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A RETROSPECTIVE INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY INTO SELECTED EXPERIENCES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS: A STUDY IN TEACHER SOCIALIZATION

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A RETROSPECTIVE INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY INTO SELECTED EXPERIENCES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS: A STUDY IN TEACHER SOCIALIZATION

by

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Research attention is focused on the cultural expectations associated with the role of teacher as these expectations help shape a beginning teacher's sense of the role and of professional identity. The traditional social science quantitative research approach is contrasted with a qualitative phenomenological research perspective; the former helps reveal aggregate teacher role characteristics while the latter provides for an in-depth examination of the individual teacher's accommodation to the new role.

Four experienced secondary school teachers were asked to reflect on their perception of their beginning teaching experience as it affected their sense of self as teacher. The interviews were analyzed using a participant-hermeneutic approach to reveal the emergent themes and issues of these teachers' socialization. The four teachers reported that they found teaching to be less fun and more work than they had expected; that they found minimal support from their peers; that they base their definition of good teaching on their observation of their own high school teachers; and that they generally feel powerless in the school setting.

The interview data also reveal that these teachers sought support and affirmation both from students and from colleagues; that students could provide personal support while

colleagues could, but often did not, provide professional affirmation. For these teachers supervision did not provide professional support or affirmation. The process of role definition for these teachers was influenced by a reliance on their personal history as students, their memories of in-class experiences, and cultural and personal expectations entering teaching. The perceived climate of the school was also a factor in shaping a beginning teacher's role definition.

As a result of the study, socialization is reconceptualized as an organic dynamic maturation process which affects the individual teacher in individual ways depending on the school's climate and on the individual's memory and history.

DEDICATION

To my parents, George Agatho and Mary Lennon Snyder, who, with loving support, always encouraged me "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" but rather "to follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

--Tennyson, Ulysses

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To these and to all the other people who contributed so much to my personal and intellectual growth, I "can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks."

--Twelfth Night, Act III, Scene 2.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background for the Study

People who become teachers have typically spent at least 16 years learning, internalizing, and successfully playing the role of a student. After a quasi-internship--the student teaching experience where the person must be both a student and a teacher simultaneously and successfully--the newly credentialed professional must adopt the dress, demeanor, manners, mores, and ethic of the teaching profession. Although neophyte teachers get a sense of professional practice during student teaching, they actually learn the nuances of the profession while in practice, and while undergoing socialization by the other professionals in the building (Lortie, 1975; Ryan, 1970).

Socialization to the teaching profession is a diffuse, haphazard, imprecise process; there is typically no formal on-the-job training, no incremental addition of tasks, little opportunity for apprenticeship (beyond the student teaching weeks), no immunity to failure, and little adequate or effective reinforcement process (Anderson, 1975; Barr, 1978; Chafetz, 1976; Ciccoricco, 1970; Edgar & Warren, 1969; Haley, 1977; Kuhlman, 1972; Lortie, 1975; Reitman, 1971; Ryan, 1970; Spring, 1977; Waller, 1961; Warren, 1973).

Although this process seems haphazard and imprecise to these researchers, there is evidence, especially in the work of Lortie (1975), Ryan (1970), and Waller (1961), that there is a clear perception on the part of teachers of a definable teacher persona--an attitude, state of mind, or mode of behavior which they perceive as appropriate to the role of teacher and that there are attitudes, states of mind, and modes of behavior that are inappropriate to the teacher role.

This teacher persona or facade encompasses both the behaviors appropriate to the role and the situations where such behaviors are appropriate. A sense of this persona seems to be included in the consciousness of most people: so much so that it is possible to develop not only dramatic but also comedic representations of the teacher persona in such popular entertainment as The Marva Collins Story and Conrack.

Part of the socialization of new teachers into the profession involves the reinforcing of certain aspects of the teacher persona and the eradication of unacceptable attitudes and behaviors. As both Lortie (1975) and Ryan (1970) have shown, learning a sense of professional identity involves learning the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for the school situation. During a new teacher's socialization, he/she encounters a set of beliefs about the persona, about the balance of power in the schools, and about the

teacher's role in the school setting (Bowers, 1974; Carpenter & Rufi, 1931; Etzioni, 1969; Illich, 1970; Lutz & Azzarelli, 1966; Moore, 1970; Riordan, 1976; Slater, 1970; Spring, 1972; Vallance, 1974). At the same time, the beginning teacher holds beliefs about the teacher persona, about the balance of power in schools, and about his/her own potential role in the school setting (Bowers, 1974; Lortie, 1975; Ryan, 1970). The individual teacher's socialization to teaching seems to center on his/her perception of, reaction to, and acceptance of others' beliefs about professional identity, power, and autonomy as these beliefs confirm or violate the teacher's own beliefs about identity, power, and autonomy.

Need for the Study

This study is an attempt to understand the processes which impinge on the beginning teacher as those processes affect both the person of the teacher and the ultimate professional practice of that teacher. The study is undertaken in the belief that an understanding of the processes which help create the teacher persona will provide illumination of the processes which inform classroom practice and in turn affect the quality and kind of instruction offered in the classroom. At a time when there is increased public call for greater accountability from American public education as well as for an increase in the minimum competency of high school graduates, there is a dearth of research about

the processes which impinge on the teacher as a professional practitioner charged with accountability and a return to quality instruction.

To facilitate the examination of the formation of a professional identity, this study assumes that a significant part of the socialization to teaching occurs during the first several years of practice. It further assumes that the words, actions, and attitudes of the beginning teacher's colleagues and superiors play a key role in the teacher's socialization. As a result of this socialization experience, the beginning teacher creates and sustains a sense of professional identity.

These assumptions form the framework for a review of the literature on socialization. The review of the literature is organized in three sections; the first looks at studies which have analyzed the process of identity formation and the role of others in the process, the second examines studies which have investigated the various factors affecting socialization, including the socialization techniques used, and the third considers those studies which have concentrated on the effect of the socialization process on the individual teacher and his/her feelings of power and autonomy.

Studies on Identity Formation

Talcott Parsons, George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley, and John W. Kinch have each looked at the process

whereby identity is created by the individual and at the role which others play in the creation of the individual's sense of identity.

Talcott Parsons, in The Structure of Social Action (1949), posits that the expectations which others have about what a person should do or be are internalized by the person and then experienced by that person as his/her own expectations. Parsons argues that it is necessary to take into account the subjective view of reality of the social actor in order to understand the resulting action by that person. In terms of this study, Parsons' position indicates that the expectations of the others in the school setting will affect the expectations of the beginning teacher; Parsons' formulations also indicate that it is necessary to consider these expectations in order to understand the subjective reality of the teacher and the reasons for the action which the teacher takes.

George Herbert Mead (cited in Manis & Meltzer, 1978), says that the human being responds to himself as others respond to him, so that he imaginatively shares in the conduct of others. A person brings meaning to reality, according to Mead, by imaginatively initiating and completing an act through role-taking; the individual rehearses action in the mind and imaginatively experiences the consequences of the action. The person's sense of self is created by the compilation of a series of imaginatively constructed

acts which are reflected upon and modified to produce the effect desired by the actor. In terms of this study, Mead's approach indicates that the beginning teacher will most probably play the role of teacher as that individual perceives it, judge the reactions of those around him/her to the role, and adjust the behavior according to the reactions of the other people in the school setting.

Building on the work of Mead, Charles Horton Cooley (Manis & Meltzer, 1978) sees the self as a "looking glass" which imagines its appearance to some unspecified other person, imagines the other's judgment of that appearance, and then experiences some sort of self feeling, usually pride or mortification. Like both Parsons and Mead, Cooley considers the role of imagination in framing a sense of self to be of critical importance along with the anticipation of the response of another to that self; these two elements--the imagined action and the imagined response--help to create and sustain the individual's sense of self. In the context of this study, Cooley's work indicates that the reaction of others to the beginning teacher's actions will probably cause some adjustment in the beginning teacher's behavior.

John W. Kinch has said that "The individual's conception of himself is based on his perception of the way others are responding to him" (Manis & Meltzer, 1978, p. 197). Kinch's work isolates four variables as critical to the formation of the individual's sense of self:

1. the frequency of the other's response to the action or behavior of the individual;
2. the perceived importance of the other to the individual;
3. the temporal proximity of the response to the action;
4. the consistency of the other's responses to the individual's actions.

Drawing upon Kinch's four variables in the analysis and discussion of this study, the frequency, perceived importance, temporal proximity, and consistency of the other's responses to the beginning teacher's actions will be a factor in the creation and maintenance of that beginning teacher's sense of professional self.

Parsons, Mead, Cooley, and Kinch all seem to agree that an analysis of the ways messages are sent to the individual and the impact of these messages on the individual will help reveal the ways that the individual constructs and maintains a sense of reality and a sense of self in that reality. Applying these concepts to this study means that attention will be focused on the others in the beginning teachers' environment as these others react to the beginning teacher's attempt to take the role of the teacher as well as on the beginning teacher's perception of and reaction to the others in the environment.

Studies of Socialization Factors

Several studies, while not directly addressing the issue of formation of professional identity, have identified factors which affect the socialization process for beginning teachers and, by implication, the formation of the professional identity for these teachers as well as the specific socialization techniques used in the process.

Edgar and Warren (1969), in looking at the factors which affect socialization, have found that "organizational evaluation is a significant factor in professional socialization" and that "personal liking between a teacher and his evaluator is a significant socialization variable" (Edgar & Warren, 1969, p. 399). Edgar and Warren's work shows that the evaluator of the beginning teacher is a significant other in the teacher's environment.

In a later study, Haley (1977) found that new teachers are subject to more frequent, more significant evaluations than are veteran teachers. Haley defines significant evaluations as those which directly affect the retention and/or tenuring of the new teacher; he does not find that these significant evaluations benefit the new teacher by guiding or improving professional practice, but merely that the evaluations are perceived by the new teachers as important for their professional employment.

Reitman (1971), in looking at the factors which affect teachers during their socialization, finds that the multiplicity of role demands made on the teacher lead to stress

and confusion during the socialization. Rather than judging all teacher duties according to the same criteria, Reitman suggests that the role of teacher be broken into three categories:

> extra-class (faculty member, community agent, and learner); executive and administrative (controller, measurer and record keeper, learning aids officer and program director); and instructional (skills instructor, knowledge instructor, change agent, values instructor, evaluator, adapter and motivator). (Reitman, 1971, p. 554)

Such a separation into the various roles would facilitate the training of new teachers, Reitman suggests, by clarifying and focusing the evaluation on one aspect of the teacher's role rather than trying to evaluate the varied roles with the same instrument. According to Reitman, one of the factors which affects the socialization of the new teacher is the confusion and role imprecision which results from the merging of his three roles into the one global role of teacher. Because of his/her inexperience, the beginning teacher is not sure about which one of Reitman's three roles to adopt nor of which role is the more important one at any given time.

Edgar and Warren, Haley, and Reitman all seem to agree that, of the factors affecting the socialization of the new teacher, the evaluation and the teacher's perception of the evaluator as a facilitator or as a bureaucrat are significant variables in the socialization process. In addition, Reitman finds that role confusion on the part of the

beginning teacher is a significant variable affecting socialization. These factors, since they affect the socialization process for the beginning teacher, will have an effect on the formation of a sense of professional identity for the new teacher.

Several studies have looked at the specific socializing techniques used in the process as a significant variable in themselves.

In examining the socialization undergone by three new teachers, P. Spring (1977) conceives of socialization as a "fluid process of continually changing inter-relationships and role adaptations." The teachers interviewed by Spring experienced a "fragmented socialization process which resulted in a period of intense confrontation and frustration" (Spring, 1977, p. 3294). Spring's findings would seem to corroborate Reitman's observations about the role fragmentation resulting from the evaluation techniques.

Gussner (1974) identifies five stages in the socialization process for school administrators; these five stages can be applied to the socialization process for teachers as well. Gussner's stages consist of:

Stage 1: Absorbing Information

Stage 2: Emerging Personal Concerns

Stage 3: Establishing Self-Assurance

Stage 4: The Role Established

Stage 5: A True Contributor

According to Gussner's schema, the first two stages of the process are typically accomplished in Schools and Colleges of Education. By the end of the formal professional preparation for teaching, the beginning teacher has absorbed information about the content and the methods of teaching; through student teaching the beginning professional has typically been able to identify personal concerns about the professional role. The available research shows that beginning teachers seem to have difficulty in establishing self-assurance in their role. This may be caused in part by the role confusion to which Reitman alludes. Partly because of the diffuse imprecise nature of the socialization process with the feelings of frustration and mistrust it engenders among teachers (Lieberman, 1977), most practitioners do not rise above Gussner's Stage 2 in their professional development. As will be shown later in greater detail, Lortie's research (1975) with the Five Towns teachers shows that many teachers feel no professional assurance about their role, nor any personal assurance that they are accomplishing anything of value for the society which employs them. Teachers seem to be locked in at the lower end of the stages--unable to feel any self-assurance so unable to move to the higher stages of Gussner's progression.

