of the perceptions of a select group of students of their experiences in the first professional component of their teacher education program in middle grades mathematics education.

More specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the reflections of a small group of students who are preparing to be middle grades teachers of mathematics
 - a. on themselves personally,
 - b. on themselves as learners,
 - c. on themselves as preservice teachers,
 - d. on the learning-teaching process, and
 - e. on their views of emerging adolescents as students

during their first semester of professional education experiences?

2. What are the themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of these students?

3. What implications do these student reflections have for the continued development of a teacher education program?

The case-study approach provided an in-depth examination of an instance in action. As explained by Stake (1978) results of such inquiry would have the potential to:

1. move one toward a fuller understanding of the natural experience acquired in ordinary personal involvement;
2. extend explanations of that which one knows (propositional knowledge), and increase one's understanding of that which is the foundation of what one knows (tacit knowledge); and
3. enhance generalizations which develop as a product of experience.

Thus, for this investigation the case-study approach was seen to be an effective means of providing a full perspective of the reflections of a few students during a portion of the professional component of their teacher education program.

Underlying Assumptions

Ideas that were accepted and were not investigated as part of this study are acknowledged as follows:

1. Given assurance of anonymity, students would be open and honest during interviews and in journals in relating their experiences and reflections on them.
2. Taped interviews combined with archival data from journals, and class work would provide data for "thick description" (Geertz, 1983) of students' perceptions of their academic experience.

In addition this study made no attempt to evaluate either the teacher education program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro or the particular courses in which the participants were enrolled.

Procedures Used Within This Study

Scope of the Study

The investigation was an interpretive inquiry into the first professional education semester for middle grades teachers in mathematics education in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. This insured a degree of uniformity of coursework experience for the students during the semester of the investigation. Five young women participated in this study. They were representative of the student population with a middle grades education major in the School of Education entering the first semester of the professional component of their academic training (during the spring of their junior year and just prior to student teaching).

Data Collection

Each participant was interviewed three times. These interviews took place:

1. prior to the beginning of the semester under investigation,
2. mid-way through the semester, and
3. at the end of the semester.

An open-ended format was utilized for all three interviews. As part of their regular coursework each student kept a journal, wrote various formal papers, and completed numerous projects. These were made available to the researcher. All data collection, analysis, and interpretation was made by the same investigator.

Data Analysis and Presentation

This investigator determined that listening to the mode of expression of each of the participants added significantly to understanding their perception of their experience. Thus a technique of "synthetic rendition" was devised to create a composite interpretation of each series of interviews. The purpose of this technique was to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant.

Synthetic Rendition of Interviews.

The technique of creating a synthetic rendition of a series of interviews involved a combination of skill and artistry. Themes identified by the researcher and those which emerged from the participants were used to code the interviews. This permitted a reorganization of the texts according to common topics. Skill and artistry was needed to weave a minimal number of connecting words and phrases into the composite "interview" so that continuity of

expression was maintained while preserving the integrity of the original dialogue. Most essential was the artistic technique of utilizing the creative imagination to "listen to the speaker" during the actual writing of the synthetic rendition of the interviews.

In order to enhance the credibility (Guba, 1981) of this technique for data presentation, the synthetic renditions of the interviews were read by the participants and were judged by them to accurately reflect the original interviews. A professional colleague also read the original interviews and confirmed the accuracy of the composite interpretations. This verification was viewed to be an essential component of qualitative research.

Synthesizing All Data Sources.

Following the synthetic renditions of the interviews each participant's experience was analyzed in light of what she shared through the interviews, her journal, course papers, and projects. Glaser's (1969) constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was utilized to identify and organize themes, patterns, and omissions in the reflections of each participant.

Interpretive Response

During the spring of 1988 five young women stated that they gained confidence in their ability to become creative effective teachers. They discovered for a certainty that

their decision to become teachers of emerging adolescents was a good decision and developed a sense of being ready to enter student teaching. They described this first professional semester of their undergraduate preservice experience as a unique challenge and an opportunity to prepare for an important and difficult career. While they demonstrated a number of insights regarding their views of teaching and of emerging adolescents, they rarely reflected on themselves as teachers or on their own themes for personal and professional growth.

In Chapter Five this investigator fully discusses the themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the participants' reflections. This is followed by a presentation of the implications of this study for the continued development of an inquiry orientation toward teacher education.

This study's exploration of the reflections of a select group of students during the first professional semester of their teacher education program has yielded insight into the development of the reflective professional during preservice teacher education.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature which provides a foundation for this study. This interpretive inquiry into the reflections of a select group of preservice teachers is intended to complement and extend this body of knowledge.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Reflection is the process through which the individual progresses from one who reacts to events to one who can change thought patterns and move into a world of creativity and intentionally purposeful activity (Assagioli, 1965; Jung, 1977; Maslow, 1971). Professionals who are successful reflective practitioners have created a theme for their own personal and professional development through the process of intentional dynamic reflection (Schon, 1983).

Reflection is a process of great complexity. Whereas individuals can listen to what one says about what one is thinking, read what one writes about one's thoughts, and observe actions which are presumed to be based on what one is thinking, researchers are incapable of directly perceiving the thoughts of another individual. In addition, it is proposed (Stake, 1978) that what one knows exists at two levels: Propositional knowledge is that which one knows and can directly communicate, and tacit knowledge is the foundation of what one knows and frequently lies below the level of immediate consciousness.

Adding to this complexity is the intricacy of the brain-mind mechanism. The brain itself is a three-pound unit composed of a hundred billion nerve cells. These nerve cells are supported and nourished by equally large numbers of glial cells and an electro-chemical signaling system incorporating as many as 100 trillion synapses (Hubel, 1979). Whereas scientists have not yet described the brain-mind mechanism, psychologists and educators do recognize frames of mind. Gardner (1984) provides a taxonomy which connects brain functioning with the nature of learning.

The physicists of this century present another consideration which is relevant to the process of reflection. They demonstrate that mankind lives in a sea of energies, and the universe is created by the influence of interacting fields which are part of a unity (Zukav, 1979).

Modern physics

has come to see the universe as an interconnected web of physical and mental relations whose parts are defined only through their connections to the whole. (Capra, 1975, p. 129)

Whereas classical science is concerned with the study of separate parts (biology, chemistry, physics, ecology) and how these are related, physicists believe there is no such thing as separate entities or of separate unrelated events (Zukav, 1979). This interrelatedness of all entities, activities, and events is a vital idea to be considered by all educators. This researcher, while investigating some

aspects of preservice teacher education, will present the possibility that it is the process of intentional dynamic reflection which provides a sense of interconnectedness.

The components of the field of education which will be presented in this review of the literature are preservice teacher education, human development, the role of public education, research in teacher education, and the process of dynamic reflection. These are each relevant to the research question under investigation; that is, the nature of the reflections of a select group of students during their first professional semester in a teacher education program.

Preservice Teacher Education

Education is the process of drawing forth the highest potential which exists within the human individual (Purkey, 1984). In order to accomplish this it is essential to "make teachers thoughtful and alert students of education." (Dewey, 1904, p. 15)

An overview of preservice teacher education programs as investigated by Howey (1983), has pointed out that programs are very brief, frequently requiring less time than the training required for many semiskilled trades. They lack clarity of definition of relevant and realistic teaching roles and involve little collaboration between different professional constituencies. Most programs are technologically impoverished, research and development

capabilities are minimal, and resources are sparse. Howey has also found that little is taught about learning disabilities, remediation, discipline, evaluation, and ethnic and socioeconomic groups. He has found that the teaching profession tends to be recommended by school counselors to those high school students who are of average ability, from families of limited financial means, and generally in the lower social and economic status. The "typical" student is female, Caucasian, single, early 20s, from a small city, town, or rural area, monolingual, and attends college within 100 miles of home.

Open debate over the goals and purposes of preservice teacher education have resulted in limited and narrow models of research and practice in teacher education (Zeichner, 1983). In recent years four dominant paradigms have emerged (Zeichner, 1983). These are:

1. the behavioristic model,
2. the personalistic model,
3. the traditional-craft model, and
4. the inquiry orientation model.

The behavioristic model of preservice teacher education dominates the literature and is based on teaching effectiveness research. Educators with this orientation typically create programs which emphasize the knowledge, skills, and competencies that can be assessed through various explicit measures of a prespecified level of mastery. Students in these preservice teacher education

programs are passive recipients of the curricular substance (Zeichner, 1983). They are seldom encouraged to reflect on the purposes and consequences of teaching and the social implications for continuity and change.

"Becoming" an adult and the development of the personality of the student is the focus of the personalistic model of preservice teacher education. Here the effort is to promote psychological maturity. The effect of curriculum and teaching practices on individuals is the prime orientation in contrast to its effect on the social system. The personalistic educator is concerned with the quality of the experiences presented and the meaning of behavior. There are a variety of diverse conceptualizations of how to meet the problem of bringing about the appropriate shifts in perceptions and meanings which are the goals of programs with a personalistic orientation (Zeichner, 1983). As an example, Glassberg and Sprinthall (1980) have applied cognitive-developmental theories to their design of a teacher education program, whereas, Combs and others (Combs et al., 1974) have constructed goals for "Humanistic Teacher Education" that are based upon the principles of perceptual psychology.

Within the traditional-craft model, the student learns by doing primarily through the student teaching experience. Educators with this orientation believe that one accumulates the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for

effective teaching largely through the process of trial and error. Students within such a program are generally passive recipients of the guidance of expert teachers. They are to accept the educational and social context of their activities largely as a unquestioned premise. (Zeichner, 1983).

An inquiry orientation toward teacher education promotes reflection about teaching and teaching contexts and the development of thoughtfulness in action. Educators with this orientation view critical inquiry as a necessary supplement to knowledge and technical skills. They create programs which enhance opportunities for preservice teachers to develop an awareness of the origins and consequences of their actions. Preservice teachers in these programs critically examine all aspects of the educational and social context of their profession.

Whereas teacher education programs may be a combination of two or more of these paradigms, the literature indicates that one of them will dominate (Zeichner, 1983).

In response to Koehler's (1985) observation that there was a need for descriptions of teacher education courses and their effect on students, Goodman (1986) explored the role of methods courses in the program of 12 preservice teachers at a large southeastern state university. She identified three distinct roles for teacher education coursework. These were:

1. the relevant role,
2. the liberalizing role, and
3. the critical role.

Goodman (1986) found that the effort "to provide students with information that they could directly use in a classroom" (Goodman, 1986, p. 343) in order to meet the students' needs dominated most courses. She termed this the "relevant role" of the course. The professors of education in her study most frequently stated that their course goal was to address what students would be required to do as teachers. In interviews these professors stated that they were primarily concerned that their courses be practical and relevant. The education program in the public schools near this university was highly routinized with a predetermined textbook-based curriculum. Goodman found that "most methods courses legitimated the view that teachers should play a relatively passive role in developing curriculum" (p. 344), and "the belief systems and practices of the practicum sites were, for the most part, taken for granted" (p. 345). Students were seldom encouraged to reflect upon different approaches to teaching.

Goodman (1986) identified a "liberalizing role" in which students were encouraged to discuss alternatives to the techniques observed in the public school classroom, to reflect upon these alternatives, and to try to implement some changes in the classroom. Most faculty members within her study encouraged their students to be creative in

planning fun activities to enrich the program in place at the practicum sites, yet there was no discussion of "the apparent contradiction between these goals and the mechanistic routine used to teach subjects in the public schools" (p. 346).

Goodman (1986) found that some faculty members addressed the "critical role" of the methods courses by having their students question their belief systems and teaching practices and become more reflective about their practicum experience. Yet a behavioristic teacher education model which promoted a relevant role for preservice teacher education courses dominated this university program.

In a review of the literature Goodman (1986) found three popular views toward the methods courses in a teacher education program.

1. The courses are too theoretical and are irrelevant to the needs of teachers.
2. Possible progressive influences of courses on future teachers is smothered by experiences in the public schools.
3. The courses usually fail to sufficiently challenge students to be thoughtful about all aspects of the teaching profession.

Whereas the teacher education program studied by Goodman was certainly not irrelevant to the needs of teachers as demonstrated in the local public schools, it did fail to

influence change in educational practices and sufficiently challenge the thinking of its students.

Spurred by these findings and other studies where teachers stated that their education coursework was not useful to them, Grossman and Richert (1988) examined interview and observational data from six teachers from two California teacher education programs. One of these institutions was research oriented and program focus was on subject matter and theory. The state university was, in comparison, more practical in it's focus. As previously mentioned, it was the university coursework which was frequently determined to be irrelevant and impractical for preservice teachers. Yet in this study teacher education coursework was found to have been a major influence in aiding teachers to conceptualize the subject matter in ways which would be relevant to their students. This coursework also provided them with a wide range of ideas in the area of general pedagogical knowledge. The fieldwork then complemented this academic knowledge by providing opportunities to learn practical survival skills. Thus it was found that growth in both knowledge and skill were promoted by different but complementary opportunities provided in both the coursework and fieldwork experiences.

In a review of field-based educational studies Wilson (1987) found that preservice teachers tended to imitate the teaching behaviors they experienced when they were students

or the behaviors of their cooperating teachers. This pointed to the possible benefit of instructor modeling of a wide range of teaching behaviors in teacher education classes. Ensuing dialogue could then critique the modeled behaviors enabling students to integrate theory, practice, and results. Wilson (1987) determined that direct experiencing would provide students with opportunities to consider specific strategies in light of their educational philosophy and whether the strategies promote learning. Thus the coursework could be practical, progressive, and challenging. Yet, Wilson claimed, "teacher educators often fail to practice what they preach" (p. 78).

Most teacher education programs are devised through compromise usually worked out through interminable committees by people with widely differing and conflicting views (Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983). Thus a clearly articulated theory of teacher education is seldom present and the content and process of the undergraduate teacher education program lacks clear definition. Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) have also noted an absence of research in teacher education. In their own research they have found that psychological competence indicated by the ability to act autonomously with self control, allocentrically with compassion for others, and with a disciplined commitment to humane values is a primary predictor of life adjustment as an adult. Thus they have

stated that teacher education programs need to focus on providing opportunities for students to be more flexible in problem solving, more adaptable to varying situation, more responsive to the needs of others, and less rigid and authoritarian. The process of intentional dynamic reflection leads to thoughtful creativity which enhances flexibility and adaptability in action.

Human Development

The nature of an individual's reflections is in part dependent on his level of personal development. Understanding one's personal development can only take place when there is a comprehensive understanding of the constitution of the human individual (Assagioli, 1965; Maslow, 1968).

In recent times Assagioli, Jung, and Maslow have been instrumental in shedding light on the nature of the individual human being. Maslow's (1968) basic propositions begin with his observation that individuals have an inner inherited nature with the common characteristic of love and a wide variety of unique propensities such as for leadership, nurturing, music, math, writing, or mechanics. He continues to propose that though much of our inner nature is unconscious and weak, it will be heard as we grow and progress beyond our inner nature toward greater potentials. All aspects of our nature (physical, emotional, mental, and

spiritual) need utilization, challenges, and frustrations for healthy growth to occur. Self-actualization is seen by Maslow (1968) to be the integration of our cognitive, affective, and motor aspects. It is the merging of one's inner and outer realities and of oneself as part of a larger whole.

Maslow (1971) proceeds from self-actualization to a transpersonal psychology which is centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interests and portrays a realm of Being beyond humanness. This Being-Cognition is characterized by an integrative view of the whole, an awareness of richness in all events and phenomena, a full expression of cooperation, growth through cyclic activity, lack of reference to needs, and a resolution of dichotomies through a realization of a higher unity (Maslow, 1971). Thus Maslow depicts a progressive physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual integration of the individual being.

Psychosynthesis is the term used by Roberto Assagioli (1965) to identify the process of personal transformation. Four stages for the attainment of harmonious inner integration, true Self-realization, and right relationships with others are outlined (Assagioli, 1965). These four stages of integration are

1. the gaining of a thorough knowledge of the elements of one's personality,
2. the controlling of the elements of the personality,

3. the discovery or realization of one's true Self, and
4. psychosynthesis: Reconstruction of the personality around the new center (the true Self).

An understanding of the elements of the personality (physical, emotional, and mental) including a penetration of unconscious impulses can be sought by oneself or with the help of another. It demands a rigor of method, a high level of impersonality, and a calm emotional stance.

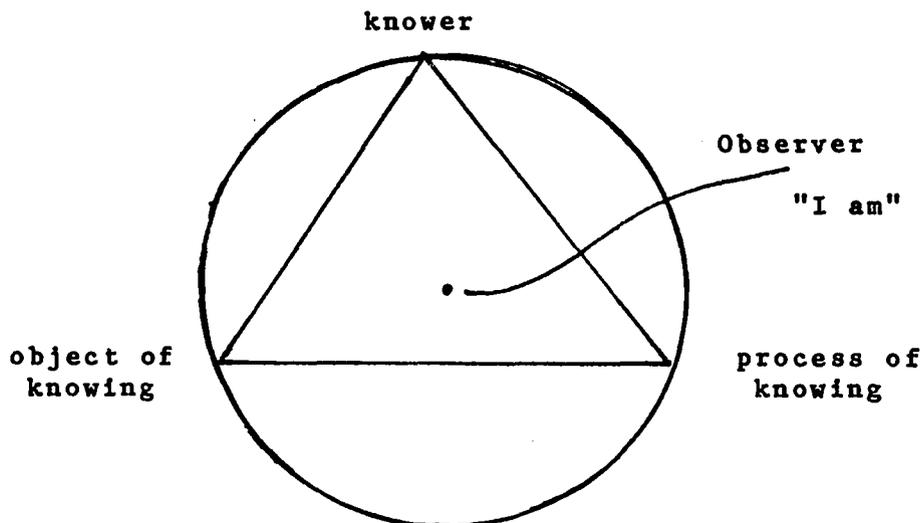
Disidentification with the elements discovered in the first stage is the most effective method of gaining their control. Assagioli (1965) stresses,

We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves. (p. 22)

The expansion of personal consciousness into that of the true Self is a magnificent although long and arduous endeavor (Assagioli, 1965). As long as one's conscious focus is in the realm of personality needs, desires, and responsibilities, awareness of the true Self remains dim. The actual process of psychosynthesis occurs after the new center has been contacted and realized. Then one can begin a deliberate endeavor to build a new personality around this unifying true Self. This is the true meaning of liberation toward which Assagioli (1965) believes all education needs to guide the individual.

Krishnamacharya (1983) defines human development within the educational setting in terms of three main components. The first is termed infilling. This corresponds to the dominant educational focus in today's Western schools of imposing the facts of science, the arts, and humanities upon the child's mental mechanism. The information side of education is the second component of education. This is taken care of by teachers who are aware of the full potential of the human mind including the eventual capacity to directly contact the world of ideas. The information component incorporates greater interconnectedness between the facts from infilling with universal vision. Children are instructed through a coordinated program of meditation, study, and service according to their potentialities. The third component, called instrumentation, incorporates two stages. Initially the child is taught to use his instruments of knowing; the body, the emotions, and the mind are trained in reasoning, logic, understanding, and in the powers of analysis and synthesis. During the second stage the child is trained in how to make himself an instrument. Instrumentation involves offering oneself up to some cause for the benefit of others. Identification with the personality is transcended and the child becomes group conscious; the personality becomes the instrument of the transpersonal Self.

An interesting configuration of the human individual presented by Krishnamacharya (1983) depicts a triangle of the knower, the object of knowledge, and the process of knowing.



In his own thirty years of teaching children and training teachers, Krishnamacharya has sought initially to make the student aware of himself, then of the subject which is to be studied, and finally of the process of knowing. The next essential step is to make the student aware that he is not any one of these three aspects. The student is made to grow into an awareness of existence, a sense of "I am", within and around this triangle and to gain facility in standing as an observer of himself, his mind, and the process of mental activity. The student becomes an observer of his own process of receiving an education. Krishnamacharya has found that students then learn any subject more easily, seeing each topic as an aspect of the total field of

knowing. The teacher plants good seeds in the mind aspect of the student where they are then nurtured by the student according to his own choice as the observer of what is the right thing to cultivate more thoroughly. When the student is left free to utilize his power of dynamic reflection, he will find his own best way.

Teacher educators may provide emerging reflective professionals with a dynamic understanding of the process human development, whereby these preservice teachers are able to create themes for their own personal and professional development. These preservice teachers may then be able to enhance such growth in their future students.

A Glance at Public Education

The dialogue of American culture gives meaning to our lives and actions (Spindler & Spindler, 1987). This dialogue arranges itself around pivotal concerns in oppositional pairs such as

freedom and constraint, equality and difference, cooperation and competition, independence and conformity, sociability and individuality, puritanism and free love, materialism and altruism, hard work and getting by, and achievement and failure. (p. 2)

Expression of this dialogue permeates political campaigns, government and personal spending, business enterprises large and small, all institutions, foreign policy, schools, and every other area of human endeavor in this country.

Education is the vehicle for the transmission of this cultural dialogue (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

Goodlad (1983) found a "bland sameness" at all educational levels in how teachers taught and in what was and was not taught. He noted a strong resistance to change reinforced by the American culture, testing and teacher-effectiveness research, and tradition. In contrast Goodlad also perceived hope for the future in the following observations:

1. The historical and present deep commitment to schools fosters the whole of intellectual, social, and personal development.
2. There has been a steady evolution from narrow academic skills to a wider array of concerns including citizenship, vocational training, and personal goals.
3. Although teaching practices are traditional, teachers' values reflect these broader expectations.
4. Schools, like society, must respond to the relentless changes in our lives.

Goodlad's study confirms the dialogue of dichotomies extending from the American culture into the schools.

MacDonald and Purpel (1987) have noted that education is dominated by the current technological culture and positivistic thinking. The classical economic decision-making theory of the "Tyler Rational" remains the foundational and functional paradigm of education today (MacDonald & Purpel, 1987). In contrast these educators have proposed an educational platform which seeks to bring

humans into harmony with the larger transcendent reality of which the world is a part, viewing education as a sacred process which can bring us to wholeness.

This oppositional dialogue continues in the work of Shane and Tabler (1981). When asked about present and future curriculum and instructional practices, 132 international scholars suggested new directions which were a "blend of inquiry, art, and philosophy" (Shane & Tabler, 1981, p. 132). These scholars voiced a need for paced and continuous educational transformation based on

1. an increase in human differences,
2. the strengths of the past and present,
3. the protection of children from junk information,
4. the utilization of society as a teacher,
5. greater responsibility of parents, and
6. more flexible school programs.

Their suggestions for an elimination of mechanical processes in curriculum organization, presentation of a wider range of opportunities, an increase in interdisciplinary studies, and greater variety in instructional methods point out what they view as weaknesses in the present system in Western culture and their hope for the future.

As the process of education deals with human individuals it is appropriate to incorporate a view of the needs of individuals into this discussion. Glasser (Gough, 1987) has presented a key to improving schools through his concept of Control Theory. He has stated that internal needs drive and motivate us. The primary need for survival having

been basically met in this culture, teachers and students look for their need for love, power, fun, and freedom within the school environment. Glasser has expressed his view that students' perceived lack of power is the outstanding cause of discipline problems and diminished learning. Students and teachers need to share in the process of learning, contributing in joint cooperation in as wide a range of educational concerns as seems feasible. Learning teams are recommended with the teacher as facilitator. Glasser has pointed out that the typical classroom is one of the few places in society where working together is rare.

A need for cooperation and a greater harmony between and within our varied relationships seems to permeate these perspectives of educational practices. A coordinated group effort intentionally incorporating dynamic reflection may reveal educators' common themes and patterns in order to facilitate greater cooperation and harmony.

Research in Teacher Education

More effective models of research on teaching are needed in order to be able to clarify what is taking place during preservice teacher education programs (Bolster, 1987). Bolster recommends thick, critical descriptions of the distinctive nature of specific instances in the process of education. In the field of teacher education a number of

recent studies begin to aid in the emergence of a picture of the experiences of preservice teachers.

The qualitative study conducted by Goodman (1986), which was referenced in a previous section of this chapter, is an example of the effective use of in-depth case-study research in preservice teacher education programs. Over a period of six months, Goodman observed and interviewed (both formally and informally) 12 preservice teachers and 10 faculty members. These were the main methods of data collection. In addition, program literature was reviewed, the syllabus for each course was read, and numerous assignments completed by the students were examined. Data analysis followed each data collection session and was facilitated through the use of the "constant comparative" method of qualitative data analysis (Glaser, 1968; Glaser & Strauss, 1975; Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Tentative conceptual categories emerged which guided further investigation until there was a clear crystallization of three analytical categories which were supported by the data. The credibility of the findings were further reinforced when "the participants were given the opportunity to review and respond to the study's findings before the final draft was written" (Goodman, 1986, p. 343). Through this method of qualitative field research, Goodman directly confronted the preservice teacher's academic experiences. She gained insight into the roles of methods courses and was

able to identify the three analytical categories for these roles which were discussed in a previous section of this chapter.

In another qualitative study, Crow (1987) followed four preservice teachers through one year of a teacher education program. This included their semester of student teaching. Concerned with the socialization process of preservice teachers, Crow used a variety of data-collection procedures. He "shadowed" the participants, conducted formal and informal interviews with them, observed them in class and in the public schools, and reviewed relevant program materials. Through frequent review of the gathered data and the technique of constant comparative data analysis, general conceptual categories were seen to emerge. Crow was eventually able to derive specific analytical categories which were supported by the data. Crow determined that the participants in his study had "a well established image of self as teacher" (p. 7). These participants were confident in their ability to create a classroom atmosphere which was different from their perception that classrooms are usually dull and boring. They identified themselves with their vision of the "ideal teacher." When two participants in the study dropped out of a program which they believed lacked an adequate academic and research orientation, Crow determined that high achievement preservice teachers are not always

willing to compromise their image of the ideal teacher to mediocre teachers education programs.

Cooney (1980) conducted an in-depth inquiry into the student teaching experiences of one preservice teacher. Through observations and interviews he found that teaching techniques can be taught in the field of math education when utilizing the tradition-craft model of teacher education (Zeichner, 1983). Complementing this was Bush's (1986) study of five preservice teachers' perceived sources of teaching decisions. Through observations, formal interviews, structured questionnaires Bush found that the preservice teachers perceived that the primary sources of the decisions they made in their student teaching experience were based on the content of their methods courses and the public school textbooks.

Grossman and Richert (1988) utilized the observation and interview data from a two-year study of the knowledge growth of beginning teachers to investigate the "Unacknowledged Knowledge Growth" of preservice teachers. Data from six of the twelve participants in the two-year study was studied in depth. All observation and interview data was coded using predefined categories of teacher knowledge. Grossman and Richert determined that these preservice teachers learned matters of general pedagogy in their teacher education courses as well as in their field experiences. For these participants the teacher education

courses suggested an image of what was possible in the classroom. Opportunities in the field for teacher-student interactions enhanced a growing understanding of students' responses to the subject matter. This complemented these preservice teachers' perceptions of student understanding based on their own experiences as students. These preservice teachers "attributed most of their content knowledge growth to the need to prepare material for teaching" (p. 60). Grossman and Richert saw that the coursework and fieldwork were "complementary opportunities for the growth of both knowledge and skill for teaching" (p. 61).

These qualitative studies demonstrate that in-depth case-study research which incorporates a variety of data collection processes combined with rigorous data analysis techniques yields insights into what is taking place in preservice teacher education programs. They contribute to a growing body of knowledge which can promote the continuing development of such programs.

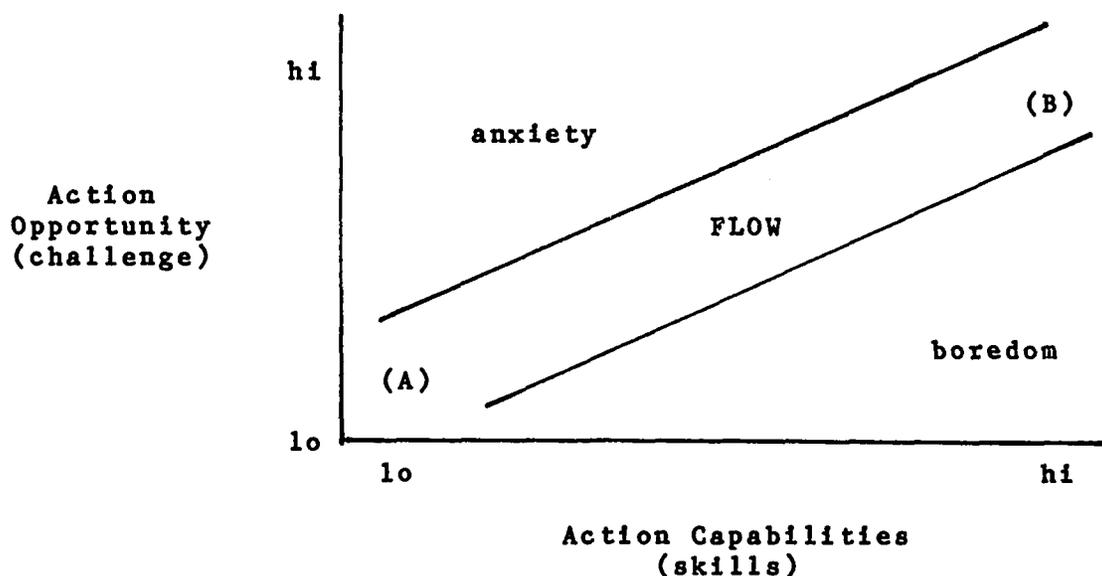
Reflection

The brain is a three-pound unit composed of a hundred billion nerve cells supported and nourished by equally large numbers of glial cells and an electro-chemical signaling system incorporating as many as 100 trillion synapses (Hubel, 1979). The brain is the instrument of the mind.

The mind is an instrument of the human individual, an instrument to be developed and coordinated with the emotional and physical aspects of the personality (Jung, 1858; Krishnamacharya, 1983; Maslow, 1968; Rudhyar, 1982). In the discipline of integral psychology (Gerard, 1988), this concept of personality integration is carried into the physicists' arena of energy field theory. The vital biofield, the emotional field, the mental field, and the spiritual field are seen as interpenetrating webs of energies extending within and beyond the dense physical body and capable of interacting with the energy fields of others (Gerard, 1988; Karagulla, 1967). Thus individuals can feel one another's emotional states, especially when they are particularly strong. Gerard (1988) claims that energy follows thought, thus individuals can not only project their emotions to others, they are also capable of directing their thoughts to one another. Direct contact with the world of ideas is ultimately possible and incorporates a sense individual identity with a sense of group consciousness (Bailey, 1954; Gerard, 1988; Krishnamacharya, 1983; Rudhyar, 1982; Thelman & Payne, 1988). Hints of this potential lie in our moments of inspiration and intuitive insight. Humanity's growing realization of planetary interdependence is a preamble to our developing group consciousness. These possibilities are mentioned as an introduction to a discussion of the more traditional explorations into the

concept of reflective thinking in order to keep imaginations open to what may be feasible in the future for every individual.

Reflection or thoughtfulness is an activity which demands sustained effort without any assurance of success or reward. Csikszentmihalyi (1977) has found that what he terms the "flow state" motivates individuals to sustain a dedicated pursuit of some action pattern for the sake of the action even without any rational compensation. A flow experience exists when there is a balanced tension between the challenge one is facing and the skills one possesses.



Model of the Flow Experience
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1977, p. 265)

One is likely to repeatedly engage in activities which fall within the range of flow experience, because they give one a sense of control over the environment. The individual

begins to lose his sense of separateness and begins to harmoniously merge with his environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1977). A feeling of harmony between dimensions of consciousness such as goals, thoughts, emotions, and actions provides evidence that life is worth living.

Through the years of adolescence a process of reinterpretation of the meanings of relationships takes place (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). The adolescent's world is one of disorder, and he is challenged to reinterpret his perception of family, peers, friends, self, of group interaction, and of being alone. Through coping with a wide range of experiences he strives to turn disorder into order. When the adolescent's experiences remain in the realm outside the flow channel, anxiety or boredom result. It is the challenge of all concerned adults to aid these children in progressing most frequently along the flow channel, offering experiences of increasing difficulty as skills progress. Whereas one cannot deny disorder or escape complexity, all individuals are challenged to determine meaning in their daily lives in order to establish a life theme which will promote growth, flowing upward.

Educators have an opportunity to provide young people with significant experiences which have the potential of helping them in their total evolution so that the students can create their own life themes and take charge of their own growth. In order for teachers to be able to meet such a

challenge there is a need for reflective teacher education programs which provide many opportunities for critical examination of educational goals and alternative courses of action (Liston & Zeichner, 1987). Teacher educators who are both supportive and demanding with their students can encourage interactions which facilitate thoughtful creative activities. Liston and Zeichner (1987) see a need to encourage analysis and reflection at three levels of the process of education.

1. The wide range of pedagogical and curricular forms which are utilized to attain educational aims must be critically assessed.
2. One must be encouraged to examine the underlying assumptions and consequences of pedagogical action.
3. Reflection on a plurality of clearly articulated moral positions and on the moral implications of pedagogical action and the structure of schooling is essential.

This construct aids in defining the critical components of the process of education in order to facilitate meaningful focus of our reflective deliberations.

Self direction in the educational setting, a prerequisite for reflective activity, is seen by Sutton (1987) to depend on three critical conditions. The first of these is the complexity of the work. Numerous researchers (Fenstermacher, 1979; Tom, 1984; Zumwalt, 1982) describe the complexity of the process of teaching. The wide range of knowledge which a teacher must have, in addition to

speaking, supervising, facilitating, negotiating, and mentoring abilities provide numerous challenges. When programs reduce curriculum development and teaching behaviors to mechanistic routines, students and teachers have little need to exhibit self direction. The closeness of supervision is a second determining condition for self direction. When assignments and due dates are flexible and classroom discussion is encouraged, self direction is essential. Lastly, frequent group work which necessitates cooperation and a wide variety of individual and group projects decreases routinization and necessitates self direction in the individual. A preservice teacher education program which facilitates self direction can then implement reflective teaching practices. The benefit of such a program is that it encourages experimentation with personal teaching styles, aids one to learn from one's own experiences and from the experiences of others, and promotes a safe psychological environment for optimum creative thinking (Cruickshank, 1985).