Socialization, according to Gussner, consists of at least two major forces:

> The first cause [sic] the role incumbent to learn about and carry out the routines, tasks and responsibilities associated with the new role. . . . The second force is that by which the role incumbent internally accepts aspects of the developing role and his own responsibility in that role. (Gussner, 1974, p.1910)

Once again, Lortie's work shows that teachers have difficulty with the internal acceptance of their role. This is not to say that teachers seem to dislike their jobs, but rather that there seems to be a great deal of confusion among both teachers and administrators about the precise definition of the teaching role. The studies by Spring, Gussner, and Reitman also indicate that the teachers define their role in a way considerably different from the way administrators define the teacher's role. Teachers tend to see themselves, according to the respondents of these studies, as those who help students accept themselves and who aid students in learning to cope with life; on the other hand, administrators tend to see these same teachers as patrollers and controllers whose primary task is the management of large groups of humans so that order and discipline are maintained throughout the building.

Studies of the Effect of Socialization on Individuals

Spring's and Gussner's work, discussed in the previous section, on the specific socializing techniques for teachers helps to illuminate the findings of Lieberman, Lortie, and Waller on the effects of the socialization process on the

individual teachers involved in the process. These studies of the individual effect of socialization also speak to the issues of individual perception of power and autonomy for teachers.

Lieberman's work (1977) shows that, because teachers and administrators learn while doing, frequently in isolation from their colleagues, feelings of mistrust and skepticism are engendered among them (Lieberman, 1977). They are seemingly unable to find or formulate a network of support among fellow practitioners because of the exigencies of teaching in isolated rooms and working in separated buildings.

In an earlier work on the socialization of lawyers, Lortie (1959) describes the role of the lawyer in the law firm as

> determined by his relationship to senior colleagues; his early years are marked by a constant awareness that his seniors must decide whether or not to accept him into the core of permanent colleagues. . . . Until his promotion or exclusion, he works under supervision . . . and with limited responsibility. (Lortie, 1959, p. 355)

Lortie's observation about lawyers is of special interest because it so accurately describes the position of the classroom teacher: working under supervision with limited authority, responsibility, or control over the conditions of the work place. However, unlike the lawyers of Lortie's study, the conditions for the classroom teacher do not substantially change any time during the professional life.

Both Willard Waller and Dan Lortie have conducted research to describe the feelings and experiences of veteran teachers. Their findings, although separated by 41 years, show a commonality of feeling among teachers--that is, that the teachers perceive themselves as impotent members of a second-class profession.

Waller's study of The Sociology of Teaching, first published in 1931, describes the teacher as an agent of cultural diffusion, continually threatened by the students, the alumni, the parents, the school board members, and his/her colleagues (Waller, 1961, pp. 10-11). Waller sees teaching as a position which "carries with it certain social privileges and duties and some well known liabilities," notably low pay and poor advancement possibilities (Waller, 1961, p. 28). Waller's study reveals that classroom teachers, though given recognition by the society as agents of cultural diffusion, do not seem to enjoy any particular status among the society members in terms of material success and recognition. Somewhere in the socialization process lies the answer, according to Waller, for teachers' acceptance of this ambivalent social role. Waller's study does not purport to provide the analysis of the socialization process which would explain why teachers accept this ambivalence in their social role.

Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study (1975) reports Dan Lortie's research among the Five Towns and Dade County

teachers. Lortie seeks to look more analytically than Waller did at the socialization process for teachers by looking at the teachers' perceptions of themselves. Lortie finds that teachers generally perceive themselves as ineffective because

> teachers never did gain control of any area of practice where they were clearly in charge and most expert; day-to-day operations, pedagogical theory, and substantive expertise have been dominated by persons in other roles. (Lortie, 1975, p. 12)

Part of the reason for this teacher perception of ineffectiveness, according to Lortie, is that

> Teachers continue to work in settings where formal authority is vested in Board members who do not belong to the profession and are therefore beyond the reach of its internal controls. (Lortie, 1975, p. 6)

This sense among teachers of a lack of control or effectiveness, this feeling among teachers of being at the control of other people--theoreticians and Board members--seems in part to result from the increasing hierarchicalization and bureaucratization of the modern school system which Barr (1978), Bowers (1974), Chafetz (1976), Ciccoricco (1970), Edgar and Warren (1969), Etzioni (1969), Freire (1972), Haley (1977), Illich (1970), Jersild (1955), Kuhlman (1972), Lieberman (1977), Lortie (1975), Lutz and Azzarelli (1966), Moore (1970), Pierce (1974), Reitman (1971), Riordan (1976), Ryan (1970), Slater (1970), J. Spring (1972), P. Spring (1977), Vallance (1974), Waller (1961), Warren (1973), and Wasserman (1974) all discuss. This sense among teachers that they have not attained a measure of autonomy may also

help to explain why they do not seem to progress through Gussner's stages of socialization.

Because "socialization into teaching is largely self-socialization" where "one's predispositions . . . stand at the core of becoming a teacher" (Lortie, 1975, p. 79), Lortie finds that teachers tend to see themselves as isolated and to see the teaching act as highly individualistic. This self-socialization aspect combined with the perception among teachers that they perform their work "largely in isolation from others" (Lortie, 1975, p. 73) has led, according to Lortie, to the development of three characteristics which form part of the ethos of the American classroom teacher. Lortie identifies these characteristics as:

1. presentism--the lack of any historical sense for the profession;
2. conservatism--the emphasis on tradition and unchanging methods;
3. individualism--the perception by the teacher that he/she is an unconnected member of the profession. (Lortie, 1975, p. 212)

Each of these characteristics result , according to Lortie, from the individual characteristics of those who choose to teach, from the boundedness and isolation of the typical work setting, and from the fragility and scarcity of the psychic rewards available to the individual teacher. Teaching, according to Lortie, is a precarious profession:

> The teacher's craft, then, is marked by the absence of concrete models for emulation, unclear lines of influence, multiple and controversial criteria, ambiguity about assessment timing, and instability of the product. (Lortie, 1975, p. 136)

Lortie's research is unique in that he so clearly documents the teacher's feeling of impotency:

> Teachers have fewer resources and less control over them than theatre directors . . . less discretionary power and fewer resources than managers . . . less formal recognition to support their judgments than do psychotherapists. (Lortie, 1975, p. 175)

Lieberman, Waller, and Lortie all seem to be talking about the effect of the socialization process on the teacher's sense of autonomy without looking directly at the process of socialization and without considering the ways that the teacher's sense of professional self is shaped by the socialization.

Several studies have examined the ways that the teacher's sense of autonomy seems to affect the teacher's sense of professional self. These studies have typically found that teachers do not have a strong sense of their own autonomy in either the classroom or the larger school setting. In addition to Lortie's findings about perceived autonomy, a recent issue of Today's Education reports a classroom teacher noting plaintively that:

> I find it more and more difficult to keep my students motivated when unnecessary interruptions constantly shatter their already short attention spans. (Warren, 1981, p. 80)

During one classroom period, Warren reports that, in addition to the intercom barrage of messages, she was interrupted by five different aides and messengers.

In addition to these infringements on the teacher's sense of control over time and space, Weinberg (1972)

observes that, when the beginning teacher feels the full weight of the bureaucratic constraints on his/her action, he/she may begin to feel alienated from him/herself and from the profession. This alienation is especially probable, according to Weinberg, when the personal commitment of the individual teacher to the students runs counter to the more impersonal demands of the bureaucracy for order, control, and discipline. The individual teacher, much like the individual student, is liable to feel depersonalized and alienated when acceptance of values such as punctuality, docility, task fragmentation, and toleration of boring, repetitive tasks are the implicit curriculum for both the teacher and the students (Spring, 1972).

Pierce (1974) finds that students are generally accorded more rights than teachers--the right to dress as they choose, leave the school building or campus as they wish, express controversial opinions as they desire, and sit as members of Boards of Education and/or teacher selection committees; Pierce says that teachers are typically accorded few of these rights and privileges.

Wasserman (1974) suggests that teachers find it "difficult to recognize their powerlessness because they often use the little power they do have--over individual children in the classroom--in such fierce and arbitrary ways" (Wasserman, 1974, p. 197). Lortie's research (1975) shows that this "fierce and arbitrary" exercise of power often results in

intense feelings of guilt. "Teachers feel shame when they act in ways which undermine their relationships with students. The big mistakes then are interactional . . ." (Lortie, 1975, p. 165). This sense of shame can be seen as resulting from both the teacher's perception that he/she has lost professional control and from the teacher's recognition that the power over individual children is the only real power he/she has.

> Intangibility and complexity impose a toll; built-in difficulties include assessing performance, balancing demands and relationships, and managing the self under provocation. In each instance, the technical culture falls short of resolving the issue; it is most unlikely that so many teachers would experience difficulty if effective solutions were at hand. (Lortie, 1975, p. 159)

These built-in difficulties which Lortie describes are the bureaucratic constraints which the school system places on the individual teacher. Lortie's research demonstrates that the lack of what he calls a "rich subculture"--a repository of skills, attitudes, and approaches to either the student or the system as a whole--has hampered the teachers in developing a sense of professional autonomy; without this rich subculture, many teachers experience difficulty in finding effective solutions to the interactional dilemmas of either the classroom or the larger school setting. While Lortie's research shows that there is this lack of a rich technical subculture, he does not attempt to examine the variables which contribute to this lack.

Each of the studies reviewed in the preceding sections casts valuable light on some aspect of the socialization process for teachers through an examination and analysis of the factors affecting socialization, the variables involved in the process, or the effect of the socialization on the teachers considered as a group. Within these parameters, the literature on socialization and identity formation provides many useful insights. There are, however, at least two areas of interest which these studies do not fully address: the individual teacher's perception of the cultural expectations associated with the role of teacher, and the specific idiosyncratic response of the individual teacher to the perceived weight of these cultural expectations as that perception and response affect the formation of a sense of professional identity among individual teachers. This study raises two specific questions for consideration:

1. What are the cultural expectations which are associated with the role of teacher in the mind of a specific teacher?
2. How does the individual teacher respond to the demands of the perceived cultural imperative and express that response through the creation of a professional self-definition?

These are the kinds of questions which the existing literature on socialization does not fully address, partly because the methodology used in these studies does not allow

for a consideration of the particular subject of the study as a separate and distinct entity. These are the kinds of questions which engage my research interest.

I am undertaking this study in an attempt to provide some illumination of the issues raised by these kinds of questions. An investigation of these issues requires the use of a research methodology different from the quantitative studies reviewed here. In the next chapter, I examine some of the weaknesses of a quantitative research approach to these questions and provide the background and rationale for the use of a qualitative, phenomenological methodology.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The social science studies reviewed in the previous chapter are not able to accommodate the idiosyncratic response of a teacher because the methodology employed in the studies does not allow for an examination of the individual. The studies cited use a quantitative methodology relying heavily on aggregate data which tend to wash out individual variation; such methodology has three main drawbacks which limit the studies. First, a quantitative researcher attempts to control for individual variance in the subject under study in an attempt to increase the reliability and replicability of his findings; such control has the additional effect of reducing the range and subtlety of the phenomena under study. Secondly, a quantitative researcher tends to see the phenomena under study as discrete units of data without spatial or temporal connection to any other data; as a consequence of this view of the data, people, when viewed as items of research, lose their uniqueness and variety and tend to be subsumed under some gross measurement, such as level of education or marital status. Third, as a result of the first two limitations, the quantitative researcher does not usually deal with the contextual

variables which render both the situation and the person under study unique; this third limitation causes many educational practitioners, according to Hollifield (1982), to see educational research as largely useless to them, or to have at most limited applicability to their situation and/or their professional selves. As Maxine Greene (1978) points out:

> The positivistic separation between the knower and the known, along with the stress on what is finished, objective, and given, increases the possibility of individual submergence. That is because ordinary people are no longer able to hold in mind that all knowledge (including scientific knowledge) is interpretive, that subject cannot be separated from object where understanding the world is concerned. . . . Everything that is presumably knowable appears to be part of the self-enclosed universe of scientific understanding; ordinary persons, lacking expertise, can only accommodate. (Greene, 1978, p. 11)

The "individual submergence" to which Greene alludes represents a major criticism of traditional social science studies; that is, those studies which do not preserve the individual as research subject, but rather submerge the individual in the aggregate data.

This study postulates that there are cultural expectations which attach to the role of teacher, and which have an effect on the individual members of the culture. Maxine Greene, in drawing from the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, advances the idea that:

> A human being lives, as it were, in two orders--one created by his or her relations with the perceptual fields that are given in experience, the other created by his or her relations with a human and social environment. (Greene, 1978, p. 2)

In terms of this study, as Greene points out, a human being has a perceptual field about a person who is known as a teacher. This perceptual field is composed of concepts drawn from two areas of human experience--one area contains those myths, legends, beliefs, and ideas held by the society into which a person is enculturated; the other comprises the individual experience with "Teacher" which a person has had. These experiences may or may not reflect the general cultural consensus. For a given individual, the concept "Teacher" may embody a variety of complex, often contradictory expectations about the behavior and attitude of a person known as a teacher; these varying expectations often reflect a dialectic between the cultural expectations attached to the concept "Teacher" and the idiosyncratic response of the person to those expectations.

Alternative Studies of "Teacher"

An examination of several of the novels which contain a teacher as a main character can reveal the differing reactions and responses of an individual to cultural expectations about a teacher.

In John Updike's The Centaur (1970), George Caldwell, a secondary school teacher, reacts in a self-destructive manner to others' cultural expectations about a teacher. Caldwell looks at the colleagues whom he considers to be good teachers and at his own behavior and finds himself deficient as a teacher. He decides that teaching would "be okay . . . if

I thought I was any good at it. But I don't have the gift of discipline" (Updike, 1970, p. 130). Caldwell experiences feelings of self-doubt and hesitancy because he personally is not able to match his behavior to the conception of teacher behavior which he holds and which he believes others in the building hold. He sees himself as a failure because he believes that he cannot act the part of a teacher.

Godfrey St Peter, in Willa Cather's The Professor's House, has had a distinguished career as a university professor and historian. For most of his professional life St Peter has acted as he and the other professors in the novel believe a university professor should act. The action of the novel concerns one summer when, because of the death of one of his favorite students, St Peter engages in a reflective reassessment of his professional life; through this reflection, St Peter begins to see that, by acceding to the expectations of others, he has gradually lost his sense of himself as existing apart from the university professor role. Although he is not interested in playing that role anymore, he finds that he does not know any other way to act. By the end of the novel, St Peter realizes that he has lost a sense of himself as a person and can only think of himself as a professional teacher.

Muriel Spark shows the reader a character who has rejected the commonly held conception of a teacher in favor of her own idiosyncratic conception of the proper behavior

for a teacher. Jean Brodie, main character in Spark's The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, explicitly rejects the role of teacher as defined by the headmistress, Miss Mackay, and by others. Jean Brodie, in her conception of the role of teacher, lives through her students, seeking through contact with them a fulfillment which the rest of her life does not offer her. Her student's betrayal of her violates much of what Miss Brodie believes about the teacher-student relationship and results in her withdrawal from teaching.

These three fictional teachers have each encountered different cultural expectations about teachers in different ways; each character has responded to these cultural expectations in his/her own idiosyncratic manner. Through these differing responses, each character has devised a personal pattern of behavior which reconciles, for him or her, the dialectic between personal and societal expectations about the role and function of a teacher. These novels, and others like them, provide one perspective on the ways which individual people develop to reconcile the differing demands of personal and societal or cultural expectations. These novels serve to illuminate the personal, idiosyncratic dimension of the dilemma which the dialectic between personal and cultural expectations expresses.

As the novels tend to illuminate this personal dimension, the social science literature tends to emphasize the group or aggregate reaction to the societal or cultural dimension

of the dialectic. Studies such as those by Waller and Lortie, as well as the studies reviewed earlier, can provide insight into the ways that a group of teachers, taken as a whole, have responded to the dialectic between the personal and cultural expectations about the role and function of a teacher. The insights to be gained from this social science literature are valuable, albeit incomplete; the insights to be derived from the fictional portrayal of a teacher are also valuable, albeit often largely ignored. According to Greene, "interpretive encounters with literature can, at least to some degree, lead to clarification of . . . our lives" (Greene, 1978, p. 38). The clarification to which Greene refers can occur because the reader can identify with the one character in the literature, rather than trying to relate to the composite picture which the social sciences literature draws.

Literature's emphasis on the personal and idiosyncratic enables the reader to apprehend the variety and beauty of the individual; a fictional portrayal of a character invites the reader to share the journey as the person experiences it, to encounter the same dilemmas, to seek the same resolutions of the dilemmas, to live, even if vicariously and for a short period of time, the same reality as the character lives.

Phenomenology

Like literature, phenomenological research attempts to have the reader share the same reality which the subject inhabits by providing an in-depth, up-close look at that reality through the eyes of the inhabitants. As Davis (1978) points out, "the phenomenological movement is an attempt to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those who are being studied" (Davis, 1978, p. 187).

Phenomenologists, according to Davis, "stress the primacy of consciousness and subjective meaning in the interpretation of social action" (Davis, 1978, p. 188). The methodological approach requires that the researcher "seek to understand experience from the point of view of those being studied" and forces the researcher to recognize that "multiple realities exist" (Davis, 1978, p. 189). This approach to research lessens the importance of the hypothesis in the research design and frees the researcher to concentrate on the emergent construction of reality by the social actor.

Among phenomenologists, Blumer (1966) advocates "taking the role of the other" in an attempt to penetrate the subjective reality of the participant and to share to some extent in the imaginative shaping of that reality. This approach allows the researcher to get beyond the quantitative data and to examine the process through which reality is created and shaped by the subject. It alsc allows the researcher to watch the modifications, adjustments, and changes which the

subject makes in his/her perception of self and reality as a result of the actions of significant others in the environment.

Along with Blumer, Erving Goffman (Manis & Meltzer, 1978) has drawn an analogy between constructing reality and playing a dramatic role. In each case, the social actor is able to try out various roles and to determine the role behaviors appropriate to the given situation. Goffman sees behavior as a willed presentation of the self based on a definition of the situation and the reaction of other participants to the role as constructed by the actor. According to Goffman, an individual perceives a situation according to his/her background, history, level of awareness of others in the situation, familiarity with similar situations, and expectations about the proper behavior to display in the situation. Using these and other idiosyncratic clues, a social actor devises a course of action and a specific role to play in the situation. If the role perception is dysfunctional, the social actor will subtly adjust or modify his/her behavior to allow for any modifications which others in the same social situation seem to require; Goffman's analysis of social behavior is predicated on the notion that people seek to comply with social or cultural consensus about the proper behavior for a given situation. On a simple level, Goffman implies that a social actor would know that casual attire is inappropriate at a formal party; if the social actor did not

know this before entering the situation, the other people at the party would quickly and subtly let the person know that his casual appearance was inappropriate through a variety of social and situational clues. On a much subtler level, Goffman maintains that a person receives and internalizes clues about appropriate and inappropriate levels of behavior at most social interactions. The appraisal of appropriate and inappropriate behavior is largely consensual, based on the cultural expectations which the society holds about a given situation and the people involved in that situation. Goffman maintains that a social actor will seek consensual clues about appropriate behavior in a situation; if the clues indicate that the social actor has misread the situation, he/she will modify the behavior until the reaction of the others in the situation is neutral or complimentary.

Using Blumer's and Goffman's theories about social interaction, this study seeks to encourage teachers to talk about and reflect upon the construction of their professional reality and their construction of a professional role in a specific reality--the classroom. By asking selected teachers to reflect on the changes in their perception of the role and function of a teacher, this study seeks to illuminate the processes which contribute to the creation of a sense of professional identity among teachers. This study uses a phenomenological approach to analyze the reality construction of a classroom teacher and the ways that this reality

construction affects the development of a sense of professional identity among teachers.

Phenomenological research provides a methodology which enables the researcher to retain and celebrate the individual variety and richness of the subject. Phenomenological research methodology provides the researcher with both a theoretical orientation and a methodological stance which facilitates the exploration of an individual's reality.

Theoretical Orientation

Phenomenological inquiry is distinct from the positivistic quantitative orientation because of its assumption that man is volitional with freedom of choice. To understand man then it is necessary to understand his volitional construction of his reality and the ways that his choices have shaped him.

Schutz (cited in Manis & Meltzer, 1978) says that the world is a product of human creation. Therefore, according to Schutz, any phenomenon in the world is the result of what he calls intersubjective agreements among human beings about the nature of reality. There is no objective social order which can be studied; there is only the operative intersubjective agreement among various people about the way reality is constructed. Included in the intersubjective agreements among a group of people is the cultural consensus which helps people to determine appropriate behavior in a given situation.

As Macdonald (1981) has pointed out, this determination of appropriate behavior assumes that the person has engaged in a self-reflective process whereby reality is filtered through a hermeneutic circle to allow for continuous adjustment based on the assimilation of new data from the world and from other people. In Macdonald's schema, the person sees the world through a particular aesthetic prism; this prism allows for a reflective reassessment of the map of reality with which the social actor orders the world and allows for a continuous readjustment of the actual lived experience of the actor to the analysis of the situation. Macdonald's dynamic dialectic reflects the tension between the assumptions about the world and the reality of lived experience in that world. The world becomes, according to Macdonald, a continually renewing reality which is able to be adjusted as analysis and reflection about the world impinge on the actual lived experience of a person in the world.

Drawing on these theoreticians and the previously cited work of Parsons, Mead, Cooley, Kinch, Blumer, and Goffman, this study is based on the following premises:

1. that people make choices and act upon their choices in ways that are sensible to them;
2. that a social reality, while perhaps not readily apparent to the observer, is created and sustained through a commonly understood set of verbal and nonverbal symbols;

3. that to understand the social reality of a given group of people, it is necessary to understand the symbol system as it affects the construction of reality;
4. that both human behavior and human society are processual and in a constant state of ratification or rejection by other members of the society.

When applied to the subjects of this study, these premises assume that the group of people known as secondary school teachers operate in a social reality known as a school and share a commonly understood set of verbal and nonverbal symbols and rituals. This group of people share certain beliefs about the ordering of the world of the school and cooperate in the maintenance of their perception of reality and normalcy in that world. These beliefs are in a continual state of testing and ratification or rejection by this group of people. Part of this process of testing of beliefs is observable when new members of the society of the school are inducted into the belief and symbol system of the group. The induction, more commonly known as the socialization, of these new teachers is a very subtle process; it is more easily discerned by talking to the people who have experienced it than by collecting empirical data. Some of the effects of the process of socialization can be seen in the definition of professional identity which teachers develop after several years of experience in this reality.

Based upon this theoretical orientation, the phenomenological researcher can draw from a variety of methodological approaches to the phenomenon under study. Before considering the particular methodology used in this study, I will discuss the general methodological principles which guide phenomenological research.

Methodological Stance

Norman K. Denzin (1970) has articulated the principles which guide the phenomenological research act. Denzin believes that "behavior is self-directed and observable at two distinct levels--the symbolic and the interactional (or behavioral)" (Denzin, 1970, p. 59). The symbolic and the interactional stances must be combined by the researcher to have a complete investigation, according to Denzin.

To facilitate this integration of symbol and interpretation, the researcher must simultaneously see the world from the subject's point of view and still preserve his/her own ability to observe the changes in either the symbol or the behavior which the subject may evince. In a sense, the researcher needs to "suspend disbelief" while conducting the investigation to capture the essence of the reality from the actor's point of view.

As the researcher is gaining access to this intimate world view, he/she must also be aware, according to Denzin, of the interplay between the subject and the other members of the same reality. While the researcher seeks to

concentrate on one subject at one time, he/she must also try to situate the subject in the larger social context in which the subject operates to understand the processes at work in shaping the subject's perception of reality. The research which guides this type of inquiry must be designed to recreate the processual nature of the events under study and of the changes in the subjects as they experience these events.

At the same time, the researcher, according to Denzin, needs to be sensitive to the impact of the choice of methodology on the results of the study since different methodologies will yield different views of the same reality. The researcher needs to be aware of the way the concepts he/she chooses to deal with tend to create a certain view of reality, a view which may or may not be shared by the subject of the research. In conducting the research, the investigator must be sensitive to the nuances of the concepts used in the study as these concepts are interpreted and integrated by the subject. The dynamics of the data collection situation need to be considered in attempting to arrive at the world view of the participants of the study. The nature of phenomenological research, like the subject of such studies, is itself processual.

The researcher needs to bring what C. Wright Mills calls the "sociological imagination" to bear on the investigation. This sociological imagination, according to Mills, "consists

of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another and in the process to build up an adequate view of the total society and its components" (Mills, 1959, pp. 211-212). Phenomenological research asks the researcher to maintain an open mind about the concepts being investigated; this methodology does not require the formulation of hypotheses before data gathering, but rather asks the researcher to be aware of as much of the phenomenon as possible and to allow for the emergence of hypotheses as the data are recorded and analyzed.

The approach of the phenomenological researcher to the data being observed is much like the approach of the literary critic to a poem; in each case, the subject of study--either the phenomenon or the poem--is knowable to the investigator on a variety of levels. As the literary critic looks beyond the words on the surface of the poem into the surrounding field of the author of the poem, more and more of the poem's meaning and imagery is revealed; the critic is able to bring new meaning to the words on the page through an analysis of the reality of the world of the poem and the world of the author. In much the same way, the phenomenological researcher is able to discover more and more depth to the subject under study as the subject's prehistory and background are examined for insight into the current reality which the subject experiences. Phenomenological research methods share this kind of intensive look at a subject with

the literary or aesthetic critics; both investigators are able to shed new light on the meaning of a particular phenomenon through an examination of what Harvey Cox (1973) calls the prehistory of the event; Cox points out that "it is impossible to understand any present phenomenon . . . without knowing something about where it came from and how it developed" (Cox, 1973, p. 147).

The phenomenological researcher, acting on the theoretical orientation and the methodological stance outlined here, focuses attention on a given phenomenon and seeks to discover some of the prehistory and the present meanings of the phenomenon as it is perceived by a given subject.

Participant Hermeneutics

From among the various phenomenological research approaches available, I have chosen to use what Cox calls participant hermeneutics as a research methodology. This research method seeks to discover how a participant interprets the messages which are sent to him/her in a particular setting.

> The parts of the approach are (1) a careful effort to discover the prehistory of the event or phenomenon now being studied; (2) an equally rigorous attempt to learn about the larger setting within which the present activity takes place; (3) a thorough observation of the phenomenon itself in all its many details; and (4) a meticulous awareness of the meaning it all has for me, the interpreter-observer-participant. (Cox, 1973, p. 147)

Cox's participant hermeneutics appeals to me on several levels. The approach resonates with my own belief that the

way to understand people's behavior is to look closely at the behavior and the person, to talk with the person about the reasons for his/her action, and then filter both the observation and the conversation through my perception of the situation.