Four approaches to creativity such as the creative use of the thought processes, have been identified by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976). The first has an emphasis on rationality. Deduction through logic guides the thought processes and leads to creative productions. Classical associationism, or thinking through a stimulus-response chain of ideas is a second type of creative process. In a

gestalt mode of creativity a problem must first exist, this triggers the need for reflection until a solution is reached and the process ends. Finally, mental activity may be an end in itself. In any teacher education program which seeks to encourage reflective thinking it seems that it would be beneficial to be aware of the variety of creative thinking processes. This may help prevent attempts to make reflection a systematized routine process.

Routine actions have been described by Zeichner and Liston (1987) as those which are guided by tradition, external authority, or circumstance. They have sought to implement a preservice teacher education program which provides numerous opportunities for reflective action and minimizes the role of routine actions. The goals of the program are twofold: The first is to reflect on the origins, purposes, and consequences of one's actions; the second is to reflect on the material and ideological constraints for any action. They see these goals as leading to the liberation of the student in that they may free the student from the control of unjustified beliefs and unsupportable attitudes. Zeichner and Liston have also utilized Van Manen's (1977) conception of three levels of reflection. "Technical rationality," the first level, assumes the goals of education are given and the dominant concern is to efficiently and effectively implement the teaching behaviors which one has been taught. At the second

level, termed "reflectivity," each action is considered to have a practical relationship to some desired end. Thus each action is carefully assessed as to its probable educational consequences. "Critical reflection," the third level, incorporates discourse on the goals, experiences, and activities of the education process in terms of moral and ethical criteria. The concern is to promote justice, equity, and the satisfaction of important human purposes.

The program seeks to help student teachers become more aware of themselves and their environments in a way that changes their perception of what is possible. (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 25)

These educators and students strive to continually "examine, clarify, and act toward improving the quality of both theory and practice within the program" (p. 45).

Schon (1983) studied professionals who were successful reflective practitioners in their chosen fields of activity (architects, scientists, plant managers) in order to determine how professionals think in action. Three points of commonality were determined to be exhibited. These professionals saw some aspect of uniqueness in every situation or phenomenon which they examined. By drawing on past references they were able to gain greater understanding of the situation presented and frequently to generate a new metaphor. Through experimental actions new hypotheses were formulated and tested in ways which also aided in further

exploration of the phenomenon. Schon (1983) also found significant differences in terms of constraints which professionals brought into any reflection activity. Each professional described reality and conducted experiments according to his own media, language, and repertoire of experiences. In addition appreciative systems varied with each professional. This system was brought into any problem setting and into any reflective conversation. The reflective practitioner also made sense of any phenomena in terms of his own overarching theory or existence paradigm. He constructed role frames within which each task was set according to the bounds he placed on his institutional setting. These were termed constraints or constants in that they tended to change at a slower rate than the theories proposed during any term of reflective activity in a problematic situation.

Organizations and institutions are inhibited even more than individuals from experiencing organizational learning through creativity and reflection-in-action. This is a consequence of their need to maintain the stability and sense of predictability which assures their survival (Schon, 1983). Yet the organization is made up of individuals. When these individuals learn to cooperate through a sense of group consciousness, paradigm shifts within organizations composed of reflective practitioners is a probable result. Paradigm shifts enhance stability as the new view of the

nature of things encompasses all that which was previously known as well as a larger field of awareness in an absorbing, enriching, nonthreatening, and integrative experience (Ferguson, 1980).

Reflection is a process of great complexity. Reflection is the process through which the individual progresses from one who reacts to events to one who changes thought patterns and moves into a world of creativity and intentionally purposeful activity.

Conclusion

The brain: It aggressively seeks out, demands, and accepts only what it needs to "make sense" of it's perception of reality; it is selective in what sensations it will admit; it does not function well under pressure; large areas of it are devoted to language; and it functions or learns by establishing sequences of programs and patterns (Hart, 1983). The brain, the instrument of the mind, can be most fully utilized by the observant individual through controlled purposeful reflection on the aspects of the knower, the object of knowing, and the process of knowing (Krishnamacharya, 1983), as one seeks to foster planetary integration and group awareness through the full development of the human individual (Assagioli, 1965; Bailey, 1954; Ferguson, 1980; Gerard, 1988; Jung, 1958; MacDonald & Purple, 1987; Maslow, 1971; Muller, 1982).

The mind: It is the instrument utilized by the human individual to integrate his vehicles of expression (physical, emotional, and mental aspects); it is used to coordinate one's intelligent activity for one's own purposeful growth and development and for the benefit of the group activity in which one chooses to participate.

The learning-teaching process has been presented as one in which the educator intentionally utilizes his own power of dynamic reflection in order to promote self-initiated purposeful creativity in his students. The development of the reflective practitioner has been presented as a theme for programs in teacher education.

The reflective professional preservice or inservice teacher working within the educational setting seeks to determine the levels of the educative process such as described by Liston and Zeichner (1987). The reflective professional also needs to understand the nature of an environment which promotes thoughtful activity and self direction (Sutton, 1987). An understanding of the nature of creativity and the process of reflection in action (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Van Manen, 1977; Schon, 1983) aids the individual in realizing his full potential as an autonomous professional educator who can facilitate purposeful creativity and flow experiences for all students and colleagues in his environment.

Investigations of students' perceptions of their experiences during preservice teacher education have shown that academic coursework appropriately combined with fieldwork provide complementary opportunities for the development of content and pedagogical knowledge. If a program in teacher education seeks to enhance an inquiry orientation toward teacher education, then preservice teachers must move from reflection on pedagogical and curricular means, through the underlying assumptions and consequences of pedagogical action, into the moral implications of pedagogical actions and the structure of schooling.

Thus this investigation will focus on the reflections of a select group of students in their first professional semester of a teacher education program in order to gain insight into their perception of themselves, the process of human development, and the teaching profession.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

This study was an interpretive inquiry into the reflections of a select group of students during the first professional semester of a teacher education program. The primary data sources were interviews, journals, and course papers. The investigator found that the interviews provided rich insight into the reflections of the participants on how they view themselves, the teaching profession, and the role of their teacher education experience in those reflections. Therefore, a technique of "synthetic rendition" was devised to create a composite interpretation of each series of interviews. The purpose of this technique was to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant.

A Critique of Case-Study Methodology

Case-study methodology, a form of interpretive inquiry, was the mode of inquiry used in this investigation. The case-study approach provided an in-depth examination of an

instance in action. As explained by Stake (1978) results of such inquiry had the potential to:

1. move one toward a fuller understanding of the natural experience acquired in ordinary personal involvement;
2. extend explanations of that which one knows (propositional knowledge), and increase one's understanding of that which is the foundation of what one knows (tacit knowledge); and
3. enhance generalizations which develop as a product of experience.

Case-Study Methodology: Potential
Advantages and Limitations

The case-study methodology has distinct potential advantages and limitations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a clear delineation of these aspects of case-study research.

Potential Advantages

Of primary advantage is the utilization of "thick description" (Geertz, 1983) in which the researcher strives to pick his way through piled-up structures of inference and implication. Thus an experiential perspective of the case under investigation is provided which is wholistic and lifelike.

The conversation-like format of the report makes it understandable to nontechnical readers, and focuses a reader's attention while illuminating meaning. The researcher can communicate beyond propositional knowledge and build on the tacit knowledge of the reader. These

factors make the case-study methodology a unique technique for understanding an instance in action.

Potential Limitations

The case-study methodology has the distinct potential limitation of yielding to the biased interpretations of the writer. This is a factor to varying degrees in all reporting. Clarification of the biases of the writer is an essential aspect of any responsible reporting.

While this methodology has been criticized as not being sufficiently "scientific," Stake (1986) has repeatedly demonstrated the rigor of a well-conducted case study. As he contends, it is the task of the researcher to demonstrate the care and thoroughness of the procedures utilized.

An aspect of the criticism of being nonscientific is the question of reliability and validity. In a case study, reliability and validity are not addressed as in the more positivistic approaches. Guba (1981) describes an alternative issue of trustworthiness for qualitative studies. In place of internal validity one establishes credibility through prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and participant checking. Transferability, facilitated through thick description, is addressed in place of external validity. Dependability is addressed in place of reliability and confirmability in place of objectivity. Both of these are confirmed through rigorous auditing. Guba sees these as paralleling the conventional rationale. The

rigor with which the study is conducted and the care to detail and thoroughness of process permit the qualitative analysis of these factors.

Another potential limitation is that a case-study may provide only a partial account of the target population. This limitation is acknowledged and may be offset by the fact that the depth of the inquiry into the instances under investigation permits a level of understanding which is unobtainable in the quantitative-type methodologies. An idiographic interpretation is mandatory when one seeks to gain understanding or meaning experienced in situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The problem of ethics when utilizing this technique must be addressed most carefully. When each instance within the case is an individual, the problem of confidentiality is a crucial factor and demands of the researcher the highest level of integrity.

The "art" of case study writing is seen as the final potential limitation to this methodology. Whereas the writer attempts to utilize a conversation-like format in order to make the report understandable and relevant to the nontechnical reader, one must also incorporate a rigor of form, analysis, and synthesis which brings it creditability to the research community. Then the study can be expected to provide insights which may contribute to the total body of knowledge on the topic under investigation.

Case-Study Methodology: Data Collection

In addition to the conceptual framework provided by Stake, case-study methodology for this investigation draws upon the suggestions of Guba and Lincoln, and Burgess. Two aspects of data collection warrant specific attention. The first aspect, which is discussed by Guba and Lincoln (1981), incorporates the major characteristics of the investigator as an instrument of data collection. Burgess (1984) has discussed the second aspect, it being the major techniques of the investigator as researcher.

Investigator as instrument: Major characteristics

Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that it is essential that the investigator be responsive to people and the environment. The adaptability of the human instrument to aesthetics, relationships, non-verbal cues, emotions, and style provides a richness in data which is unobtainable from structured inflexible instruments. The investigator as instrument is also able to expand the knowledge base of the case by utilizing propositional knowledge to reveal tacit knowledge and thus having both of these function simultaneously.

A unique aspect of the investigator as instrument is the immediacy of the data processing capability. As the investigation unfolds, themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions may be revealed and permit fuller inquiry before the period in question has culminated. This provides

opportunities for clarification and summarization through additional exploration of typical and atypical responses.

Investigator as researcher: Major techniques

Burgess (1984) contends that it is essential that the investigator keep a journal. This has a four-fold purpose: Personal experiences relevant to the study are recorded, professional activities are noted, activities under way are organized in a timely manner, and planned activities are delineated for proper insertion into the flow of the investigation.

Three other distinct forms of written notes also aid the investigator in providing accuracy in data collection. Substantive fieldnotes provide a continuous record of situations, events, conversations, observations, interviews, and content of documents. Methodological notes contain personal reflections, problems, impressions, feelings, and hunches which occur to the investigator at any time during the study. By keeping these notes separate, both process and procedure are noted. Analytical notes contain preliminary analyses of the data which are worked out during the investigation with crude yes/no propositions, hypotheses, and rough models. These three separate and distinct notes permit the investigator as instrument to make needed adjustments in process.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) discuss the thought processes of the investigator as data collection strategies.

As schemes, patterns, and key linkages are discovered and identified, the investigator as researcher may increase selectivity in the choice of properties to be subjected to further inquiry.

Case-Study Methodology: Data Analysis

The collection, analysis, and interpretation of data involves both skill and artistry. In the analysis of the data, the investigator seeks to discover themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions within and between individuals and/or groups involved in the study. A technique unique to qualitative studies in contrast to most quantitative research is that the data collection and data analysis occur somewhat simultaneously. The researcher "immerses" himself in the data following each collection session in order to gain a greater understanding of the situation and enhance further investigation. This immersion may involve both intense and frequent reading of all notes and data gathered and an initial coding and sorting.

Sorting and Classifying Data

Glaser (1969) and others (Glaser & Strauss, 1975; Goetz & LeCompt, 1981) present the "constant comparative" method of qualitative analysis. This is a dual technique of codification and data inspection. It incorporates the identification and substantiation of categories of interest and the integration of the categories and their properties.

Predetermined categories and those which emerge from the data are identified and the data is coded and reorganized. This facilitates the discovery of both the quality and quantity of information within each category. Relationships between categories can also be more readily identified.

Burgess (1984) discusses practical techniques for the sorting and referencing of data as well as a triangulation scheme for logical presentation of the themes and patterns which emerge.

The devising of a system to index all data sources, journal entries, fieldnotes, methodological notes, and analytical notes is advantageous to the investigator. The use of wide margins and multiple copies permits the identification of preliminary categories such as common patterns or responses, special situations, and theoretical constructs of the researcher (Burgess, 1984). Files can then be constructed according to the categories defined.

Data triangulation (Burgess, 1984) enhances the rigor and organization of the presentation. This triangulation may occur in three areas: Time, space, and persons, with the category of persons further broken down in terms of individuals, interactions between individuals, and collective interactions. Methodological triangulation is also possible within method and between method. Within method triangulation may take place in a case-study between differing data sources such as observations, interviews, and

documents. Between-method triangulation may incorporate one or more quantitative methodologies into the study.

Presentation of the data

The presentation of the data takes on three dimensions: (a) descriptive accounts, (b) analytical accounts, and (c) substantive theoretical accounts.

Descriptive accounts and synthetic rendition of interviews.

Descriptive accounts provide a context for the reader and help him toward fuller understanding of the natural experiences acquired in ordinary personal involvement. A technique which can be used to enhance the utilization of interview data is to compose a synthetic rendition of a collection of participant interviews into a single composite interpretation. After identifying themes and reorganizing the texts according to common topics, skill and artistry is needed to weave a minimal number of connecting words and phrases into the composite "interview" so that continuity of expression and time reference is maintained while preserving the integrity of the original dialogue. Most essential is the technique of utilizing the creative imagination to "listen to the speaker" during the actual writing of the synthetic rendition of the interviews.

Analytic accounts.

Analytic accounts detail specifics of the description, extend explanations of that which one knows (propositional

knowledge), and increase understanding of that which is the foundation of what one knows (tacit knowledge). Themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions across time, within and between people, and within and between places are detailed with references to specific substantiating instances.

Substantive theoretical accounts.

Substantive theoretical accounts enhance generalizations which develop as a product of experience. The descriptive and analytical accounts may substantiate or repudiate predetermined theories. They may also suggest new hypotheses. When combined with the results of other studies, they enhance a body of knowledge which may lead to generalization.

Conclusion

The case-study methodology, due to its versatility and potential for depth of inquiry into instances in action, provides an effective research framework for investigating a full perspective of the experiences of a select group of students during a portion of the professional component of their teacher education program.

The Procedure for this Study

Background Information

Context of the Study

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) was chartered in 1891 as a State Normal and Industrial School "to give young women such education as shall fit them for teaching..." (Bowles, 1965, p. 6). Since that time UNCG has become coeducational and expanded to become a doctorate-granting university.

The School of Education at UNCG has a highly visible program, and among other degrees offers majors in Early Childhood Education, Intermediate Education, Middle Grades Education, and Secondary Grades Education leading to certification for teaching in public schools, kindergarten through 12th grade.

Middle Grades Education has been an area of teacher certification in North Carolina since 1984. The middle grades are a reflection of both elementary and secondary level education as in both developmental preparation and content specialization. This investigation has focused on a portion of the undergraduate program in Middle Grades Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in order to provide continuity of experience for the participants.

During the semester under investigation each participant was enrolled in the following courses [Note: Two students took Psychological Foundations the previous semester.]:

Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education. Designed to develop an understanding of classroom learning and instruction and the role of the teacher in the middle grades classroom.

Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts. Designed to develop skill in planning and in teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the middle grades with emphasis on developmental reading. Consideration given to a variety of approaches to reading/language arts instruction with public school classroom observation and participation required.

Edu 518 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum for Middle Level Mathematics. Designed to investigate current mathematics programs, including emphasis on meaning theory and on instructional materials, methods, and procedures in teaching fundamental operations.

Participants also spent one and a half days each week with an experienced teacher in a local middle school. This practicum experience was intended to provide the students with a practical frame of reference and context for the theory which was discussed and studied during the coursework. In addition to the methods course in mathematics, each participant also took a methods course in their second academic area of concentration.

Underlying Assumptions

Ideas that were accepted and were not investigated as part of this study are acknowledged as follows:

1. Given assurance of anonymity, students would be open and honest during interviews and in journals in relating their experiences and reflections on them.
2. Taped interviews combined with archival data from journals, class work, and observations during class and practicum experiences would provide additional data for "thick description" (Geertz, 1983) of students' perceptions of their academic experience.

In addition this study made no attempt to evaluate either the preservice teacher education program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro or the particular courses in which the participants were enrolled.

Procedures Followed

Selection of Participants

The names of those students with a concentration in middle grades mathematics education who would be entering the first professional semester of their academic studies during the second semester of the 1987-1988 academic year were obtained.

In consultation with the chairman of the Department of Pedagogical Studies and a faculty member who assists with the mathematics education program, five students were selected to be approached for participation in this study. In order to confine the study to students who would experience the same set of courses, students with one concentration in mathematics education were selected. As all but one of the expected eligible participants were

females, no males participated in this study. This was a restriction in order to assure anonymity of the participants. The five participants selected reflect the population of students in the School of Education Middle Grades Program.

The students selected were individually approached and cordially invited to participate in this project. They were each given a detailed accounting of the number and length of the interviews which they were to expect. The investigator also gained their consent to obtain copies of any journals and papers they would write and other documents they might produce during their coursework. They were assured of complete confidentiality with regard to anything they may say and do during the interviews, in journals, and with regard to all archival data. Copies of written invitations to participate in the study, written permission to obtain archival data, and written assurance of confidentiality have been placed in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Three sources of data collection were used in the study. They included: (a) preservice teacher interviews, (b) course descriptions and, (c) documents.

Preservice teacher interviews.

Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour on three separate occasions.

1. The initial interview took place prior to the participants' entering their first professional semester of academic study.
2. The second interview took place after the eighth week of the fifteen-week term.
3. The final interview was conducted after completion of the participants' semester exams.

The interviews were semi-structured, and all interviews were audio taped to provide an accurate record of the verbal behaviors of the individuals during the interviews.

The interviewer began the initial interview by requesting that the participant discuss her expectations for the first professional semester. Further questioning centered around the following topics:

1. significant life experiences,
2. reasons for selecting a career as a teacher,
3. reasons for selecting to teach emerging adolescents, and
4. reasons for selecting particular areas of academic concentration.

The investigator discretely probed when further enlightenment on the participant's thoughts were needed. See Appendix B for additional interview guidelines for the initial interview.

The second interview began by requesting general impressions of how the semester was progressing. Further questioning focused on the following topics:

1. thoughts on a course which is selected as being particularly significant,

2. thoughts on each course in which the participant is enrolled (key issues and assignments),
3. thoughts on the practicum experience,
4. thoughts on the field of mathematics and the purpose for its inclusion as an academic discipline, and
5. thoughts on effective teaching.

Careful probing, when necessary, was used to gain insight into the experiences which the participants were encountering which encouraged deliberation and reflection on the skills they were expected to acquire and the art of their profession. See Appendix B for additional interview guidelines for this phase of the inquiry.

The final interview began with a request that the participant share her experiences in each of the courses in which she was enrolled during the semester. The following topics guided the questioning:

1. key issues and assignments in each course,
2. opportunities for creativity and reflection,
3. teaching style of the professors,
4. thoughts on experiences during the practicum and opportunities to share these thoughts, and
5. the significance of the total experience of this first professional semester.

More specific probing occurred during this session than during previous interview sessions. This was the first time that the investigator directly requested information regarding the extent to which the participant encountered

experiences which initiated and provoked reflection and presented an introduction to becoming an emerging teacher in contrast to a college student. See Appendix B for additional guidelines for this phase of the interviews.

Course descriptions.

A description of each course in which the students would be engaged was obtained.

1. Open-ended interviews were conducted with each instructor (see Appendix C) to clarify their intentions in their choice of topics, assignments, and teaching techniques.
2. A syllabus of each course to be taken by the participants during the semester of the investigation was obtained from their instructors.

This provided the investigator with knowledge of the components of the course so that she could direct the questioning during the interviews if the participant did not refer to a particular activity or assignment. It also assured the investigator that these faculty members intended to incorporate an inquiry orientation into their course.

Documents.

Archival data was obtained from a number of sources. This researcher made a list of the types of archival data which were anticipated to add depth to the investigation. In consultation with the instructors these data sources were incorporated into the course requirements when they were seen to be valuable experiences for all students. Thus the academic experiences of the participants in the study,

except for the interviews, were similar for all students in the case under investigation.

1. The participants kept a single journal for two of their courses (educational psychology and language arts education). They were requested to discuss their experiences and their thoughts about them. Copies of these were requested.
2. Those who were enrolled in educational psychology wrote a biographical sketch for which they were requested to share their thoughts on their life experiences. Copies of these were requested.
3. The investigator obtained copies of all papers which the participants wrote during the course of the semester.

Data Analysis

Data was prepared and analyzed in four phases as follows:

Phase 1: Preparation of data.

All audio tapes were transcribed and typed by the investigator.

Margin notes made on the interview transcriptions lead to the devising of a coding system which would permit the categorization and filing of threads of commonality across and between participants as suggested by Glaser (1969) and Burgess (1984). Data from journals and other documents was also coded and integrated into the files. This facilitated the use of the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser, 1969).

Phase 2: Subject by subject analysis.

A synthetic rendition of the three interviews conducted with each of the participants was composed. This combined the three original interviews into a single composite interpretation which maintained the integrity of each participant's verbal expression while giving the reader insight into the "voice" of the participant. Care was taken to insert only those words and phrases which were needed to provide a smooth transition between paragraphs and maintain the appropriate time reference. The artistic utilization of the creative imagination to "listen to the participant" facilitated the writing of each synthetic rendition of the original interviews. The synthetic rendition was given to each participant in order to establish credibility through participant checking. A faculty member who had worked extensively with these students and was experienced with qualitative research also read the original interviews and confirmed the credibility of the synthetic renditions. The synthetic renditions of the interviews are presented in Chapter Four.

An analytical account of the perceptions and experiences of the participant based on the three primary data sources (interviews, journals, and documents) was then prepared. These accounts were organized according to the themes established by the research questions and those which

emerged from the participants. These are also presented in Chapter Four.

Phase 3: Between Subject Analysis.

Using the constant comparative method of analytic induction (Glaser, 1969), the investigator looked for and reported on themes and patterns of common perceptions and experiences between all the participants as well as clusters of participants. Thick description (Geertz, 1983) was provided based on the three primary data sources and using the time, space, and persons data triangulation procedure (Burgess, 1984). The investigator also looked for and reported on individual uniqueness and the context of their occurrence as well as omissions in participants' reflections. This interpretive response to the reflections of the participants is presented in Chapter Five.

Phase 4: Interpretive inquiry.

The investigator interpreted the implications of the participants' perceptions and experiences during this semester of their academic training in the context of a teacher education program which seeks to enhance an inquiry orientation toward teacher education. The theme of intentional dynamic reflection provided the interconnections between the idiographic interpretation of the reflections of the participants and implications for continued development of a teacher education program. The suggested implications of this study are presented in Chapter Five.

Trustworthiness of the Study

This investigator utilized the construct devised by Guba (1981) to establish the trustworthiness of this qualitative study. An accounting of techniques which were incorporated into this study in order to establish its trustworthiness follows.

Credibility

Guba suggested that credibility would be established through prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and participant checking.

In this study the investigator began her encounter with the participants before the beginning of the semester under investigation and continued this association throughout the semester. The initial interview took place before the semester commenced or shortly thereafter, the second interview took place approximately midway through the term, and the final interview took place during or after the week of final exams.

The participants wrote in their journals on a weekly basis and completed a wide variety of assignments in all their courses. This provided for a triangulation across data sources. One professional colleague, a faculty member who had worked extensively with these students and was experienced with qualitative research, reviewed all the original interviews, the journals, and many of the course papers to assure credibility of the descriptive and analytic

accounts of the data. Each of the participants also reviewed the synthetic renditions of their interviews to further establish their credibility. These procedures established the credibility of this study.

Transferability

The transferability aspect of trustworthiness in a qualitative study would be established through thick description (Guba, 1981).

The combination of synthetic renditions of the interviews and an analytical account of a triangulation of the three data sources for each participant provided a thick description of the reflections of the participants during their first professional semester in teacher education. These techniques for facilitating thick description established the transferability of this study.

Dependability and confirmability

Rigorous auditing would establish the dependability and confirmability aspects of trustworthiness in a qualitative study (Guba, 1981).

The interviews were meticulously transcribed by the investigator shortly after each interview took place in order to assure appropriate inclusion of all conversational syntax, pauses, and tone of participants' responses. Therefore, the synthetic renditions of the interviews incorporated the exact phrasing of the participants' reflections. The investigator inserted only those words or

phrases which were needed to provide a smooth transition between paragraphs and maintain appropriate time references. The inserted words or phrases were based on the question to which the participant was responding.

The investigator also made photo copies of all the participants' journals and course papers so that she could always refer to the original document.

Through rigorous auditing and meticulous attention to detail the descriptive and analytical accounts of the data were established as dependable and confirmable.

Trustworthiness established

The rigor with which this study was conducted, the meticulous care to detail, and the thoroughness of process which was followed established the trustworthiness of this qualitative study.

Summary

Through the utilization of thick description the descriptive, analytical, and substantial theoretical accounts which are presented in this study provide the reader with an experiential perspective of the reflections of a select group of preservice teachers during their first professional semester in a teacher education program. The conversation-like format of the reports in Chapters Four and Five makes them understandable to nontechnical readers. The synthetic renditions of the interviews permit the reader

to gain insight into the "voice" of the participants. This format focuses the reader's attention while illuminating meaning through communicating beyond propositional knowledge by building on the tacit knowledge of the reader.

The investigator has facilitated the understanding of an instance in action through the use of the case-study methodology in interpretive inquiry. The study is a contribution to the body of knowledge may enhance an educator's understanding of the process of transformation as a preservice teacher moves from being a college student to an emerging professional educator.

CHAPTER IV
SYNTHETIC RENDITION OF PARTICIPANTS' INTERVIEWS
AND DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE DATA

Introduction

A synthetic rendition of the series of interviews conducted with each preservice teacher in this study is an innovative feature of presentation of the data in this chapter. The purpose of this technique is to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintains the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant. This also provides the reader with an experiential perspective of the reflections of this select group of preservice teachers during their first professional semester in a teacher education program.

Following the synthetic rendition of each participant's interviews is a descriptive interpretation of her reflections on her experience. These are discussed in light of what she shared through the interviews, her journal, course papers, and projects. These accounts are organized according to the themes established by the research questions and those which emerged from the participants.

Introducing the Participants

Five young women participated in this study. They had all entered college immediately after their graduation from high school. This study took place during the spring of their junior year and just prior to student teaching. They were enrolled in the first semester of the professional component of their academic training as middle grades teachers at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Middle grades teachers are required to have two areas of academic proficiency. These preservice teachers had all chosen mathematics education as one of their academic concentrations.

Alice

Alice commuted from her home town. This was about a one hour drive from the university. She had transferred to UNCG from another state university at the beginning of her sophomore year. She selected science as her second academic concentration with her preference being to teach mathematics. The courses which she completed during the semester of the study were:

- Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education
- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics
- Edu 519 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Science

Bettie

Bettie entered UNCG as a freshman and lived on campus during the time of this study. She selected communications skills as a second academic concentration to accompany her predominant background in mathematics. The courses which she completed during the semester of the study were:

Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts

Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools

Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics

Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts

Carole

Carole transferred to UNCG after completing a two year associate degree at her local community college. She entered UNCG as a junior and lived on campus. She selected English as her second academic concentration and expected to enjoy teaching both English and mathematics. The courses which she completed during the semester of the study were:

Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education

Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts

Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools

Edu 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers

Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics

Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts

Debra

Debra entered UNCG as a freshman and commuted from a large city which was about a two-hour drive from the university. She was an out-of-state student. She selected

communications skills as her second area of academic concentration with the hope that she would only teach mathematics. The courses which she completed during the semester of the study were:

- Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education
- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics

Ellie

Ellie entered UNCG as a freshman and lived on campus during the time of this study. She selected communications skills as her second academic concentration, although she thought she would prefer to teach mathematics. The courses which she completed during the semester of the study were:

- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 470 - Reading Education for Secondary and Special Subject Teachers
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics
- Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts
- Edu 570 - Reading Across the Curriculum

These women enthusiastically participated in this study. Assured of complete confidentiality, they consented to share their reflections on their experiences through a series of three interviews, their journals, and the papers they wrote for their courses. The descriptive accounts of

these preservice teachers' reflections which follow in this chapter were based on these interviews, journals, and coursework papers.

Alice Speaks of Herself and Her Experience
in Her First Professional Semester

I definitely want to teach. I know now that if I didn't want to teach I wouldn't be here. Being this first professional semester, if I didn't want to teach this would definitely tell me that. But I definitely want to, I mean I'm going to stick with it.

It's just that I want to help these kids learn something, so that they can move on and not be stuck with a job that pays minimum wage all their life. It's just so they can go out and better themselves just a little bit. Well this school that I'm at, it's a lower middle class, it's not a really rich school. I just want to help them go as far as they can. And they're capable.

My parents both work in the textile mills back home, and my brother is in trucking there, but he hopes to go back to college. It's just a small town, these people they finish high school. A lot of them don't even graduate, and they work in the mills. And that's where I've worked, like three past summers, or four of the past summers, and I just knew that was something I didn't want to do. I knew I would go to school so I could do something else. And that's one thing. That's one reason I'm here, cause I don't want to work there. I mean I want to go back there and teach, but I

don't want to go back there to work in a hosiery mill.

I don't know why I chose to teach the middle grades. The teachers I had they taught me, and they gave me a chance to go on and better myself and get a better job, and I would give that to somebody else.

I had one great teacher, and she graduated from here, and she was great, Mrs. Rebecca Clark. She's the best teacher, hardest teacher I had, but she's always a teacher I'll look back on for teaching me the most. She was my high school math teacher for algebra II and advanced math. I was 11th and 12th grade. She made us keep notebooks. She would give us a quiz we never expected, so you always had to be on your toes. And a hard teacher like that you learn more, and you look back on her and thank her for that. You might not then, but I do now.

Math has always been my best subject so I decided to teach that. It's concrete. It's black and white. It's not like English where you have to think the symbolism for this and that.

Math is teaching kids to deal with the numbers, and you have numbers in life all around. Like going grocery shopping, going to the bank, balancing the checkbook, and these are activities that the children are going to have to know when they get out into the world. I think math gives them a solid background for that. That's not exactly what

math is, but I think that's a basic principle of what it's for.

Mostly though kids study math because they have to! That's what we tell them, well that's what they think. Like I was in high school. What would I ever need algebra for? But you could run up with problems that you need math for, like I said, balancing a checkbook, going to the grocery store. There's just always situations that they need this math for.

And science is interesting too, and of course it is the only other subject I like. I don't like English, history, or anything like that. So I decided to teach middle grades science too.

With middle school you kind of have to get them interested, and to keep them going so they want to keep learning. These kids are talkative, rambunctious! But they are experiencing new things so I think they are going to ... they are going to be hard to control, but I think I'm doing OK. I think I'm going to like teaching. I know I'm going to have a tough time trying to keep them calmed down and interested and things.

I knew teaching was going to be hard, and everybody's told me this is the worst age to teach. It's the hardest age to teach, and I understand that now, because it's hard. I mean it's hard to get them to want to learn anything. Because sitting in the classroom, they're talking to their

neighbors or doodling on their paper or just looking into space, and it's really hard to keep them keep their attention so they can learn something.

You just want to keep everything interesting or they are not going to want to learn anything. Some of the classes I'm taking, I don't understand why I have to take them, I feel they don't have anything to do whatsoever with what I will be teaching. I mean I guess there must be some reason for it, but I wish I could ask somebody. That's why I want the kid to understand why he has to do this or why he needs to take this instead of just saying, "You have to do this, don't ask any questions." I think they should be able to ask questions to understand why they are doing something.

My first week of this semester, well the first week I was ready to quit teaching. I don't know why, it just seems like they were throwing all this stuff at me. Right? They were throwing lesson plans, unit plans, and I had never done this stuff. It's gotten better, believe me! In the first week I went into the schools, the kids didn't care if I was even there. But after we'd had a couple labs and a couple times when I could work with them, and they felt better that I was there, and I felt better that I was there. So I had time to work with them, so. It got better.

The classes I'm at, it's a real basic class, but I set in on a math class once that's supposedly a basic math

class. But the teacher told us that the kids scored like two grade levels below the normal. And it's just hard for me to believe that they're there and scoring that low. Science is what I'm usually sitting in on.

I mean I would rather be observing in both. And I wish they could do that somehow, but it's just hard because if I go into this math class, then that means sending Traci into another class, and nobody signed up for her other area, social studies. It's just hard for us to get around, at Kelly Middle School. We're there for like three and a half periods, almost four, but their first period and third period, they have free periods, so we only see one and a half classes on Thursdays. And so it's hard for us to split that up.

On Fridays we're there, let's see, we're there all fifth period, they have lunch from like ten after one til something til two, so we just leave sometime during lunch, because we would only get to see something like ten minutes of the period after lunch. So we just leave, so we're sitting in second period, fourth period, and fifth period. So we're only seeing three periods then. So it's just hard to split it up for me to get in both classes

In the science class all I do is sitting in, I'm seeing this same class for every period, because she has eighth grade classes, and it's the same class each period, so I'm not seeing anything different. I'm seeing the same thing

the whole day. I mean it's different students, but she basically does the same thing.

My cooperating teacher has been teaching for like twenty-one years, so she's been in it. She tries to get them hands on. She says she's got them spoiled giving them labs so often, but they're pretty well organized. I was impressed with them. I expected eighth graders to be real hectic, but they weren't. And um, her style, she goes to the board, she, and she even will run off her notes, and let them have them instead of them having to copy off the board. But she explains things well. She has demonstrations, so she's getting the kids motivated.