Participant hermeneutics also affirms parts of my value system. I believe that people are incredibly complex and interesting phenomena with almost unimagined depth and sensitivity. Even a young child is a complex individual with a highly developed way of meeting the world and other people. I find people to be a compelling area of interest; I like a methodology which encourages me to meet people in their reality and try to unravel the mystery which will help to explain their behavior to me.

I believe that an inquiry which focuses on the people being studied is more meaningful than one which focuses on aggregate measures of people. I believe that human beings are too complex to be summed up in a demographic table, or through a report of statistical significance.

To me, the most valuable part of Cox's methodology is the inclusion of the inquirer as part of the phenomenon. As both Greene (1978) and Davis (1978) have pointed out, it is not possible to completely remove the researcher from any area of inquiry. Rather than seeking to remove all of the possible biasing elements from the research design, it makes much more sense to me to include as much of the phenomenon as possible in the design.

Phenomenological research, such as participant hermeneutics, rejoices in the fact that human beings are highly complex, sophisticated knowing beings; it affirms that the locus of control for action rests with the individual and not with external impersonal forces which control and direct human behavior; it grants to each human being his/her uniqueness and value as an individual; it accepts the fact that each human being has both a history and a future which contribute to his/her behavior now; it values the perceptions of the researcher, with his/her own history and future, as it values the individuals under study.

The participant hermeneutic mode of inquiry enables the researcher to gain an intimate understanding of the reality of an inquiry subject on a micro-level by allowing the researcher to concentrate on one individual at one time as that individual perceives and processes the events of his/her reality. Such an intensive look at the shaping of one person's reality can provide the researcher with an opportunity to gain some insight into the larger issues of socialization and professional identity formation. Through a process of reflection and synthesis, the researcher can discover facets of the phenomenon under study which would elude him/her using the more traditional quantitative methodologies.

In terms of a traditional quantitative research paradigm, however, there are several limitations to a qualitative phenomenological inquiry such as this study.

One limitation revolves around the concern for interviewer bias. In the quantitative paradigm, it is assumed by the researcher that all conditions of the research can be controlled so that any observable change in the subject must be attributable to the action of the independent variable on the subject. In the studies which take advantage of the phenomenological approach, the researcher "attempts to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those being studied. . . . It does not eliminate bias but, rather, attempts to recognize and incorporate it" (Davis, 1978, p. 187). A phenomenological perspective, such as participant hermeneutics, accepts the fact that people cannot be controlled and held in abeyance while one particular aspect of their reality is studied; by accepting and including interviewer bias in the research design, the phenomenological researcher him/herself becomes part of the design of the study.

The other limitation which can be ascribed to a phenomenological research procedure concerns the question of the reliability and validity of the research. Given the premises under which phenomenological inquiry is conducted, the issue of the reliability and validity of the research does not pertain to the methodology. Phenomenological researchers assume that the phenomenon under study will be seen in a unique way by the research subject; this unique perspective then is not assumed to have reliability or

consistency over time. The validity of the research is implicit in the premise that the research subject can provide only an individual perspective on the phenomenon; that individual perspective is precisely what the methodology seeks to illuminate. The quantitative methodologists' concern with reliability and validity is addressed through an examination of the premises of phenomenological research, not through any particular research design.

A phenomenological researcher seeks insight into the "ways in which persons locate themselves in the world in the light of their own particular biographical situations, the experiences they have built up over time" (Greene, 1978. p. 69). One way to gain this insight is through the use of a participant hermeneutic methodology which looks at both the prehistory of the phenomenon and the present perception of the phenomenon.

Description of This Study

I interviewed four secondary classroom teachers to determine the salient features of their first-year professional experiences. After gaining initial demographic data about their families and background, I asked them questions about the nature of their first-year experience, their feelings about the events which surrounded them that year, and their assessment of the impact of those events on their current professional practice.

I chose to interview teachers who had a minimum of three years of experience for two reasons. First, I assumed that teachers who had three or more years of experience would be able to reflect on the events of their first year with a minimum of self-consciousness; I reasoned that these teachers would be better able to examine the forces which may have affected their professional practice than the newer teachers who were probably just beginning to develop a sense of professional identity and who might be unwilling, for whatever reason, to acknowledge the fact that external forces may have an impact on them. Secondly, I assumed that the more veteran teachers would feel freer to discuss the people and events which had led to the creation of their own professional identity than would those newer teachers who were still in the process of formulating their professional identity.

When I asked each of the four people to participate in the study with me, they were all willing to talk with me. Because I wanted each of them to be comfortable and at ease while we talked, I asked each of them to choose the time and place for the interview. Diane chose to be interviewed in a private room at the university library; Theresa and Nancy asked me to come to their homes; Al talked with me during his planning period at his school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour; all interviews were taped for later transcription.

Each interview started out with the same question: Tell me about what happened to you during your first year of teaching. Responses to that question generally included the person's expectations entering teaching, the reality found in the classroom, and some indication of how the person felt about the disparity between expectation and actual practice. If these elements did not form part of the response to that first question, I asked the person to talk about them in more detail. This part of the interview generally contains the most passionate and rueful answers as the four people reflected on their feelings about teaching during their first year.

The next group of questions concerned the person's perception of a "good" teacher. I asked each of them to describe the behaviors and attitudes that they attribute to a good teacher. I also asked them to explain where these beliefs about what makes a good teacher originated--whether in their reading, from their own experience, or from the influence of particular people.

The last group of questions concerned the individual's feelings of autonomy in the classroom and in the larger school setting. Concerned that the use of the word "autonomy" might confuse or disconcert them--either because they might not know the meaning of the word or because they might think the word sounded like jargon--during the interviews I substituted the phrase "in charge" or "in control." I used the two phrases interchangeably during the interviews.

The specific questions asked and their approximate order are:

1. Tell me about what happened to you during your first year of teaching.
    a. What did you expect teaching to be like?
    b. What did you find it to be like?
    c. Who influenced you during that year?
    d. What about you changed during that year?
2. Describe for me your perception of a "good" teacher.
    a. Has it changed as a result of your teaching?
    b. If it has changed, how is it different?
    c. If changed, how did the change occur?
    d. What behaviors and attitudes characterize a "good" teacher for you?
    e. Where do these ideas come from?
3. Tell me about your feelings of being in charge or in control in the classroom.
    a. Where and when do you feel most in charge?
    b. Where and when do you feel least in charge?
    c. What happens to those feelings when you have visitors in your room?
    d. How are those feelings affected by the observation or evaluation visit of your principal?

The interviews are presented first as separate entities with a full report on each person's perception of his/her experiences during the first year of teaching. The interviews are then considered as a group and analyzed for the dominant themes which emerge from the overall discussions with each of the people. In interpreting the results of the interviews, the phenomenological perspective which prizes the subjective interpretation of the events under study is maintained. After the initial interpretation, the interviews are subjected to a more holistic interpretation, seeking to see them in their entirety as a reflection of the reality formation of these teachers.

The analysis of the results of the interviews is structured first around the individual teacher's responses to the questions posed; the interviews are then analyzed for the emergent concerns which the teachers reveal as an indirect result of the questions asked. This approach is consistent with phenomenological methodology which provides a means of "reflecting process or change as well as static behavioral forms" (Denzin, 1978, p. 67).

CHAPTER III

INTERVIEWS

Introduction

I met the four people whom I interviewed through personal contacts with colleagues of mine. Each of the four people agreed to be interviewed with little hesitation although they did not know me personally. When I called them, I explained that I was a doctoral student working on a dissertation about the socialization of teachers. I asked each of them to talk with me about their experiences during their first years of teaching; I explained to them that I was trying to understand how beginning teachers were socialized to the profession.

After the first interview, I transcribed the tapes and then wrote up the interview with my observations and conclusions about what each of the people had said. I then contacted each of the teachers again to show them what I had written, to get their reactions and clarifications, and to get their permission to quote them as I had. All were again willing to give me their time. For the second interview, I went to each of the four schools during the teachers' planning or lunch period. As they read the presentation of the interview, each of the four concurred with my conclusions about what he or she had said and each reaffirmed his or her feelings about the topics which we had discussed.

For each of the four people, I try to give a short verbal picture of the person, including information about his or her background and family. I then present the interview with some initial conclusions about what I perceived as happening during the interview, followed by a brief report of each person's reaction to the interview analysis. After I present all the interviews, I give some preliminary conclusions drawn from a consideration of the interviews as a group, rather than of each one individually.

Nancy

Nancy is a 29-year-old, junior high school English and Social Studies teacher. Nancy's parents, now divorced, are both professional people; her father is a lawyer in a neighboring town and her mother is a school guidance counselor in the same system, although not the same school, as Nancy. Nancy's older sister, now living in Denver, is a nurse and married with two children. Her younger sister lives in the area and is a teacher. Like Nancy, the younger sister is single. During Nancy's childhood, the family lived in a medium-size city; although they lived in several different houses, the family has lived in the same geographic area since Nancy's infancy.

Originally Nancy had thought about becoming a missionary in adulthood; "but then I found out that you had to be religious and then I didn't want to do it anymore!" Nancy

had considered teaching as a career from early childhood; she thinks this is partly because she was always good at school and usually happy in school. She admits that teaching may not be a life-long career for her; she is attracted to the area of Teaching English as a Second Language because of the possibility of traveling and/or living outside the United States. Nancy loves to travel and concedes that one of the attractions of teaching is the extended summer vacation for travel time.

Nancy holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and has taught for seven years--three years in the Peace Corps in Thailand, one year at a school for the deaf teaching "very little kids, 5-, 6-, 7-year-olds," and three years at her present position.

Nancy is slender, attractive and dark-haired, with a vivacious and infectious laugh which always seems to bubble just below the surface of her words. She is a measured, thoughtful speaker, seeming to weigh the question asked and the words of her own answer very carefully before she speaks. She shows great care in choosing the precise word to convey what she means to say. With her careful listening style and her slow reflective speaking style, Nancy has an aura of great calmness about her. She is a reflective person who brings to her experiences a maturity and sense of quiet strength seemingly beyond her years. This increased maturity may be a result of her Peace Corps years in Thailand and the

semi-traumatic adjustment to her life and friends when she returned from Thailand. Although she deprecates the dedication and sacrifice which the Peace Corps service entailed, I sensed that she is very proud of her three years' service; she has certainly formed a lasting attachment to the Thai culture and things Oriental in general. Her apartment is decorated with many mementos of her Thai years; she has kept in close touch with the Peace Corps people she trained and served with, mentioning that they have an annual reunion in Washington just to relive the years of their service and to reforge the bonds which unite them. In much of her talk about her Thai service there is a wistful tone, as though she missed not only the culture and her friends but also the sense of missionary zeal which seems to have animated her then; it is as though the passion and joie de vivre which she experienced in Thailand is no longer part of her personality.

As we turned to the questions which I had prepared, Nancy confessed that she was both pleased to have been asked to participate in the study and apprehensive that she would be of little help; I assured her that her responses would be very helpful and told her that she need not worry about her responses, but simply give me her best recollection of the events and people who had affected her during her first year of teaching.

I first asked Nancy to talk in a general way about her expectations for teaching before she started to teach.

In talking about her expectations for teaching, Nancy said that she thought teaching would be "interesting . . . demanding . . . and fun." There was a certain wistfulness when she mentioned the fun, as though that was an unreal expectation. What she has found, she said with an almost child-like pout, is that teaching is "real hard." Although she laughed as she said it, I sensed that the fact that teaching could be "real hard" work had been a revelation to her. She found teaching to be "not as intellectually demanding as I thought it would be--as in having to do a lot to keep ahead of the class. . . . I had a lot more intellectual preparedness than I thought I had. . . . I found it very personally demanding because I think I expected them to like me throughout the first year. And I think that was . . . that was the hardest thing for me to overcome because in order to have . . . I felt like I was always torn between wanting them to like me and think that I was nice and give me certain things or approve of certain things that I did and in wanting the class to be a certain way and wanting them to learn certain things. And in fact, in order to have the class the way I wanted it to be, they wouldn't always like me and at first I was not willing to give up being nice and being seen as beloved."

Nancy and I laughed about the unreality of the "Mister Chips, beloved teacher syndrome where a good-hearted teacher goes against incredible odds to make wonderful things happen

for everyone." Nancy mentioned that inspirational books and movies like The Water Is Wide and Up the Down Staircase had influenced her decision to go into teaching. "So I was wanting some intense, personal, cognitive experience which I didn't get. . . . I expected that I would do everything right and that everything would be wonderful. And I didn't do it all right and everything wasn't wonderful."

"A lot of the idealism just died . . . not that I wanted it to be that way but just that--I sort of gave up on that and there was just enough there I guess to just keep doing it. . . . But it was kind of a fall from intensely high expectations in a lot of ways and . . . I don't know, I guess I just relaxed."

Once again, the wistful note, present at the beginning of her answer, reappeared; I had the feeling that it was only with a great deal of reluctance that Nancy gave up on the perfect teacher syndrome--I'm not sure that she is yet reconciled to the idea that her students won't always love her, that she won't always do everything right, or that everything won't always be wonderful.

Picking up on her comment about relaxing, I asked Nancy to describe what about her had changed as a result of her first year's experience. In addition to learning to relax her expectations of the students, Nancy said that she had had to learn to set more realistic expectations for herself. The head of the English department at her first school is

the only adult whom Nancy mentioned as influential on her beliefs and expectations during that first year. The most important thing that the department head offered seems to have been emotional support which Nancy didn't realize she needed or wanted at the time; it was only while talking about the department head that Nancy came to realize how much she had depended on this person to bolster her self-confidence in her own teaching.