From what I saw at my school, to me I think you have got to motivate the students which I've seen is the hardest thing for them to do. And, but with the science class that I'm in, to motivate them, the kids want the labs, and that's just hard for them to do, but they get this hands-on experience. And that's what you've got to give them, because they understand more if they get their hands on it than just the teacher explaining it. And I think to be effective that you've got to do that, that you've got to give them some kind of hands-on experience.

There's a few, I mean I know they're eighth graders, but they don't seem to care about anything they're doing. You know, I'm setting there one day in the science class, and she handed out a work sheet, and they were going to have

to turn it in to be graded. And she even went over the first part with them so they would have a few of the answers right, and they didn't even pick up a pencil to write anything down. And then this just disturbs me. And they have to be told everything. They'll start, the teacher will start writing things on the board, and it's bound to happen every time that a student's hand will raise and say, "Do I have to write this down?" It's alright when I was in school I was taught, if a teacher wrote something on the board then it was important, and you should write it down too. These kids don't get that. They just, I don't know, it's amazing to me that they don't, that they haven't understood. I don't know how many days they've been in the classroom, but they should know when they write something on the board that it's important.

So you have to tell them everything, or they're not going to do it. I mean, it's hard, they do not pay attention. It's hard to keep their attention. I knew that going in, but I didn't realize it was that hard.

In math to keep them interested I think you have to use manipulatives. They don't have them at Kelly Middle School where I'm at, the teacher, the math teacher doesn't believe in using them and that's hard to believe, because it just seems like with this, with her lower level math class that's what she would need, because they would be able to see it.

In Dr. Lacy's math methods class she used a lot of manipulatives, and she believes in that, and I think with the lower level students it'll help too, because they get to see it more concretely. With the upper level kids they felt like it was baby stuff, and they didn't want to do it. But if they don't understand the concept, manipulatives will help if you can just get them to use them, and teach them how.

I knew students had a lot to learn in math, but Dr. Lacy brought out a lot of concepts, a lot of skills and everything that I had no idea that the students had to know how to do. It's and they keep growing as you go along. There's a lot for them to know.

But mostly the math methods, I mean it's an elementary math, and I wish we could be with the middle school, but they don't have a class offered. I think it was fairly good, but I think it was more for the elementary. She's dealing more with the, with the primary grades and the prenumber concepts and this, and with the middle school the kids are going to already have reached this. So I don't, well I guess it makes us see what stages the students have to go through, but I have to come up with my own teaching methods, because she didn't really show us too much for middle school. She got on geometry some, this last part of the semester. That's really about it, the rest are more for elementary, adding, subtracting, dividing, multiplying.

In that class we had to read articles that dealt with the math topic she was covering at that time. And we had to read those and do a summary and a reflection to those. We had seven of those to do. We had to do, we had to do a unit plan in there also. I did it on the metric system. It was, it was OK. We never set down and showed us how to do one. I mean they would go through the six-step lesson plan, but that's all they did. They never... See they didn't break down a chapter or anything, they said here do it. And that's what we did.

That's what I'm afraid of. Because I don't think it's going to be exactly what she wants. She wanted us to do it her way. And that, and it was just stress. I've talked to people who have had her for like four classes, and they say she wants you to say exactly what she does, and I can see that on the tests. I feel I've said it but in different words, but I don't get all the points for it, it's just little things like that.

Dr. Hart's class, it's basically algebra II, but it's, he's showing us how to teach the students that we'll have, cause he's taking it out and doing outlines and showing us how to put notes on the board and everything. So I think it's a real good class if I ever get to teach algebra. I've felt that the students are going to have a hard time with it, but Terry gave us a lot of, the way, the way he teaches, I want to follow that, because I think he's great.

He kind of outlines the chapter, or the section on the board, and he gives examples, and then you ask questions. It's just, just that I like the way he teaches. But I think the kids will be able to understand if you put the section, and put a heading, and then put examples. I think, and then have students ask questions.

With his class now, I wish I had went ahead and majored in math, and maybe gotten my teaching certificate. But maybe I'll do that later. Come back.

Then I have a middle school science with Dr. West, and he showed us a lot of hands on experience stuff where we can show the kids, and I think that helps a lot. Each class we meet one night a week. In each class he has different concepts, like chemical phenomena, and it's just, he's still, we're doing experiments all through class so we can get our hands-on experience, so we can relate it to the kids. And that's how, we're doing experiments, and I think that's great.

Most of the people in there were teachers already, and they were I guess, just coming back for their masters or something. There were only like three of us in there that were not teachers. But um, he didn't, well I guess he lectured, basically what he did he would give us activities to do. I think it was a good class, and plus being with the teachers. We learned a lot from them too. Dr. West would ask them questions like, "Are you teaching this? How do you

do it?" But basically the problem they ran into is lack of science equipment for them to do things with.

Then the last couple weeks each student in the classroom had to do a lesson for hands-on experience. And what I learned is they don't always work out like they're supposed to! The hands on makes it a lot, well it's more interesting, fun, and I think the kids can grasp the ideas a whole lot better.

In my science class at school my teacher told me that most teachers were afraid to do labs and stuff with the kids, afraid of not controlling the class, but she did things. Like she did one every week I was out there. I think that is real good, because it gives the students a hands-on and they enjoyed it.

When she lectured, you could see they were just sitting around staring at the walls or doodling. But when she talked about a topic that they were interested in, then you could tell that they were really getting into it, because they would ask questions and everything. Like she will, she just finished teaching AIDS this past week when I was out there. And they were popping questions every two minutes. So you could really tell the difference. You can really see it.

I think I'll enjoy teaching science. I wasn't, hoping math, I was hoping I would get math, but then with the science class. I think it's going to be fun and interesting

for me, and also the students, because I don't know a lot either. And as I go along I'll learn with them too.

I had one class I don't think I needed to take. It's Dr. Emory's class, and it's with the language arts. I mean, well I never liked language arts, but I can see that it could be fun. She gave a lot of useful activities that I enjoyed. Some of it the students would also. So I never thought of language arts as fun, but it can be.

We had to do language arts lesson plans, and I'm not even in a language arts concentration, and I couldn't get into a language arts class because the teacher didn't sign up for an intern. I'm trying to understand why I had to take it. Well, except that all classes deal with reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which is the four things of language arts, I understand that. But we had to do three activities or lesson plans. And I asked her could I not incorporate language arts into a science lesson plan, and she said she didn't care if I could write science lesson plans, she wanted to know if I could write a language arts. And I just, I would rather be doing something that I could use when I get out to teaching instead of doing something that's just going to sit there.

Now with the unit plan we were able to do a science application. She gave us examples, they were two science. One was weather, one was on geography I think. And she gave them for examples cause they were well done. So I figured

we could do a science unit plan, she didn't say we couldn't, but the individual lesson plans were to do with language arts. And that's why I feel I didn't need it. I mean I need practice in writing lesson plans, but I need practice in writing lesson plans in what I plan to teach.

The unit plan was better for me because I got to do it in science. But we had three individual teacher reports we were supposed to do. We were supposed to be able to teach one in the classroom, and everybody read them, but since I wasn't in a language arts classroom I didn't get to do that. So all I had to do was write up a lesson plan. It was hard because I'm not going to teach grammar or language arts. And it was harder for me to come up with something for those. The unit plan I could do anything just as long as I tied it in, speaking, writing, and listening.

Her class was different from the others. Most of her class was handing out handouts and activities that we would be able to use once we got in the classroom teaching. And she went through the textbook, but most of hers was handing out the handouts so we would be able to have something when we started teaching.

She would lecture, then we had group activities. Um, we were supposed to bring in a book and evaluate it through ability, on the readability level, what it was, like seventh grade. And we had to bring in a short story and do

different kinds of questions, like interpretive, comprehension. A lot of her's was small group activities.

She makes some good activities, but I don't know where I myself will get to use them in a science or math class. Some I can, but not all that she got to hand out. The last part of the class was on reading, and that deals with every class, so that was a lot better.

We did a journal for Dr. Emory's class too. Doing it made me look for more than just to sit there and watch her teach. It made you think of what was going on instead of just sitting there and watching and not thinking anything about it. It made me sit down and think and realize what teaching was about, and the different teaching techniques that my teacher used out at Kelly. I'll read it again and see what I thought about what was going on. She only graded it once, we had to turn it in again at the end of the semester. And I got a "B" on it, and it just, I don't understand how people can grade down your journal, because it's what you feel and not what they're supposed to feel. I don't understand.

Dr. Wray read our journal too. In his class he wanted to make sure we could go in a classroom and make sure we could handle the students and know what we were in for the very first day we went in. It was education, psychology applied to education or something, it's so we can see the behaviors of the kids and kind of know what to expect with

this age level. I really think that's going to help out a lot.

He showed us the lesson plan which is important for our first year. And uh, like I said before, with the behaviors, he's kind of, with the class it's kind of shown us what to expect with the behaviors of these kids so we won't get surprised. I'm sure there's going to be an exception that doesn't follow any of the behavioral rules that we're studying, but I really think it's giving us a pretty well background to go into teaching.

Everything we did in his class was important, because it taught you how to deal with the students in the classroom. Classroom behavior, classroom management, he gave us a lot on classroom management. And how to do, make out tests and things like that, and I think the course was good all the way around, and it's going to help when I student teach.

We had different students and their behavior, and we had to deal with each one of those, and his class taught you how to do that. Like we did a case study, and I did my fiance's little sister, because I didn't have a lot of time to work with the students at Kelly Middle School. So I just did with her, because I could see her about every day. She's fourteen, eighth grade, and she's an above average student. I observed, I talked with her, because there were some things you just couldn't observe of her learning

styles. Like did she like to study when it was quiet and things like that. So I'd talk to her, and I observed her. I went to her class a couple of times, and then I helped tutor her at home on her homework.

So you see that there's individual styles, and each one's different, and you have to plan to your presentations according to each child. Where you vary your presentations, like one day you could lecture, one day you could show a film, another you could have an activity or a lab or something. So you can reach every student.

I also did a micro teaching lesson plan that we had to do, video taped it, and then went back through it and observed it so I could see what I did wrong or what I could do better. That helped a lot. We were supposed to do it in the schools, but I figured it would interrupt, I didn't have much chance to teach out there, so I did it with my peers on campus. Well I was nervous I could tell that. I, I haven't done much on a video tape, and I don't like to see my self either. It's, the only thing was my introduction, and of course my teacher input since I haven't had a lot of practice teaching yet. But I guess that comes with practice.

In class Dr. Wray would lecture and then we would have small group discussions. Then um, he would have these little activities like the personality thing, and he gave a mensa challenge test or something like that it was called.

And he just did it a variety of ways. Sometimes he, he brought in a video tape, and he let us watch that, a teacher teaching a classroom. So he did it in different styles in different ways.

That personality thing [Keirsey Temperament Sorter, (Keirsey & Bates, 1984)] I found out I was a very judgmental person. So I can see that now. It said judgmental meant you make judgments on people before you even get to know them or anything. And I do that. But also I'm outgoing, sometimes I'm quiet, fun to be around, most of the time happy, sometimes not, and it didn't talk about that.

I was excited to start this semester, and I know now I definitely want to teach. You have to deal with a lot, like with the administration, take roll, you have to keep notes, and you have to make conferences, but it's easier there. Where I went to school they, they didn't have a team. And at Kelly Middle you had a team made up of the teachers that taught each subject, therefore if you had a problem you didn't have to deal with it by yourself. You had other teachers to talk to. I think that's real good.

I had never seen that before, but it worked well, because if you had a problem with one student, you didn't go face on with that student and his or her parents. You had people to back you up, because they had the kid in class too.

It seems like it works pretty well. But they lost two people on their team, because they were moving. They were hoping to get a man on their team because it was all ladies, and they wanted a man just for the man's ideas and stuff. They were hoping they would get one.

I like my cooperating teacher, but she didn't seem to have time for me, because.... Well she's an older teacher, she's been at the school for like 20 some years, so she's an old pro. She takes the eighth graders on a Washington trip, so she's been busy with that. It's just, they need one that's going to take up time with them, and mine didn't have the time. But I would have them go out to Perry Middle if I could, because the way the students talked there, they got to teach all the time, the students helped them, and the teachers helped and gave them handouts and everything. So I would recommend Perry Middle over any of the rest. I didn't get to go out, I just heard the other ones talk about it.

But Block was good because you get to see kind of what it's like. It may not be the exact same middle school or anything. But you do get a feel for it, for what it's going to be like. And with the coursework, you know from the very first start what you've got to do. So as long as you would keep it up along it wouldn't be that much. And the teachers [University faculty], if you don't understand or if you're not sure what you're supposed to do you can ask them, because they'll tell you. They help you out, but you can't

just sit there and wait til the last minute and then say,
"Hey I don't understand what's going on."

Most of all I definitely know I want to teach! I mean there's, I mean if I hadn't known before I think it would have turned me away from it, and it didn't do that. But, and walking out Thursday, it was my last day at Kelly Middle, and I didn't think I had made that much of an impression, or I didn't enjoy it that much, but as I walked out and knew I wasn't going back I knew then that I enjoyed myself!

Descriptive Interpretation of

Alice's Reflections

As I was walking out the front doors at Kelly Middle School [my last day there], I finally realized something. I realized that I enjoyed myself and that I actually accomplished something while I was there. I did not come to these terms until I realized that it had all come to an end. I think teaching is definitely the career for me.

Alice's Journal

Introducing Alice

Alice was not sure what put the idea of becoming a teacher into her head. She was a senior in high school when this occurred. She just knew that her schooling experiences had included many good teachers who had given her a chance to make something of her life, and she wanted

to help kids learn something, so that they can move on and not be stuck with a job that pays minimum wage all their life.

Her small hometown in North Carolina focused it's work force on the textile mills, and Alice worked in the mills for four summers. She knew she did not want to spend her adult life as a textile laborer, and she did want to help others "better themselves just a little bit."

Math had always been Alice's best subject, so she chose to seek a middle level teaching certificate with a concentration in mathematics. In the spring of 1988 Alice was in her junior year of college and commuted about 40 miles to a state university. This was the first professional semester of her undergraduate academic career.

Professional Aspiration

In an autobiographical sketch written at the beginning of the semester Alice expressed having some doubts about being a good teacher and a fear of being boring and ineffective. Yet she also expressed hope that the semester ahead would help her find that she has some talent for teaching, because "I am dedicated to this career, and I plan to work hard at it." The last entry in the journal Alice wrote during this semester seemed to express the fulfillment of this hope.

As I was walking out the front doors at Kelly Middle School, I finally realized something. I realized that I enjoyed myself and that I actually accomplished something while I was there. I did not come to these terms until I realized that it had all come to an end. I think teaching is definitely the career for me, and I thank Kelly Middle School for helping me to find that in myself. I'll miss you Kelly Middle School.

The experiences of this first professional semester seemed to have calmed Alice's fears about her abilities and reassured her of the correctness of her decision to become a teacher.

Academic Endeavors

Alice completed 15 credit hours of coursework during this semester and also participated in two credit hours of practicum experience at a middle school near the university. The coursework included:

Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education
 Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading
 and Other Language Arts
 Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
 Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level
 Mathematics
 Edu 519 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Science
 Mat 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers

The first week of classes was almost overwhelming for Alice when she found that she would be required to write many lesson plans and unit plans, a new experience for her. She then went out to Kelly Middle School and was further discouraged when after being introduced to the students she recalled in her journal "the kids didn't care if I was even there." Yet Alice remained firm in her resolve to become a teacher and found that she was able to keep up with the course assignments. In addition after working with the kids at the middle school a little "they felt better that I was there, and I felt better that I was there."

Personal and Professional Discoveries

Alice was aware of having made a number of discoveries this semester about herself, about teaching and the teaching profession, and about the nature of adolescents. Primarily the experiences of the semester confirmed Alice's resolve to become a teacher.

Most of all I definitely know I want to teach!
 I mean if I hadn't known that before I think
 it [this semester] would have turned me away
 from it, and it didn't do that.

Whereas her preferred academic concentration was mathematics, Alice was assigned to an eighth grade science class at Kelly Middle School and discovered that she would enjoy teaching science.

I think I'll enjoy teaching science. I was hoping I would get math [as a practicum assignment], but then with the science class, I think it's going to be fun and interesting for me. And also the students, because I don't know a lot either, and as I go along I'll learn with them too.

Alice chose science as her second academic concentration because

it is the only other subject I like. I don't like English, history, or anything like that. So I decided to teach middle grades science too.

Yet from her experiences in the language arts methods course which focused on reading, speaking, writing, and listening across the curriculum, Alice discovered that language arts could be fun too even though "I never thought it could be." However, she was disappointed that the three lesson plans she wrote for that class had to focus on a language arts topic and could not have a science or mathematics focus. Alice found that the required language arts unit plan went better for her since she was permitted to focus on a science topic. This was more satisfying to her need for assignments to be relevant to her chosen teaching areas.

University Coursework in Curriculum and Teaching

All of the education methods courses in which Alice participated emphasized the need to actively involve students in experiencing the process of learning. Dr. West in middle school science "showed us a lot of hands-on experience stuff where we can show the kids," and "in Dr. Lacy's math methods she used a lot of manipulatives."

Language arts with Dr. Emory

was different from the others. Most of her class was handing out handouts and activities that we would be able to use once we got in the classroom.

Overall, Alice found that her coursework was very relevant to her preservice teacher preparation. The mathematics methods course seemed to have been the most disappointing. It was primarily directed toward elementary level mathematics.

She's dealing more with the primary grades and the prenumber concepts, and with the middle school the kids are going to already have reached this. I guess it makes us see what stages the students have to go through, but I have to come up with my own teaching methods.

Although the six-step lesson plan was discussed, Alice stated that she was not shown how to break a chapter down into coherent lessons. When it came to writing the mathematics unit plan, Alice experienced some anxiety.

That's what I'm afraid of. Because I don't think the unit plan is going to be exactly what she wants. She wanted us to do it her way, and that, and it was just stress.

In addition this primary level focus had lead Alice to believe that manipulatives in the middle level mathematics classroom was mostly for remedial work.

I think with the lower level students it'll help With the upper level kids they felt like it was baby stuff, and they didn't want to do it.

Alice believed "math is teaching kids to deal with the numbers." This perception seemed to have been confirmed as she described a lesson she observed at Kelly Middle School. Her detailed account of the lesson indicated that it focused on teaching two rote techniques for subtracting mixed numbers when you need to borrow (ex. $6 \frac{1}{6} - 3 \frac{5}{6}$). The students were told "the lesson was important because they needed to know how to do it for the test that she was giving on Wednesday." In her reflections on this observation experience Alice gave no indication of her impression of the quality of the lesson. She did comment that "the students were more responsive and attentive than if it were a review lesson." In interviews with four students after class Alice "learned that as soon as math is over, the students do not want to discuss math."

Methods for teaching mathematics at the middle level were more clearly demonstrated for Alice in her algebra II class taught in the mathematics department by Dr. Hart.

He's showing us how to teach the students that we'll have, cause he's taking it out and doing outlines and showing us how to put notes on the board and everything.

Yet Alice also related that it was a good class "if I ever get to teach algebra." Whereas she noted that she liked his technique of putting up a heading, giving examples, and then letting students ask questions, it was unclear as to whether Alice saw this as a technique which would transfer to other areas of the curriculum.

Practicum Experience

These classes reinforced what Alice was observing in the middle school. In reference to an eighth grade science class she related in an interview,

from what I saw at my school, to me I think you have got to motivate the students ... but they get this hands-on experience. The kids want the labs, ... and that's what you've got to give them, because they understand more if they get their hands on it than just the teacher explaining it.

After observing a remedial math class where the lesson introduced the skill of subtracting mixed numbers using rote memorization techniques, Alice remarked,

in math to keep them interested I think you have to use manipulatives, ... because it just seems like with her lower level math class that's what she would need, because they would be able to see it.

During her practicum experience Alice assisted with the weekly science laboratory experiments and designed and taught one laboratory lesson. This practicum experience reinforced the appropriateness of the many experiments attempted in the science methods course. Alice also found

that students were more involved in a lesson when "the subject was of more interest to them." She found this was especially evident during the week the science teacher devoted to the subject of AIDS. Overall Alice became more aware of the need to get her students interested and to vary her presentations.

Like one day you could lecture, one day you could show a film, another you could have an activity or a lab or something.

Alice participated in such a range of teaching techniques in most of her education methods courses this semester and saw the effectiveness of such practices in the public school classroom. She related that this was necessary in order to "reach every student."

Adolescents

In the education psychology course with Dr. Wray Alice conducted a case study of one student, observing her, talking with her, tutoring her a little, and visiting her classroom. Alice found that this study reinforced what she was learning in the classroom.

So you see that there's individual styles [of learning] and each one's different, and you have to plan your presentation according to each child.

Yet Alice also found similarities in adolescents. They "are talkative, rambunctious ... they are experiencing new things....It's the hardest age to teach, and I understand that now." Alice was also very troubled when she noticed

that a few students at Kelly Middle School "don't seem to care about anything."

I mean it's hard to get them to want to learn anything. Because sitting in the classroom, they're talking to their neighbors, or doodling on their paper, or just looking into space, and it's really hard to keep their attention so they can learn something.

Alice related this uncaring attitude to her own experience as with some courses she found that,

I don't understand why I have to take them. I feel they don't have anything to do whatsoever with what I will be teaching. I mean I guess there must be some reason for it, but I wish I could ask somebody.

Thus Alice was further reinforced in her resolve to make her classes meaningful to her students.

That's why I want the kid to understand why he has to do this or why he needs to take this instead of just saying, 'You have to do this, don't ask any questions.' I think they should be able to ask questions to understand why they are doing something.

This had a very practical manifestation when the eighth grade class was going on a field trip to a historical museum and Alice convinced a reluctant student to go on the trip by reminding him that he would get a zero for the day in social studies. In her journal Alice related,

It made me feel good that he thought about what the zero would do to his grade so he showed up for the trip.

Alice was perplexed by some students' lack of concern for their grade and need to be told what to do all the time.

And they have to be told everything. The teacher will start writing things on the board, and it's bound to happen every time that a student's hand will raise and say, 'Do I have to write this down?'

She went on to remember that when she was in school it was assumed that everything the teacher wrote on the board was important and the student must copy it in her notes.

More Professional Discoveries

Alice seemed to be striving to resolve her new conviction that effective teaching meant presenting lessons which were interesting and relevant to the students with the authoritative tone of her education experiences. In a paper on middle schools which she wrote at the end of the semester Alice stated,

In a successful middle school you need cooperation, trust, honesty, rules, and punishment. These are what I think is the basis for a good school, but of course it takes a lot of extras, too.

The nature of these extras was not discussed in this paper, yet in the interviews Alice repeatedly mentioned the need to "keep everything interesting or they are not going to want to learn."

Alice's perception of a need for cooperation may have been particularly impressed on her from observing the team teaching technique which was used at Kelly Middle School.

You have to deal with a lot, like with the administration, take roll, you have to keep notes, and you have to make conferences, but it's easier there. At Kelly Middle you had a

team made up of the teachers that taught each subject. Therefore, if you had a problem you didn't have to deal with it by yourself. You had other teachers to talk to. I think that's real good. I had never seen that before, but it worked well.

Thus while Alice discovered that teaching responsibilities extended well beyond the classroom activities, she also found the team approach to be beneficial.

Teaching Experience

Alice had little opportunity to teach either a small group or the entire class during this first professional semester. She did two small group teaching sessions with her peer group in the education psychology class, conducted one science laboratory session in the science methods class, and led the eighth grade science laboratory session her last day at Kelly Middle School. From these limited experiences Alice noted that her introduction to the lesson "needs quite a bit of work." In a reaction paper written after her first peer teaching experience Alice stated,

This needs to be well done because it is what gets the students interested in what I am going to teach.

She also hoped that her teacher input would improve as she got more practice in the classroom. In reference to her experience in the science laboratory Alice laughingly recalled that planned experiments do not always work.

Summary

Alice tended not to talk too much about herself and her ideas. In her reflection papers, journal, and interviews she was more likely to tell about what happened than about her feelings and thoughts about the meaning or implications of her observations and experiences. Yet it was clear that Alice had made some realizations this semester about herself, the teaching profession, and the nature of adolescents which could enhance her success toward her goal of becoming an effective middle level mathematics and science teacher.

Bettie Speaks of Herself and Her Experiences
in Her First Professional Semester

As a teacher you have to be amazingly flexible! I see that teachers being flexible is really the key, and seeing that the teachers really care about students. And I see it especially in my language arts teacher [cooperating teacher at Perry Middle School]. She can be doing something, she'll have like four or five interruptions in her fifty minute class period, and keep, just like another student coming with a note from another teacher, or a student being sick and another student being sent around to get all the work for that student so it can be sent home. Every now and then the assistant principal will walk in to say something to her. None of them are very long, just different, things like that mostly, and she answers it and then just goes right back to what she's doing. I think I would find it really hard to keep my concentration. I think you have to know what you want to get accomplished, but you have to know that you may have to change that along the way. And you have to adapt to the students. They may learn something faster or slower than you planned, then I think you have to be flexible enough to extend the time that you plan to spend. You can see it in their faces. Their reactions to what you are doing. I think it all, it originates in being

organized and knowing what you want to do, and then adapting as time goes along.

I didn't really think I could be very flexible, because I'm so, you know, organized, and I've got what I'm going to do pretty much mapped out. But I found like with teaching a lesson, and it was a discussion sort of lesson where I ask questions and they answered, which, you know, I had to be flexible to field their questions and still get them to bring out what I wanted them to bring out. And then I was, you know, putting up a bulletin board, and doing this that and the other, and I just feel that I can be more flexible than I thought.

I know that I'm, I like to think of it as being a leader. Some people like to look at it as being bossy. I'm very organized and in charge. Like if something is going to get done, either I want it ... if I'm in charge of doing it, I'm either going to delegate it to somebody that I know will do it or do it myself. So in charge, I like to be in charge generally. So I wasn't sure I could be flexible. I enjoy funny things, so I have a decent sense of humor, but I guess I'm pretty moody as far as, you know, I'm either in a good mood or a bad mood, and there is not a lot of in between. Generally I have good patience, but if I'm at the end of my rope, I'm at the end, and I have no patience. But I think pretty much that I am pretty level headed I like to think,

and in control of my emotions for the most part. I don't have sudden outbursts of anger or anything. I'm in control.

I also like to know what's expected of me. I don't like classes where you have a paper to do and that is all that's said. I want to know how many pages, how long, what do you want it on. I want to know exactly how it does, and I think I do better as a student when the teacher is organized and runs class in an organized manner, presents things organized and is not real haphazard. I think I do better when things are set.

When I was teaching this semester I found I'm comfortable with the kids, and being in front of them. Dr. Emory had said in class one day that it is a lot easier to talk to people younger than you than to stand up in front of people your same age and talk. And this really, I found that to be really true. Standing up in front of the group I was really comfortable, which I was glad. I was nervous my first time, but it wasn't, they didn't make me nervous, and I wasn't nervous being in front of them. It was just actually doing what I was doing. So I was pleased.

It's easy to see how these kids want to be so grown up, by the things they wear, and by how they act. You can just see how they want to be so grown up. But yet, like we had them make book covers with crayons and paper, and you know, these were the top kids, and they seemed to enjoy it. And

so at the same time they're still kids, and they still like to do those things even though that might not be cool.

A significant thing I observed was a, the true diversity in students and in people. Mainly some, there's some kids just really don't care at all. And I find, I don't always, well I just sort of thought maybe in eighth grade they still had a little bit of the kid in them where they still wanted to do well. And I think deep down they do, but I think some of them are at this point of being put down for so long that they're like, "So what! I'm giving up." So that, that has been really significant to see, the just the few times that I've observed the low, the lower academic students. To see, just to see the, just to even see the difference in the teachers too. How they handle, or how they have to be a little bit more hard line with the lower ones to avoid the discipline problems.

I've been over at Perry Middle School, and it ended up that I was observing the top and middle classes at a predominantly white school, so it's pretty much like the cream of the crop. I got two really good teachers to observe, so that is really good. I'm with the language arts, I'm with the top kids in language arts, and then I follow that same class. Most all of them are in the top algebra class. So I am with the same students, and then I stay with the math teacher for the prealgebra. That's for the average kids, and then I follow them to language arts

for their English. So I have really two groups of students and four classes that I watch. And then I watch the journalism, one of my teachers is the journalism teacher. I'm there for that. Then for a while I switched and observed the average and lower kids and followed them back and forth.

One time I was there like for the whole week to make up some days I would miss. It was nice to be there for the whole week, but it was also, made me just itch to do things. Like I was tired of just sitting there watching, I was ready. I mean I don't know what I would have done, but I was sort of getting bored watching. I was ready, I mean I was like, "You want me to grade these papers?" Just anything just to be a help, to be useful. Certainly the best thing was just being out there and actually wanting to do it and getting to do some.

It was fun being in the schools. It got kind of old at the end. Just, when I got there I always had a good time while I was there, it just. It was just, it could get boring just because you're sitting there during, while they're teaching. And, I mean sometimes I do grades or put grades in the book, or little housekeeping things. Like in the math, if they had time at the end of class to work over homework, I'd walk around and answer questions as the teacher did too. Just it was mainly to help her out and to help them out too. I didn't at all get up in front of the

math class. Well I did one day, she was, I went up there, went over homework with them one day. Just mostly I just watched.

Mostly I'm watching them and picking up their little hints. And if they, and they're freely given, like they'll say like, "Watch this," and they'll do something to show me, like show how writing on the board really captures their attention, and she turned and said to me, "Watch." The class was pretty noisy, and she started writing, "I want you to take out a piece of paper and number," it was their spelling test day, "and number your paper for your spelling test." And gradually out of say 20 kids that were in there, eventually there were just two of them talking, and so just little hints I get from them. I don't really get to do much, I just get little hints from them.

In English I was there a couple times doing, like I did a bio poem, and a biography, and a collage. So those were the three things I taught. I didn't really like teach I just did activities. More, I think we were supposed to teach, but since we were only there two days a week, like it's hard for her to tell me on Friday what she might want me to teach the next Thursday, because it depends on what happens the other three days. It was fun, it just sort of got old.

The two teachers I'm observing under, they're very different people, and they teach very differently, but they

both like really, like really care. They like love their students, and to me that's very evident, and I think the students perceive that. It may also help that I also observe like the top academic classes, and it's a little bit easier to love those kids. But I think they, both teachers seem to be genuinely concerned about all of their students; any of the students in the school maybe not even in their classes. And a, they're really into the school activities. I'm really interested in the sports, and they like, they go to the games, and they help at track meets measuring and starting races and stuff. And that, that just really hit me hard, just seeing, just seeing them walk around and you know, pat on the back, or you know, "You feeling OK today?" And that's the one, and the other's a little bit more hard lined, but when it comes right down to it she's like, "Are you OK?"

The language arts teacher that I'm observing under is very bubbly, carefree. She's organized, but in an abstract way, and like she's not as rigid in what she's doing. Like she easily changes to things that are happening, and that can be bad. And she tries to adapt to what the kids want, and I don't know if that's always good. But she's pretty much bubbly, and she's the one that's really always ... She'll be walking around the room, and you know, "Are you OK?" and you know, "You've had a tough day today, huh?" Or just little things like that. And she's always talking all

the time to somebody, and she's always got time for somebody.

But the math I'm observing under ... And I think both of them are highly respected within the school, and I've heard lots of good things about them from people in the education department at UNCG. The math teacher is a little more hard nosed, and you can tell she sort of goes in her steps. But she, but the kids know that, and there's a respect between them. But just, but I think if it were me, I mean if I came in mid year, I would be intimidated by her I think. And they're not as much as I think they would be. They're, they'll still ask their questions. And sometimes she'll answer them in a way that I think is very, you know, very blunt, or crisp. They'll still ask. I guess just they know that's her way. And I think they know that's her way of caring.

I've asked several of the kids, like, "Do you guys like Ms. Fenster, the language arts teacher?" And they're like, "Yeah, she's easy going, but sometimes she confuses me because she's so flexible." Because they're not sure what she wants. And then, "Do you guys like Ms. Richmond?" [math teacher] "Yeah, even though she's sort of in a bad mood sometimes." So I pretty much like both of them. So then they're different in just how they approach things, and the students see them I think the students perceive that. And it's funny, because they both of them have a very

close professional relationship. Out of the four teachers in their block, the science teacher, the social studies teacher, they all four work closely together, but these two work particularly close as far as doing things. Like between the classes together, standing up for each other. Usually like if one of them has a parent conference, if the other one has that student, they'll go with them, just to give more insight into whatever the problem was, or is. So and, it, it's really neat to see them. I can't imagine working in a school without having a buddy so to speak since I've seen that.

The math teacher has been in middle school for years, thirteen years I think. And the language arts teacher, I think this is her first year in the eighth grade. She's taught like fourth grade and sixth grade before. So this is her first year, so I think she has really relied a lot as far as the age difference in the kids, although she knows what she's doing, it's just the age of the kids and the material. And I think, I think they lean on each other equally for different things. So I think that's real neat.

I also saw they have so much paperwork! They do, they had a popcorn sale, and every, ... they have a homeroom, an advisor-advisee period, it's about 20 minutes. And they like they have the announcements on TV, TV in the school, and they have like five minutes of TV. And then 15 minutes where the teacher is supposed to do some sort of personal,

not one-to-one, but classroom to teacher activity, like listening skills, or habits, or manners, or just things of that sort that you don't really cover in the academic classes. Popcorn sale, she never had, they never, they didn't do anything during that time, the kids just sort of sat around and talked or did their homework or whatever. She was busy finding out who had popcorn back, sending the right envelope to the right office at the right time so her name wouldn't get announced over the speaker to call, "You haven't sent in the right papers." It was just figuring it out and getting all the right numbers, and filling out a paper for this and a paper for that!

This is all really making me think about what I'm getting ready to do. I think it's all getting to be a little more real. It's not totally real, just because I'm not doing it, actually teaching. But this is the first semester where everybody knows you're going to be a teacher, and your classes are just all people who are going to be teachers, and so that is the total emphasis. I mean this is the first semester you might could really tell that you might not like this.

I came here as a math major, very blindly I might add. In December of my junior year I decided I needed a change. Mostly because of the grades in my math classes were not getting me where I needed to be, and so I had to change, and at that same time I had coached a middle school girls

basketball team and enjoyed that. So it made the switch easier ... to middle school. I knew I didn't want to go as low as elementary. I'd like to stay involved in athletics as part of my teaching. I always sort of knew I wanted to teach. Even as a math major I was secondary. So it really wasn't that big of a switch in majors, it was really just switch in age level.

I never really knew what I wanted to do, and really school is all I know, and as far as ... I mean I felt that would be a good place for me as far as staying active in athletics and hopefully teaching people in that respect. And then I always enjoyed math, and always respected the good math teachers I had along the way. Actually the first one who stood out was in eighth grade when I had algebra I, and it was from then on that I really liked math more than the other ones. It was fun in eighth grade algebra I, he was nice, and he was fun. He let us do our thing, and yet we learned. And I really respected being treated as an individual and as a student and not just as a bunch of little peon morons out there that this little dictator teacher up there talking to us. And I feel like I can be a good teacher, and you know math is sort of like one of those things you either love it or hate it for most students. And at least for the ones that hate it I hope I can at least make bit bearable for them by not making it so difficult.

I think math is a very, it's a very practical thing that you need in life, but it's also, can be in an abstract level and help you learn to think. Depends on what level you want to take it. Ultimately I think the ultimate purpose of math is to help you develop your abstract thinking. Be able to see things that you might not actually really see, but you have to see it in your head. And so that a lot of it like the algebra and stuff like that, I mean while it does have its practical uses, a lot of it is, I think is to make you think and make you learn how to think. And it helps to try to figure out how to manipulate things in the legal way to manipulate math things to work it out in, in a practical sense you have to have math to balance a check book and do all sorts of everyday things. We do math just to think and to learn and to be able to grow mentally.

So math and communications skills, English. Very heavily mathematics, predominantly math, since most all of my background is in math. You have to have two and communications was, out of the sciences, or social studies, I enjoy English the next most, and so I do that, but I know that my background in English is not going to be near what it is in math.

Everybody thinks I'm in PE. I play volleyball, and I like basketball and softball. I just think that is a valuable part, it was a valuable part of my high school as a

student and as an athlete, and it is still a big part of my life now as a student here at UNCG, and I play an inter-collegiate sport. It's harder even now for kids to play. There are so many outside things, and I think if you really get active in it and stay active in it then it can be a really big and fun part of your life, and so I would like to stay involved with it.

I thought I could, well I came in as a math major, I thought if I got into teaching and that really wasn't, well that just wasn't it, I had a degree in math, not a degree in PE. Where in PE you are very limited as to what you can do. You teach or you become a professor. You know you teach high school or you go further, and I really didn't think that was for me, and I thought back to when I was in school and for the most part I really didn't like PE, because everybody is thrown in together, and three-fourths of the people don't want to be there in the first place. And I think it would be really hard having a gym full of people, and doing something you love that they really can't stand ... and it's the same thing in math, but it is a little bit easier because they're sitting, and they have to do it. I felt like I would have more leeway with the math, and even now just sticking with education, I feel like I have a better, I have a broader range of things which I could do than limiting myself to PE. And I can coach, and I'd like as far as my athletics goes, I'd like to think that as a

coach, they'll want to learn about themselves and hopefully become, or enjoy sports enough to continue in high school because most of them after, pretty much after middle school you either stick with it or you don't, and I'd like to think that they would just to keep them busy in high school and maybe avoid some other things they could fall into.

So I play intercollegiate softball for UNCG now when I'm in my Block semester.

Out of the three Block classes, I have the same professor for two of them, and that's with Dr. Emory, the language arts. And each, I really like her classes, they're very different. The 443 is mostly undergrads, and it's a different atmosphere than 521 which is mostly graduate students. And I'm glad I'm in both with her, because I can see the difference, and I'm learning a lot from her. She gives a lot of practical things, like all the work sheets and stuff and handouts that she gives that you can really use. The math one is, the math class that I'm in is mostly, it's mixed undergrads and grads, and it's mixed middle school people and then younger grades. And the course is designed for people teaching younger grades, so it's like, I would get a lot more out of it if I was teaching the younger students, because a lot of it is, you know, how to teach number concepts and things like that, which by the time they get to me they're supposed to already have. I mean if they, if they don't, then you go back and deal with it, but you

won't really deal with it in the same way you would deal with it to start with. So, I feel I'm not sure what I'm getting out of that one.

But from Dr. Emory I feel like I'm getting a lot of practical things that I can use in a language arts classroom, not just a bunch of, "This is how it should be," and more of, "This is how it is." Like the way she does poetry. She gives you a, you want the kids to, you know, practice finding adjectives or something, and there's a little poem for them. Like the first line you write three adjectives that describe yourself, and the second line you write three adjectives that describe things you like in other people. Or just a, you know, she gives you copies of everything she talks about like with the poems, or she'll say like this is a good thing to do at the beginning of the year to get to know each other. And things of that sort that can be adapted to math, a lot of them, but it's just that, or she'll say, she'll reflect on things from her personal experiences, or experiences of her friends, or experiences student teachers that she observes, and it's so real. She doesn't spend a whole lot of time lecturing out of the book. She's real big on, she's real big on current things, like current books, current magazines, real big on current things and, and keeping you current as a teacher I think. Like especially in the graduate class. I think a lot of those people could better appreciate her as far as

always bringing in new material and showing you new things. Mostly she follows the book and uses it, but it's mostly from out of her head and from what she knows.

Most of my practical things come from Dr. Emory with 443. We do a journal. That gets to be a pain sometimes. It just sort of takes up a lot of, you know, it takes like an hour to do that when you have all these teaching reports and other papers to write and stuff like that. But I guess it wasn't really a hassle, because I, some of things as I wrote them down, I think, I thought it was funny, things that I, just things that I picked out to tell about. You know, and I can't think of anything specific, but just the things, like I would jot down while I was there. Sometimes I found them to be funny, just the little things that stood out to me, and I think probably I will benefit more like later. Like if I read it over the summer, or even before I start student teaching. So I think that would be beneficial, just for me to see how I felt, and then also for me to see, think about the schools again, and really get back into it. That, it's kind of hard to see how that's going to be beneficial now. I think she just wanted us to do it so we have to think about what we were doing in the schools, and so we wouldn't forget. And that was good.

Dr. Emory does a lot of activities, and we get a lot of handouts. I think probably the things that stand out to me are the handouts she gave us on self-esteem things. She's

really big on, you can teach and make people feel good about themselves, and they can learn, and even better if they feel good about themselves. So I think those activities stand out the most. And then since I'm really not in, not an English oriented person she had a lot of neat little things, activities for speaking, and listening, and writing that were neat. I'm real big on little puzzles, like work puzzles, or different sorts of puzzles, and she had a lot of those and gave us handouts on those. So I enjoyed, I enjoyed those personally, and then I've enjoyed sharing with my students. I used some of the puzzle things in free time at the end of the class that I was observing in. Then like I said I did the bio poem, I did that one. It's just a, it's like just a little formula for writing a poem about yourself. The things that the kids turned out were really nice, so I, I enjoyed that. Well I enjoy poetry too.

I really, I really didn't like doing the unit we had to do for 443. I think it might be beneficial, but I really didn't like it, because it's not, it's realistic but it's not realistic. Because like I don't, I mean I'm in the school, but I'm not actually doing the teaching, and it's really hard to know how you, I mean I don't really know how I can write down what I'm going to teach until actually go and, and actually do a whole chapter in math, and teach it and then I can see how I should go about doing. And even when I was teaching at Perry, the things I did teach, when I

was making up what I was going to do ahead of time, like I had no clue as to how much time it would take. I didn't know if it was a ten minute thing, or I didn't know if it was a thirty minute thing. I think just because you have no concept of time as to how long it is going to take you to do something, it's really hard to sit down and make out a unit that's supposed to last so many days. I think it was good in the fact that I had to go through the plan, go through the lesson plan, and actually think about what would go into each step, and do that, but as far as actually I don't know if it's relevant. I, I'll have to find out. I'll find out later how relevant it really is.

In 521 the language arts at night, we do readings that we have to read and then do, you know, a one to two page paper on that mostly on the things we are talking about in class. And we do a unit in there too. So none of that is based on being in the school because most of those people are teachers. I pretty much get a lot out of it just hearing things from the teachers that are out there, and I get more out of that class than I do out of the 443, because Dr. Emory talks about a lot of the same things in both the classes, and you really hear how they use it or things on the same line that they do. It's really neat to hear the different creative ways those people use different things in language arts. She a, she's, I think she really tries to, to get you to realize that all the material you're teaching

is not the most important thing in the world, but that the students are. And I think she really believes that or has for her years of teaching has come to see that the student's the most important, and making people feel good about themselves is really important. And I think that she's really concerned with people, and she doesn't, I mean I like the way she does, I don't like the way she grades.

I think she makes us compete against each other in a sense. Like on her midterms, you know, everybody did it and everybody turned it in. And I think, I think she had some idea what an "A" would be, but I think from there down it kind of went as, you know, if she asked me something and listed ten things and you listed fifteen things, then I might maybe get a, I would get not as good a grade as you would. Instead of saying if you list, you know, fifteen things you get, that's an "A" for that question, if you list ten things that's a "B", five things that's a "C". Instead of setting what, what she expects, it's more what, what did everybody do? And everybody generally listed fifteen things, so all you people who only list ten, that's really bad. But, and when she's grading, it's, we're in competition with each other in her grading, and I'd rather.... When I had Terry Hart, he talked about different ways of grading, and he said, you know some teachers, you know, take up all the papers and see how everybody did and then decide grades on the bell curve. But I do like that

fact that she does give us the questions ahead of time so it's not a guessing as to, "Well I wonder if she thinks this is important?" But then, so then you like really study it and then it's not on there. And with this way you know what she thinks is important and know where to concentrate your efforts.

And she's real receptive to people saying things or offering things. And she asks a lot of questions, "What do you think?" You know, she had her guidelines on our assignments, but then you had opportunity to create within those, and do your own thing. Pretty much her assignments were pretty broad, so you could do what you wanted, which is kind of scary to me, because I'm like, "Is this really, I mean is this OK?" I just I get a little nervous when something is so broad that you can create, because I'm afraid I won't create what she's thinks I should create. It made you, it made me think more about what kind of teacher am I going to be. It opened up a whole, whole new doors as far as thinking about middle school kids, and seeing the middle school kids. And, and really, with Dr. Emory emphasizing so much the person, and not the student but the person, made me think more about how difficult it is to reach every student as a person.

For my other class, Dr. Lacy, she's very different from Dr. Emory. Much more structured, much more lecture, pretty much she talks you write sort of thing. You had a ton of

work assignments, like math is your life, and you don't live unless you live math. And your, we just, we did a whole lot, and I don't think it was, it was all fairly relevant, it was just so much. I'm not sure how realistic she is about thinking that people have all this time to invest in her class, like her class is the class, and the only class. And it's, I'm not real sure where she's coming from. But she knows, she knows so much about math that she just grades so hard, and gives so much work, that like, like you put so much into it because you have to, and then you don't get the grade back that you think reflects the effort you had to put in. And it's frustrating, like her grading scale's set up where if you do all the work you probably are not going to get an "A." I mean so like if you did all the points on all of the assignments, then you would have 450 points and you would get an "A." But if you like lose a point, like you made a 99 on a test, then you will only accumulate 449 points, and that is a "B." To accumulate points for an "A" you have to do extra stuff besides the seven required readings, the two required projects, and the three tests.

There was one project that I had, we had a choice that we, for part of the project we could either observe a math lesson being taught with like a new concept, and then interview two or three students after the lesson, and then reflect, write up your findings in a five to six page typed paper. I thought it was really silly before I did it, and

it was like how in the world am I going to get a five or six typed page paper out of interviewing these people. But the lesson was a good one to do, because it was adding fractions using pictures, and the kids had to draw the pictures and add the little fractions, and it was really neat, because I had never seen that before, and the kids were really good. It was real funny, that was really good, I was really glad I did that, because it was funny to see how they said it. "Well Ms. Richmond said you draw this..." And I said alright, "Don't tell me what Ms. Richmond said, tell me what you say." "OK, you draw your box, and then do it." And I would say, "Well why do you do that?" "Well I don't know you just do it." It's funny how, I think, like you might think, it really made me see how that you might be teaching something that you just think is really great, and the kids are like just, they're not really getting out of it what you intend for them to get out of it. And that was really neat, and it was really interesting to see how some kids know exactly what they were doing.

That was the half of our, we had a total project, it was, your big project had two parts, and that was one part. And the other part was the unit planning, and that, a seven day unit including a test. And, but she is very very picky as to getting everything in the right place at the right point, and what not. And I haven't gotten that back. And that took me forever to do that. I waited too late for one

to start. I had, have, mono, and was laid up over all of spring break. And thank goodness I did it on a friend's computer so I could just go back and insert things. And so I hope I did that right. It helped a lot that my teacher at Perry had Dr. Lacy for the same class and had to do a unit. And I looked at her unit just to see how she wrote things out. And I did a different topic, but that helped a lot to be able to see that, and I showed it to a couple people in the class so they could see what to do. It's pretty much if it's not just the way she wants it I'm not going to get a good grade. And if, and every little thing that's not right, it's going to be like minus one or minus one half, because she's so hard, and sometimes I think she forgets that we're not out there. There's little to no opportunity to do your own thing. You either do it her way or you're not going to made a good grade. Not that good grades are the most important thing, but pretty much at this stage it looks good to have "A's"/"B's" if at all possible. So pretty, I'm more concerned, is this how she wants it, more as than if, is this good for me? It was more like is she going to like this? I guess I could be creative in pulling in extra activities for the unit. But it was pretty much, she said like, you know, pull in outside games and activities, so it was sort of required. Like I created it, but it was sort of I had to.

That was our project. Then we had seven required readings. We'd like photo copy an article out of a current periodical, and it has to do something with math, or math teaching, and write up just like a handwritten one-page summary reaction to the thing. Now those aren't hard, but you have to like go to the library, you have to find an appropriate article, copy it, and I mean it just takes time to do those seven. They were good, and I got a lot out of it. It was just, I mean seven of those. You know you could have done you know three or four. I mean it was all, it was good the stuff we did, it was just so much.

And then we had like three 100-point tests which usually took I think probably like two or two and a half hours, that she would allow like an hour and a half to two hours for, so everybody always had to stay over to finish it because she didn't give us enough time. So that was really frustrating. And it was, it was just a lot, and then to get your extra 50 points to be sure of an "A" I haven't gotten but maybe half my stuff back, so I did twenty extra points hoping that if I got close to getting all my points, those twenty point would push me over. But I just ran out of time as far as trying to do other things. And really it's not very fair, because like if I had had all my stuff back, like if I had the tests back. Like it took her three weeks to give us our tests back one time. She's had three of my readings for at least a month. But it's not really

fair I don't think because if I had had that stuff I could be keeping up with my points. If I had just known how close I was. Because I might have done something else. We, I mean even if I didn't do it I would at least have known and would have had that option to choose. You could also say if you were really into it you would have done more points. But just with my time being budgeted, and I was real busy with softball, especially at the end. And getting sick really messed me all up. I think a lot of the assignments could have been just as worth while if they hadn't been so big, and not have been so much, Then, but I don't think all her required stuff should add up to, pretty much just to a "B." She gives us so much. She's just really hard line.

Also it would have been better had there been two separate classes for the math part, like one for the elementary people and one for the middle people. There's not enough people for that, be really small classes. But then she, or whoever teaches it, would know where to direct their emphasis, and I think it's hard for her to do that. There was always, the middle school undergraduate people were different. We always had to stay after, or come early, or she asked us a couple times. Like somebody raised a question in class about the lesson plans, and she was like we'll have to talk about that after. And when you're there from four to seven at night you don't want to stay a few minutes after, because you've been there for three hours. I

mean it was not that much, I'm not saying it was all the time, it was only two or three times, but you feel like you spend the time in class on others which has no relevance to us, you should spend time in class with us.

Education classes, I feel like I've had a ton of them, and they pretty much all run together. Some of them, I think some, but not, I mean I think the best teacher is being out there doing your stuff. Um, kids not caring, just kids that flat don't care, stop caring. Having to deal with parents, all the piddly little things you have to do, the paper work things that are, they take up so much time, all the interruptions the teacher has. I think I was, became fairly flexible while I was in the schools, so that has helped. But it was just, you see the bad, but then you also see the good. You see the interaction between the teachers, you see, you see when they understand something. You see them having fun. And, and so that, bad is there, but then it's also easy to see the good!

I mean I think I'm ready to try. I'm ready to go on and get into it, because I think I'll really learn a lot. I think that's where I'm going to learn the most, getting in there.

Descriptive Interpretation of
Bettie's Reflections

I didn't really think I could be very flexible, because I'm so organized, and I've got what I'm going to do pretty much mapped out.... I think I became fairly flexible while I was in the schools, so that has helped.

Interviewing Bettie

Introducing Bettie

Bettie saw herself as a leader, as a person who liked everything to be well organized. She would readily accept responsibility and take charge of a situation as she said that "I like to be in charge generally." She found she does better as a student when

the teacher is organized and runs class in an organized manner. I think I do better when things are set.

A major realization for Bettie this first professional semester of her undergraduate academic career was that "as a teacher you have to be amazingly flexible!" She then became concerned about her own ability to have the flexibility she saw as the key to effective teaching.

Professional Aspirations

Bettie's decision to become a teacher seems to have been based on not having a preference for any other career.

I never really knew what I wanted to do, and really school is all I know. I mean I felt it would be a good place for me as far as staying

active in athletics..., and then I always enjoyed mathematics.

Bettie came to UNCG as a math major with the intention of teaching in the secondary schools. Grades in her math courses which were "not getting me where I needed to be" were the deciding factor for her switch to middle level teacher certification. Although Bettie is very involved in athletics, she chose to earn a degree in middle level mathematics because "in PE you are very limited as to what you can do." Communications skills was Bettie's second area of concentration as "out of the sciences or social studies I enjoy English the next most."

Bettie found mathematics to be one of those subjects where "you either love it or hate it," and she hoped she could make it bearable for those who hated it.

I think math is very, it's a very practical thing that you need in life, but it can be in an abstract level and help you learn to think. I think the ultimate purpose of math is to help you develop your abstract thinking, be able to see things that you might not actually really see, but you have to see it in your head.... In a practical sense you have to have math to balance a check book and do all sorts of everyday things.

Most of Bettie's academic background was in mathematics. This interest began in earnest when in the eighth grade she had an algebra I teacher who was fun and nice. "He let us do our thing, and yet we learned." From that time on Bettie found that she "really liked math more than the other ones."

Academic Endeavors

Bettie completed nine credit hours of coursework during this semester and also participated in two credit hours of practicum experience at a middle school near the university.

The coursework included:

- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics
- Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts

With this being the first semester where "your classes are just all people who are going to be teachers," Bettie found that she really thought more "about what I'm getting ready to do. I think it's all getting to be a little more real."

Practicum Experience

Perry Middle School was the site of Bettie's practicum experience where she "observed the top and middle [eighth grade] classes at a predominantly white school" in both language arts and mathematics classes. The lower level classes were observed a few times. On her arrival the first day Bettie found that her two cooperating teachers were eager to have her in their classrooms, and they had organized her day so she could see students in both subjects. Bettie related in her journal:

I feel I have been placed with two very good teachers, and have been placed with good, caring, eager to learn students.

By the second week at Perry Middle School Bettie felt that she was becoming more a part of the classes and students were used to her being there. "This week was more fun." Yet as time went on she found that "it got kind of old at the end."

When I got there I always had a good time while I was there. It was just, it could get boring just because you're sitting there during, while they're teaching. I mean sometimes I do grades or put grades in the book, or little housekeeping things.... Just mostly I just watched.

Through this watching Bettie was "picking up their little hints," and learning a lot about herself, teaching and the teaching profession, and the nature of adolescents.

Professional Discoveries

Bettie was especially impressed with a number of realizations as a result of her practicum experience. She decided that flexibility was the key to effective teaching.

She can be doing something, she'll have like four or five interruptions in her fifty minute class.... None of them are very long, and she answers it and then just goes right back to what she's doing.

On another occasion Bettie related,

And you have to adapt to the students. They may learn something faster or slower than you planned, then I think you have to be flexible enough to extend the time you planned to spend.

Bettie was also amazed at the amount of paperwork with which the teachers had to cope.

I also saw they have so much paperwork. They do, they had a popcorn sale.... She was busy finding out who had popcorn back, sending the right envelope to the right office at the right time so her name wouldn't get announced over the speaker to call, 'You haven't sent in the right papers.'

After assisting with the averaging of six-week grades at the middle of the second semester Bettie remarked in her journal, "It takes a long time to do grades!"

The differences between teachers and students was clearly impressed on Bettie. Ms. Fenster taught eighth grade language arts and was described by Bettie as being "very bubbly and carefree."

She's organized, but in an abstract way, and like she's not as rigid in what she's doing. Like she easily changes to things that are happening.

Bettie also observed Ms. Richmond's eighth grade mathematics classes.

The math teacher is a little more hard nosed, and you can tell she sort of goes in her steps. But the kids know that, and there's a respect between them. Sometimes she'll answer them in a way that I think is very blunt or crisp. They will still ask [their questions]. I think they know that's her way of caring.

In talking with the students Bettie found that they liked both teachers, and she felt the students were very perceptive of the differences between these teachers. These teachers had a "very close professional relationship" which impressed Bettie.

Out of the four teachers in their block, the science teacher, the social studies teacher,

they all four work closely together, but these two work particularly close as far as doing things.... I think they lean on each other equally for different things.

As a result of observing the interactions of these two teachers Bettie shared her thought that she "can't imagine working in a school without having a buddy." The teamwork of the teachers was also interesting as Bettie noticed when the language arts teacher instructed the students in the writing of a science research paper.

Adolescents

In general Bettie saw that adolescents try very hard to seem grown up. This was especially evident through what they wore and how they acted. Whereas some of the students in the lower level classes seemed like they did not care about school, Bettie believed that deep down they did want to do well.

I think some of them are at this point of being put down for so long that they're like, 'So what! I'm giving up.'

She observed that the teachers handled these students differently from the average and upper level students. Bettie related that "they have to be a little bit more hard line with the lower ones to avoid discipline problems." The students "were louder than any of the other groups, but many of them still seemed interested in learning." The 21 students in the top classes were enthusiastic, loved to answer the teacher's questions, and asked a lot of

questions. In comparison Bettie noticed that the average classes were more hectic with 30 students, "but they are all well behaved, conscientious people." Between teachers, between classes, and between students many differences were observed by Bettie. Yet overall the students had a desire to do well, the teachers demonstrated that they really cared about their students, and an atmosphere of cooperation existed throughout the school.

Teaching Experiences

Bettie planned and led three activities with the students at Perry Middle School. She was very pleased to find that she was "comfortable with the kids, and being in front of them." In a paper reflecting on this experience Bettie stated that her greatest difficulty was that "I had no idea how long I would need to do what I had planned." She had two other unique opportunities to interact with students. Bettie tutored an eighth grade algebra I student who

learns quickly and likes to go beyond what's asked in the book and make up new numbers or situations to see what will happen. He does so much in his head.

When observing him in his math class and in his lessons with her, Bettie found Robert to be quiet and well-behaved. In his average-level English she "saw a very different Robert" who was disruptive, loud, and rude. She determined that he was

trying to 'fit in', and with the top kids in algebra he is well-behaved, and with the more disruptive students he acts like they do. He is good at driving you [the teacher] crazy.

Bettie saw another example of the differing perspectives of the classroom activities when she interviewed four students after their math lesson. The lesson involved using pictures in order to understand the concept of adding fractions (ex. $2/3 + 1/5$).

Perhaps the most striking thing I discovered while talking with these students was the variety in which the math was interpreted. The students all heard the same thing, yet each student told me differently how I should solve the problem.

Bettie concluded that,

As a teacher, I'll have to realize that what I say will be heard differently by each individual. And each student won't always get out of the lesson what I had intended for them to get out of it.

Due to these and other experiences in the public schools Bettie shared her conclusion that "the best teacher is being out there doing your stuff."

University Coursework in Curriculum and Teaching

University education courses did provide Bettie with what she saw to be valuable experiences. The two language arts courses with Dr. Emory offered a lot of

practical things that I can use in a language arts classroom.... And things of that sort that can be adapted to math, a lot of them...

Dr. Emory, Bettie related, did not lecture out of the book. She tended to share a lot from her own personal experiences, and she was "real big on current things ... and keeping you current as a teacher." Bettie also spoke of Dr. Emory's concern for "making students feel good about themselves," and the many self-esteem activities which Dr. Emory presented to the class really stood out as significant to her.

With Dr. Emory emphasizing so much the person made me think more about how difficult it is to reach every student as a person.

The many teachers in Edu 521 were encouraged to share their experiences in the classroom and listening to them was valuable to Betty. "Dr. Emory asked a lot of questions, 'What do you think?'"

The writing of a journal was required by Dr. Emory. Bettie found that it "gets to be a pain sometimes," yet she also noted,

I found them to be funny, just the little things that stood out to me, and I think probably I will benefit more like later, like if I read it over the summer.... So I think that would be beneficial, just for me to see how I felt, and then also for me to see, think about the schools again and really get back into it.

She believed that the main purpose for writing the journal was to make them "think about what we were doing in the schools, and so we wouldn't forget. That was good."

Going through the writing of a unit and lesson plans in language arts was good experience according to Bettie. However, the unrealistic nature of the unit plan since they were not preparing it for a real classroom, and her lack of clues for timing the activities made the project a task that she did not enjoy. The projects were broadly defined, so Bettie felt uncomfortable because "I'm afraid I won't create what she thinks I should create." Yet at the same time Bettie said, "It made me think more about what kind of teacher I am going to be."

Dr. Emory gave her students the questions to her tests ahead of time so that "you know what she thinks is important and know where to concentrate your efforts." Bettie did not like the way the tests were graded.

I think she makes us compete against each other in a sense. I think she had some ideas what an "A" would be, but I think from there down it kind of ... more, what did everybody do.

Grades below an "A" seemed to be determined according to what everyone else did. On other assignments Bettie noted that within guidelines the students were encouraged to be creative and "do your own thing."

The mathematics curriculum and teaching course was composed of both graduate and undergraduate students and was "designed for people teaching younger grades." Bettie was uncertain about what she was getting out of that course.

She also experienced Dr. Lacy to be very different from Dr. Emory.

Much more structured, much more lecture, pretty much she talks you write sort of thing.

Bettie thought the number of assignments were excessive and that Dr. Lacy graded unusually hard.

And it's frustrating, like her grading scale's set up where if you do all the work you probably are not going to get an "A." To accumulate points for an "A" you have to do extra stuff.

In addition Dr. Lacy was not prompt in returning completed assignments, so it was difficult to know how much extra credit work was needed to assure an "A." Bettie did find the assignments to be useful learning experiences. The required readings from recent journals were interesting. Interviewing students after observing their math lesson had seemed like a silly idea to Bettie before doing it, but she discovered that "it was really neat, and it was really interesting to see how some kids know exactly what they were doing."

Planning a seven-day mathematics unit "took forever" according to Bettie. She contracted mononucleosis during the middle of the semester, and this interfered with working on assignments as planned throughout Spring Break. For this assignment Bettie experienced "little to no opportunity to do you own thing."

It's pretty much if it's not just the way she wants it I'm not going to get a good grade.

And every little thing that's not right, it's going to be like minus one or minus one half, because she's so hard. Sometimes I think she forgets that we're not out there.

Tests were frustrating because students were not given enough time to complete them, so they always had to stay over to finish them. Study guides given out before the tests did help in preparing for them. Basically "it would have been better had there been a separate class ... for the middle people."

Summary

This first professional semester seemed to have been a combination of hard work, revealing insights, and lots of fun for Bettie. She felt herself to be very ready to get out in the schools and try her own techniques for teaching. She knew she would "really learn a lot" from student teaching, and she was ready "to go on and get into it."

Carole Speaks of Herself and Her Experience
in Her First Professional Semester

Special. Um, I think I have a special personality. I like to talk, I like talk in circles, but I get along with people. I smile all the time, and people say I talk with my eyes, you know, and I'm just like a real nice person. I'm sensitive, and anything I might see, you know, that might involve younger kids, older people, it effects me. And I just think that, you know, I have a unique kind of personality that most people wouldn't say that they have, but um, I guess you would call it that I am sensitive to other people's needs, and that is why I am like I am, you know, real nice. I would do something for someone else before I would do it for myself. That's how I feel.

But this sensitivity it's like a weakness for me, you know, people can really get to me if they want. I think I've had other people take advantage of me, you know, but I've like lived through it. I mean I've gone through it and stuff, so I'm much stronger now, but someone can get on my weak side. I'm always so nice. I'm just so nice I'm naive I guess you could say, I'm naive.

When I was, I think I was ten, when I was in the fifth grade, I skipped a grade, sixth grade. I mean I was like put aside from other kids. I was like tested for like a month or so, you know, me and this other guy, and I just

knew that, I mean more was expected from me, you know, from then on. So like when I entered high school I was twelve, and I got a lot of flack from people about my age and stuff. And I was like, I'm going to prove to them, that you know, just because I'm young doesn't mean I don't know things, that I'm not mature.

So when I graduated at sixteen, I wasn't really ready to go off to school, I was still like a momma's girl. I knew I was going to finish college, and I knew what I wanted to do, so when they moved me up I think they started, you know, letting me go through all these classes figuring out IQ tests and everything. So I mean they helped me decide, you know, my teachers in fifth grade.

I got a scholarship to go to our community college. So I didn't work my first year. I worked my second year, but I devoted all my time to college my freshman year, and it was good, it was good. It had a lot of clubs there, and I was in the honor's club, and sports, and practically anything I could get into. I loved it, and it was near home, so I didn't have to, you know, go away, and financially it was great.

I got an AA degree from there, and then transferred here to go into teaching. I was just always interested in teaching. When I was very young, I taught my little sisters everything, you know, before they were four years old I was just interested in teaching the little kids. As I got older

I seen that the middle grades were the hardest, you know, to teach. My two little sisters are in junior high, and I always work with them, so I thought, you know, that would be the best thing to go into.

Um, I had a good background in math, in high school I had a good math teacher, I had a good math teacher. I loved trig, calc, and algebra's real good, I love algebra. So I decided to go into that, cause history and bio they really don't interest me like math did. I was just really intrigued with all those numbers and stuff so I went into math, you know, I thought I could do good in math.

Now in Dr. Lacy's class I'm learning some easy ways to teach math instead of the ways I was taught. Cause, you know, I had to like learn on my own after a while, because the method was so different. You know, the teachers were teaching at a higher level than what I was learning, and I had to learn on my own. Mathematics is, is real abstract to me. I mean I can see where the kids don't like mathematics, but see I had a good background in mathematics. And um, if you, if you just look around you know that everything is like turning into numbers. We're becoming numbers. I see that, you know, because when I went up to the academic advising, you know, they said, "What's your social security number?" They didn't even ask me my name! That's how I feel about, you know, numbers, mathematics is just numbers. Numbers grouped together, adding them together, it's just

numbers. It's nothing like speech, you don't have to really speak math, cause no one would really understand you, especially when you start talking about calculus and derivatives. But it's just numbers, it's just a bunch of numbers.

I was telling the kids at Perry Middle School about my checking account, how, you know, I had to make sure I knew how much was in there before I wrote a check for like the phone bill and stuff. I was like, so you see how important math is. You don't want to get in trouble with the government, you know, I was telling them that. I would relate it to something in society, you know, what they want to get, you know, things like that. Because, you know, they love money, you tell them to try this game with money, they'll go for it just like that.

I can't relate to history and science, like you know, most people go into math and science. I just couldn't you know. I was alright in science, physics, and chemistry, but I love literature. I love to read, and I mean I was like a bookworm when I was growing up, so I love to read literature, and like Hawthorne is really with me, and I just like English, you know, just any kind of English. Except grammar, I shy away from that a little, but I love literature, so I decided to go into English too, you know.

I have 19 hours now in Block, like the methods courses, I have two night classes, and it's real tiring cause I don't

get to eat like I usually do. I have to work in the mornings, and I have to go to the school two times a week in the mornings, and then all the projects. Then I have like keep a journal, and I'm just real tired, it's just real tiring.

But I love going into the school. The kids are great. I mean they can relate to me and I can relate to them. Kids in middle school ask more questions, I mean they want to know everything now. With television and all the media and stuff they see a lot of things, and they want to know why, or where, or when. And they are the, I think they are the real special ones. I mean they are caught in the middle from like the lower grades to high school. They want to know what is expected of them, you know, cause when you get to high school, you know what you've got to do, you know, and it's just like right before you're getting ready to go to college. But they're having a harder time now with all the tests that they're having to take now, you know, the education program is quite, giving them all those tests, and they're um, I just think they're the, they're the special people in school right now. Because I know my sisters have had a lot of problems with the school they're at, with the rules, and the rules that they have to go by now, and some of the regulations, and I don't like it. And but, you know, there is just not really a lot I can do about it, just to help them get through it.

But I love the schools, I love the kids, I mean it's different than I thought, cause I observed my little sister's classroom last fall. You know, and the little girls there, you know, I could see they were having some problems with these guys. They're into guys, you know, it's like they don't want to do work. Observing at my school now I see they have more problems than I thought they did. I mean when I was in the seventh grade I didn't think about, I didn't worry about most of the things that they're worried about now. You know, how they look, how they dress, the hair styles today, who's popular, who's in. I can't remember worrying about that, you know, when I was in the seventh grade. And it's real, it's like peer pressure now. You know, cause like there's one guy in there, he is real smart, but he doesn't want the kids to think that he's smart, so he cuts up to get attention, you know, to say that he's like a cool guy. It was the first time I had ever seen anything like that, you know, I, I figured there was some kids like that, but I didn't think I would like see it the first few days. But I've seen this kid, I noticed him. And he really gave his teachers some problems, but he's real bright. I also sat with the kids at lunch one day, you know, they asked me to sit with them at lunch, and I sat with them and listen to them, and it was like WOW! These kids know a lot, it's surprising.