"She was always supportive and felt that I was doing a lot better than I thought I was doing. And felt--would urge me not to worry about whatever I was worrying about and take it easy on myself--just sort of that kind of thing. Reassurance which at the time I didn't--I felt she didn't care or didn't understand or just didn't really know what it was like--but there was an undercurrent of--but I felt like--I drew something from that that I really wasn't aware that I was drawing. She wasn't expecting the same things from me that I was expecting and seemed to think that I was a nice person and somewhere along the line I came to feel that maybe I was worrying about things too much or trying to do contradictory things or trying to do too many things. Gradually I think I started to listen to her, but it wasn't a kind of help with lesson plans or us having the same teaching style--a mentor. It wasn't like that but just I felt she knew enough about me and about teaching to have a valuable opinion about what I was doing. I didn't feel that way about

everybody in the school. And--eventually--I think that she was right. Just to relax and to take it easier and not to worry."

Nancy went on to talk about why she had stayed in teaching, citing the fact that "teaching suits me . . . suits my personality. The interacting with a lot of people . . . trying to do something in a helping relationship . . . interest in reading . . . certain things that just suited me . . . and I felt that I could accomplish certain things."

In an attempt to discover what these "certain things that I could accomplish" are, I asked Nancy to tell me about her general concept of "teacher"--what kind of person is that, what kinds of things do you see him/her doing or believing?

A teacher, according to Nancy, is one who likes people, is warm, tolerant, intelligent, and strong. When asked to elaborate on strong, she said, "I think it takes a lot of durability--strength--to put up with the needs--the demands of students, the demands of administrators, the demands of everybody on your time and on your abilities and the way that fluctuates." She seemed to be talking mostly about emotional or psychic strength. She talked about the fluctuation and variability of student demands--"At times there are huge things demanded of me and then there'll be a lull. . . . Sometimes they do absolutely adore you and they need you desperately and you're the person who's there for them when something strenuous happens to them and they feel close to

you and it's so wonderful; but it isn't something lasting and you have to be able to stand up to that and let it go. . . . There's so much building intense relationships and then getting over it. . . . It's wonderful and terrible."

Nancy talked about the need to give a lot to someone else and the need to pull back from that need and to find time for herself. In talking about her students, Nancy noted the cyclical nature of the demands on a teacher and the need to accept the transient nature of the student demands. She alluded to the fact that they seem to love the teacher for the year that they are with that teacher, then they seem to love the next year's teacher just as much as they had once loved her.

"I don't want to matter to them too much because I want to get on with my own life, but on the other hand I want to matter to them a whole lot because I'm not being paid enough to do this just for the pay!! . . . But you have to be able to say no to the demands . . . to get off the emotional rollercoaster."

Nancy talks about the need "to feel good about myself in the role of teacher." As an example of what she means, Nancy talked about the difference between the Thai system and the American system in terms of recognition of the teachers. She expressed resentment that the Thai system gives homage and honor to the position of teacher but not necessarily to the person of the teacher. In talking about a reward system,

Nancy reveals her own definition of a good teacher; "I'd like to see a merit pay or some such system where I could be rewarded for knowing the students' names and for trying to reach them as individuals . . . not just be honored because I have the title of teacher." She expresses a need to feel good about herself as a teacher because she did try to do these things; she wanted more recognition for her efforts, not just veneration for the title. "I wanted to get credit for working and for being caring. But later somehow that mattered less and less to me. . . . So the need is not lasting and sometimes you have to stand up to that and not quit, but let it go and not cling to it."

Although she says that this need for personal recognition became less and less, her vehemence in discussing the inequities of the Thai system, combined with her expressed need for emotional approval from her students, would seem to indicate that the words do not reflect her true feelings. Part of the relaxing that she learned to do during and after her first year of teaching may have been an effort to convince herself that the emotional support and public recognition were really not important to her. As she says, "I want to matter to them [the students] a whole lot because I'm not paid enough to do this just for the pay." Nancy seems caught on the horns of the proverbial dilemma--she tries for some emotional distance from her students, but she needs emotional support from them to compensate for the relatively low pay of her position.

Following our discussion of the demands and needs of teaching, I asked Nancy to talk about the times that she felt most and least in control during a school day.

"I would say that I feel most in control after four o'clock or before quarter of eight. . . . I feel much more satisfaction planning something and getting organized than I do when I'm teaching. . . . There's a satisfaction to me of having the room to myself and getting the desks lined up and getting things in a row where I feel like now I'm doing it right. . . . There's a satisfaction in making it all neat. . . . It's kind of a relief."

In the hours between eight and four, Nancy feels that she is "on call all the time that I'm at school. And even when I'm teaching I'm on call cuz somebody comes to the door and says 'Hey' and I can't not go over there because it might be someone out there that I really need to see. It's always worth it to me to go but there's always this sort of cranky feeling. It's just too much sometimes."

Nancy does not feel in true control of the room during her classes. "It's not when I'm with the kids because then there is all this unpredictable--everybody always needs something--I mean I'm in control because when I tell them to sit, they sit, but it's such crazy time that I find myself saying sometimes, 'Where's my book?' and that doesn't seem to me like someone who's in control!! Yet it's control in that they aren't doing certain wild things and that learning is

going on and that nobody else is in control, so I must be in control, but I feel such relief when they leave. . . . It's hard to work with so many people, it really is."

"I feel like there's so little time at school that I can get done what I want to get done because somebody--guidance counselor, fellow teacher, librarian, secretary--would say, 'Listen, let me tell you about . . . .' It just seems like I can't get anything accomplished until 4 o'clock when most everybody is gone. At times I feel very irritated that there is always something that needs to be done. I feel like I can't say 'Hey, don't bother me, I have to type this now.' . . . There's just no private time because what everybody is doing is closely interwoven with what everybody else is doing. But in many other professions, my work would be something between me and a desk, or between me and a thing and I wouldn't have to be on call. . . . It would be nice to have things separated more. Like this is my time to get my day together and this is my time--like I'd have office hours and you can see me between 12 and 12:20, . . . and the rest of the time I wouldn't have to feel guilty and sort of apologizing for being cranky."

Based upon Nancy's answers to my question about control, I began to see a pattern emerging where the expectation of control and the reality of the classroom came into conflict. Nancy apparently thought that as a classroom teacher she would be clearly and forcibly in charge of the room at all

times, and that her distractions during instructional time would be few. She speaks several times of the "cranky feeling" she experiences when someone interrupts her during her teaching, yet she also feels that she cannot ignore anyone who comes to her door. Nancy cites interruptions by non-teaching staff--guidance counselors, librarians and secretaries--as the most frequent disruptors of her room. Although it seems that Nancy has learned to tolerate these interruptions, she is not always able to control the "cranky feelings" that they engender.

Although Nancy had not mentioned any principal's visit as part of the classroom disruption, when I asked her to talk about evaluation visits, she responded with a torrent of feelings.

"I always feel nervous. . . . It's just <u>real</u> <u>hard</u> to have someone in there. . . . Any teacher from outside or, God forbid, somebody who doesn't teach school, especially someone who knows me and it's very upsetting to me . . . to feel that they'll know exactly what's going on because I don't know exactly what's going to happen. . . . I just feel naked. . . . It's okay with another teacher cuz they know how that is, but anybody from outside my own school, or even outside my own hall. . . . People on my hall have heard me yell, they've seen my room at its best and at its worst and they have some of the same kids, so I feel okay then, but it's <u>real</u> <u>hard</u>. And I'd have to say that it's probably

as good as it could be with this principal, with his methods, to be observed by him. So, I have some trepidation about it, but it's minimal. . . . It could be a whole lot worse!"

Mentioning the fact that the principal's evaluation observations are always announced and never pop-in, Nancy said very defensively, "If it's announced, it's my right to be on guard and I'm going to try to do a real good job. I should have the right to make it a very good day."

When I asked what she thought the principal saw, she said, "I don't think you observe a meaningful lesson anyway. . . . I think the most valuable thing is frequent appearances so I get used to it, the kids get used to it, and so he gets an idea over a period of months of what's going on."

In talking about evaluation generally, Nancy articulates the fear that most teachers seem to feel about this process. "What do I have to do in advance to make it all right?" is the question she asks herself before an evaluation visit. About evaluation generally, Nancy says, "It's just plain threatening to have somebody back there watching you and writing things down. . . . It's <u>terrifying</u>."

Nancy's evaluation is on record-keeping and teaching style--"preparation, eye contact, variety of the lesson, everyone being involved . . . it's that tone of things--lots of little categories to choose from." Nancy's evaluation is mostly a fill in the blank and checklist with a small space

for a few comments. "The criticism is so harsh and so scary." Nancy has a clear perception of the role of supervision--it is to look for problems, not for things that are going well.

In talking about the evaluation visits, Nancy also discussed her feelings about working with a curriculum coordinator who had been invited into her room to help her explore different classroom management techniques. She said that Larry, the curriculum coordinator, spent several days in her room just observing what went on; she said she was very grateful to him that the observations were not obviously observations. She reported that he brought in stacks of materials from the library and reviewed them as the lesson proceeded so that she had no sense of a direct observation. "I'm sure that he knew everything that was going on, but he didn't just sit there and watch me." After Larry had been in the room several days, Nancy says that she just relaxed and acted in her usual manner because she couldn't keep up the "perfect teacher" image anymore. "I was moderately aware that he was there, but I don't think I yelled at anybody for four days, and then I thought 'Oh what the hell, it's going to happen sooner or later anyway,' so I just let go."

Apparently, according to Nancy, part of the "perfect teacher syndrome" is that good teachers don't yell; she mentions apologetically several times that she has yelled at her students. Although it doesn't bother her to have other

teachers on her hall or the visiting Larry know that she yells, she does not seem to think that yelling is an appropriate behavior for a teacher to display in front of the principal or other teachers who do not know her or her students.

Based on her comments about the principal and about Larry's presence in her room, it seems that Nancy finds the presence of anyone with line authority or supervisory capacity in her room to be traumatic. She speaks of hating the idea that someone is watching her and taking notes on what she does.

Nancy feels that her nervousness about evaluation is her own problem. "I have to say that what I have is in my head. I mean, there's no politics about it or anything like that." Clearly to Nancy, the fault with supervision rests with her, not with the tone and style of the supervision. She says that she likes her current principal, likes the fact that he treats his faculty as he wants the students to be treated--he stresses private, individual work with the teachers who have problems--but still finds the whole experience fraught with danger for her self-image. Although she laughed it off, she also did mention several times the fact that she can be and has been faulted for her sloppy attention to "administrivia"; "the things that really bother me most are administrative things--record-keeping, money. It really irritates me to spend my time on that. I think it's an absolute waste of me. . . . I always get low marks for record-keeping and

high marks for everything else." Although Nancy says that she feels record-keeping is a waste of her as a teacher, she still feels defensive enough about her inattention to it to make a laughing apology for her attitude.

Analysis

Nancy's interview reveals that she frequently felt isolated during her first year of teaching. She speaks about the department chairman who tried to help her during that first year; from her responses it seems clear that Nancy did not realize how much she was drawing from that person until she looked back on her teaching experience from the vantage point of several years' experience. She speaks of feeling unappreciated--of wishing that people would recognize the extra effort she was putting into her teaching. "I wanted to get credit for working and being caring." Although she says that this need for recognition lessened as she gained experience, her comments about needing her pupils' love and approval would seem to indicate that she stopped looking for approval from the authorities and looked for it from a different source, not that she stopped needing it altogether. "I want to matter to them a whole lot because I'm not getting paid enough to do this just for the pay."

Nancy also revealed that she had to change her expectations of herself and of her students as a result of her first year's experience. She had to learn that the reality of students, herself, and the teaching situation did not fit

the fictional portrayal of such books as Up the Down Staircase or To Sir, With Love. Nancy had to face the fact that, while the picture of the kindly Mister Chips--beloved and respected by all his students--was a very nice picture, it was also a very unrealistic picture. It seems that the hardest lesson Nancy had to learn during her first year was that she could not be all things to all students and that she could not work miracles with all her students.

In coming to this realization, Nancy found the most help and comfort from her department chairman who simply assured Nancy that she was doing a good job, doing the best that could be expected. Nancy found that the emotional help and support she drew from this woman was invaluable to her in learning the limits of what she could expect to accomplish. At the same time, there is a real sense in Nancy's words that she has not completely accepted the lesson that she can't be "Super Teacher." From her own words, I suspect that Nancy still thinks that she can be that "good hearted teacher who goes against incredible odds to make wonderful things happen for everyone." When Nancy talks about her expectations for teaching, there is a wistfulness and poignancy to her words, as though she is just giving lip service to the idea that she has to relax and lower her expectations.

Nancy reveals this ambivalence about lowering her expectations when she talks about the ideal or mythical teacher. She describes such a person as super-human in patience,

tolerance, strength, and endurance. She has learned that she cannot look to external sources for her own gratification and sense of accomplishment; yet she still speaks about the "goodies" which can be gained from teaching--goodies such as the love and admiration of her students. She admits to a pang of jealousy when she learns that her students display the same type of loving behavior to other teachers as they did to her.