I'm enjoying myself at the middle school. I thought I was going to be nervous when I got there. But when I got there, I introduced myself, you know, and I was like, if I'm available you can come to me and I'll help you. And I wish you would help me, cause I'm going to need your cooperation and help.

I'm tutoring this little boy for my case study project. He's an at risk student, and I'm making progress with him. He's not nervous any more, he was nervous the first couple of times that I tutored him, you know writing, I could see the nervous writing. When he passed the first math test he had passed in a long time, I was real proud of him, and I gave him a little treat for doing it, you know, and I got a big smile from him, the first big smile. It made me real happy that day. But the kids, I love going to the school.

My cooperating teacher is great. She is just letting me take over. I just knew I was going to be nervous, but I wasn't. The teachers love, they love for me to get up there and talk, you know, to the students. They say like go ahead and try it, cause see they, they say they wish that they had had that opportunity, and they'll try to give me the opportunity to do that. And the teachers talked to me, and they told me that it was real good that I was having a practical core, you know, to see how the world really is, and I was happy to hear some of that. And they told me if I needed any help with anything, you know, to let them know.

They're real nice teachers and everything. But they have a lot of work to do, I seen that. They're like just going, they never sit down. I noticed that, the teachers never sit at their desks any more, unless it's planning period.

Yes, the teachers have a lot of work to do, I noticed that. My teacher's, it's like, oh I have to get this done, cause the Board is having them do so much. Um, they have AA room now instead of a homeroom, and they have to give the kids like activities to do, this is like a classroom. And the teachers have so many duties, they're always, you know they had to do, they had to do their own role, the computerized grades and everything. They're doing that now, but they have to, um, get their set time, and all the kids, you know, they have like 30 kids every class period. It's hard to keep track on what level the kids are. It was real, it's real funny how I didn't notice that before, how teachers have so much work to do. But they do, they really do.

I was saying about me being so sensitive. Um, I've controlled that now, you know, I know where I stand with the kids. They look to me, and you know, for me to give the answers. I can relate more to the kids, we learned, we learned from each other. That's how I felt when I was there. I mean I had to get a feel of confidence, you know. Because student teaching seems like real scary to me right now. But, my cooperating teacher talked to me, and she was

like, "You're doing great." And other teachers that had watched me, and I had been in their classroom, it was just like, you're doing good things with the kids and stuff. I thought coming from them it was encouragement. And I never thought of me, you know, of being ready, but she told me at the middle of the semester, she was like, "I think, I think you are ready, I think you're going to make it." This was the first time that someone had ever said that to me. And my teacher, from what she saw, she said it was real positive. There were some negative things too about me giving homework, or a pop quiz which you know, that was just part of it.

My cooperating teacher helped me, anything I needed to do. I was free to do just about anything. She would show me the lesson, and I got up there. I would go around and ask the students if they need any help. She liked that part, you know, going around and helping the students while she was helping somebody else. I went to somebody else's class and taught, Miss Carmen, I went to her room, and she's a great language arts teacher, I just learned so much from just watching her with the kids. She, um, she's real sensitive to their personal needs, and if they need to talk, she can tell if something's wrong. They have problems, you know, about taking tests. She was like, you know, she'd help them. And um, Ms. Parks my cooperating teacher, she

would also. They gave those kids so many chances to do things you know.

And they had to do all these things, and they had so much to do, like guidance, or you know, the reports they had to turn in on the students and the report cards. I don't know how they take it. I don't know if I could do it. But she told me, she told me she said, um, "You get used to it after a while." She said, "Everything is just changing." The new tests the teachers have to take, and going back to school and all this. Everything is just changing now. They're glad I'm getting an opportunity to come into the school before I do my student teaching. They think it's good experience for me, you know, I know how I would act in the classroom. You know, and I was um, I said I thought I would be nervous. I was not nervous. Um, the whole time I was there, I was just, you know, I got up and talked, you know, and I took control of the class, you know. And I liked it! She gave me the opportunity to do that. That was real good. And she told me, she encouraged me, she was like, "I think you're ready."

This whole semester has prepared me, because I know how I can act in the classroom, and how some of the kids like react, you know some of the discipline problems, personal problems. And I think that, you know, I have a better chance of doing it now than I would have if I didn't have Block. Because I wouldn't know how to react to someone, you

know, fight in the halls. Or how they learn, their learning styles. That I have never known, how the different learning styles effect learning, and Dr. Wray helped me understand.

That class is great. Dr. Wray is my advisor too and he's really helping us a lot in the schools. He wants to know the problems that we're having, you know, the good things that are going on in the schools. He's real worried about, is it helping us. You know, when he knows a lot of us are getting discouraged about being at the schools, if there's any problems with any of the teachers, let him know. He is real great. And he goes through the psychology, like ed psych. He's the psychology part, and there's a lot of things in there that I never though of, you know, the kids. Like negative reinforcement and positive reinforcement and punishment. You know, how to identify the difference in those two.

We also focused, we focused more on, um, we called it kid watching. You know watching the kids and seeing how they reacted to the school, and how they reacted to the teacher and the environment that they were in. And a, we talked about that a lot, and I think, you know, he wanted us just to um try to understand the kids, you know, and their, how they felt, because he was like put yourself in their place because I know you were there once. You know, and think about all the things and changes that they're going through, you know, in the school, because they just are

going through an age where they have to go to another school like high school, that transition. And he said just to try to understand, I mean that they have problems too, and understand the situation.

The first week of Dr. Wray's class we taught our peers in the class, and I had to get up and teach the magic square. And two of them caught on, we had to teach three of them, and the other one, she just couldn't get it. And I was, I was like getting frustrated, because it seemed like it was so easy to me, but I knew she just didn't understand. I think I finally got to her, you know, but I didn't give her the test. I was just like work on it, and I thought that was real good, because it prepared me. You know, there's going to be a student who doesn't understand it. And you can't expect him to understand it at all times, you know, and this was just with my peers, you know, the people in my classroom, but she didn't understand it. And um, we did another thing where we had to teach, and we were the students and one person was picked as the teacher, and there was a discipline problem. We'd be in the back of the room, and we'd think he's not paying any attention to us, and we were passing notes and talking and whispering. And he just called on us, and we jumped, you know, and it was like, we knew how those kids feel. We were like, you know, I know how those kids feel now when they're called on. Because,

you know, we didn't think he was paying any attention to us, but he was.

We did another thing in this class that was fun. We just found out what kind of category we were in from this little test [Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1984)], and I can't remember what mine was, but I know that I was "warmly enthusiastic." That was one of the words, and um, "high spirited," and "sensitive to other's feelings." I said, "I knew that!" And um, like to make things fun for other people, I think that was part of it too. You know, and I was like, "That's me!" And the part about "warmly enthusiastic," I never really thought about myself as, you know, enthused at everything I did. But when I thought about it after that, you know, it was like well I can make things, you know, positive when you know things are negative, you know, like cheering somebody up, or cheering myself up. Then Dr. Wray divided us into groups according to introvert or extrovert, and we talked about it, and there was a lot of different, you know, personality brought out. You know some people are just, you know, how we learned, we had to have everything organized, or we had to just like look for the big idea and then put it in detail. You know, and I just thought it was real strange that people would look for the big idea, and then go back for details, because I'm a detail person you know. And I was like, "How do you learn from that? Explain it to me." You know, because I

thought it was interesting. There are some students that just learn like that, and people in my class said that's how they learn, and I thought that was, that was part of the personality, how we learn. That I have never known, how the different learning styles effect us, and Dr. Wray helped us understand. And then in the schools we understand, when I did my case study, you know, I tutored to his learning style. And it was just different, but if he learns that way, he was different from most of his class.

The way Dr. Wray teaches is great! It's more like a discussion class, like he lets us talk. And how he puts us into groups, and we, you know, talk about it ourselves and then come back as a class and talk. He just doesn't stand up there and just like lecture the whole time. But if we like come together and we sort of do it together, then the class can help me understand what he was saying, and it was like, "Oh." You know, and then he won't have someone, all these people coming up and asking him, and I think that was his main purpose. You know getting really to know each other, and different ideas that we might have that we could share with each other, like in the schools. And um, I liked that part, that part of the class. It was never boring, you know, I went to class every day, because I want to know what they have to say, and um, his class was great, I loved it.

I had two classes with Dr. Emory. That's language arts. One of the classes, the Wednesday night class, was

for teachers, and they had so many ideas, that I just, you know, wrote down, I tried to remember everything. It was great. We talked about their kids and how it was for them, you know, starting out. And they was like encouraging us, you know, like you'll do fine. And um, Dr. Emory, she had a lot ... she was more of, she didn't talk about the book, you know things in the book and stuff. It was just our own feelings, you know, and what we could do in the classroom to make it right for the child. Or what we could do to make it better for the environment, or for us. And she gave us so many ideas. I mean she gave us handouts, I have three files of different handouts, I have them in order. And she was giving us so much, I never had any teacher give me so much material. She worked really hard in both classes. You know, they are about the same, but it's um, it's just a little, little different because of the teachers. The other class is just all students, and um, she had a quote for us every day, and she brings in a poster, and it's really great. You know if you're feeling bad, and you come in the class and she has this poster, and you know, you have to smile. You know, it's just like if you do that when you're doing the, when you're in the schools, you know, you might make your kids feel better, one kid at least, you know.

She was different because, you know, usually teachers tell you material, tell you things, like you know, out of the book and what's going to be on the test and stuff. We

never knew what was going to be on the test, because we talked about so many other things. We got off on like tangents of things. She would tell us about her trips, you know, and um, we talked about the Chinese New Year for two days. You know just interesting stuff that I've never thought about. You know, and um, when it was raining she was like um, "Well how do you feel today?" Let's talk about that. You know, she just did things like on impulse. She never really had a lesson plan, I think. She just did lot of things on impulse. She probably knew what she was going to pass out to us, because she had all these handouts. But the subject, you know, it was always different. We had like three different topics, you know, on a day. You know if you stayed on just one topic it can get boring sometimes.

I'm learning to write a lesson plan. Dr. Emory told us that the six-step lesson plan was not always good to use in an English class. But I based one on that, and um, I turned in all of those, and I got them back, and I got A's. And, you know, she enjoyed them. And um, there was one I did on personality, no, no, no, no, self concept. Self concept, and I taught that lesson, and um, they had questions like, "What is self concept?" and "If there was there was something you could change about yourself, what would it be?" You know, and she enjoyed that, because I used her little self-concept form that she passed out, one of those

handouts she gave us, and um, in the classroom that I taught.

And when I taught that the kids just, I couldn't believe how much they would talk about themselves, you know. Because they felt, you know, I think most of them felt like, "Well I'm special in a way." You know, like in sports, or academics, personality, anything, some of them would just say, "Yeah, I know I'm pretty." You know, or handsome, you know, and I was like, "That's good that you know, that you feel that way." And the activities, I did one activity with the, looked at the reading scores for the kids, and looked at how they were put into reading groups, and what the reading scores meant. Then um, she liked that idea, she gave us ideas to use, and um, just things. I gave the spelling test, you know, and the bulletin boards, just little things like that, you know. The bulletin board, you could do a bulletin board, but you didn't think anybody would be interested in what the bulletin board was, and she was. She wanted a sketch of what was up there. I did do the bulletin board, but it was on fractions, and I had Lucy, Charlie Brown, and Peppermint Patty on it.... And the kids seemed to enjoy it so much. They did the problems, and some of them tried to make the cookies, it was just something I made up in my head, I was like, "Those cookies are not real!" But she was, she liked that idea, but she doesn't like math, because it was on math. I told her about the

ideas, she said, "It's nice that you used characters that, you know, the Peanut's characters that they think about." And um, it was, it was through the lesson plan that really helped me, you know, because I got up there and taught the self concept, and I did go, I did basically go by the six-step lesson plan. I didn't know I was doing that, I just, you know, did it on impulse. My teacher said could you do this one for us, and I was like, "I'll try." But I didn't say no to, you know I was like I'll try, because I'll try, I'll try just about anything. So she said, "You did great."

We did a journal for Dr. Emory too, and Dr. Wray read it too. You know you can forget some little things that happen in the schools, and if you write it down, you know, you can go back and see what it was like. There was this one incident I know it was, you know, and you couldn't really remember. And I went back to that journal, and I was talking about it in Dr. Wray's class, you know. And um, he was like, "You remember lots of things!" and I was like, "It's in my journal." He was like, "Oh, that journal is helping you so you won't forget." Because I usually remember stuff, but it was like just so vague, you know, but I knew it was something special. And um, I got an "A" on the journal, she liked how I, you know, wrote it out. I told her about different classes, and how the students acted towards me, or acted towards the teacher, or acted towards the lesson, you know. And how that particular day was, if

it was raining, or the class was kind of gloomy, and we had to cheer it up. So I think it's going to help me, you know, for when I begin teaching that I saw how kids would act to certain situations. Like if it's sunny outside it was like, "Do you want to go outside? It's warm." And you know how do you react to this, you know, if you can like incorporate it into the lesson, into like going outside. Because um, we measured Noah's Ark. You know how you take the string, and do it like that, and they could not believe that Noah's Ark was that long, you know, and that wide. I couldn't either, I didn't know. And so we were outside and they liked that. And that's what I was talking about, I knew it was something that I wanted to tell Dr. Wray, that we had measured, because he was talking about math that day. We did Noah's Ark and it was long, I mean it was really big. Most people don't think about that, you know? They were really shocked, it was like, "Miss Fraye, did you know it was that big?" I was like, "No!" I was like, "This is a surprise to me." That journal, yeah, I've got to finish that journal this week.

I said before that Dr. Lacy was teaching us some easy ways to teach math. But her class is more for the younger group. It's not for middle school people. I wish we had a class for it. I'm sure, you know, she's trying her best There's more teachers in there than there are students, like Dr. Emory's night class. And I'm learning

from those teachers. They're giving us, you know, feedback on what's going on in their classrooms. Um, my 518 class [math methods], that's the only class I could say I had any kind of trouble with. Um, it's basically elementary stuff, and it's trying to um, show us how to use things for the smaller kids, like kindergarten. You see I really don't get into it, because I know I won't, I'll probably never get to do half the things in that class, you know, with these seventh and eighth graders. And I know I might have to use blocks, you know the base-ten blocks, or the little cubes things, but she's trying to help us, the middle school. And um, I tried to understand what she said, but see, most of the time this was, you know, it was Greek to me. And it shouldn't be, but it is because you know, I had never had a class like it before. And I've talked to some other people like, "Do you understand this?" And I don't feel so bad now because there was more people in there that did it, that was just like in the same position that I'm in. And it's real, you know, I've worked so hard in that class too. All the papers. I've had to write papers, and do lesson plans, and um readings, readings. And I've done all those, and I've shown them to her, because I've tried to understand this. She, she's willing to help, and it, it's just that I, she said she doesn't think that it's anything, you know, that has to do with academics. She's just like, I know you understand, but you just don't know how to write it down,

because I'm trying to write it down like she would, which is like, "Here's what she wants." I can't write it down like I want to, that's what I've been doing, you know. She wants us to write it as what she would. So you see I have a different opinion about what I would do, you know, if I was in that classroom.

In most of my other classes I can express my creativity, what I would do, you know, it's more like opinion. And they take that, you know, they welcome my ideas, and I'm not saying that she doesn't, but on the test. That's the only thing that's hurting me is the test. And she wants it as she has said it, and you know, sometimes I just don't, you know. If you don't agree with something why, you know, why be dishonest about it and write it down. And I can't remember everything she says, and you know, and half the things that most people say, you know, you take different than what they mean. She really wants me, you know, to try to get the grade that I would want, You know, and I want that grade, and I, I think I can work at it now, because I talked to her.

I had to do a unit plan for like a week for Dr. Lacy's class. I think she would like that since it was my own thoughts. She wanted us to do that. Mine was on integers, and I was creative with that. And um, well observation, you know that was what I thought, and what the, how the kids reacted, and how the teacher reacted to the kids questions.

I was real proud of that paper too. Most of the time teachers, you know they just go through a lesson, and most of them can't really ask questions because of the time. But my teacher was really cheery that day for some reason that I don't know. And she talked about, she had a problem at home, and the kids were concerned, "What was wrong?" And um, there was really no problem, she was just like getting into the topic of fractions, and um, they understood her, and if they didn't understand they would let her know by just like raising their hand, "Could you do that problem over?" She went over like four or five each time on fractions and mixed numbers, and um, they seemed to understand. She gave them a nonexample also, and they seemed to understand about the pizza. You know she divided, she was like, "I'm having so many pizzas and I have this many people in my family, who would get what, you know, and would I have to open up a can of soup?" And um, one guy he had already did it and he was like, "You're going to have to open up a can of soup!" And um, I liked that, how you use the pizza part, something that they can relate to instead of just jumping right into the numbers.

I interviewed some students after the lesson. I told them, I was like, you know, tell me what this lesson was about. And it was like, "Well first you do this. She told us she had a problem, ...". And um, they remembered everything! One little girl, she remembered the first

comment the teacher made, she was like, "She told us that she was proud of us for being real patient in the computer room." And I didn't even remember that! She remembered everything that the teacher had said. But the problem, when the teacher said she had a problem at home, I think that's what really got their attention. You know, she didn't lose anybody right at the beginning of the class, because she was asking for their help. And you know you like, I would like someone to tell me, "Well could you help me with this?" You know, it makes you feel good if you can help somebody. And I think they felt good about that, and she was like, "Ok, thank you, I'll make sure I have that can of soup out."

I also have Terry Hart's class. It's algebra. I love the way Terry teaches the math steps. He goes through everything, you know, until the final solution of the problem. And it's helping me, because one day when I had to teach, I used his steps for teaching an algebra equation, and that really helped me. I didn't think, you know, about it until I got up there, and I was doing the problem, and I said let me go through every step so the kids will know how I got this solution. Because, you know, I think before I write, I can think of the answer and not write it down, but I knew that I had to write down for the kids, cause they don't know what I'm thinking. And Terry helped me realize that. He told us, you know, you know what you are thinking, but they don't know so you have to write it down for them.

And that class is helpful, I love his class, and I love algebra so I love that class.

I don't think I've missed a day of Dr. Hart's class either, although I've wanted to many times when I've come back from the school, because I'm so tired, but um, he, he is an understanding person. We talk, you know, he talks to me, and he told me, you know, he said, "I knew you could do well." And that's the first time my math teacher has told me that. Because I've had, I've had one experience with one of the teachers, but he um, he encouraged me, and he was like, "I know you can do it." Because I was really down when I came back this semester, and he talked to me. Most of all, I'll probably miss his class more than anybody's, you know, because I, I've been in three of his classes. Each class I would feel better, because I knew I could do it, I was confident you know, and he gave me that confidence.

I didn't think I would have this much to do for this Block that I have, but it's been real um, educational. And I, I've loved the experience, you know talking to the students in my class. We're real close, and I love talking with them. And we stick together, and I like that. We stick together, and we try to work out problems among ourselves. Because at the first of the year, we just didn't think that we were going to make it. You know, we thought like well just stick together, and we'll be pushing each

other, you know, you can make it, you really can. And I like that, because I know how we can get discouraged, and it felt real good that someone was concerned, because you're away from home and stuff, and not having anybody to talk to. And you know they would come by and talk or they would call, and I liked that. I like to talk.

So I would tell another student coming into Block, I would tell them not to give up. Because the first few weeks is just too much, because um, I think of all the work I had to do plus going into the school. I'm carrying 19 hours, but I never, I never thought about giving up. But there was this time when I was going, "I wish I had never done this." But after you get in there, and you converse with the kids, because the kids help a lot, and talking to the teachers, like Dr. Wray and Dr. Emory, you will um, you will appreciate the work that you have done. And of course the grades that you get, they always help if you get good grades. But it's just to hang in there, you know, and express, express your feelings, you know, about, you know, if anything's wrong. Or good, you know, they like to hear good things too, they respect you. Be sure that you um, can have like a partner, or three or four people that you can talk to. You know, because that helps a lot, to work like a team, having a team, like two or three. I will feel like this was worth while, and it is, because if you really want to be a teacher you have to go through this step. You will

know this is worth while because the kids, you know, the kids need you. And you know you need them too.

But yes, yes it has prepared me, I think that I am a better person. Just grew! I mean, you know, I talked to my mom last week and she was like, "You seem like you've just grown up." I'm more responsible now. I know what I have to do, and I do it. Yeah, Block has prepared me for that, and um, I think I'm ready. I think of all the work that I have put in, and I really worked hard, it's really paid off.

Descriptive Interpretation of
Carole's Reflections

I can relate more to the kids, we learned from each other. That's how I felt when I was there. I mean I had to get a feel of confidence, you know.

Interviewing Carole

Introducing Carole

Carole has always been interested in teaching. Her first pupils were her little sisters, and Carole related her thought that "if I could teach two stubborn sisters, I can teach anyone." It was this first professional semester of her undergraduate academic career that gave Carole the confidence to believe that she would attain this goal.

I have grown professionally and personally by my experience in the middle school. Professionally I know what is expected of a teacher.... Personally I have grown to love the field in which I have chosen -- teaching.... I know that I can reach my goals and achievements. The goals consist of teaching with respect and compassion and sharing the knowledge I have accumulated....

Having the opportunity to be active as a professional participant in the public schools was an exciting and productive experience for Carole. She also found that the entire semester's program was beneficial to her professional growth and stated, "I have a better chance of doing it now than I would have if I didn't have Block."

A major change took place in Carole's life when in fifth grade she was "put aside from other kids..., tested

for like a month" and then promoted to seventh grade. She sensed that "more was expected from me," and Carole demonstrated that she was determined to be successful. She earned a full scholarship to a local community college and loved being very active in clubs, sports, and academics. Being close to home was also important during that time since "I wasn't really ready to go off to school, I was still like a momma's girl."

Professional Aspiration

After earning an Associate of Arts degree Carole transferred to UNCG with the intention of going into teaching. She said that she decided on middle level teacher certification because

As I got older I seen that the middle grades were the hardest to teach. My two little sisters are in junior high, and I always worked with them, so I thought that would be the best thing to go into.

Having had a good background in math, loving algebra, and being intrigued with numbers Carole "thought I could do good in math."

Mathematics is real abstract to me. I mean I can see where the kids don't like mathematics, but see I had a good background in mathematics. If you just look around you know that everything is like turning into numbers. We're becoming numbers. I see that, because when I went up to the academic advising they said, 'What's your social security number?' They didn't even ask me my name! That's how I feel about numbers. Mathematics is just numbers.

Carole selected English as her second academic concentration, because she could not "relate to history and science," and she loved literature.

Academic Endeavors

Carole completed 15 credit hours of coursework during this semester and also participated in two credit hours of practicum experience at a middle school near the university.

The coursework included:

- Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations of Education
- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics
- Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts
- Edu 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers

Carole found it to be a very stressful semester.

I have two night classes, and it's real tiring cause I don't get to eat like I usually do. I have to work in the mornings, and I have to go to the school two times a week in the mornings, and then all the projects.... I'm just real tired, it's just real tiring.

Yet after only a month of classes she wrote in her journal, "I've come this far so I know I'm going to make it."

Professional Discoveries

Discovering that students have different learning styles was significant to Carole. During a group activity in her education psychology class with Dr. Wray Carole found it to be

strange that some people would look for the big idea and then go back for details, because I'm a detail person.

She continued to share that

I have never known how the different learning styles effect us, and Dr. Wray helped us understand. And then in the schools we understand, when I did my case study, I tutored to his learning style.

Carole found that the small group discussions in Dr. Wray's class gave the students opportunities to share their different ideas and better understand the topic being presented.

The way Dr. Wray teaches is great! It's more like a discussion class, like he lets us talk. And how he puts us into groups, and we talk about it ourselves and then come back as a class and talk.

A major focus of the course was "just to try to understand the kids" through watching the kids and seeing how they reacted to the school and to the teaching and environment. This was then written in their journals and shared in class discussion.

Adolescents

After a short time at Perry Middle School Carole concluded that "kids are great." She found that they ask more questions than she expected.

I mean they want to know everything now. With the television and all the media they see a lot of things, and they want to know why, or where, or when.

When Carole sat with some students at lunch and listened to their conversation, "it was like WOW! These kids know a lot, it's surprising." She found they worry about how they look and who is popular and that "the girls have trouble with guys." Peer pressure was also seen to be a significant factor in their lives. Carole was thrilled when she discovered that she could relate to these students and they could relate to her.

University Coursework in Curriculum and Teaching

Dr. Emory was the instructor for Carole's two language arts classes. The evening class was attended by many in-service teachers, and Carole found that "they had so many ideas." Many discussions incorporated the experiences of these teachers, and these teachers encouraged Carole and the other undergraduate students. Carole saw that Dr. Emory was interested in everything they did in the schools and led discussions about

what we could do in the classroom to make it right for the child. She gave us so many ideas. I mean she gave us handouts.... I never had a teacher give me so much material. She worked really hard in both classes.

Carole was also pleased that she was learning to write lesson plans this semester. The six-step lesson plan was presented in all her education classes. She found it to be an effective way to organize a lesson plan yet remembered

that Dr. Emory "told us that the six-step plan was not always good to use in an English class."

Carole enjoyed being creative in writing a unit plan for Dr. Lacy's mathematics curriculum and teaching course. The class as a whole was not as satisfactory.

It's basically elementary stuff ... like kindergarten. You see I really don't get into it, because I'll probably never get to do half the things in that class with these seventh and eighth graders.

The tests were particularly difficult, because "I can't write it down like I want to. She wants us to write it as what she would." She found Dr. Lacy to be very willing to help her, and the other assignments were more beneficial. In particular Carole was proud of her paper describing her observation of a seventh grade math lesson at Perry Middle School. Following the observation Carole interviewed four students and was amazed at the four different techniques they used to do the prescribed arithmetic.

The mathematics class which Carole successfully completed this semester incorporated the content of a high school algebra II course. Dr. Hart's teaching techniques made a major impression on Carole.

He goes through everything..., and it's helping me, because one day when I had to teach I used his steps for teaching an algebra equation, and that really helped me.... Terry [Hart] helped me realize that ... you have to write down [what you are thinking when you solve a problem].

She found that Dr. Hart's caring and understanding manner helped her renew her confidence in herself and her abilities.

Practicum Experience

Greater confidence was also gained through being at Perry Middle School two days a week during this semester. Carole loved being in the school and with the kids. The students' friendliness and receptivity to her teaching and tutoring efforts brought Carole great joy.

It was so exciting watching them light up at folded paper. At the end of class they didn't want to go to their next class.... I was happy that I could make them happy.

Carole had numerous opportunities to interact with the students in a wide variety of ways. She did a case study with Eric, a seventh grade at risk student, who she noticed was nervous during their first few sessions. Carole studied his learning style and helped him to establish better study skills. They were both delighted when test scores improved and Eric decided he could proceed without her further assistance.

Teaching Experiences

Carole conducted a small group lesson with three prealgebra students who had missed the class presentation on the subtraction of integers. The lesson was carefully sequenced and presented, and Carole "was impressed with all the students and my lesson." On two occasions Carole

designed and presented lessons to an entire class. The first opportunity involved a language arts lesson complementing the students' study of The Call of the Wild. The cooperating teacher told Carole she was pleased with the way the lesson was conducted and

the students also gave me compliments about the lesson and that was most important to me.

On another occasion Carole presented a lesson on self concept. Her satisfied comment on this lesson was,

I couldn't believe how much they would talk about themselves, because they felt, I think most of them felt like, 'Well I'm special in a way.'

Carole spent most of her time in the seventh grade mathematics classes with Ms. Parks. She was encouraged to participate actively in the classroom proceedings. Carole had feared that she would be nervous in front of the students and was delighted when she discovered she was not nervous and that "the teachers love for me to get up there and talk to the students."

More Professional Discoveries

Another big surprise for Carole was her discovery that she could figure out how to use a computer. Carole assisted Ms. Parks by putting students' grades into the computer. She also participated when Ms. Parks took her class to the computer room. Carole recorded in her journal, "I didn't

know that I had the ability to figure out machines like computers."

Carole found that she also learned a lot from watching the teachers. She was impressed with how Ms. Parks and the language arts teacher were both so sensitive to the personal needs of their students. "They can tell if something's wrong," Carole remembered, "and they gave those kids so many chances to do things. Both of these teachers gave the students a lot of encouragement and tried to help them learn from their mistakes. Carole saw this as a very effective way to relate with the students. Carole also saw the language arts teacher use eye contact effectively and determined that this was another effective classroom technique.

I think this [eye contact] is real effective, because she's having the students not look at the board or their books, you like keep your books closed [and] listen to me.

From these observations and her own experiences Carole concluded that she would know she was being effective with her students if "they could come talk to me about their problems." She would also want to see them participate frequently in class, relate well with one another, and be able to use what she taught them later on in life.

The demanding nature of the teaching profession was a new idea for Carole.

They have a lot of work to do. They're like just going, they never sit down. I noticed that, the teachers never sit at their desks any more, unless it's planning period.

She noticed that the traditional homeroom had become "AA" (Academic Advising) with activities to plan. Taking roll, doing computerized grades, and keeping track of the level of work of each student made an impression on Carole: "It's real funny how I didn't notice that before, how teachers have so much work to do."

Summary

After the first month into this semester Carole recorded in her journal,

I feel that I'm going to make a difference in at least one of the kids at Perry Middle and it's a good feeling. Now I'm almost positive that I want to teach. The kids at Perry Middle has helped me realize that I'm needed.

Carole loved her experiences in the schools, and although the Block semester involved more work than she expected, she found it to be "real educational." It was important to her that she and her fellow classmates would

like stick together. And we'll be pushing each other, you know, you can make it, you really can. And I like that, because I know how we can get discouraged, and it felt real good that someone was concerned.

She firmly stated, "Yes it [Block semester] has prepared me, I think that I am a better person." She found that she could use her sensitivity to people in beneficial ways, she gained confidence in herself and her abilities, and enjoyed

taking control of a class of adolescents. Most of all she found that she was needed. In one of her last journal entries Carole shares her feeling of joy with teaching.

I really enjoyed this week in the schools. I love seeing people happy. I also love getting compliments - it makes my time there so worthwhile. I feel so appreciated, and that's the best feeling that I could have besides love. The students respect me and I respect them. I see this more and more each time I'm in the classroom. Teaching is meant for me -- as of this moment!

Debra Speaks of Herself and Her Experience
in Her First Professional Semester

This semester took a lot of energy. It wasn't hard, it just took a lot of energy. Just high energy all the time, I mean, I had to think a lot, but it was things that were so interesting that it wasn't, it wasn't hard. It wasn't difficult like struggling with something you didn't want to do. It just took a lot of energy and a lot of insight and a lot of creativity. And I think for anyone just beginning Block I would say get your brain working, because you know, the first day, bang it starts.

When coming into this semester I was hoping the methods courses would really prepare me more to get ready to go into the schools, and really cover what I am going to need to know to really, you know, to make my lesson plans and make it more helpful to students, make it a better learning environment for them. Now I would say one thing that student teaching I can't wait to do. This semester definitely aided me to get ready for student teaching. definitely! It would have been a shock if I wouldn't have had it. I mean a lot.

I've always wanted to be a teacher, I don't know why. I've always liked my teachers. I've always been friends with my teachers, and it seems they've always ... you know I couldn't exactly tell you why I want to go into the teaching

profession, just that I think it's, um, one of the most important jobs anyone could ever have. I think it's a challenge, and I think there's too many teachers in the middle grades now that don't try to understand the children. These kids are the hardest age to handle. And I think it would be a challenge, and I like kids a lot, and I like that age even though they are impossible, cause I'm sure it's always ... probably worse. If I'm not a good teacher I hope I get out, I hope, I hope I go on to something else if I'm not effective, but I hope to be effective.

These kids, I think, are fascinating. I think that's the most, for some reason it's the most fascinating age; that's when they do all their changing. I mean they go from, you know, it seems like they're a baby child one minute, and the next minute, you know, they're thought of as an adult. I think it is the hardest time in their life. I've always, um, always babysat, which is completely different than, than teaching, but I've um, sit for parents when they go out of town, and usually adolescents in the junior high, and you know, kids that their parents have said, "Oh, he's terrible, and they're going to have a terrible time, just send him to his room," have been, um, you know, they try you, and I'm sure I'll be tried many times, but I think adolescents as learners, students, kids in general are good people. You just give them a chance.

You know. I think, I think they could be the most active learners of all.

One thing, I really want to teach math. I like math, and I think it's important. I think it's just as important as social studies or English, but um, I think it's one of those subjects that kids always say, "Ew, math." You know, they rather go to English they think they have a better, a better chance of getting around the answer, you know, they can, they can at least get partially right. In math they know it's right or wrong. I wish that I could, you know, that I could make it fun. You know, maybe it's, you know, you can't expect geometry to be a bowl of laughs I guess, or, or algebra to be the most exciting thing you've ever done in your life. But I hope that, that they want to come to class, and that, you know, they really think that, I will show them that they're not just, they're not just learning math, that they're learning something that, you know, that's in everyday life. That, you know, I mean math has to do with weather. If you didn't have math how could you compute the weather. I want to let them know. I don't want to be a, a hard-knock type situation like, you know, this is the right way, this is the wrong way. I want, you know they might figure out a new way to do something that no one's ever figured out before, that, you know, and I've, you know, I've had some teachers that said this is the only way you can do something, and I don't think that's right. So I

guess that's, I mean I guess that's kind of my goal, my challenge I guess is, is to make them understand that, that math isn't, I always thought math was just in school, you know, you're never going to use it out of school, but I had, I had a good class last semester that really showed me that math is, you know, in advertisement. More or less in your everyday life, so it's, ... I think that's my biggest challenge. It's to show them early enough that they, that they don't get real bored and frustrated and ... I think.

My other concentration is communications. I'm a communications.... Which I don't know exactly what I could do with that. I've never, you know, I've asked and they're, I've always kind of been, you know, said well, um, you know it's kind of been my answer, and it kind of got skidded off the side. I've been told, you know, kind of you can do some, some English classes, but it just depends on what the, um, what you get in the school district. But it's communications, but I'm not really quite sure exactly what, what I could do with it, and I don't, I don't feel like, I don't feel like I've been prepared to take on, um, to take on a class with my communications skills. I don't think, I don't think I've had enough background. I mean I've had my English classes and stuff, but it's, um, I don't think it's prepared me enough like my math classes have.

I think it's a good education program at UNCG, I mean it's, you know, very good, but I still think it has a lot of

problems. And, um, I just, I'm kind of, I'm kind of baffled by some of the things they do. I think there needs to be more unity in the teachers, I think especially if they are, one teacher will take, you know, one, one advisor tells me, you know, one thing to take, and I talk to someone else, and they have a completely different what I need to do. And I think there needs to be some kind of a unity. I don't know how easy that would be, how hard that would be, and I'm sure it's difficult or it, or if, you know, if it wasn't difficult, I'm sure it would be done. But that's not saying all the good things that are up there in the education department, because I think there are a lot of wonderful things. I think my math program has been very strong. I think the math program here has wonderful teachers. Hard, but wonderful, I mean, you know, I just, I, I have not yet to grasp what my communications studies is, is teaching me.

But then again I can't say enough about how wonderful my math classes have been. I feel more prepared than anything, someone who hates geometry, I feel I could go in there and actually, maybe convince the child that it's going to be fun. I mean I never, I never thought it was fun. You know, and when I first wanted to teach, goll, I thought if I ever have to teach geometry I'll die, I will just die. Now I think I could really do it. I had Terry Hart, and I had Dr. Lacy for two completely different geometry classes [before the professional semester], and they come with two

completely different approaches. Of gosh, you know, and I can say I'm really, I think I learned a lot. I think I learned a lot more from Terry. I think he is probably the most, you know, one of the most wonderful teachers I have ever had. Some people say, "Oh, he's too lenient, he's too caring. He lets you get away with murder," but then in the long run maybe, maybe that's what made it, because I haven't forgotten a thing he's taught me. He would show us three or four, you know, at least three ways to look at something, and he would have us make models. And I think that's so important, and Dr. Lacy came at a whole different approach, but goll through her class, I hated it, oh I hated it, but now that I'm out of it, I actually think I learned a lot.

I had Dr. Lacy again this semester for math methods. In my math methods course, it's an elementary methods course. We're learning how to teach someone by using bundles of sticks. I mean they still use manipulatives to a point, I mean in seventh grade you're trying to get away from manipulatives, and get them into abstract thinking. I mean I don't think totally, I don't think they totally rely on abstract, but I think that that's what you're moving toward. I mean, yes I'm learning a lot. I'd feel a lot more confident if I was in an elementary grade classroom. I mean I'd think it was a wonderful course, because she really, she really is teaching well, I mean she's such an intelligent woman. I wish that we could have a methods

course specifically for middle grades, or for four through nine. I wish I didn't have to take it. I don't feel like I got a lot out of it for middle grades. On a positive note I wish I could have all the intelligence that she carried up there. I mean she's got just a worth of information, just gosh! But honestly I wouldn't want to do a thing she does. I mean the teacher's not always right. I mean you can't, I mean she might be right, but there might be a different way to do something. She sees it just her way is the only way, and it's very hard that.

We had to do a unit plan for Dr. Lacy, and that was really good, really taught us how to, how to do it. I'm glad we got to, you know, had to do one, because that prepares me to, for what I need to do. And it's a lot of preparations. We did readings, which I don't think any of us, I thought it was very time taking and money taking [to copy the articles]. I didn't really learn a thing from it. We did an observation report too. I thought that was a good idea too. I still don't agree with the way she graded them though. The observation report, the unit plan, they were great ideas. We put together also a resource file. That was another great idea, something, you know, at least to start off with. You know I'm sure it's just a very very basic start off, but the ideas were wonderful. I mean I can't ever say that she's not an intelligent woman. It was just the way she graded that I don't agree with. From

getting the highest possible grade on the same report from one teacher, and her saying that I didn't even deserve the B minus I got from her on it. I just tried to understand where she was coming from. Try to be patient, try to goll.

With Dr. Emory's class in language arts, at first I thought it was just busy, I think most of us thought it was kind of busy work, but then when I started interning and really started to get to teach, writing down lesson plans, I found how much, how useful it really was. But for the first few weeks it really tried my patience, coming in three hours a week and it was so boring. I was getting a folder full of language arts games I thought I would probably never open again. Now I think it would be really helpful, the folders I've made, I don't know. I'm pretty, I'm excited to use some of it.

The language arts was a good class, a lot of ideas. Dr. Emory is real lay back. She responds really well to people I think. She doesn't make you feel like you're so pressured, get this done right then and there. And then I mean she understands that we have pressures too, and that, you know, we're busy, but, you know, she wants you to be in her class. Expects you to be in her class, and she expects you to be polite while you're there and listen, and get your work done, but she doesn't, she, she's good. She's real caring and understanding I think.

We did a lot of activities in that class, did a lot on, she went over the six-step lesson plan, you know the taxonomies and things. We acted out things, like just like we were the students in the classroom, you know, just like if we had a classroom that's how our students would be. We did a lot of participating as well as listening, which made it, you know, made you feel how the student's going to feel which was good.

I liked doing the journal for her class too. I'll definitely look back over my journal and look at the instances that occurred and how they were handled, and you know, I can learn from them. I've already decided I want to do one when I student teach, and I think it's just, I don't know. It was, I mean I liked writing it. I mean I felt, I kind of get carried away sometimes. She probably read and read and read. But I mean I liked doing it. It probably made me open my eyes more. I think a journal is important. I mean a lot of people thought they were a hassle. I think they're important, because it makes you watch more. You know, because I had to come up with something. I had to watch how they acted. You know, because sometimes you're just kind of idle in there. Sometimes you just kind of like lose it, daydream. Yeah, I wouldn't do away with it. I think it was probably one of the better assignments we had.

The assignments were pretty hard for me especially the unit plans. The math unit I had to do for Dr. Lacy seemed

like it went better. I mean I thought I had to do more for it, but I had to do a language arts unit for Dr. Emory. Not that she said, she said you could do it in social studies or science. But she just really didn't want you to do it on math, because it's harder to, you know, involve reading, writing, comprehension, and skills on there. So I did a language arts, and I did it on mythology. And I just did, but it was, it was hard. It was real hard. I don't feel as confident if I was put as a language arts teacher. I would feel very, I don't know how at ease I would feel. I didn't feel comfortable, and I'm not, I'm not a big reader like in the mythology, you know, and things like that. But it actually was interesting. I kind of, I really kind of felt myself starting to get into it. But I, it would take a lot of practice, a lot more than I did, but it was a start, and it will help when I have to do it for real. We did three teaching reports, and those were a little bit different for me since I was in a math class at the school and she wanted us to do language arts. But I just did them during our AA time, and like, we did a poem thing, and the kids thought that was real fun. And then we talked about friendship, and you know, what they wanted, what they thought qualities were best in a friend. And I made up a helping verb song, and we sang in class. So now they know their helping verbs. So those are my three teaching reports. We also had two activities. I did an observation and looking at spelling

tests. Those were our main assignments for, and then the exams, and then just being in class and doing activities.

All those teaching reports we had to, well I don't, well I don't know if she really required us to have to make them up ourselves, but you know, I kind of found them more fun to make up my own ideas. It sparked a lot of creativity, it made you think about, you just have to use your head once in a while to, to spark some stuff. It was just, I liked doing them. I mean the, sometimes I didn't know if I was doing them right, but I liked doing them. And the kids really enjoyed just doing something different.

Mostly in her [Dr. Emory's] class I found that I can actually do something that I didn't think I could do. I mean I never thought I could do something relating to reading and writing and things like that, since I just, I, I don't find myself as an excelling reader or writer at all. I mean I just struggle writing a paragraph, but I could just mainly see how far just a little effort goes. You know, just it takes you so far if you can just spend a little time. Set aside time to do it instead of always being so busy all the time. Just sitting down thinking about when I was going to do it works a lot better.

Also just watching Dr. Emory. Just the way she is, just the way... I don't even know how to describe it. She really taught me a lot about how to teach. The way, sometimes the way she goes about things, and then all, all

of her, some of her goofy activities she did, like standing up and down when they say a certain name, or some of the more serious things she tells us, you know. I can really see myself implementing them in the classroom. I mean I don't see how a teacher survives without them. You know and I think a lot of teachers don't use this kind of thing. And so this class has really helped me.

Dr. Wray's class was particularly good. He's real, he, we've learned a lot about the adolescents, and how you deal with things. And also we learned a lot about the six-step lesson plan, which is, you know, which, after what my teacher told me, you know, my cooperating teacher, all my teachers here have all said, and the teacher that's now at Perry Middle graduated from UNCG, she said that's exactly what you get evaluated on. I mean, he's gone over and explained why they do it, explained other ways to, you know, things that get away from the six-step lesson plan. I think that's been my most helpful class, was Dr. Wray's class. It's a, in some ways I think, on some days I feel like he's just strayed from anything I could ever use, but mostly I feel pretty, like it's real useful, it's very helpful.

We have a few assignments that, you know, that he just checks to make sure that you did them, which were like, let's see. First of all we in the beginning wrote, you know we did what we felt was an effective teacher, which I thought was helpful just to spurt ideas of what you even,

what you thought was an effective teacher. Now at the end we read back what we put as an effective teacher, and really look at, you know, what ideas we were attracted by, and what ideas we learned from it, and changed, and can learn from experience.

We did a case study, which is with one-on-one student, which shows us, you know, the differences of, of how you can really help a student, how a student differs from a class. That was good for me. I had a little girl who was labeled "at risk." She's very far from that. She's, she's a bright little girl, she just, she doesn't want to try. But she just, I mean there's something there, that you know, her parents think that schools are bad, the schools are worthless. And so they give her that, that image, so she doesn't, you know, if they're worthless why try. You know her parents are not going to be devastated if she comes home flunking. So she, we related real well, and she went from an "F" to a "C." And she really could have had a "B" if she just would have done her homework. So it went well for me. We kind of had some bad days and some good days. Some days where she just didn't want to work or a day when she turned in someone else's work, and I mean I knew it, but.... It was an experience that I'm glad I had. Sometimes you wanted to shake her, you know. Say Mary just why, just do this, just why. And I guess she has an older sister that's in college, and she's flunking out. And I mean her parents

just don't care. I mean I guess if you just don't have any, anybody to care and say, "Great!" You know a little encouragement. I think me being there and being able to give her individualized, she wanted to do well for me I think sometimes.

I had such a very happy family life and that made happy school life. The schools had a real positive atmosphere. My parents always turned, they've always tried to make even bad experiences something to learn from. So my life is so different from her's.

I did a video tape for Dr. Wray's class too, and it was quite a stitch. I just, I really give them looks that are really funny. You know like, if someone says something that I just can't believe came out of that little mouth, you know my eyes pop open, my mouth kind of drops. You know, I shouldn't do that! You know, and I watched myself on the, and they laughed, and they thought it was funny. And we got over it, but.... I mean I need to learn to control the way I react sometimes. You know, and sometimes the way I stand sometimes bothers me. You know, because you're on, I mean they're all looking at you, and you have to remember that. So it's, that was kind of funny. But otherwise, I liked the voice control, and I liked the way the kids responded when I talked to them. We had a few stumbling moments, but... we made it. It was neat. I mean I learned a lot just by, just by even watching how they responded to me. Just by the

types, the way I asked a question, or the way I stated something, or you know, the way they responded and I responded back to them. Just to see what works and what doesn't work. I just, I don't see myself, you know, the regulations army sergeant. I mean I could tell that the way I stood up in front of the classroom, and I think they could feel that. I mean I learned a lot. I can't really explain all that I learned, things that I already know I would correct. I would correct or I would keep or...

I think most everything we did for his class was very relevant. I think he tries his hardest not to make it busy work. And what we do we'll, well later on you can look back and say, well think how I dealt with that situation, or how I viewed this student, how much you changed, how much you didn't change. I think most everything we did in that class was relevant, a lot of work. It was a lot of work, a lot of time. I feel like I've never spent that much time on something, but I think it's worth my time.

In Dr. Wray's class outside of knowing, I think the whole was just figuring out your students. Trying to learn how different the students are, how different they learn, how different they act, how different they respond. And I think, you know, learning all the different styles and theories on how to teach, how to evaluate, how to diagnose, how to do this, how to do that, I think alongside with that he also was trying to teach you, teach us responsibility....

You know pace yourself, get things done, I mean we were very active in what we were doing in the schools. I mean he accomplished a lot. Now that I look on, I mean, in the short time we had he accomplished a lot! We covered all, I mean every kind of child you could have. I mean I guess that's not true, because there's always people who are exceptions to the rule, but you know we always had good discussions about how to deal with things. And he never had a sure fire answer, because he said there's not. There really isn't. And I don't, just it's hard to explain just all the different theories that go behind how to teach, all that kind of stuff. I kind of learned that I can really halfway look at a situation and try to be objective. You know, or look at a child and realize how different they really are. I mean, I'm not really sure ... I'm not really sure how to say what I learned. I just, I learned a lot about myself, and how I get things done, or how I act, or react.

I've done a lot of looking at myself, and how I do things compared to how I feel someone who does it so well does it. And it seems like I kind of walk out of my body for a minute, and just see. I'm a very outgoing and active person. I always have to be in the middle of whatever is going on, you know, I always want to be in there to do it. But then I also stay a little shy sometimes ... a little apprehensive about things. Sometimes I always don't see the

positive side quick enough. I get bored very easy in school if I've seen it before. I sometimes don't want to see it again. But then again I hate it if I don't pick something up the first time and then I don't get to go over it again. I think I need to maybe work more on patience, patience and keeping my attention span longer. I don't, this was a very growing situation for me. It was good.

In Dr. Wray's class we did a thing [Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1984)], it seemed kind of trivial. The only thing it said in there was that, of course I was an extravert, talked all the time. Then there were a couple of things. It said I'm really imaginative and creative. And I just had never really seen myself as that way. I mean as I said with Dr. Emory, I mean I had to come up with the things that I did, but I just never have seen myself as real imaginative and creative. I've always seen myself as more of an idealist than a realist, but I've never really thought about it. I don't know, I mean I don't know how true that test could be, but it was pretty funny to read that.

Then the practicum kind of went hand-in-hand with all our courses. I love going to the schools, absolutely love it. Ah, it's fun, it's interesting, it's hard work. A lot more than I think people realize. It's neat. I have the most cooperating teacher I think you could possibly ever have. She wants me to do as much as I want to do, and you know, is very very helpful, and she's just as busy, because

she's in graduate school, and she, you know, she'll be done with her masters in July. I'm learning a lot, I mean more than just learning like how to teach a certain concept, but more how to run a classroom, you know, effectively without, you know trying to deal with interruptions, and just dealing with the students. If someone's being disruptive it seems like the teacher has to take time out to be, to say that's enough da da da da, and I just learned from her that you don't have to do that. It's, she has a more effective way just to say, "Oh, thank you Bobby for adding that to the class," and da da da da, and it's just still on with what she was talking about the whole time, and the whole class is just, I mean just almost mesmerized, and he can't believe he was called up. He is just right back on task. I think I've learned mainly just how to run a class smoothly. Just watching I've learned how to run a class smoothly, and what really goes on behind the scenes not just.... Like I'm learning a lot about how team planning works, and team teaching, and just a lot about the system. I mean we've had very real problems that had to be dealt with, and so it's been interesting. I didn't realize that they had to deal with as much as they do. I mean they have to completely switch what they planned on doing just because of a certain situation.

The kids were pretty candid with me. They don't want to hold back saying anything to me. I think it will be

different when, when they know more that I am an authority figure or that, that's not the word I want to use, but more in the teacher role. They'll say anything, just the funniest remarks. Like a little boy told me the other day, "Miss Wells, Miss Wells, you want to know what Bobby said?" "Well I don't know. Bobby, should I be told what you said?" And then you know he said, "Well I don't know," and he commented that I was, "Fine as hell." That was the big comment for the day. I mean they're pretty candid. But they're real good for me when I get up in front of the classroom, and she let me teach which is good. I found that I'm not as organized as I think I am. You know, that if I had to switch things, I don't know how well I would adapt to making these constant changes. I think that's something you have to, you're bound to get used to being able to, to move from one mode into another just in an instant. That I've found real hard to deal with. I always thought I was pretty organized, that I usually know where things are, but then a lot of things. It made me feel unorganized, like I'm not getting things done, or I just don't have the ability to just switch. I think that was one of the main things I learned about myself. Another thing is I'm sometimes not, not ready to come back at them with what, sometimes with what they say. I don't think they are going to ask the questions that they ask now.

I think I know my subjects well. I really, a lot of things I think I'm going to cover I forget, I'm going to be baffled about how to get the point across, but I feel like I could really get the point across. And I know the different aspects, and that comes from what I've learned, what I've been taught. I think I interact well, but then again I have a lot of weaknesses. I don't like to get upset with the kids. I don't like to have to tell them to be quiet. You have to be caring and have control, yet understanding, and have written guidelines. I always knew that's what you wanted a teacher was to be caring. You also have to be very very knowledgable. I mean I think, I think you have to widen your knowledge. I've learned more sitting in there, more knowledge has been pounded into my head than I could think of, but I think a teacher has to be very intelligent. Which you know, comes from more than just school. You have to listen to your students. Just listening, reacting, see how the children react, you know interactions and reactions.

I would say one thing that I can't wait to do student teaching. I did see the interaction the kids had with one student teacher, you know, actually watching a student teacher. They can be monsters! Oh boy! They can be angels when the teacher's still in the room. The minute she walks out the door, I mean it's almost as bad as having tomatoes thrown at you. I mean they'll, you know they try everything. I hope I'm stronger than she is, but she gets

run over a lot. It's kind of scary. I've learned you have to be prepared, even more prepared than your cooperating teacher, being a student teacher. Student teaching would have been a shock if I wouldn't have had Block. Now I can't wait to do student teaching!

Descriptive Interpretation of
Debra's Reflections

I've learned more sitting in there [at Perry Middle School], more knowledge has been pounded into my head than I could think of, but I think a teacher has to be very intelligent. Which, you know, comes from more than just school. You have to listen to your students. Just listening, reacting, see how the children react...

Interviewing Debra

Introducing Debra

Debra was looking forward to her semester of student teaching. She found that this first professional semester of her undergraduate academic career

definitely aided me to get ready for student teaching. Definitely! It would have been a shock if I wouldn't have had it.

Her observations of students and teachers at Perry Middle School "kind of went hand-in-hand with all our courses." Debra loved going to the school, and found it to be fun, interesting, and a lot of hard work. The semester's work required "high energy all the time."

I had to think a lot, but it was things that were so interesting that it wasn't hard. It wasn't difficult like struggling with something you didn't want to do. It just took a lot of energy, and a lot of insight, and a lot of creativity.

Debra would advise anyone just beginning their first professional semester to "get your brain working" the very first day of class.

Professional Aspirations

Debra viewed teaching as "one of the most important jobs anyone could ever have," and related that she had always wanted to be a teacher. Her own family life and school experiences were very happy. She liked most of her teachers and would wish "to make all of my future students have a positive and successful experience in school as I did." The challenge of becoming an effective teacher was exciting to Debra.

Impossible and fascinating are two of the adjectives Debra has used to describe adolescents. Having observed them at Perry Middle School she recalled that they could be very candid and funny in their discussions. In their behavior they could be monsters one minute and then turn around and be angels.

For some reason it's the most fascinating age, that's when they do all their changing. I mean they go from, it seems like they're a baby one minute, and the next minute they're thought of as an adult. I think it is the hardest time in their life.... Kids in general are good people. You just give them a chance. I think they could be the most active learners of all.

This fascination led Debra to seek a middle level teaching certification.

Mathematics was Debra's preferred academic concentration. She liked math and saw it as an important field of study. Students always said "Ew, math!" according to Debra, and she believed they prefer English because "they

though they had a better chance of getting around the answer. In math they knew it's right or wrong." It was one of Debra's goals to make the study of mathematics fun for her students, even the geometry which she hated. She shared her view that her biggest challenge was to help students realize that mathematics was in their everyday life. Part of her technique would be to give them opportunities to "figure out a new way to do something." Debra believed that her academic preparation in mathematics had been very strong. She was not certain what she could do with her complementing academic concentration in communication skills. A weak background in this area of study meant to her that "it would take a lot of practice" to be able to teach it comfortably.

Academic Endeavors

Debra completed 9 credit hours of coursework during this semester and also participated in two credit hours of practicum experience at a middle school near the university.

The coursework included:

- Edu 430 - Psychological Foundations in Education
- Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts
- Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools
- Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics

Coming into this semester Debra "was hoping the methods courses would really prepare me more to get ready to go into the schools."

Previous to this semester Debra completed a number of classes in mathematics which were very meaningful to her and helped her to "feel more prepared than anything."

University Coursework in Curriculum and Teaching

Complementing previous work was her course this semester in the curriculum and teaching of middle level mathematics. Debra stated that it would be "a wonderful course ... if I was in the elementary grade classroom." She found Dr. Lacy to be an extremely intelligent woman with "just a worth of information." Yet Debra shared in reference to classroom and grading procedures

I wouldn't want to do a thing she does. I mean the teacher's not always right..., but there might be a different way to do something. She sees it just her way is the only way, and it's very hard that.

The unit plan which Debra created for this course was a valuable experience for her, and she was "glad we had to do one, because that prepares me for what I need to do." The compiling of a resource file and a paper on the observation of a math class were two other interesting and practical assignments. On the observation report Debra carefully described the way Ms. Koonse guided her 7th grade average math class through a lesson on mathematical sentences involving variables using the six-step lesson plan. During interviews of four students following the lesson, Debra noticed that the students liked having the opportunity to

talk a lot with the teacher during the lesson yet found it to be generally boring and not useful to their perceived needs. She used this opportunity to try to help the students realize that "math class, today, actually had a purpose." The assignments in this class were generally interesting to Debra, but she did not agree with the way they were graded and had to struggle to "understand where she [Dr. Lacy] was coming from."

Dr. Emory was described by Debra as being a teacher who is "real lay back, and responds well to people." While she found the first few weeks of class to be boring and filled with busy work, as the semester progressed Debra discovered how the many ideas presented through class activities and handouts "would really be helpful." She was "excited to use some of it." Many of the class activities "made you feel how the student's going to feel," and Debra was glad to have had that experience. This technique of teaching through "her goofy activities ... really taught me a lot about how to teach."

Writing a journal was the most valuable of Dr. Emory's assignments for Debra. Debra shared her belief that

they [journals] are important, because it makes you watch more, because I had to come up with something. I had to watch how they acted. You know, because sometimes you're just kind of idle in there.

The other assignments were described as "pretty hard for me, especially the unit plans." The unit plan for this language

arts class could focus on any academic area except mathematics due to it being difficult to "involve reading writing, comprehension, and skills on there." Although Debra was uncomfortable with the assignment, she did find her topic of mythology to be interesting, and "really kind of felt myself starting to get into it." Debra enjoyed developing three language arts lesson plans which she was then able to share with students at Perry Middle School during their academic advising period.

It sparked a lot of creativity. It made you think, just have to use your head once in a while. I liked doing them. I mean I didn't know it I was doing them right, but I liked doing them. And the kids really enjoyed doing something different.

Most important for Debra was her discovery that "I can actually do something that I didn't think I could do." She had usually found it to be very difficult to have to do much reading and writing, yet during this course she found that "I could just mainly see how far just a little effort goes." At the same time, when Debra taught these lessons, she discovered that "I'm not as organized as I think I am," and she was concerned about her ability to adapt to the constant changes that took place in the school and classroom.

The course in education psychology with Dr. Wray focused on "just figuring out your students."

Trying to learn how different the students are, how different they learn, how different they act, how different they respond.

Debra also believed that

he was also trying to teach us responsibility. You know, pace yourself and get things done, I mean we were very active in what we were doing in the schools.

Good discussions were part of every class meeting, and Debra was impressed that Dr. Wray "never had a sure-fire answer" since he believed "there really isn't" one.

Debra learned about the six-step lesson plan in all three of her education courses this semester, and the teachers at Perry Middle School confirmed that "that's exactly what you get evaluated on." Dr. Wray presented ways to get away from the six-step plan and also taught a lot about the nature of adolescents and "how you deal with things." Through the assignment of a case study of a student at the middle school, Dr. Wray helped Debra see "how you can really help a student, and how a student differs from a class." Her particular student was "a bright little girl ... whose parents think that schools are worthless." With encouragement from Debra and activities based on her learning style both Debra and Mary were delighted when Mary's grade improved from an "F" to a "C."

Teaching Experiences

Dr. Wray encouraged Debra to make a video tape of one of her teaching sessions at Perry Middle School. Debra described her viewing of the tape as "quite a stitch." From this tape as well as her other experiences with the student

Debra concluded that "I need to learn to control the way I react sometimes." The candidness of the students' comments sometimes made her "eyes pop open, and my mouth kind of drops." She was glad to see from her questions and the students' answers that they responded well to her. Debra also noticed that the students could feel that she was not "the regulations army sergeant" type of teacher. To be "caring and have control" were both seen to be important for effective teaching.

Personal and Professional Discoveries

Many of the assignments for the education psychology course helped Debra to look at herself as a growing professional and see "how much you changed, how much you didn't change." Although sometimes she was shy, Debra saw herself as generally "very outgoing and active. I always had to be in the middle of whatever was going on." Thus it was no surprise to her when the results of the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1984) she took in Dr. Wray's class indicated that she "was an extravert, talked all the time." Yet it also indicated that "I'm really imaginative and creative, and I just had never really seen myself as that way." Thinking of the unit and lesson plans she had completed for her coursework Debra saw herself in a new way although she still said, "It was pretty funny to read that."

Practicum Experience

Perry Middle School was described by Debra as being in the process of "developing a positive learning atmosphere for its students." She liked seeing the teachers greet students in the halls due to the absence of bells and the increased sense of responsibility this seemed to give to the students. A great deal of school spirit was displayed while the students were painting murals on many of the walls. Debra believed the two principals "needed to become more visible not just being seen as disciplinarians." The hallways, classrooms, and outside areas were all seen by Debra having been somewhat neglected and in need of cleaning. During one mural-painting session Debra was impressed when her cooperating teacher, Ms. Koonse, had the students who were not involved in murals redecorate the classroom.

It was so wonderful to see everyone get involved and to see the final product. The room looked fabulous and it gave the kids an enormous feeling of accomplishment. This also made what I was studying about positive discipline all the more worthwhile. Actually seeing those ideas put into practice, and on top of that, successfully, was a plus for me.

On another occasion Debra was equally delighted when the restlessness of students due to the lovely weather after spring break prompted Ms. Koonse to change her planned lesson and take the students outside to look for geometric shapes in their outdoor environment. Debra saw that

teaching involved the need for much self control and versatility.

Debra observed 7th grade mathematics classes at each level of academic proficiency. In her journal Debra recorded that with the high group "the students are thought of as both responsible and trustworthy." With the average math class "the students are all dealt with as little adults.

She [Ms. Koonse] has complete control, yet always manages to deal with the problems in a positive manner.

During her observation of the low math group Debra observed that "motivation and expectance levels are significantly less."

Significant participation is absent so teaching methods and strategies are altered to fit their needs. Some of these adjustments may be detrimental, such as the students being treated as children instead of young adults.

Debra described the overall attitude of the lower group of students as "terrifying."

You could just tell by their empty expressions and sluggish movements that they were not interested in being there.

Yet Ms. Koonse remained enthusiastic and encouraged the students to participate. All of these classes were conducted in "a relaxed and easy manner," and Debra saw Ms. Koonse as being able to maintain control and stability while providing her students with a wide range of learning experiences.

Adolescents

Three specific incidents with the students were particularly noted by Debra. During her second week at Perry Middle School two 7th grade boys were suspended from school for possession of drugs. Many of the students became very "confused and frightened" and wanted to talk. Debra was interested in the way this was handled. The discussions which took place in Ms. Koonse' classes were open and relaxed and resulted in the class deciding that

a 'true' friend wouldn't pressure another friend into doing something he/she did not want to do.

Debra saw this as more effective than a discussion on drugs and the "just say no" strategy. She was less impressed with the way another situation was handled. A 7th grade white girl made a very abusive verbal racial attack on a 7th grade black boy. The young girl was placed in In-School Suspension and conferences were held with parents and counselors. What troubled Debra was that there was no apparent attempt to help the young boy handle the abuse which was aimed at him. On the occasion of the third event Debra was "absolutely devastated" when she discovered Mary, her case-study student, cheated on one paper. The most revealing aspect of this incident for Debra was that she took Mary's offense personally. Debra recorded in her journal, "I felt as if she had cheated me." Through some careful introspection, Debra was able to realize "Mary was

not maliciously trying to cheat me," and found this to be another experience from which she could learn and grow.

Summary

On her last day at Perry Middle School Debra was surprised when at the end of the day the "majority of the students literally lined up to give me a hug good-bye" along with a card they had made. Debra had previously written that teaching frequently seemed to be "an impossible job," but the "kids energy also gets me going and over those fears." Now she realized the "extra joys of teaching."

Ellie Speaks of Herself and Her Experiences
in Her First Professional Semester

Coming to school was my decision. My parents wanted me to stay at home and go to a community college at home and just commute. I wanted to get away, because they're so strict, and I was so dependent upon them I knew if I didn't get out then I would always be that way. So I guess coming to, coming away to college and being on my own or whatever has changed me completely. So now I'm really independent where before I wasn't.

I'm so different now. I'd say that I'm outgoing. That I'm happy. I like to do different things. I love to travel. I'm not really scared of taking risks or anything like that. I think my friends and family come before anything else. My friends are really important to me. I set, I usually try to set my priorities and get first things out of the way first, and then I have time to have fun. Um, I like math. I think I have a pretty high standard of morals. I agree with most of the things that my family has taught me, even though at times I didn't like the way they make certain decisions.

I do have to study in school, and I'm not one of those people that it comes naturally at all. Math more, I can pick that up really easily, sometimes that, you know, I can get that on my own with the book, but I do have to study.

And I'm, I always make sure I complete all my assignments, maybe the night before, or the hour before, I'm bad about putting things off, but I do get them done. I would never not turn in an assignment, no, that would bother me. I might put it off to the very last minute and get really nervous about it, but I will complete it. I'm pretty dedicated I think. It's just because it's what I want to do. I tried to stay organized this semester, but I have 18 hours and work parttime, as far as getting things in, you know, working on it ahead of time, it was just get it in. And I got really frustrated, but um, I don't know, I used to just give up you know. And um, now I think that if I have a goal, I mean I know, I know I can go after whatever I want. You know, I know I can get it done. I had so many projects and so many papers, that, you know, at the beginning of the semester I was like, "There's no way if I don't start on them right now and put them off to the last week." And you know, I just had the motivation to just stay up. I enjoyed what I was doing, so I mean, there were nights the last two weeks where I didn't go to bed except for maybe an hour or two, so that I could get everything done. And things like that, so ... I know for a fact that this is what I want to do.

I started out working for a day care when I was like fourteen, like helping out and everything. So I worked there after school through high school and then every summer

til the past summer, and then I had the after school children for the last, my last two years of high school. I had them when they came in, and I used to help tutor them in their homework. Most of them were in middle grades, and, um, also I would help them mostly with math. So then I started liking teaching from there, and then I applied for a teaching scholarship and got that, so that really made my final decision.

My Mom's a teacher's aid. Most of my neighbors and all of my Mom's friends are also teachers, and I know the pay's not going to be that great. I know all the time the teachers are supposed to get an increase in salary, and it hasn't happened yet. Um, to me, well I went into it because I like, you know, I love math, and I love to teach, and I love kids. And I think also if I ever got married, which I plan to do, it's really one of the most perfect jobs for a woman. You know, because if I have a child I'm not going to keep it in a day care, I'm going to keep it until it goes away to school. And teaching you can always come back to most of the time, and they do have good benefits, even if the pay is not the best. And you have the nights off and your weekends off and vacations off, so if you are going to have kids that's going to be perfect.

It was good this semester to be taking all education classes and be completely done with all of the little side classes that don't strictly go with my major. I've taken

classes in almost every field, but um, they teach you like the classroom techniques and stuff, and I find that most teachers in the education department are more caring. They're just real interested in you as a student, they're not just there to get you in and get you out, you know, most in education.

I love math and I really want to teach math. At school lots of kids were asking why they had to learn math. I guess I would give them examples of how they'll need, people need mathematics in everyday life situations, and things like that. Just sort of things like that, balancing a check book, you know, learning how much money you can spend at the store, just little things like that that you don't even think are associated with math, but they are. So I would just try to relate it to their everyday life style. I think math really goes more by the book than any other course. In my language arts class we did see some ways to be creative with math. The games and stuff like that, but it's hard with math, because I think math really has to come from the book. You can't act out math, and you can't draw it, and you can do certain things with it, but you know, you just don't have time to do things like you would in the English course.

I chose communications for my other concentration, because I didn't want to go into more science, or history, or anything like that. I really want to teach math, I don't

like it as much as the math, Just because you do things like reading and things like that. You write papers and things like that, as far as, I've had one class before that's taught me how to teach it, and now two more classes with Dr. Emory this semester. But I don't feel that I could teach communication skills or English in the schools nearly as well as I could teach math.

My math class has been so good. You know, I enjoy math the best, plus I have Dr. Hart again. I've had him several times, and I think he's the best professor, I really do. He doesn't really teach from the book, he, the book and what he says goes together, coincides, but he teaches in such an easy way, and he gives you little hints to remember things. And he, not only does um, and this is about the first class that's done this, apart from maybe a couple English classes and a couple of education classes I had last semester, but um, he teaches you the material, but he also teaches you how to teach your students in the middle grades or whatever, which is what we need to be learning. That's my favorite class.

They have a program here for the middle school students, but they don't have a math methods class for the middle school students. But we're required to have one, so we're taking education 518, and it's for elementary teachers or whatever. So I'm learning how to teach maybe K through 3, how to count, how to multiply, things like that. And we

don't have time for the middle school students, so I really don't think it's fair, you know, I'm not interested in it that much. It's like breaking apart those little blocks and things like that, and teaching them how to count, so it's not beneficial to me at all. Now we did, she assigned us a book, the middle school students are required to have a middle school math methods book, but we're learning that on our own. As far as getting a lot of instruction in the classroom, we're not.