In Nancy's comments about the effect of the principal's supervisory visit, there are indications that she thinks that the ideal teacher is one who is always in charge, always in control, unflappable in the face of any occurrence, and always prepared for any eventuality. She attributes her fears about evaluations to her own weaknesses, as though she is failing to meet some standard which she has set up as an ideal; "I have to say that what I have is in my head. I mean there's no politics about it or anything like that." Her denial of the politics "or anything like that" sounds like she is protesting too much, almost as though she suspects that there is something more to this supervision that she is not aware of and has no way of learning.

Nancy definitely seems to feel that she is not in control when there is some other adult in the room with her; she does not feel much more in charge when she is alone with her students. The best times for her, in terms of feeling in control or in charge, are before and after the school day

when she can work at her own pace without interruptions, however well-intentioned or justifiable, from any other people. She likes the feeling of "having the room to myself and getting the desks lined up and getting things in a row because I feel like now I'm doing it right." During the school day, Nancy seems to feel that she is not in control, that either the students, the noninstructional staff, the principal, or her fellow teachers are somehow more able to control her time than she herself is. She mentions the frustration of classroom interruptions while admitting that she does not feel free to just ignore those interruptions lest they be important. She frequently feels cranky about her lack of control, but she sees no way that she can change or ameliorate the situation. Nancy feels most clearly in charge at the beginning and end of the school day when she is in her room by herself and able to manage her environment to her own satisfaction; she feels least in control during the school day when she is at the mercy of her students, the other adults in the building, and various external interruptions which she can neither ignore nor learn to accept.

Follow-up Interview

In general Nancy concurred with my conclusions about what she had felt and most of the reasons I deduced for her feelings. She spoke again about the department chairman, mentioning that she had resented the woman's seeming lack of concern about Nancy's problems; it almost seemed to come as

a shock to Nancy to discover that this person had given Nancy exactly what Nancy remembers needing at the time. Apparently Nancy thought that the woman was just sloughing her off and belittling her concerns by telling Nancy to relax. On reflection, Nancy has found that the woman gave her good advice; there is, however, still a slight residue of the resentment she originally felt toward the chairman.

Theresa

Theresa is a 26-year-old junior high school Language Arts and Reading teacher. First married "at a very young age," Theresa has divorced her first husband and is about to celebrate the first anniversary of her second marriage to a parole officer; Theresa has no children but says that she and her second husband are talking about having children fairly soon.

Theresa remembers wanting to be a teacher from her earliest years. She thinks that she had the idea because her family always valued education. Theresa's mother especially was instrumental in giving Theresa a respect for and love of school; her mother had dropped out of high school and worked for 20 years as a quality control supervisor at a local manufacturing plant. Theresa speaks very proudly of the fact that her mother completed the requirements for the G.E.D. degree, then went on to college to become qualified as a teacher. Her mother now substitute teaches in area

schools. Theresa's father is a service representative for a local industry.

An only child, Theresa describes her childhood years as very settled; the family lived in a rural area--Theresa remembers a barn on the property and chickens and horses all around her as she grew up. Her parents live in the same house now, although the area has changed and become more like a suburban or urban area; Theresa seems to resent the change in the area, caused, in her eyes, by the annexation of the whole area several years ago.

Theresa holds both a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree in English with additional certification in history and reading. At the time I spoke with her, she was taking courses to become certified as a teacher of gifted and talented students.

Theresa tends to talk in torrents of words with long pauses between clusters; she projects a semi-cynical, semi-self-deprecating tone in much of her conversation. Theresa is also a visual speaker, substituting a hand gesture or a raised eyebrow or cocked head for a whole series of words or connections between ideas.

Theresa conveys a deprecating attitude toward authority; at the time of the interview she was serving county jury duty; she was alternately scornful of the court procedures and fascinated by the system. Although she spoke of the tedium of the jury process, she also looked forward to

telling her students all about the process of selection and seating of a jury.

I first asked Theresa to talk about her expectations entering teaching, to describe how she had thought it would be.

"I guess most of my perceptions were based on my years as a student. And I had very good years in school. I was always in advanced classes; you know, I didn't know that there were kids in school who could only read on a second grade level, who threw spitballs, who told the teacher to 'Shut up.' In a way I led a rather sheltered existence as far as school went and I expected my classes to be the exact same way. And I found nothing like that at all. Here again, student teaching was an extremely good experience for me. . . . When I first started teaching, we still had ability level grouping and we did not have blocks in Language Arts, so I had an advanced class for reading and then I had the lowest class in the school for language. So my day ran the whole gamut. And it was the first time I had known--even in student teaching I didn't have discipline problems . . . I had the problem--I couldn't put my feet on the fine line of being a nice friendly teacher and being the authority figure. But the main thing was I was just thrown in this world of I have this nice 8th grade book here but this kid reads at a 3rd grade level. . . . The other teachers were not at all helpful. I think one teacher came over to me and

said, 'Can I help you with anything?' You'd send a kid to the principal's office for discipline and they'd come back with 'Well, you must not be handling this properly.' It was horrible, it was just awful. . . . I had a lot of problems situating myself to the role I had chosen to play."

I asked Theresa to talk a bit more about what she meant by "role she had chosen" and to tell me about how she played this role. "Some people that I had had in high school who were all three as different as night and day . . . and I think ideally my goal was to choose the best of those three people because even though they worked me to death I respected them tremendously. . . . We were pushed. And that's what I wanted. I wanted my students to like me but. . . . We finally got to the point of--you know, we reached a very good understanding. And it was not an intimidating situation. They were not threatened by me and I was not threatened by them. . . . But it was a very difficult year as far as the idea of the role of teacher. I was very young. I had a real hard time with where does the teacher end and the person begin. Am I a teacher twenty-four hours a day? Do I ever stop being a teacher? . . . I had a real hard time with--you know, what do you do? Do you stop living?"

"Yes, you want to be a role model, you want these kids to look up to you and so on and so forth. What do you do? And I had a real hard time with that. To that extent, I've never learned to play the role of the teacher or what I

consider to be the role of the teacher as far as the way I dress. . . . I think that I've reached a compromise that I'm happy with now as far as I can be an effective teacher and I can still be a person. That was one of the things, that I had a real hard time coming to that point. . . . Because my feelings about teaching and teachers had come from looking at teachers, I never considered that they might go out on a Friday night and get drunk or that they might be having three affairs at one time. You know, I never even thought about those things and then, all of a sudden, I'd think, 'Gosh, I wonder what one of my teachers would do in this situation.' But she was too old to call and ask! I found myself thinking of that."

From what Theresa says, it appears that she formed her ideas about teaching and teacher behavior from the observations she made of teachers while she herself was a student; however, Theresa's youth when she began teaching (20 years old) seems to have militated against her forming any clear-cut conception of the role or definition of teaching. She seems to have had a great deal of difficulty separating the person of the teacher from her own personality during those first years. Her ideas about teaching and the teacher seem to be more intuitive about what is appropriate to the role than they are clearly articulated concepts. In this sense, Theresa does not seem to have progressed beyond the conception of teaching she held when she entered the profession;

her six years of experience do not seem to have directly affected her thoughts and beliefs about teaching or the role of the teacher. She believes that students ought to be pushed and challenged as she was while a student; she knows that teachers should be respected as she respected her own teachers; she wants to be liked and admired by her students as she liked and admired her own teachers.

"I wanted my students to like me but--it's strange because there was one group that first year that I was able to sort of sit down and say, 'Look guys, I don't know where we're going. I don't even know if we'll get there, you know, but if you want you can stick with me or you can bail out. You know, I'm not making any promises.' And you know . . . I feel like I got more out of those kids that year just by saying, 'Hey, I don't know. What should we do?' . . . And we had a good time and we got a lot done, but I think it was because I was at the point where--not that I'm not there now but I was particularly there then--where I realized that you don't know what you're doing. And you might just as well go along. You might just as well be open to every possibility that comes along." Throughout this part of the interview, Theresa expresses concern about the rationale for the teaching practices she employs and shows some concern about the ambiguity she expresses about what she is doing. She says that she "doesn't know what she is doing" and that this state has existed both then--when she began teaching--and now that she has had several years experience.

Because Theresa expressed this doubt about the reasons for her teaching practice, I asked her to tell me about a person who had been influential in her life during her first year of teaching; I thought that her answer to my question might provide an insight for me into the reasons for her expressed insecurity in her role.

"There was another teacher who was an experienced teacher, but who was new to the school. And she and I happened to share a couple of the same groups of kids. And we thought very much alike and disliked the principal a lot. We both thought he was a jerk. And we worked quite a bit together. We had a very good working relationship--we worked well together and communicated very well. . . . The other three teachers in the department . . . had been there for many years and were just a little bit distant. I felt like if I went to them and asked for their help, I'd be rebuffed. So I think the bond was formed between this other teacher and I because we both were sort of new and finding our way through. And also for me she was a tremendous help because she was experienced and she could say to me, 'Look, this isn't going to work' . . . . We were both sort of kindred spirits and we were both sort of floundering around the first year. She was probably the most influential person."

Theresa also mentioned the teacher with whom she carpools to and from school as being helpful. "The ride is a good time to talk things out and I think we've helped each other out."

Although Theresa did not mention them as specifically helpful, I found that she spoke quite often of her students as being influential with her. She speaks with great affection of the students she had during her first year. "I just sort of opened everything up and the kids helped a lot as far as 'Let's read this' or 'Let's do it this way.' They were very helpful in those respects. And they were helpful as far as realizing my limitations. They were a special group of kids, a very special group of kids." Theresa talks about and seems to treasure the fact that "I have so many of those kids who stop by every day to find out how I am."

Theresa reveals her close identification with her students when she talks about the gifted and talented classes she is now teaching. She remarked several times on the fact that "the g/t kids don't appreciate anything, not anything. They seem to feel that they are owed special, preferential treatment. The remedial kids, on the other hand, are very grateful for any special treatment--field trips and things like that."

Theresa talked at some length about a recent problem she had had with her gifted students. She had sent the class to the library to work on a special project; later in the day she heard from the librarian that the students had been very disruptive during that period. She seemed to take it as a personal insult that her students would misbehave. "I was crushed, really crushed. That I didn't have the relationship

with this particular class that I had with my remedial reading students." She felt very strongly that the remedial students respected both her and themselves enough never to behave in such an unseemly fashion.

In talking about her gifted and talented class, Theresa admits that "I'm finding myself with this one particular class not able to be myself. I find myself having to play the role of the authority figure. 'Yes, we <u>will</u> do this, we <u>will</u> do it now.' And that's sort of difficult for me--I just haven't had to do it much . . . I'm not very comfortable with it. I'm not very comfortable with telling people what to do. You know, I feel like--here are your options and if you want <u>my</u> advice or <u>my</u> opinions, okay. I'm not a yeller and a screamer. . . . I'm not threatening; I don't threaten people either by my presence or by my voice. That's just not me; I'm not very good at it. . . . So, I've never really tried it before and I'm not very good at it. . . . It's like the kids know I'm trying this role out and I'm not very good at it and we're playing this game. . . . It's not my best thing."

Theresa seems to look to her students or to fellow teachers who are on the "same wave length" for help and support in defining the role that she has chosen to play. She does not speak of seeking any help from anyone in an authority position; "I feel much more comfortable just going down the hall and saying, 'Hey, I'm having some problems with this; can you help me?'"

When Theresa talked about the observations she had experienced, there was a great deal of scorn for her first principal. "When he came to observe me, he sat in the back of the room and flipped through this stack of papers. He would look up occasionally, I guess to see if we were all still there, and then he would go back to his papers. At the end of the period he left and then he called me a couple of days later with this sparkling evaluation--nothing negative--according to it I should be teacher of the year. And I thought, 'You're not telling me anything.' I felt it was a terrible waste of my time. I wasn't threatened by it the way some people are; I've always had confidence in that I'm something of a perfectionist so if I'm going to do it I'm going to do the best I can. It might not be perfect but it's the best I can do. . . ." As she talked about this principal for whom she had so little respect, I wondered if Theresa were not expressing her feelings about the person of the principal, denying that he could possibly have been any help to her because she did dislike him so intensely. She had characterized him as a jerk and she admitted, "I had this personality thing with this principal."

When I asked her to talk about subsequent evaluations she had had with the new principal, she was much more positive in her feelings. "I find his observations helpful. I know that as a teacher I'm supposed to say that I don't think that this man can evaluate me and I should feel threatened, but I

guess in some ways I'm still naive and I feel like I do a good job, so there's no reason for it to be threatening. I think it's the way he conducts it. He becomes a part of what's going on. . . . And when you go to him to discuss your evaluation, he has some very concrete things. He looks at the levels of questioning; he counts the number of times you ask a literal question and so on. He talks about body language. And says, 'These are the feelings I got from being in your room. This is what you did to reinforce this child.' He tells you about your voice inflections and things like that. And something that I appreciate, but I think here again some people probably don't, he will purposefully try to find one thing and say, 'Look, why don't you consider doing this?' Not necessarily that you're doing this wrong, but here's a suggestion to consider. And I like that and I feel that the man is earning his money. . . . Obviously you plan when someone's coming in and obviously you hope to have a good lesson and so on and so forth and you don't expect him to say, 'Well, this is really bad.' You also realize that you're not perfect and that there's got to be something that this person must be able to point out to you. So, I feel that observations can be very helpful; that's my personal experience, but I don't think it's everybody's."

Comparing Theresa's responses about the two different principals, two conclusions seem to fall out. She personally disliked the first man and felt that he had nothing to tell

her about her teaching practice; she likes her current principal and he acts according to her idea of a principal--he becomes involved in the class, he offers specific suggestions and observations about her practice and he seems to be earning his money. Based upon Theresa's experience, the personal feeling of a teacher for her/his principal is important to the perceived effectiveness and reliability of the principal as observer and judge or evaluator of teaching practice.