I know Dr. Lacy is really concerned about it, and I know a lot of the students, I was even getting really frustrated, and I guess I was taking it out on her. Um, not really to her face, but it was just like, "I can't believe it, this is just not fair, she should teach us," and all this kind of stuff. Not, I mean she's a good teacher, the course is fine, but it's directed towards elementary. That's, you know, it's nice to know, but as far as teaching, having some background on math methods for my particular age group, for the middle grades you know, every once in a while we might get something I could use. In our projects we have to use what we had been taught. We were supposed to write a paper intended for the grade that we would be certified to teach and do our projects for the grade we would be certified to teach. But then when we didn't use certain manipulatives and things like that, she didn't, you know, points were taken off, and it was fine, but it was, well I

don't want to say it was worthless, because I did learn a lot. But as far as for my particular age level, it was more of a waste of time than it was, you know, I really could have taken something else, a computer science or something that maybe I could use more. I guess I did really learn to make adjustments. To be able to readjust my, what I have, what I'm used to doing, or what I want to do, because somebody else wants something. The course was OK, but I got so bored in it. All I could picture was these kindergarten kids sitting on the floor with blocks. I like to teach the mathematics, the problem, the problem solving and things like that, and not how to count and stuff. For me I just got so bored.

I think I'm the only one in my group taking 470. It's just reading in the content areas, so um, it, what it's saying is instead of just teaching reading like up through maybe fifth grade or something like that, that you need to continue to teach the kids how to read their textbook, because a lot of times they could do the material, but they don't understand the textbook material. So, and it teaches us to bring in like outside information, or substitute a textbook if their readability level is lower than the average person, then you know, things like that. It's a great course. Some days we had lectures, some days we had films, some days we went on trips to different buildings and stuff and learned how to look up things. And then um,

sometimes we had to, we just spent the whole class in the group of people according to your content area and worked on projects. We had a lot of individual assignments that we had to do. She just went back and forth, kind of taught all different ways to teach it, and all different ways to go about it.

I have two language arts type classes with Dr. Emory. She's another one that teaches us how to teach. Apart from the projects there's really not that big a difference in the two classes. The class that I have with her Wednesday night is one that a lot of teachers are coming back for I guess the renewal or something like that. So we have a lot of teachers in there that have been teaching for years and years. And so that's really that's the only difference. The other one's all Block students right now so that the Wednesday class is really better, because whatever we go over each teacher that's already teaching tells us exactly how they handle a situation. It can be the same or totally different, but you know, we see a lot of different ways to go about different problems and stuff like that. And so that class is really good too.

My classes are good this semester, apart from the math methods class. And it's not the class itself or the teacher, it's just that it's not with my major.

The main thing I learned from Dr. Emory is that you do not have to strictly go by the book. You don't have to go

by the six-step lesson plan for everything you do. And to never just follow the same routine, I mean, her classes at first, when I first went in there I was like, this is so unorganized, what in the world is the test going to be like. And I got really frustrated, but um, but then what she did, she was going by the book, yet she wasn't, you know, we didn't know that, and now I see. I look back in the book we've, we've learned everything, but not in that, in, you know, different ways, she would show us illustrations, or bring in films, or just come in and talk. We always had class discussion, class participation every single day. Anything we wanted to share with the class you could, and I learned more from her classes than anyone else's probably. I mean I had some really, all of my teachers were, you know, good, and I learned a lot. But from her I learned what I needed to know that I never had before, I mean, you know in my other classes, which was how to teach.

Instead of just assigning the normal research paper or book report or whatever, um, she taught us different things. Let them do different things like be creative. They can, um, just take parts of the story like the characters, and they can dress up, and they can act it out, or they can take the set and then maybe make a map out of clay, or just draw a map, or you know, make a shadow box. She taught how to incorporate reading, writing, listening, and speaking into everything. So they would always be going on, they would

always, you know, they would have that variety which keeps a class from being so boring. So I mean, I learned so much in there it's hard to even organize it all, but I mean I used a lot of her ideas. In our projects she was kind of looking for us to be creative. She definitely wanted us to be creative. She's very worried about the student, she's not worried about six-step plans, she's more worried about, well you need to meet your student's needs. And that's how she taught us, and you know, different, and to make sure that they're always interested.

I had to do some teaching of books for Dr. Emory's class in the schools. So I had to teach the class and get an evaluation from my teacher, and evaluate myself, and things like that. And um, one of the, I asked the teacher what she wanted us to do, and mine was to introduce a story, and um, instead of just saying the story's about so-and-so, you know, I brought in a poster. And it had the major scenes that I drew the major scenes on it, and I just let them look at it, and I didn't tell them what it was about. But they were so interested they couldn't wait to get to that part. And then after we started reading later on they were like, "Oh, that's what that was." And then um, the poster, my teacher also used it, you know, when I wasn't there as a review for the exam.

Dr. Emory loves English, so she's real dedicated to that. She's not math oriented at all. She doesn't even

want to hear about it. I learned more probably more how to teach science and every other course area than I did math in that particular class. She did teach us some games that could be of help when it comes to math I guess. Most of the things she taught us for methods could be applied to anything.

We also kept a journal for her class. I thought it was good, I mean I could write anything I wanted to write on. The only thing that bothered me was the grading. Because I've written many journals in the past, and she had said that we could write on anything. You know, she said write about what's bothering you, or what you think about the day, and I did that and I got a "B" on the first half. I couldn't understand how she could grade like that, because, and that's the only thing that I ever, that I you know, that I think she's ever contradicted herself on. Because I know that we did some little assignment papers, like one, read articles in the library and write a reaction paper, and she would just give us a check just to make sure that we did it, because she said you can't put a grade on things like that. And then the journal, it just boggled me that she, you know. A lot of students were very upset, because it was going to count like a test grade. You know they didn't understand the grade, they had what she wanted. But I liked doing it. If I was frustrated about something I could write it out,

and I generally did. I felt better like I told somebody or something. Yeah I guess I did find it to be a good thing.

When I got the first journal back, you know the first half of the semester, and I read back, and it was funny to see how I'd changed, you know. Like the first day, you know, you could see how I was just like, "Wow, this is," you know everything just is so neat and so perfect. And then you realize, and then reality sets in, and you can see. I mean like in the beginning everything looks so perfect, and it's so organized. And then towards the end of the journal I'm like, "I want to change this, I want to do this differently." You know in the beginning I guess I was just, you know, she's already got her degree, she's perfect. And I was trying to follow the same ways, the same ways, except you get ideas from them. Then I found out that I can do it myself, you know, and I think I could do a better job in some areas than some teachers, and maybe not as well in others, but just, it was different. I start to think more about things. On the weekend I tried to write mainly what I did, and things that I learned, and things that I saw. And then I started writing just about things that bothered me, or something that I saw, something like that. I got more involved in it personally than I did initially.

I'm in math and English for my two concentrations, but in the schools I'm only, they've got me working in the library which is, you know, and they've got me, I do have

English. It's called Chapter I, the kids that, they're not LD's, but they're a little bit behind, so that's fine. But I've got a math scholarship, and when I graduate I have to teach in this state for four years, and it has to be math, and I'm not getting any experience in it at all. They had us assigned, all the Block students are assigned Thursdays and Fridays in the school system. Um 8 to 12 on Thursday and 8 to 2 on Friday, and um I don't think that's good at all. You go in there and the particular grades that I'm in they have their spelling test, a reading test, or a quiz every single Friday. So as far as us observing, what we, you just sit there a lot and just watch. I talked to Dr. Wray and the other girl that rides with me, and we had our hours switched to Monday and Tuesday. We talked to our teachers. So, but I don't know if a lot of the students could do that because of their schedules and things like that. But after the change we got to see the units introduced, and, you know, a lot more instead of just sitting there for tests after test after test. I was getting so bored. So this worked out a lot better, and the teachers, you know, they were really pleased.

I didn't get to really teach, you know, I didn't get to go out and get materials for them to use, because the teacher had already done that. But it definitely helped me. I learned a lot. I wanted to get more experience in math, but I was stuck in the library one day a week. There were

many days in the library when I had nothing to do there. You know, and I did my homework, and so I felt a lot of times I was getting up and getting out there at 8 o'clock to sit in the library and watch kids come in to pick out their books. Because in there I learned everything that she does pretty much. You know, how to run the equipment, where things were located, how they use the card catalogue, the Dewey decimal system, things like that. I taught the classes, she had classes coming in, I taught, I taught them. So pretty much I learned. I wanted to be in a math class, you know, for at least part of the time.

As far as the Chapter I class went with Ms. Peel, that was great. I learned a great deal from her. She was very, I don't know, I guess, she was very strict, very strict with me in a way. I remember I stayed up one night til four, and I called her at seven, and asked her if I could make up the day, and I thought it would be absolutely fine. I was just going in there to sit and watch. But she gave me a lecture on, and I thought she was really angry, I thought, "Oh, I got a great one." But um, she gave me a lecture on, "You're in your professional semester, and part of it anyway, and that you can't just call in like this. You know, I would expect you to have plans in a substitute's hands to come in here, you know in detail to hand to me." And I was like, "Well, I'm just observing," you know and I never understood her point, but then, at the end, she didn't even have to

tell me, but she, she let me know. I forget how she said it, but what she was doing she was just letting me know how it's really going to be. So she taught me not only how to be a caring teacher, but she was great. She had all of the Chapter I kids, and they loved her to death. Um they respect her, because she was too good to them. Not only that, but she also taught me the way it's going to be, the way I'm going to have, have to be, you know. How big of a responsibility it is, and I mean, I learned a lot from her. She only had nine or ten kids. Everything was individualized a lot of the time, but I learned a lot. I did.

I've learned a lot about myself too. I thought I was going to be really scared and really shy, and it came more natural than I thought it was going to be. I learned a lot that I can deal with different people, that I can just switch from different levels, and, and you know, and I can determine that this student is totally different from that one, because you see he learns this way, just by watching, by observing the kids. And I learned that I can, you know, that I can remember little things, or come up with my own ways to help this particular kid. I would say, "Well maybe this will work," and things like that. And I was like, then before, before Dr. Emory's class maybe I wouldn't have been as creative. But I learned that I, you know, that I'll be able to do it. I would have liked to have taught a little

bit more, or had more, you know, experience observing her class instead of the library. It would have been good to observe on other days so I could see some other stuff, but I wish I would have seen more of the sequence pattern. The main thing that prepared me was just learning all the different ways to teach the kids, and before this semester I really didn't have any new ideas.

I'm going to have to work on being a little bit more strict in the classroom I think. I thought that I could come in here and just talk to the kids like a student and get along, but you really can't do that. I had it all planned out and everything, and I thought that we were going to be on more of a friendship basis, which you can do to a certain extent, but I've learned that really you need to more or less dress and act and talk and everything else like a teacher so that they'll respect you. I've always thought that I could go into a classroom and be so easy going and get along great with the students, and not have to yell at them or anything like that. But the way it is, especially with this age, they're going to try you. They're always picking on each other and everything, you know, this is the time when the girls are after the guys, and they like, the girls and things like that, so I'm going to really have to work on how to go about having classroom control, and have their respect, and still being as close to them as I want to be. I think that's going to be really hard.

I'm going to have to work on that a lot. I'm still observing. Maybe I'll use some of the things my teacher uses, some of her methods for keeping her class interested or quiet, you know, or things like that. She never raises her voice or anything, and she's not, she never embarrasses the student. A lot of times she'll only look at them and quietly, you know, ask them to see her after class. But sometimes she says some of the methods that she uses don't work; they'll work one day and not the next, so I'm going to have to, to work on that. I'm not scared about knowing the material and being able to teach it on a level that they can understand. But I am very nervous about how to handle the classroom.

My favorite part of being in the schools is the student I'm tutoring. I have a seventh grader who is already 15 years old, and he's really behind. The assistant principal called in and asked if I would take him as a case study. If I would just work with him and he doesn't, he said that he wasn't responding to any of his teachers, you know, they had him seven or eight periods a day, and that he's into like hard rock and things like that. So that's all he does in class is draw, and he won't say a word to you. So the first day I had him I was introduced to him over there, and he didn't say a word. I had him just for an hour that day, and the first thirty minutes he didn't look me, he didn't say a word, he was just really hateful. And I was supposed to be

helping him with his math. So I just took his books away and everything, and I just started talking to him, and talking to him you know, I told him I said, "If you don't start talking to me, you're just going to have to listen to me." And now we're getting along really really well. I'll teach him or tutor him whatever for maybe forty-five minutes out of the hour, and then the last ten or fifteen minutes, I'll let him talk or I'll let him bring in a tape and we'll listen to that or just different little activities like that. I'll go back even after Block just to talk to him. I've kept in touch with his teachers, and I'm supposed to go back before he has his final test, you know the last nine weeks test to help him prepare for those in math. So he's my favorite part of the school.

Overall the main thing I've learned that I think this is the job for me, and that I can do it you know, and that I'm going to want to do it. So, that's the main thing I learned about myself this semester.

Descriptive Interpretation of
Ellie's Reflections

I learned more than I ever imagined from this internship. I learned different ways to teach language arts subjects, different ways to handle discipline problems, how to have classroom control, that different students must be taught in different ways. The list goes on and on.

Ellie's Journal

Introducing Ellie

Deciding to go away to college was a major event in Ellie's life. She saw it as an opportunity to be on her own and develop a sense of independence. The experience "has changed me completely." Ellie saw herself as being happy and outgoing, a person who was not afraid to take risks. Friends and family continued to be very important to her, yet she would "try to set my priorities and get first things out of the way first" before taking time for fun and leisure. Ellie also stated that "I'm bad about putting things off, but I do get them done."

During high school Ellie worked in a day care center and frequently had the responsibility of assisting the middle grades students who came in after school with their homework. From this experience Ellie found that she "started liking teaching" and decided to pursue a middle level teaching certification. Ellie planned to get married some day and saw teaching as "really one of the most perfect

jobs for a woman." Having weekends and vacations off as well as good benefits were attractive to her. This goal to become a teacher led her to a level of accomplishment which resulted in her receiving a four-year teaching fellowship.

Professional Aspirations

Ellie's love of mathematics led to her decision to select this as one of her academic concentrations. She noticed that a lot of the children at the middle school were asking about why they had to study mathematics. Ellie believed she would

give them examples of how people need mathematics in everyday life situations.... Just sort of things like balancing a checkbook and learning how much money you can spend at the store.

She wanted to make her math classes interesting for her students and found that "games and stuff like that" can be used. Overall all however Ellie saw that "math really had to come from the book."

You can't act out math, and you can't draw it, and you can do certain things with it, but you just don't have time to do things like you would in the English course.

Communication skills was Ellie's other chosen area of academic concentration. This was selected because she "didn't want to go into more science, or history, or anything like that."

Academic Endeavors

Ellie completed 15 credit hours of coursework during this semester and also participated in two credit hours of practicum experience at a middle school near the university.

The coursework included:

Edu 443 - Teaching Practices and Curriculum in Reading and Other Language Arts

Edu 470 - Reading Education for Secondary and Special Subject Teachers

Edu 491 - Practicum in the Public Schools

Edu 518 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Mathematics

Edu 521 - Curriculum and Teaching Middle Level Language Arts

Mat 505 - Algebra for Preservice Middle Level Teachers

Throughout this semester Ellie also worked parttime, yet she was "motivated to just stay up" and get her papers and projects completed, because "I have a goal" and "I enjoyed what I was doing." Taking all education courses made it a good semester for Ellie, and she was glad to be "done with all the little side classes that don't strictly go with my major."

University Coursework on Curriculum and Teaching

Having Dr. Hart again for a mathematics course was a pleasure for Ellie. "He is the best professor." Ellie liked the way "he teaches you the material, but he also teaches you how to teach your students in the middle grades." He tended not to teach from the book although "the book and what he says go together."

Ellie was disappointed that although UNCG had a program for middle level teacher certification there was no course which focused on curriculum and teaching mathematics at this level. Dr. Lacy, the instructor for the mathematics methods course, "is really concerned about it, and a lot of the students [were] getting really frustrated." The present course was for elementary teachers.

I'm learning how to teach maybe K through 3, how to count, how to multiply, and we don't have time for middle level students ... so it's not beneficial to me at all.

Most of the students were "learning on their own" from the required middle school mathematics methods book. Projects and papers in this class had to focus on the grade level the student intended to teach, and Ellie found it difficult to adjust what she was learning in class to the requirements of the projects. Ellie realized she learned a lot about teaching mathematics at the elementary level and how to adjust what she wanted to do to the requirements of Dr. Lacy.

Learning how to indirectly teach reading in the middle level grades was the focus of another of Ellie's courses. Ellie was surprised at the wide range of activities in which they participated in the process of learning more about how to teach.

Some days we had lectures, some day we had films, some days we went on trip to different buildings and learned how to look up things. Sometimes we spent the whole class in [small

groups] according to your content area and worked on projects.

This was a "great course," and Ellie saw that it helped her to learn how to continue to teach children to learn to read by supplementing the textbook with a wide range of other materials.

The two courses in language arts were taught by Dr. Emory. Initially Ellie found the classes to be "unorganized," and she was worried about what the tests would be like. As the semester progressed, Ellie discovered that through a wide range of teaching procedures "we've learned everything" that was in the book. Every class session included discussion and class participation and Ellie found that

anything we wanted to share with the class you could, and I learned more from her classes than anyone else's probably.... From her class I learned what I needed to know that I never had before ... which was how to teach.

The Wednesday evening class which also included many in-service teachers was particularly interesting since each teacher would "tell us exactly how they handle a situation, and it can be the same or totally different." Not having to go strictly by the book, not having to always follow the six-step lesson plan, and "never to follow the same routine" were some significant ideas which Ellie believed she gained from Dr. Emory.

Ellie was able to use what she learned from Dr. Emory during her practicum experience. Dr. Emory "wanted us to be creative," so Ellie introduced a story to one class through a poster on which she had drawn pictures of major scenes from the book. The students discussed the pictures without any clarification from Ellie, and Ellie noticed that they were excited about reading the book and discovering more about these pictures. Overall Ellie found that "most of what [Dr. Emory] taught us for methods could be applied to any [subject]."

Keeping a journal was beneficial to Ellie and she liked doing it. She found that if she "was frustrated about something, I could write it out, [and] I felt better, like I told somebody or something." When Ellie read over the beginning of her journal she said,

It is funny to see how I've changed. Like the first day everything just is so neat and so perfect. And then reality sets in and you can see, 'I want to change this. I want to do this differently.'

Initially Ellie would try to copy the techniques of her cooperating teacher, but as time went on she "found out that I can do it myself." It was the grading of the journal that was upsetting for Ellie. Since they were told they could write on anything, it was confusing to her to understand how varying letter grades could be assigned to the journals.

Practicum Experience

Perry Middle School was the location of Ellie's practicum experience. The initial assignment was for Ellie to be in the schools on Thursday morning and all day Friday. This proved to be unsatisfactory to Ellie as tests were given every Friday and there was little to observe, so she and another student changed their assignments in the school to Monday and Tuesday. One of these days Ellie spent in the library. She learned

how to run the equipment, where things were located, how they use the card catalogue, the Dewey decimal system, things like that.

Ellie also taught the classes that came to the library. As the activities and materials had already been selected by the librarian, Ellie concluded that "I didn't get to really teach."

On one occasion Ellie was asked by the librarian to explain to three students how decimals were placed in numerical order. These students could not see that 900.13 was less than 900.3, since 13 was greater than 3! Ellie designed a lesson using place value blocks and was able to help the students see the relative value of these two and other similar decimals. Ellie wrote in a paper describing this lesson that the students thought the activity was interesting and fun. Some of students' comments were:

I like those blocks. I think I will be able to do this decimal stuff now.

We did this by using blocks instead of the chalkboard. It was easier! Now I'll be able to find the books that I want.

For Ellie it "revealed the use of mathematics in a subject other than mathematics itself."

A full day each week was spent in Ms. Cary's Chapter I class. Ms. Cary "taught me the way it's going to be, ... how big a responsibility it is." When Ellie called Ms. Cary one morning and asked to arrange to come in on another day, Ms. Cary was "very very strict with me..., and gave me a lecture."

'You're in your professional semester, and you just can't call in like this. I would expect you to have plans in a substitute's hands, you know, in detail to hand to me.'

Ellie recalled that she also learned a lot about being a caring teacher and how to individualize instruction. When Ellie taught some lessons one day, she discovered the importance of eye contact when Ms. Cary pointed out that she tended to look only at the students in the front of the room. Having classroom control, the respect of the students, and a close relationship with them were what Ellie saw as three difficult challenges for her. She noticed that Ms. Cary's calm voice level, and specific eye contact with a "see me after class" were effective techniques although "sometimes ... some of the methods that she uses don't work."

Adolescents

In her observation of adolescents Ellie noticed that they were "always picking on each other," and the "girls are after the guys." In the classroom "they're going to try you."

I've always thought that I could go into a classroom and be so easy going and get along great with the students, and not have to yell at them or anything like that.

Ellie saw that she was "going to have to work on being a little bit more strict in the classroom." In addition Ellie found that "you really need to more or less dress and act and talk like a teacher so that they'll respect you."

Working with students independently was the most rewarding aspect of the practicum experience for Ellie. The assistant principal of Perry Middle School asked Ellie to work with a 7th grade student who had been unresponsive to the efforts of his teachers. At their first meeting Ellie was faced with a 15 year old young man who "didn't say a word. He was just really hateful." After half an hour Ellie startled Billy by closing and taking away his math book.

He finally looked at me and said, 'What did you do that for?' I replied, 'I really don't feel like doing math today. Let's just talk. We will study another day.' Within twenty minutes we were actually carrying on a great conversation.

Ellie told Billy all about herself and soon Billy was sharing some of his experiences.

We parted on good terms. He told me that I was 'pretty cool' and that he would see me next week.

Ellie saw that being a 15 year old 7th grader bothered Billy and lowered his self confidence. During the time Ellie was at Perry Middle School, Billy was tested and discovered to be Learning Disabled in mathematics. It angered Ellie to realize that this student had been retained twice, and it was only now that the learning disability was noticed. Facing reality Ellie concluded that "the school probably does not have time to recognize and test every student that fails a grade." Ellie decided that Billy "just needs to know that someone cares about him, not just his achievements."

Summary

Learning a lot about herself was perhaps the highlight of this semester for Ellie.

I thought I was going to be really scared and really she, and it came more natural than I though it was going to be. I learned that I can deal with different people, that I can just switch from different levels, and I can determine that this students is totally different from that one by observing the kids.

Ellie also learned through her experiences in Dr. Emory's classes that she could be creative in devising techniques to present ideas to students.

The main this that prepared me was just learning all the different ways to teach the kids, and before this semester I really didn't have any new ideas.

Above all else Ellie learned that "this is the job for me.
I can do it. I want to do it!"

Summary

Utilizing the innovative technique of synthetic rendition this investigator presented a composite interpretation of the three interviews which were conducted with each participant. The purpose of this technique was to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant. Therefore, the reader could gain an experiential perspective of the reflections of a select group of preservice teachers during their first professional semester in a teacher education program.

The investigator also presented a descriptive account of the perceptions and experiences of each participant based on the three primary data sources (interviews, journals, and documents). These accounts were organized according to the themes established by the research questions and those which emerged from the participants.

An interpretive response to these descriptive accounts follows in Chapter Five. Themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of these preservice teachers are presented. The investigator also presents implications which are suggested by the findings of this study for enhancing dynamic reflection of preservice teachers within a teacher education program.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETIVE RESPONSE AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

During the spring of 1988 five young women expressed their thoughts on their experiences during the first professional semester of an undergraduate preservice teacher education program. They stated that they gained confidence in their ability to become creative effective teachers. They discovered for a certainty that their decision to become teachers of rising adolescents was a good decision and developed a sense of being ready to enter student teaching. They described this first professional semester of their undergraduate preservice experience as a unique challenge and an opportunity to prepare for an extremely important and difficult career. These preservice teachers related these as the benefits of this program to their professional development.

These preservice teachers seldom reflected upon their experiences in a dynamic fashion. They rarely reflected upon themselves in ways that demonstrated perceptions of "self as teacher" and expressed few perceptions of themselves as developing individuals. They seldom expressed views of the students they observed that demonstrated a

developmental orientation. Moreover, they seldom expressed an acknowledgment of the totality of human development.

This chapter incorporates a discussion of the themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the participants' reflections. Implications suggested by the findings of this study for the continued development of a teacher education program are also presented.

Overview of the Study

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) was chartered in 1891 as a State Normal and Industrial School "to give young women such education as shall fit them for teaching..." (Bowles, 1965, p. 6). Since that time UNCG has become coeducational and expanded to a doctorate-granting university.

The School of Education at UNCG has a highly visible program, and among other degrees offers majors in Early Childhood Education, Intermediate Education, Middle Grades Education, and Secondary Grades Education leading to certification for teaching in public schools, kindergarten through 12th grade.

Middle Grades Education (grades six through nine) has been an area of teacher certification in North Carolina since 1984. The middle grades are a reflection of both elementary and secondary level education as in both developmental preparation and content specialization. This

investigation has focused on a portion of the undergraduate program in Middle Grades Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The program, as described through interviews with the faculty, emphasizes an inquiry orientation toward teacher education.

The investigation provided an opportunity for five individuals to share their thoughts on their experiences during the first professional education semester [informally termed "Block"] for middle grades preservice teachers. Each of these participants had chosen one of their two academic concentrations to be mathematics education. They were part of a group of ten students who had similar professional interests and who were at the same point in their academic pursuit.

The in-depth study was intended to investigate answers to the following questions:

1. What are the reflections of a small group of students who are preparing to be middle grades teachers of mathematics
 - a. on themselves personally,
 - b. on themselves as learners,
 - c. on themselves as preservice teachers,
 - d. on the learning-teaching process, and
 - e. on their views of emerging adolescents as studentsduring their first semester of professional education experiences?
2. What are the themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of these students?

3. What implications do these student reflections have for the continued development of a teacher education program?

Information was gathered through a series of interviews with each of the five participants and by obtaining copies of their journals and of the papers they wrote as course assignments throughout the semester. The first of the above questions was addressed in Chapter Four. Chapter Four of this report incorporated a synthetic rendition of each series of interviews. The purpose of this technique was to present reconstructed "interviews" in a way that maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant. The investigator also discussed each participant's experience in light of what she shared through the interviews, her journal, and course papers.

Themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of these preservice teachers are now presented. The five related topics listed under the primary research question of this study serve as organizers for the presentation of these themes. This discussion is followed by a presentation of the implications of the findings of this study for the continued development of an inquiry oriented teacher education program.

Themes, Patterns, Unique Differences, and Omissions in
Participant Reflections

Education is the process of facilitating the unfolding of the highest potential which resides within oneself and others. The individual is encouraged to progress from one who reacts to experiences to one who intentionally interacts with the situation and those involved (Dewey, 1904; Jung, 1958; Maslow, 1968). For the human individual, the ability to reflect on one's own thinking and to change thought patterns moves one into a world of creativity and intentionally purposeful activity. The process of reflection turns any experience into an opportunity to utilize skills in ways which challenge one to intentionally push beyond what one was formerly able to accomplish (Csikszentmihalyi, 1984). Whereas approaches to the creative use of the thought processes differ (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976), such activity can be enhanced when numerous opportunities for reflective action are incorporated into any planned program (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). As this study investigates the reflections of students who are preparing to be middle grades teachers, the participants' intentional use of the process of reflection is a global organizing theme.

In order to enhance the discovery of themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of the

participants in this study, this researcher utilized a technique of constant comparative qualitative analysis (Glaser, 1969). Categories of concern to the investigator and those which emerged from the participants were used to code the interviews, journals, and course papers in order to generate a reorganization of this information. The investigator was then able to compare incidents applicable to each category and across categories for all five participants. Themes, patterns, unique differences, and omissions in the reflections of the participants were identified.

Interpretive Response to Participant Reflections
on Themselves Personally (Question 1a)

In order to provide young people with significant experiences which have the potential of helping them create their own life themes and take charge of their own growth, a teacher must have developed such a stance within himself (Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Sutton, 1987). Thus it is appropriate to respond to the participants' reflections on themselves personally.

The young women who participated in this study presented some thoughts on themselves personally. This was initially pointed out in their discussions of the nature of their personalities and their personal growth during this

semester. Alice, Bettie, Carole, Debra, and Ellie made comments such as:

- Alice: I'm outgoing, sometimes quiet.
I am dedicated to this career.
I'm a judgmental person; I can see that now.
- Bettie: I like to be organized and in charge.
I'm level headed and in control of my emotions.
I found I'm comfortable with the kids.
I can be more flexible than I thought.
- Carole: I've controlled my sensitivity.
I'm a better person now, I just grew.
I'm more responsible.
I had to get a feeling of confidence.
- Debra: I've done a lot of looking at myself.
I don't like to get upset with the kids.
I know my content.
I interact well.
- Ellie: I learned a lot about myself.
I can deal with different people.
I thought I would be scared and shy but I wasn't.
I can be creative with ideas.

This listing was indicative of the number and quality of the statements the participants made about their personal natures and development.

Alice made few comments of a personal nature yet did repeatedly express her determination to become an effective teacher in order to help kids "so they are not stuck in a minimum wage job." In autobiographical sketches, course assignments for Alice, Carole, and Debra, opportunity was given to specifically reflect on themselves, their past experiences, and present circumstances. Alice again expressed her dedication to teaching and wrote little about other aspects of her personality or personal growth. Carole

and Debra shared more specifically although only very briefly about their life experiences, feelings, and thoughts.

The investigator noticed that Bettie in particular was aware of being in control of her emotions. Carole discussed her sense of greater control of the sensitivity she had seen as a hindrance to effective relationships. Debra and Ellie spoke less specifically about attempts to deal with their emotions yet noted having greater poise in the classroom than they had expected of themselves. Ellie did share that she found that thinking things through before she tackled the work to be done was an effective way to accomplish the tasks with greater success. This replaced the hectic random procedure she had formally employed. Alice's aspiration to be a teacher in order "to help these kids learn something so they are not stuck in a minimum wage job" indicated a thoughtful sense of purpose, yet she made no comments on her sense of personal or professional growth during this semester.

Whereas some of these women noticed changes in themselves, they seldom expressed that they were in charge of their own personal development. They presented few concepts or themes for the growth they would like to see take place within themselves and the process they would utilize to facilitate personal unfoldment. The statements in the above listing revealed no reference to any

intentional effort to work toward particular personal goals. They noticed changes and discovered abilities within themselves but gave few indications that they deliberately sought to enhance or develop any particular quality within themselves.

Interpretive Response to Participant Reflections
on Themselves as Learners (Question 1b)

The activity of reflection or thoughtfulness demands sustained effort without any assurance of success or reward. To be engaged in reflection most fully the individual is usually faced with a situation which challenges his abilities without excessively exceeding his potential to achieve. Csikszentmihalyi (1977, 1984) has called this a flow experience and has presented that one is likely to repeatedly engage in such activities because one is able to maintain a sense of control over the environment.

Their Perception of Being Challenged

A perception of almost overwhelming challenge was shared by each of the participants as most specifically expressed by Debra.

[The semester's work required] high energy all the time. I had to think a lot, but it was things that were so interesting that it wasn't hard. It wasn't difficult like struggling with something you didn't want to do. It just took a lot of energy, and a lot of insight, and a lot of creativity.

Carole stated, "I didn't think I would have so much to do for Block.... The first few weeks were just too much." Yet it was evident from their proud success that the academic and experiential demands of this first professional semester were flow experiences. They stated that every course incorporated learning activities which challenged their creativity and would be of benefit to them in their chosen career.

Their Perceptions of Their University Coursework

It was important to these women that the assignments and class discussions were relevant to their perception of their professional needs. As Ellie expressed it, "It is good to be taking all education courses and no 'side courses.'"

One of the two chosen academic concentrations for each of these five women was mathematics. Thus they all participated in the course designated as Curriculum and Teaching in Middle Grades Mathematics. Due to university departmental constraints they participated in a course which was primarily designed to present curriculum and teaching in early childhood and intermediate grades mathematics. Dr. Lacy's concern over this dilemma was evident to her students, yet the situation was a source of constant frustration to the middle grades preservice teachers. Ellie shared, "I learned a lot, but not for the level I will teach." Yet these participants found they were surprised at

the effectiveness of some of the assignments. In particular they enjoyed interviewing middle grades students after observing them in a math class. They heard the students' explanations of the lesson and discovered that students' perceptions of lessons vary widely. Compiling a seven-day lesson plan was also considered to be a very beneficial experience. Thus as students in this class they all found themselves having to make many adjustments to make the course content relevant and to struggle with dissatisfaction over the basic course content.

Keeping a journal, a combined assignment for two courses, was found by these women to be very beneficial to their professional growth.

Alice: It made me sit down and think and realize what teaching was about.
It made me look for more.

Bettie: I think she wanted us to do it so we have to think about what we were doing in the school, and so we wouldn't forget.

Carole: You can forget some little things that happen in the schools, and if you write it down you can go back and see what it was like.

Debra: It probably made me open my eyes more.
It makes you watch more.

Ellie: I felt like I told somebody my frustrations.
I reread the first half, and it was funny what I wrote. The first day everything was so perfect.
Toward the end I see changes I would make.

It is evident that these women realized that the requirement to keep a journal encouraged more careful observation and reflection on their experience in the public schools. The

journal also provided a means for them to review their own progress. Keeping a journal provided these women with an on-going opportunity to review and reflect on their day or week in a manner which was meaningful to them.

Dr. Emory's course, Language Arts Across the Middle Level Curriculum, was required of all students seeking middle grades teaching certification, and all five women also participated in this course this semester. They found themselves enjoying a wide variety of classroom activities as well as assignments which sparked their creativity. Debra considered much of it busywork until she found it to be useful in her practicum experiences. Alice, having mathematics and science concentrations, thought she would find it difficult to complete the course due to the language arts emphasis and a lack of opportunity to present her lessons to any middle grades students. She was, however, pleased to discover that language arts could be fun and some of the reading level information could be useful. Carole, Debra, and Ellie were especially pleased to be able to use many of Dr. Emory's materials and techniques during their practicum experiences.