Secondly, although Theresa "knows" that as a teacher she is supposed to feel threatened by the presence of the principal in her room, she does not feel that way because this principal is acting as Theresa thinks a principal should--he is aware of what happens in the room and is able to document that awareness at the subsequent teacher-principal conference. She expresses resentment about the observation-evaluations from the first principal because she did not perceive that he knew what was going on in the room--"He would look up occasionally, I guess to see if we were still there, and then he would go back to his papers"; as far as Theresa was concerned, the first principal demonstrated this inattention to classroom activity when he called her in for the conference a few days later and gave her a "sparkling evaluation--nothing negative. . . . And I thought, 'You're not telling me anything.'"

My last group of questions for Theresa dealt with her feelings of autonomy. I first asked her to tell me about

the times she felt most and least in control during the school day. She immediately appeared perplexed and quickly answered, "I don't think that there's any change." She lapsed into silence for about a minute, started to frame an answer, then became silent again. Finally she asked me to clarify the question. Thinking that perhaps the word "control" was causing her to have problems with the question, I asked her to tell me about her feelings about being in charge of the classroom during the day. After a long pause, during which I simply waited for her to clarify her thinking, she finally admitted, "I have a lot of trouble with the idea of sitting in judgment. And I have the same feelings about being in charge. I think I'm always in charge of me. I question how much you can be in charge of anything else. . . . I feel like the only time that I ever lose my hold on myself is when I just become so frustrated. I think I lose some of the power that I have."

I asked Theresa to talk more about what she perceived as the power of a teacher. "Well, when I think about power, I think of it in terms of influence. I guess I don't like to think about it because in reality you have a whole lot and it can be a very overbearing sort of thing. I feel very good in my particular setting because I feel I have the power to do whatever I think is best and that's a good feeling. I feel very much like I'm treated as a professional. . . . I feel very much that I have the power to do what I choose to do and

here again, it's that I have power over me and my feelings and my decisions. . . . What I'd love to be able to do is just not show up and have the kids go on with their business. That's really what I'm working toward. That they don't need me there, that I don't run the class. I really don't like that feeling that they were sitting there waiting for me to tell them what to do. . . . It's like my method of discipline. I feel very strongly that it's wrong for me to say that you can't do this. I think some kids have problems because I say, 'Look, maybe what you're doing is okay, but I can't handle it. Maybe it's my problem but I can't deal with it. And because I'm the one who's been put in charge of this class, we're going to have to make some compromises and, I'm sorry, I'm not going to compromise. If something is going to change, it's not going to be me.' So I think sometimes I exercise a little power play sort of thing."

Theresa continued to be perplexed about the idea of being in charge or in control in her classroom; she returned to the theme that she could only be in charge of herself, not of anyone else, nor of any particular situation. Clearly, as she says, she does not like to think about power and being in charge or in control because she finds the thought "overbearing"; yet she is willing to talk about the "little power play sorts of things" that she does with and to her classes.

Analysis

Overall, Theresa's interview responses seem to show a teacher who is still trying to establish the limits of the "role she has chosen to play." In talking about influences on her teaching practice, Theresa appears to have modeled her behavior on the older teachers she talked about and on her students' expectations of her.

Part of the reason for this continued reliance on the memory of her previous teachers' practice may be the shock Theresa experienced when she discovered that all students are not as she was when she was a student. Theresa admits that she "led a rather sheltered life as far as school went" and that she expected her classes "to be the exact same way." Because Theresa's student years and her teaching experience had been with advanced classes, she "didn't know that there were kids in the school who could only read on a second grade level, who threw spitballs, who told the teacher to 'Shut up.'" It sounds as though Theresa experienced a severe case of "culture shock" when she was "just thrown into this world of I have this nice 8th grade book here but this kid reads on a 3rd grade level." Her shock at finding a type of student with whom she had no experience was compounded by the lack of "back-up as far as the principal was concerned." When she was talking about that first experience, Theresa sounded as though she felt completely alone, removed from the range of anyone's help. This feeling of isolation was probably

compounded by the fact that Theresa was a very young teacher when she started teaching; several times during the interview she referred to her youth and naivete as a partial explanation of her thoughts, feelings, or perceptions. Despite these initial feelings, Theresa still feels "very secure when I'm at school. . . . It can be a great escape for me."

In talking about the people who have influenced her teaching practice, Theresa mentions people who "share the same wave length" as a source of comfort to her. She specifically talks about the experienced teacher who was new to the building; "we thought very much alike and disliked the principal a lot--we both thought he was a jerk." Theresa talks about the help she received from this other teacher in terms of the practical advice which the person could give her; "she was experienced and she could say to me, 'Look, this isn't going to work.'" Theresa seems to prize a certain feeling of bondedness with other teachers. She spoke about the cliqueishness she encountered among the other teachers in the department; "the other three teachers in the department . . . had been there for many years and they were just a little distant. I felt like if I went to them and asked for their help, I'd be rebuffed." It sounds as though Theresa and the other new teacher were left to themselves to find any help they might need; apparently Theresa felt uncomfortable asking either her principal or the other members of her department for any assistance during her first year.

In considering the ways that she has changed since she began teaching, Theresa explicitly denies that teaching itself has had any influence on her. "The big thing that comes to mind--and it might have happened if I had been a secretary-- . . . I sort of opened up a lot--to my kids, not necessarily to anyone else. I felt a lot of security from being around those kids and a tremendous sense of pride and a sense of being cared for. . . . I think part of it is that I didn't feel threatened by the kids. I still feel that to a great extent." Whether or not this change, this opening up would have happened in any other occupation, Theresa does not feel that teaching itself contributed to this change in her.

In her comments about the ideal teacher, Theresa reveals some uncertainty about the concept of the ideal teacher. She continues to draw upon her memory of the good teachers she had to help her define good teacher; she speaks of such a person as being able to walk a fine line of "being a nice, friendly teacher and being the authority figure." Although she does not say so directly, I infer that Theresa has had some problems reconciling these two approaches; she is personally uncomfortable with the role of the authority figure yet she seems to feel that there are situations or classes that require her to play that role. "I'm finding myself with this one particular class not able to be myself. I find myself having to play the role of the authority

figure. . . . And that's sort of difficult for me--I just haven't had to do it much. . . . I'm not very comfortable with it." Theresa seems to much prefer playing the role of the nice friendly teacher; she speaks with obvious affection of the students who continue to come and see her, even though she no longer has them for class.

Theresa's responses to the question about feelings of being in charge or in control reveal a clear ambiguity on her part about the amount and proper use of teacher authority. She states very clearly that she does not like to play the authority figure in the room, yet she speaks of the "little power play sorts of things" that she has done with her students. Theresa feels that teachers have a lot of power, or influence as she calls it, over the students and the events in the classroom. She does not like to think about power or influence because "it can be a very overbearing sort of thing."

Although she does not directly say that she feels that she has a great deal of power in her interactions with students, she also tells her students that she is "the one who's been put in charge of this class." Yet Theresa states very clearly that her goal is to have her students not need her. She wants to help them get to the point where she does not run the class. Theresa feels that she has been put in charge, yet she rejects that feeling when she says that she can only be in charge or in control of herself; at

the same time she admits to trying "little power play sorts of things." It seems from her comments that she feels some ambiguity about being in control or in charge and has devised a variety of strategems to deal with the ambiguity.

Follow-up Interview

As soon as she had finished reading the last page of the interview write-up, Theresa commented that "it is going much better in the g/t class now than it was when I first talked with you." She described the cohesion of the group and their increased willingness to cooperate with her. She is finding that she needs to "play the authority figure" less and less with that class.

Theresa also remarked that things in general are going much better for her now than they were when we talked. Her personal and professional life is much more organized and much more rewarding to her now than it was at the time of the interview.

I thought I could see a reflection of that change in her life in Theresa's calmer demeanor during our second talk. During the first conversation, Theresa seemed to be much more tense than she was during the second conversation. She seems to feel much better about herself and her professional role now. She talked particularly about the fact that she was so much better organized now, so much more in control than she had been before. She projects a greater calmness now than she did when I originally met her.

Al

Al is a 29-year-old senior high English teacher. Al's wife has also been a teacher but she is now staying at home with their 15-month-old son. Al talks with affection and quiet satisfaction about his son and the clever things that the baby does. Although he says that he and his wife are having a difficult time managing on one salary, they both feel that it is important for the mother to be home with the baby.

When I asked Al to tell me about his family and his childhood, he responded with the bare facts and gave no elaboration on these facts.

Al describes his childhood years as "very settled." His father is the manager of a wholesale food plant; his mother has never worked outside the home. Al has twin sisters 10 years older than he.

Al had always considered teaching as one of the career choices for him; he looked for jobs in the service or helping professions when he graduated from college. He says that one of the reasons he began teaching is that he was offered the job and it was the only job offer he had at the time; he also said that he is very glad that he found a teaching position and that he would not now consider a career change.

Al has a Bachelor of Arts degree in religion; he says that he "was not the kind of person who always knew that

they wanted to be a teacher, but I always knew somehow or another I'd be in the humanities, either somewhere in history or English--never knew which." Al has the air of a small intense preacher about him; he speaks softly but with authority and assurance. He is a low-key, careful speaker, seeming to take plenty of time to be sure that his thoughts are ordered and clear before he speaks. Al is also the advisor for the yearbook. Several times during the interview, conducted at Al's school during his preparation period, students came in with various questions about their yearbook assignments; Al was very patient and considerate of them, carefully answering their questions before he returned to the interview. Watching his interactions with these students, I could tell that they are very important to him; he allows nothing, including our interview, to take precedence over his relations with his students.

Although Al has a Bachelor's degree in religion, he hastened to assure me that he had enough credits to teach English; he is presently working on a Master's degree in English. All of Al's six years' teaching experience have been at the same city high school where he himself had been a student.

When I asked Al to tell me what he remembered of his experiences and feelings as a first year teacher, he thought about his answer carefully before responding. "Well, I expected it to be a lot easier. . . . The students didn't

know me. I was new to the school and they knew it. I expected it to be better than student teaching because I was in charge. And it was, especially here because I didn't have anyone ever come in to observe me. I never had that threat. I expected it to be better, but I had trouble and I think I had trouble--I think I had trouble even in student teaching--really understanding what I was supposed to teach. And so I really don't know what my expectations were except that I knew it would be better. I was glad to have the job. . . . I didn't really have that many expectations of teaching because my student teaching was with a lot of lower kids so, if I had any expectations, that sort of dispelled any ideas I had about the perfect classroom. But I guess I did have them; looking back I had--I thought about the best teachers I had in English and I thought I had some pretty good ones and I thought order was important in the classroom, and I thought organization was and we were pretty much in awe of our teachers. They were the authorities and I guess there was no question about that. So that was a big change because I was trying to be like them, or I felt that I should be like them--the kids should treat me like I treated my teachers. And of course that was a big difference. That's basically one thing I expected and that was very different."

Perhaps because Al had not always intended to be a teacher, he displays more insecurity about his practice

than the other respondents. "So, I wasn't sure what--in fact it took up until the last couple of years for me to really understand the things in my own mind that I was trying to teach and some basic things--that if they can get this and that, then I've taught them something. But, back then (in the beginning of his teaching) I didn't understand; I was just trying to follow the course outline. I tried to follow it as closely as I could but with no real understanding on my part of what they were supposed to get out of it. . . . Maybe that's just a personal thing. I think a lot of people go into it with a better idea."

I asked Al about some of these other people, fellow teachers, and how helpful they had been to him during his first year. "Well, that was--one of the good things about being here was that we were given a lot of autonomy in the classroom. I felt good about that but, you know, I think I wanted some more interaction with the other teachers. . . . I'm the kind of person who doesn't really ask a lot of questions, especially when there's not a whole lot of offer. If I had asked the questions, I'm sure I would have gotten the help. They were very helpful but I still felt like maybe I could have used some more models and specific help; I think maybe that was it."

I asked Al if he could point to anyone specific who had been influential to him during his first year; after a particularly long pause, he responded, "The department chairmen

were a great help. And when I would go to them, they would be helpful. I guess of all the people they were the greatest help. I felt--I had gone to school here and so I knew them or I knew of them, but I never had them as a teacher. . . . So when I came back I didn't feel like saying 'Yes Sir' or 'No Maam' like they were still my teacher. They were a big help. But they were of course busy, they were very busy."

As Al talked I had the feeling that he had wanted and could have used a lot more help and support than he had gotten that first year. He probably did not feel that he should bother these busy people with his problems and concerns. This feeling was also compounded by the fact that he had attended this school himself as a student and I think tended to still see these people as he had seen them when a student; the fact that he explicitly denied any such feeling indicates that at some point he probably felt that he was imposing on them by asking for their help. Whether Al wanted their help or not, there was clearly "not a whole lot of offer" of help to him during that first year.