Practical relevance of course activities and assignments to their future as middle grades teachers was the primary criterion for satisfaction as students among these five people. Goodman (1986), in her analysis of three roles of methods courses for preservice teachers, found that

the "relevant role" was most prominent; that is, the practices of the local public schools were seldom questioned, and reflection upon different approaches to teaching were seldom encouraged. Whereas these students were most interested in their courses when they viewed them as relevant, the terminology is misleading as these students were encouraged to discuss alternatives to the techniques observed in the public school classroom (Goodman's "liberalizing role") in all their classes. From the interviews and course papers it was unclear as to the extent students were encouraged to question their belief systems about teaching practices (Goodman's "critical role").

Interpretive Response to Participant Reflections on
Themselves as Preservice Teachers (Question 1c)

The evidence from the interviews and other data sources indicated that these women maintained a perception of themselves as students in contrast to viewing themselves as emerging teachers. The focus of the concerns of these preservice teachers was with completing assignments and maintaining an acceptable grade-point average. Thus, they viewed their experiences during this first professional semester in teacher education as an extension of their experiences as college students rather than as the commencement of their experiences as teachers.

At the stage of preparation of the preservice teachers in this study the coursework provided them with a common language for reflection and discourse on their experiences with microteaching among their peers and in the public school classroom.

Alice: My introduction needed to be better. You have to get the students' attention. My teacher input could be better and my closing needs work.

Bettie: I had no concept of how long I would need. I needed to know my timing better. I am comfortable in front of the group. I just did activities, I didn't really teach. Being out there is the best teacher. I became more flexible during this semester.

Carole: I know how to act in the classroom. I thought I would be nervous, but I wasn't. I followed the six-step lesson plan. I was proud of the timing. I controlled the tempo, they controlled the discussion. I was frustrated with the one who didn't catch on.

Debra: I could have had more classroom control. I hope smoothness and flowingness will come in time. I know my content. I need to follow through with what I say I will do. I liked my voice control and student responses. I'm not the regulation sergeant.

Ellie: I didn't really get to teach. First I tried to copy the teachers, then I found my own way.

Opportunities to interact with students in the public school setting varied widely among these five young women. Alice and Ellie did a lot more routine observation than the other three participants. Alice stated that her cooperating

teacher was too busy to spend much time with her, and Ellie spent one of her two practicum days a week in the library and the other day with a resource teacher.

Each of these preservice teachers conducted a case study with one of their students. They observed his or her learning style and behavior in class, and tutored the student in an area of academic difficulty. These women spoke of an ability to relate with these students in a professional and sympathetic manner to which the students warmly responded. In the final project reflection paper and in the interviews with the investigator, they seldom discussed their own facility as a teacher.

When questioned about their perception of their strengths and weaknesses as preservice teachers, they all shared their lack of insight on this point due to the scant opportunity they had to do any teaching. Alice, Carole, and Debra participated in one small-group peer teaching session early in the semester during their course on foundations of educational psychology. Both Bettie and Ellie specifically emphasized that they "just did activities" and "didn't really teach" while they were out in the schools. Alice had only a single opportunity to lead a class, and that was on her last day in the schools. These preservice teachers felt that they were expected to try to conduct some lessons/activities with the students, but they did not feel

these expectations were made clear, especially in communications with the cooperating teachers.

Reflections as Mathematics Educators

Debra was the only participant who made a comment regarding her sense of competency with the academic content of mathematics. All the participants viewed their math courses at UNCG to be highly relevant to their profession. They stated that they gained great insight into the field of mathematics and the teaching process in these courses. When this researcher questioned these women concerning their view of the nature of mathematics and the purpose for studying it, their descriptions were as follows:

- Alice: It's concrete, black and white.
I cannot say what math is all about.
It deals with numbers, grocery shopping, banking.
Mostly kids study math because they have to.
With lower level classes you need manipulatives.
- Bettie: It's a very practical thing; it can also be abstract.
The ultimate purpose is to develop your abstract thinking. It makes you think and learn how to think.
- Carole: It's just numbers.
Everything is turning into numbers. We're becoming numbers.
I love algebra.
- Debra: You need to show kids math in everyday life, weather, advertisement.
In seventh grade you're trying to get away from manipulatives. You need to get them into abstract thinking.
I hated geometry, but now I think I could teach it.

Ellie: People need math in everyday life situations,
checkbooks, spending money.
Math has to come from the book.
It's hard to be creative with math.

These women had established their competence in the academic study of mathematics, yet they displayed little insight into the significance of this discipline. They did not readily express descriptions of the field of mathematics in traditional terms such as "problem solving," "estimation," "computation and calculators," "computer literacy," "geometry," "measurement," "data collection," and "reading and devising graphs and tables." In addition, their descriptions of the use of mathematics in everyday life were very limited. As regards the teaching of mathematics, they generally saw the use of concrete modeling through manipulatives as only appropriate for lower level students and otherwise said little about methodology in the teaching of mathematics.

These preservice teachers' views of mathematics education underscore their perceptions of themselves as students.

Interpretive Response to Participant Reflections
on the Learning-Teaching Process (Question 1d)

The tremendous complexity of the teaching process (Fenster, 1979, Tom, 1984, Zumwalt, 1982) necessitates that teachers become thinking, reflective, and responsive professionals. Systematic dynamic reflection moves teachers

toward an in-depth understanding of what is happening in the classroom (Wildman & Niles, 1987) and toward an ability to articulate their principles of practice (Strahan, 1987a).

For the preservice teachers in this study this process began in earnest during this semester's practicum experience in the public schools.

Alice: You have to motivate the kids.
It's hard to get the kids to want to learn anything.
Students were so involved when the topic pertained more to their lives; they had mature questions and answers. I was surprised.
You have to exert yourself as an authority.
Hands-on experience is important.
You have to deal with a lot: Administration, take role, keep notes, conferences, parents.
At Kelly Middle School teachers cooperate in teams; that's real good.
Everyone has to work together to make school function properly.
When the teacher lectures, the students stare at the walls and doodle.

Bettie: Students have a desire to do well in school.
Students goof off when they are not occupied.
I saw two sides to Robert.
You have to be amazingly flexible.
Teachers have many interruptions.
The language arts teacher calls on the same students a lot.
Teachers are more hard-line with lower students.
You have to know what you want to get accomplished and know you may have to change.
The best teacher is being out there.
You can see their reactions in their faces.
Each student hears the same lesson yet tells about it differently.
The math teacher is reserved; she pushes and stretches their minds.

Carole: The school setting is nice; friendly people; up-to-date materials.
The prealgebra kids amaze me; they pick up ideas so quickly.
Good eye contact is important.

Teachers have a lot to do.
 Teachers have a lot of duties: Role, computerized grades, meetings.
 Teachers never sit down any more except in planning period.
 How kids relate to me and to each other indicates [teacher] effectiveness.

Debra: Interaction and communication is number one.
 Kids want to be accepted; they want to be liked. They want to be accepted by their teacher; I never realized before how important this is. They want acceptance not just attention.
 The low students come in so sluggish. It was terrifying.
 Perry Middle School has a positive atmosphere. There are no bells; the teachers greet the students in the hall.
 Teachers' responsibilities go beyond lessons: Friend, listener ... responsibilities are endless. [Teaching] is a lot of hard work; a lot more [work] than people realize.
 Principals need to become more visible and not just a disciplinarians.
 Behind the scenes I saw team planning.

Ellie: Some days these [discipline] methods don't work. I was seeing different ways to teach; I had no new ideas before this semester.
 Just watching her I learned about teaching. Teaching is a big responsibility.
 She never embarrasses the student.
 You need to dress, act, and talk like a teacher. Billy needs someone to care about him and not just his achievements.
 I first tried to copy the teachers, then I found my own way.

These comments were scattered throughout these preservice teachers interviews, journals, and coursework papers. These women indicated that they observed and experienced many aspects of the learning-teaching process which they had not previously realized.

These five preservice teachers had two course assignments in which they had an opportunity to specifically

reflect on the learning-teaching process. After completing the case study of a single middle grades student, each woman wrote a reflective paper in which she discussed the experience. In these papers they each basically reviewed the learning style of their student, aspects of the student's character and particular difficulties, what they did to assist this person, and how this individual could be helped in the classroom. In addition to this in-depth reflection on a single student and the learning-teaching process, Debra also shared her realization that she "finally realizes the struggles teachers face in trying to accommodate all students." During an interview Debra also stated that the case-study experience helped her see "how a student differs from the class." This in-depth focusing on the learning-teaching process seemed to be effective in helping all these preservice teachers realize the differences between students and ways in which teaching techniques could be varied to meet the needs and style of the student. The coursework provided them with a construct and common language for professional discussion.

These preservice teachers found the second assignment relating to the learning-teaching process to be extremely interesting. This assignment was incorporated into the requirements for the course on curriculum and teaching middle grades mathematics. Each woman observed a math lesson being taught by her cooperating teacher and then

interviewed three or four students. The objective of the interview was to hear the students' interpretation of the lesson. They then wrote a paper reflecting on the lesson observed and the student interviews. Bettie and Carole both demonstrated an ability to look behind the teaching behaviors observed to sense the purpose of the teacher's moves. During the interviews Bettie asked excellent open-ended questions which encouraged student responses and was very insightful in her discussion. She summarized by writing that "each student heard the same thing, yet each told about it differently." Carole was impressed with her teacher's good example of academic learning time with each student engaged in successful purposeful tasks. She also noticed that during the interviews each student did the arithmetic they had just learned in a different way. Alice, Debra, and Ellie each described the lessons observed in terms of the six-step lesson plan and made few comments on their perception of the quality of the lesson. Alice tried to interview students and found they really did not want to discuss mathematics. She did notice that the students could not explain the mathematical process demonstrated in the lesson, but they could show it. Debra listened to her students talk emotionally about what they thought of mathematics and conducted no discussion of their understanding of the lesson. Debra concluded her paper with the comment that her cooperating teacher "runs her class in

a unique manner," yet her description of the lesson indicated that it was very rule oriented. In discussing the interviews Ellie stated that all the students basically said they reviewed fractions. She concluded that "they understood the lesson" but gave no indication as to her basis for this decision. Whereas the university instructor indicated to these three women that they had missed the basic purpose of the assignment, they were not given an opportunity to further reflect on their experience or redo the assignment.

The interviews, journals, and papers for these five preservice teachers indicated the development of some facility with the common language of learning and teaching so that they could clearly describe what they observed. They readily chronicled the activities they observed in the classroom, but they seldom provided any consideration of teaching as decision-making. Their journals included few accounts of discussions with their cooperating teachers in which they questioned these teachers concerning the variety of possible teaching techniques which could be utilized. These preservice teachers seldom presented a critical analysis of the pedagogical practices they observed and a perception of their effectiveness in the learning-teaching process.

Interpretive Response to Participant Reflections on Their Views of Emerging Adolescents as Students (Question 1e)

Education at the middle level (grades six through nine) as presently designed seeks to address both the developmental level of the students (physically, emotionally, and mentally) and the separate content courses.

Alice was the only participant in this study who did her practicum at Kelly Middle School. She was disturbed by her observation that the students "don't seem to care about anything they're doing." She found that her cooperating teacher had to tell the students exactly what to do and that getting the students' attention was difficult. Alice concluded that a teacher must exert herself as an authority or the students will not listen. Yet later in the semester during a week-long discussion of AIDS, Alice related that the students were vibrantly attentive and inquisitive. She found that in a well-organized science laboratory activity the students were also on task and well-behaved. "The students want labs," said Alice. Through these varied experiences and observations Alice was able to see a range of learning-behavior patterns and form some insightful conclusions about the student's need to be personally implicated in a lesson in order to remain an attentive and active participant.

Bettie, Carole, Debra, and Ellie had their practicum experiences at Perry Middle School. The atmosphere at this

school seemed to them to be more positive than at Kelly Middle School in that there was an indication of greater school spirit and a closer comradeship between teachers and students. For Alice, Carole, and Debra "kid-watching" was a focus of interest in their education psychology course.

Bettie: They want to be grown up.
Some kids just don't care.
Deep down I think they want to do well. Some give up.
Top students ask questions and love to answer them.
Average students are more hectic. [30 students in this class as compared with 21 in the top class]
Students goof off when they are not occupied.
I saw two sides of Robert.

Carole: Kids are great. They can relate to me, and I can relate to them.
From the media and stuff kids see a lot.
They want to know why, where, or when.
They want to know what is expected of them.
They worry about how they look and their popularity.
I sit with them at lunch. Wow! They know a lot!
I couldn't believe how much they talk about themselves.
The prealgebra kids amaze me. They pick up ideas so quickly.

Debra: The kids can be candid and funny.
They can be monsters. I saw them with a student teacher.
They can be angels.
When two boys were suspended for drugs many kids were confused and frightened. There was lots of need to talk.
The kids want to be accepted and liked.
They wanted my respect and understanding.
These seventh graders try to dress and act in grown-up fashion.
Some are quite small and underdeveloped.
In the low math group motivation and expectancy levels are significantly less. The students are treated as children.
In the high group students are thought of as responsible and trustworthy.

Ellie: Billy tested LD in math and as an auditory learner.
Why do they just find this now?
Billy needs someone to care about him and not just
his achievements.
I can determine student differences.

These women were beginning to understand a psychological-developmental theory of adolescents. In their coursework they studied and discussed various theories and used them as a background in their observation of the students at the middle school. In particular they studied learning styles and incorporated this into their work with their case studies. In their journals they discussed what they observed but seldom reflected on the implications of their observations in light of their academic studies. During the interviews they said they participated in extensive discussions of what they observed in the middle schools in several of their courses and tied their observations in with their formal studies. These preservice teachers rarely displayed an ability to articulate a perception of the adolescent as a student and the implications of this for their potential teaching practices.

Many of the reflections of these preservice teachers with regard to adolescents were of a personal nature. They were concerned with their relationship with the students, helping students feel good about themselves, student behavior, and how to control these students in the classroom. There were few comments in the interviews, journals, or course papers about the academic needs

of adolescents and how to encourage them to be active learners. These preservice teachers seldom expressed a synthesis of these concerns into an overall pattern of human development. When reflecting on themselves personally and professionally and when reflecting on emerging adolescents as students, these women rarely acknowledged the totality of human development and one's potential command over one's self as a developing individual.

Summary of Interpretive Responses

Encouraging analysis and dynamic reflection on human development and the process of education promotes the development of teachers who thoughtfully and purposefully facilitate interactions with their students and colleagues (Liston & Zeichner, 1987).

In this study it was found that Alice, Bettie, Carole, Debra, and Ellie gained a sense of confidence in their ability to become effective creative teachers, yet their personal orientation remained that of a student in contrast to realizing themselves to be emerging teachers. These women presented few themes for their own personal or professional growth, and intentional reflection on their personal growth and developing professional competence was minimal. They felt they gained some level of poise in conducting activities with adolescents. They did not feel they had sufficient experience with either small or large group lesson planning and implementation to be able to begin

to express a sense of their strengths and weaknesses as preservice teachers.

It was important to these women that the courses in which they participated during this semester be of practical relevance to their professional pursuit. The intellectual challenge of the semester stimulated their efforts to be creative and enhanced their dedication to the education profession. They experienced a range of teaching styles and techniques with their university professors. In addition, their practicum assignment in a public school gave them experiential references for the constructs, theories, and activities presented in their academic coursework.

Alice and Bettie both made numerous comments on their observations of adolescents in a learning environment. Alice noticed that the students responded more enthusiastically to lessons when they were personally involved. Carole and Debra focused their discussion of observations of adolescents on the students' personal behavior and emotional needs with Debra also noticing variations in the way teachers regard students in classes of differing levels. None of the five women presented a full developmental picture of adolescents in either the interviews, journals, or class papers.

In reviewing the journals written by these women it was noticed that they primarily wrote descriptions of the events which they observed in the public schools, of their personal

relationship with the students and teachers, and of how they felt about their experiences. The focus of their writing was a personal perspective of one who was reacting to a situation in contrast to one who was a critical participant-observer capable of thoughtful analysis and reflection upon the situation.

From the interviews, journals, and course papers these women gave few indications that they were aware of an intentional effort to actively reflect on all aspects of their experiences during this semester in order to more fully understand their personal and professional development, the learning-teaching process, and the people with whom they would interact. Whereas they demonstrated that they learned a great deal which is relevant to their future goals, the semester was primarily seen as an extension of their experiences as college students. Their concerns were completing assignments and maintaining an acceptable grade point average. They rarely expressed perceptions of themselves as teachers and did not view this first professional semester as the commencement of their experiences as teachers.

These findings suggest implications for enhancing dynamic reflection of preservice teachers within a teacher education program.

**Implications for the Continued Development of a
Teacher Education Program**

As noted in Chapter Two, debate has been continuous over the goals and purposes of teacher education programs. Four dominant paradigms have emerged in recent years (Zeichner, 1983).

1. The behavioristic model
2. The personalistic model
3. The traditional-craft model
4. The inquiry orientation model

The behavioristic model dominates the literature and is based on teaching effectiveness research. In these teacher education programs students are passive recipients of the curricular substance. "Becoming" an adult and the development of the personality of the student is the focus of the personalistic model of teacher education. Within a traditional-craft orientation students' experiences center on the student teaching process. An inquiry orientation toward teacher education promotes reflection about teaching and teaching contexts and the development of thoughtfulness in action. Whereas teacher education programs may be a combination of two or more of these paradigms, the literature indicates that one of them will dominate (Zeichner, 1983).

Participation in a teacher education program is the initial phase of becoming lifelong students of the art and science of teaching with reflection and analysis of one's

performance being the heart of this process (Cruickshank, 1987). The extent to which preservice teachers are provided with experiences which intentionally encourage,

1. deliberation about the knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire, and
2. critical investigation into the purpose and art of their profession

sets the stage for lifelong learning (Cruickshank, 1987; Dewey, 1916; Krishnamacharya, 1983; Peters, 1980; Posner, 1985; Schon, 1987).

Interviews with the faculty involved in this study suggest their intention to promote reflection and encourage inquiry within the first professional semester of teacher education. Given these intentions, the researcher offers suggestions for a teacher education program which seeks primarily to promote an inquiry orientation toward teacher education. These suggestions, the findings of this study, and the review of the literature are the basis for a series of program guidelines.

If the Program Seeks to Enhance the Personal
Development of Its Students, Then...

Abraham Maslow (1968, 1971) and Carl Jung (1986) both discuss the unfolding of the human individual in terms of a progression from a focus on physical concerns, through an emotional centeredness, to a mental focus leading in some cases to personality integration. They then proceed to

describe a transformation from this stage of self-actualization to the development of a transpersonal consciousness (Maslow, 1971), or psychosynthesis (Assagioli, 1965), characterized by an integrative view of the whole, an awareness of richness in all events and phenomena, a full expression of cooperation, growth through cyclic activity, lack of reference to personal needs, and a resolution of dichotomies through a realization of a higher unity.

The participants in this study seldom presented conscious references to their personal development. It may be that few experiences within courses emphasized the dimension of personal unfoldment. Therefore it is suggested that if a teacher education program seeks to enhance the personal development of preservice teachers through an inquiry orientation, then it must incorporate two phases of awareness:

1. there must be a means whereby the faculty of teacher educators discover and reflect on the nature of the elements of their personality, continue to establish control of them, grow in their consciousness of their spiritual dimension, and become aware of the impact they have on the preservice teachers, and
2. there must be a means whereby the preservice teachers become aware of the need to intentionally discover and reflect on the nature of the elements of their personality, begin to establish control of them, and grow in an awareness of their full potential.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of this intentional process of personality development this aspect of the

program would need to 1) address the continual personal and professional development of the faculty as well as 2) provide the preservice teachers with developmental experiences which would extend over as many semesters of university experience as possible.

If the Program Seeks to Enhance Its Students' Understanding of the Nature of Emerging Adolescents, Then...

This suggestion is closely connected with the initial proposal as understanding the overall process of personality unfoldment as well as one's own development is interconnected with understanding the nature of adolescents. The wholistic process of personal unfoldment is the same for all individuals. Differences are perceived due to the variety of individuals' inner orientations and the way they express them.

In order to begin to understand the nature of adolescents through an inquiry orientation, preservice teachers must become knowledgeable about the theoretical constructs of human development. This provides a common language for observation, reflection, and discussion. Classroom processes must be linked with numerous field observations with intentional objectives to focus the attention of the preservice teacher. This needs to incorporate an ongoing process of reflection (oral discussions, journals, and formal papers) through which the

preservice teacher eventually synthesizes his observations of the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of the adolescent into a practical construct of the diverse dynamics of the evolving adolescent.

The faculty must be knowledgeable about the theoretical constructs of human development. They must facilitate within themselves an inquiry orientation toward an evolving understanding of the process of the unfoldment of the human individual.

If the Program Seeks to Enhance Its Students' Understanding of the Learning-Teaching Process, Then...

The tremendous complexity of the learning-teaching process (Fenster, 1979, Tom, 1984, Zumwalt, 1982) necessitates that teachers become thinking, reflective, and responsive professionals. Systematic reflection on what is happening in the classroom is facilitated through experiences within the following dimensions:

1. development of a common language for observation, reflection, and discussion;
2. development of a sense of continuity between schooling and non-schooling experiences (Boyer, 1988);
3. experiencing and reflecting on a wide range of teaching styles and techniques (Wilson, 1987);
4. focused observation and reflection on the styles and behaviors of different teachers in differing contexts;
5. interviewing (or viewing videos of interviews) of students following observed lessons;

6. experience with teaching in the classroom incorporating an interactive reflection process (Cruikshank, 1985); and
7. synthesizing one's reflections on the above experiences through group discussions and formal papers.

Facility with the above process develops only through a program which systematically aims to integrate theoretical constructs with preservice teachers' dynamic reflections on what they observe, experience, and practice. The faculty of teacher educators must share their decision-making process with these preservice teachers as an example of the process of integrating theory with practice. To be beneficial, preservice teachers' experiences with dynamic reflection on what they observe, experience, and practice needs to be incorporated into approximately four semesters of directed effort and extend into a beginning teacher program. This is similar to a time frame recommended by the Holmes Group (Murray, 1986).

If the Program Seeks to Promote Its Students' Facility with Planning and Implementing Creative Lessons, Then...

The complexities and difficulties of the classroom sometimes produce inconsistencies between teachers' classroom practices and their beliefs about teaching (Strahan, 1987b). Yet it has also been found that teachers who systematically give thoughtful consideration to their classroom practices both before and after each class exhibit

instructional behaviors that are more consistent with their expressed beliefs, views, and preferences (Thompson, 1984).

Within an inquiry orientation toward teacher education, experience with teaching, opportunities to articulate one's beliefs about the purpose of education and preferred classroom practices, and an intentional systematic practice of purposeful reflection enhances an ability to plan and implement creative meaningful lessons. It is essential that the faculty of teacher educators frequently articulate and examine their own beliefs about the purpose of education and their preferred classroom practices. The faculty must incorporate an intentional plan of purposeful reflection in their individual professional work as well as in their group development and implementation of a creative preservice teacher education program. They must develop a program which provides preservice teachers with a progression of experiences from small-group peer teaching, small-group student teaching, planning and implementation of mini-lessons, through a full semester of student teaching integrated with purposeful reflective activities. A focus of this aspect of such a program is to encourage preservice teachers to move from an image of self as a student to an image of self as an emerging teacher. This necessitates the development within the individual (both preservice teacher and faculty member) of an ability to synthesize and articulate his present theory of educational practice with a

sense of his essential strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.

If the Program Seeks to Promote the Process of Intentional Dynamic Reflection within Its Students, Then...

Education is the process of facilitating the unfolding of the highest potential which resides within oneself and others. The individual is encouraged to progress from one who reacts to experiences to one who thoughtfully interacts with the situation and those involved (Dewey, 1904; Jung, 1958; Maslow, 1968). For the human individual it is an ability to reflect on one's own thinking and to change thought patterns which moves one into a world of creativity and intentionally purposeful activity.

An inquiry orientation in teacher education may enhance preservice teachers' development of thoughtfulness in action and a stance of dynamic reflection through the presentation of a wide range of opportunities to intentionally reflect on all dimensions of the field of education. The faculty and the preservice teachers must experience the realization that they are intentionally utilizing the process of dynamic reflection and that this is a means of fully realizing their personal and professional potential.

Summary of the If-Then Hypotheses

If a program in teacher education seeks to focus on an inquiry orientation toward teacher education, then the synthesizing theme for the program is the development of all individuals' ability to intentionally incorporate systematic dynamic reflection into their daily responsibilities. In doing so, faculty and preservice teachers may progressively broaden their understanding of themselves, their students, and their chosen profession. A program enhances this by providing a wide range of appropriate challenging experiences combined with numerous opportunities to share observations and discoveries through discussion and formal writing so that preservice teachers may develop an ability to articulate their thoughts. Through a combination of study, relevant practical experience, and dynamic reflection one develops an ability to be an educator who demonstrates a clear sense of purpose in all aspects of thought, articulate expression, and creative activity.

Implications for Future Research

The method of in-depth case-study research utilized in this interpretive inquiry provides a model for future research. This study and others (Bush, 1986; Cooney, 1980; Crow, 1987; Goodman, 1986; Grossman & Richert, 1988) stand as evidence of the care to detail and thoroughness of

process which can establish the trustworthiness (Guba, 1981) of qualitative research.

The mode of interpretive inquiry has value for analyzing the impact that a preservice teacher education program has on its students. The insights which such studies yield have the potential for being beneficial for the continuing development of the program within which the study is conducted. These insights may be further enhanced by following study participants through their entire preservice teacher education program and into their beginning teaching careers. More importantly, the findings of such studies contribute to the body of knowledge which may be utilized in the continuing development of any teacher education program.

The review of the literature with regard to research in preservice teacher education indicates that there is a great need for continued interpretive inquiry into the meaning and impact of the experiences of preservice teachers. More needs to be known with regard to:

1. one's transition from a view of self as teacher to a view of self as emerging teacher,
2. one's acquisition of a sense of command over the process of one's personal unfoldment personally and professionally,
3. one's progressive development of a stance of intentional dynamic reflection,
4. one's synthesizing of theoretical constructs of human development and the process of education with what one believes, observes, and practices,

5. the impact of various models of teacher education on the development of thinking, reflective, and responsive professionals, and
6. the role of academic coursework in developing thinking, reflective, and responsive professionals.

An in-depth case-study may not stand alone as evidence of a particular phenomenon, yet it does have the power of revealing phenomena which might otherwise not be detected. The discovery of such phenomena may provide the focus of further research. The present study demonstrates the need for further investigation into the concerns listed above.

The innovative presentation of a synthetic rendition of a series of interviews which has been introduced in this study demonstrates a unique technique for providing a reader with insight into the "voice" of a participant in a study, while preserving the integrity of the original interviews. Synthetic rendition of interviews is an artistic mode of data presentation which adds to the value of an interpretive inquiry by providing the reader with an experiential perspective of the participant's reflections. The format focuses the reader's attention while illuminating meaning through communicating beyond propositional knowledge by building on the tacit knowledge of the reader.

Research is always context specific, yet it is the capacity of the human mind to analyze any event and then synthesize it into a greater body of existing knowledge. Teacher educators grow in their understanding of the complex

nature of themselves and their profession through dynamic reflection on a wide range of investigations into experiences relevant to teacher education.

Synthesis of the Essence of This Study

There has been very little direct analysis of the role that the form and content of university teacher education plays in shaping the professional perspectives of students.

(Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981, p. 10)

A review of the literature indicated that by 1988 there had still been very little research into the university experiences of a preservice teacher and the shaping of his professional perspectives. Therefore, the reflections of five preservice teachers during their first professional semester in a teacher preparation program were examined.

An innovative technique of creating a synthetic rendition of the interviews conducted with each participant resulted in reconstructed "interviews" which maintained the integrity of the participant's verbal expression while providing the reader with insight into the "voice" of the participant.

The findings of this study in conjunction with a review of the literature were used to suggest a series of guidelines for a program in teacher education which sought to promote an inquiry orientation toward teacher education.

Suggestion One

If a teacher education program seeks to enhance the personal development of its students, then it must incorporate a means whereby faculty and students become aware of the need to intentionally discover and reflect on the nature of the elements of their personality and begin to establish control of them. Then through intentional dynamic reflection, they may become self-actualized individuals who may move toward the fulfillment of their highest potential.

Suggestion Two

If a teacher education program seeks to enhance its students' understanding of the nature of emerging adolescents, then faculty and preservice teachers must become knowledgeable about the theoretical constructs of human development. Then through observations, dynamic reflection, and discussions, a practical synthesis of the diverse dynamics of the evolving adolescents may emerge.

Suggestion Three

If a teacher education program seeks to enhance its students' understanding of the learning-teaching process, then preservice teachers must have multiple and diverse opportunities to integrate theoretical constructs of what they believe with their dynamic reflections on what they observe, experience, and practice. The faculty of teacher educators must continually be aware of the quality and

purpose of experiences they provide for preservice teachers within their program.

Suggestion Four

If a teacher education program seeks to promote its students' facility with planning and implementing creative lessons, then faculty and preservice teachers must be encouraged to articulate their beliefs about the purpose of education and preferred classroom practices. This must be integrated with progressive experiences with planning and implementing creative lessons.

Conclusion

The overarching theme is that in education one is concerned with the development of the personal and professional potential of the human individual. This development is expected to occur within all individuals involved in the process. Educators must gain greater clarity of understanding of their own developmental process both personally and professionally. Educators must gain greater clarity of understanding of the impact they have on their students, their colleagues, and their profession. The process of intentional dynamic reflection is the key to gaining this greater clarity of understanding.

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APPENDIX A

Communication with Participants

November 1987

Dear [Participant],

You are cordially invited to participate in a study focusing on the reflections of preservice teachers during their first semester of professional courses.

In the on-going process of improving the quality of the experiences of preservice teachers at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, it has been determined that direct input from students while they are experiencing the professional portion of the program would greatly enhance our understanding of the needs of our students. I have, therefore, chosen to investigate a portion of the teacher education program at UNCG from the student's point of view as the focus of my doctoral dissertation.

If you consent to participate in this investigation, I have two requests to make of you:

1. Please allow me to interview you for about one hour on three separate occasions.
 - a. In December before semester break.
 - b. Approximately mid-semester during the spring of 1988.
 - c. At the end of the semester (May 1988).

Please permit all interviews to be audio taped.

2. Please permit me to make copies of any journals, papers, or other materials you produce during any of the courses you take during the spring term 1988.

Complete confidentiality will be maintained at all times, and your instructors will not know who is participating in this study without prior approval from you. They will know that the study is being conducted. Your name will not be used in the dissertation nor in any other reports resulting from this study.

You may review all transcriptions of the interviews and preview any of my summaries of your reflections and request corrections or deletions if you desire to do so.

You may discontinue your participation in this study at any time for any reason.

It is anticipated that the results of this investigation will add significantly to the information needed by the School of Education to more fully meet the needs of students in the preservice teacher education program.

Warm regards,

RESEARCH PROJECT CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the present study being conducted under the supervision of Marilyn R. Mueller, a doctoral student in the School of Education of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I have been informed about the procedures to be followed and about any discomforts or risks which may be involved.

I understand that my name will not be used in any report of this investigation, nor will any of my instructors know of my participation in this study without my prior consent. I also understand the Ms. Mueller will be audio taping three separate interview session with me. I also understand that Ms. Mueller will be making copies of any papers, journals, or other materials I produce during any of the courses I take during the spring semester of 1988.

Ms. Mueller has agreed to answer any further questions that I may have about the procedures of this investigation. I understand that I am free to terminate my participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. I am aware that further information about the conduct and review of human research at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro can be obtained by calling 379-5878, the Office of Sponsored Programs.

date

signature of participant

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for Interviews with Participants

GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEW SESSION

This interview was conducted informally in the office of the investigator. Participants had all taken classes near the location of this office. The tone of the conversation was kept informal. The following general topics formed the guidelines for the questions asked.

Expectations for the coming semester

Reasons for entering teaching

Reasons for selecting middle grades

Significant life experiences

Personality temperament

Perception of self as a student

Perception of the nature of adolescents

Vision for the future for education

GUIDELINES FOR THE SECOND INTERVIEW SESSION

This interview was conducted informally in the office of the investigator. Participants had been here for the first interview. The tone of the conversation was kept informal. The following general topics formed the guidelines for the questions asked.

What are you learning about:

 Yourself personally and professionally

 Adolescents

 The teaching profession

A significant course

Key issues in each course

 Class activities

 Assignments

Practicum experience

Relevance of past courses

Mathematics

 What is it about?

 Why do students have to study it?

Concept of effective teaching

Strengths and weaknesses as a preservice teacher

GUIDELINES FOR THE THIRD INTERVIEW SESSION

This interview was conducted informally in the office of the investigator. Participants had been in this office for the previous two interviews. The tone of the conversation was kept informal. The following general topics formed the guidelines for the questions asked.

Key issues in each course and experiences provided to enhance (specific examples):

Personal relevance

Professional relevance

Opportunities to explore or be creative

Teaching style of professors

Specific examples

Opportunities to explore your ideas

Opportunities to share with the class

Course assignments

Opportunities to explore and express creativity

Personal relevance

Professional relevance

Practicum

Opportunities to share this experience with
professors and other students

Sharing with cooperating teacher

Professional growth

Totality of experience**Opportunities to reflect on:****Yourself professionally****Yourself personally****The science and art of teaching****The nature of the adolescent****Advice to others going into "Block"****Bottom line:****Are you now ready for student teaching?****Did Block prepare you?****Significance of participation in this study**

APPENDIX D

Guidelines for Interviews with Faculty Members

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS WITH FACULTY MEMBERS

Informal interviews were conducted with the faculty members who would be teaching the courses in which the participants in this study were enrolled. The interviews took place before the beginning of the semester in that faculty member's office. The tone of the conversation was kept informal. The following topics formed the guidelines for the question asked.

Course content and significant issues

Types of assignments

Role of assignments in the student's experiences

Their teaching style and how this is demonstrated in
class

Experiences they hope the students will have

Range of learning they expect will take place

Systemic restraints to what they would like to do in
the course

Vision of the future for teacher education