I asked Al to talk more about his feelings about the assistance given him by the other teachers and principal. "Well, our principal would never, never ask you things or bother you in any way. And I felt that was good because I felt that he had confidence in me. And that's what I needed at the time. My wife's experience was a whole lot different

and, comparing the two, I really felt a whole lot better. I felt more fortunate than she was. But I guess I felt like I still needed some help, you know. Maybe as I left student teaching, I needed some more help, working with somebody. I felt that that would have been good. I don't know how possible that was, but I felt that working with somebody real closely for a little longer would have helped me understand better because basically all the ideas I've gotten in teaching--a lot of them--and I guess most teachers are like this anyway, come from other people. And you have to get it at different intervals and just when you can and it seems like maybe if you got it in a more concentrated dose--and every school does it differently, so maybe within your own school if you could get it in more, if they could just sit down with you and tell you this is the kind of thing to do and these things will work, that would have helped."

At this point I had a picture of Al as a lonely frightened first-year teacher who apparently had no one or felt that he had no one to turn to for help, advice, or support. Curious about where he had formulated his ideas about what a teacher is and does, I asked him to describe what he thought of when he thought of "Teacher." "That's a very good question because in my teaching that's the thing that I've always tried to live up to. I've always had an image of the good teacher. Originally it was those teachers I

had as a student--and I had some pretty good ones, I really did. And since then, it's changed . . . um . . . [a very long pause] I guess it's a person who knows a lot. I think that's still important. Someone who knows the subject, I think that's got to be the bottom line, and someone who can get it across. I think the variety of getting that across is really important. It's the way to do it in interesting and different ways--that always impresses me. And the organization of that and the ability to do a lesson that has, that's really good and to have a good evaluation about it, to follow it from beginning to end with a logical rationale with all that you have to do and all the different classes and the little time that you have to do so much, that really impresses me when I see that. When everything has a good reason, because some things you seem to do out of desperation. I guess that's it. The teacher who has a variety of lessons and everything has a meaning--I think that's something I've always tried to--I've always been impressed with. And getting kids excited--I think that's important. And if you can do that, I think that's one of the things that--I think a teacher should really care about the students. And I don't mean that--I mean, that's why we're here and that sounds kind of trite but that's the bottom line. . . . I guess among the good teachers I've known, they seem to care about--they love the subject and they care about the people they're with. You can't hide that and you can't fake it."

I asked Al if he had always associated the characteristics he had just listed with good teachers or if his concept of teacher had changed with practice. "I never realized that the teacher could care or be concerned, although as a student you know they do, but you still see them as a taskmaster. And basically I guess that's the kind of teacher I still admire. One who is almost unbending and yet one who is fair and one who--this grade business for instance. You know, you have to discuss that and all that but I've always admired the teacher who can in an almost unrelenting way feel like they're right and not really care about being right. You know, I guess you have to care about the students and you have to do things that they don't like because you care for them. You can go the other way and be nice all the time and that's not really showing a caring attitude toward them. I think a good teacher has wisdom and knows when to do all those things, you know. And I think the word wisdom--I like that--because there's more to it than just knowledge of the subject, there's the knowledge of life and of young people and old people--what these kids are supposed to be and an idea of what they could become. And you're trying to help them do that. That's something I guess I've always felt--that a teacher is wise. I guess I realize now that a lot of teachers aren't; I always thought they were. I guess I still go with that--I'd like to be a wise teacher, to know what is best. . . . For a long time the only model

I had of good teaching were the teachers I had as a student. . . . But still, those old ideas about a good teacher have never--I've just added to them but they have always kind of been there."

Al talked about the colleagues in his school whom he perceives as good teachers, even though he has never seen them teach. "They are the teachers who seem to demand a great deal from their students, and they seem to get it. In fact the way the students respond to me has always been a key, has always been one of the things I've looked at in deciding if I'm doing a good job. . . . You know, the way they treat you and the questions they ask and the way they approach assignments rather than just answering questions in class . . . how they generally feel about the course and you. . . . I guess I put a lot of stock in their feelings; they're pretty honest. . . . And they <u>are</u> the experts."

In trying to define for himself what makes a good teacher Al has drawn extensively on his own student experiences and the reactions of his own students. He does not mention any clear strong colleague who has helped him in defining good practice; the picture Al paints is more of a lonely teacher, looking for the kinds of feedback which are meaningful to him and finding it in his own memory primarily. His ideas of what constitutes good teaching have not changed significantly since he first formulated them to himself when he began practice; he still sees good teaching as the wise

use of time and opportunity to help the students see what they are capable of becoming and to help the student begin to realize that vision. What Al seems to have learned over the course of his six years' experience is that not all teachers are wise and caring people, not all teachers share his vision of what good teaching is.

I asked Al to talk about the times he felt most and least in charge during the school day. "Well, I feel most in charge in my classroom. I feel like I'm it, you know, for those few minutes. . . . I'm the person who gets things going as the teacher and I have to just have a lot of responsibility, a lot of power which you have to handle carefully. One of the least places is just out in the hall or in the cafeteria; you know, where they don't know you necessarily and where, if you're not their teacher, they would never do what they're told. And that happens so often. You may say something that you've been told to say by the principal or that is just common knowledge as a teacher you're supposed to take care of some things in the hall. But that's when I think it all breaks down. When they are in your hall or in the cafeteria, a lot of order and respect breaks down, so you have to be careful how you use your authority as a teacher there. They feel like they're free and you don't have any right to--and I can understand that. They need that time. If there are some things that are obviously wrong and you try to take care of them, you really

feel on kind of shaky ground. It's like being in a dark alley somewhere. But we don't have that kind of school here. They could say almost anything and almost get away with it. I feel that this [indicating his own classroom area] is a good place to be. I feel on top of it here."

Al apparently feels most in control and in charge when he is in his own room, on his own territory, dealing with students who know him. His feeling of being out of control in the halls or in the cafeteria is probably partly a result of his physical appearance; Al is slender, of medium height, and wears horn-rimmed glasses. The combination of those three attributes might spell "victim" to many of the typical high school rowdies who didn't know him. Tall tough students in leather jackets and cowboy boots are not likely to listen to this slight-looking scholar; Al is not an imposing figure, though there is quiet strength to him which the students who know him have probably sensed or experienced. Al's lack of role model has probably also affected his feelings of control in and out of the classroom; he apparently has not had the opportunity to observe another teacher controlling a group of unknown students.

I asked Al to tell me more about the lack of observations or evaluations on him and how he felt about that. "We were evaluated but I think I was observed one time. But that was in a yearbook class which I didn't know what--of all the things I didn't know what I was doing, I didn't know

what I was doing there. And that was a class, that was not just the staff. That was where I was supposed to be teaching yearbook. And I was sitting in on the staff and watching them because they were already positioned, they were halfway through and they ran themselves, I was just kind of babysitting and learning. But I had nothing to teach them. And I think one of the observations occurred because one of the students and I didn't get along and he had asked the principal--the vice principal--to come in. And he made one--I remember one suggestion about technique that was well taken and I appreciated it. But I believe that was the only time that--we were not observed as part of a regular evaluation. . . . Just maybe--I've been here six years--just maybe in the last part of it they've started to come in on a regular, maybe once a year, basis. It's when they have to, when they have to do it. So, that's really only happened in the last couple of years that they've started doing it."

When I asked Al how he felt about observations generally, he replied, "Well, frankly, one reason I was a little bit apprehensive about having a student teacher was the idea of some stranger in my room watching me because I haven't had that since student teaching, so I wasn't used to it. But it's worked out just fine. . . . On the whole I think a lot of teachers feel that way; they just don't want somebody in there watching them, because they feel a

little insecure about somebody's going to, you know, we just don't feel real good about criticism as teachers even though we do it all day long. We just don't like it and I'm as bad as anybody about that."

Although Al has only been observed a few times he still displays the fear of the observation. He is concerned about having a stranger in the room watching him, as though he were afraid that he would be found wanting. The one observation that Al mentions during his first year happened at the instigation of a student; the lengthy explaining he gives of the circumstances surrounding that observation are an indication of his nervousness about the whole process. He does remember one helpful suggestion about technique; he mentions no other benefits from that or any other observation. He makes a point of the fact that the observations are completed when "<u>they have to do it</u>," not when it might be of some benefit to the teacher. Neither does Al mention any kind of follow-up interview to discuss the evaluation; it sounds as though the visit is made, the report completed, and a copy put in the teacher's mailbox. Although Al has little use for the observation evaluations, he still expresses some disquiet at the idea of the stranger watching his practice.

I asked Al to tell me about the ways he had sensed a change in himself as a result of his teaching experience. "Well, . . . [a very long pause] . . . I didn't see a lot

of growth. The growth that I've noticed has been within the last couple of years. I notice such a big difference between--just in the last couple of years--it almost seemed to happen just over a summer. I came back with just a real different attitude. What I tried to do--I guess one change was--what I tried to do was give 'em a lot, keep 'em busy, you know that type of thing. And I spent so much time doing that that I really didn't have an idea of what was being learned and of what was being reinforced. I think I got better at that, I felt adept at that, and more confident. I guess if anything I--no specific thing--I just felt more confident with the position of a teacher, the authority and the respect. I got some more confidence. I began to feel that I could actually help them in writing, even more than in any other area. The writing I felt like I could help and I started feeling more like that after a few years."

Although Al does not specifically mention it in response to this question, I think that one thing that changed in him as a result of teaching was a growth of confidence in himself. In response to several of the other questions, Al mentions his insecurity when he first started teaching and his concern about the kind of job he was doing. His reference to his attempts to just "keep 'em busy" during his first year reflects his insecurity about what he was supposed to be doing. After he gained a few years' experience

and began to see that keeping them busy was not the sole function of his job as a teacher, he began to look at the teaching/learning experience and to try to analyze it for areas that needed work. In connection with this kind of reflection, Al talks about the broader perspective which meeting his colleagues in graduate courses at the university has given him. "I got a lot of good ideas from them and it's nice to be able to talk about things with people who are experiencing things that you are." His experiences in the classroom, in his graduate courses, and through his own reflection seem to have given Al a quiet assurance that he knows what he is doing and that he is doing it well.

Analysis

Al's first-year experience seems to have been one of almost completely unrelieved professional loneliness. He did not mention any one person as having been of any real help to him; although he mentioned the potential assistance of his department chairmen, he also stressed the fact that they were "very busy" people. Al admits of himself that he is not the kind of person to ask for help when there is "not a whole lot of offer"; he also admits that he would have welcomed some more assistance from his colleagues. "If they could just sit down and tell you this is the kind of thing to do and these things will work, that would have helped."

Apparently Al felt that he was out of his depth when he began teaching; he mentions his concern about not knowing precisely why he was doing what he was doing. "We had a course outline with a lot of suggestions and a lot of books and short stories and poems that were appropriate and that was a--you know, I really wasn't sure what I was supposed to do. I tried to follow the course outline as closely as I could but with no real understanding on my part of what they were supposed to get out of it." Although Al experienced these doubts, there seems to have been no one with whom he could share them. Al does not directly say that he was a lonely, insecure teacher during his first year, but it is implicit in much of what he does talk about.

Al has fairly definite ideas about what makes a good teacher--the person should know the subject matter, know the students, and know the world. The person should be wise and fair and fairly unbending in his/her requirements of his/her students; the person should also command respect from the students. Most of these ideas have remained unchanged during Al's six years' experience; he has thought them through and can articulate them fairly well, but they have not changed from his first days of teaching. Al has mostly drawn these ideas from his remembrance of the good teachers he had as a student and from the reactions of his own students to the kinds of things he does in his classroom.

In talking about his feelings of being in control, Al reveals a great deal of insecurity once he is out of the confines of his own classroom. He mentions the fear of the students who do not know him; "It's like being in a dark alley someplace." Within his own classroom Al feels that he is definitely in charge; he is the one who sets the tasks, who monitors the progress, and who issues the criticisms and corrections. He seems to feel comfortable there because he knows the students and they know him.

It would seem that many of Al's feelings about himself as a teacher stem from the fact that he had so little help or advice from his peers when he first started teaching. These feelings of isolation were compounded by the fact that he was given complete autonomy in his very first year. He mentions only one observation, evaluation during his first year; that visit was occasioned by the complaint of a student about his practices and not by any wish from the administration to know how he was doing in the classroom. The message from the school administration to its teachers seems to be: Do what you wish to do, just don't make any trouble for us. We will leave you alone if you leave us alone. Al seems to have internalized this message very well; although he mentions trying to assist the administration in enforcing those things that the principal has asked the teachers to enforce, it seems to be in a desultory fashion; in the halls and in the cafeteria, Al does not seem

to go out of his way to help the administration enforce discipline. It is as though his attitude were that he will help them as much as they have helped him.

Overall, Al seems to have found his own niche in teaching without the assistance of anyone else; he has given considerable time to a consideration of the attributes of a good teacher and tries to act according to his definition of a good teacher. He seems to be feeling more and more confident in his own ability as a teacher; I sense that this was a hard battle for him.

Follow-up Interview

Al rejected the description of himself as a lonely first-year teacher. He said that his life was too full of other things to be described as lonely. He did agree that he felt a lot of insecurity during that first year, but not loneliness.

Al and I talked about various ways to relieve the insecurity which a new teacher experiences, perhaps an internship plan or a buddy system with an experienced teacher. We agreed that some sort of system is needed and we also agreed that if it needed funding, it would probably not be feasible. Al seemed genuinely sorry that he had no solution to this dilemma.

Diane

Diane is a 26-year-old secondary school English teacher; she is in her "third official year" of teaching in a local school system. Diane is married to an electrician who attends college part-time; they have a 3-year-old son. Diane holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

Diane describes her early life as very settled. The family lived in an urban Southern area during all of Diane's childhood. Diane's father is a property appraiser for the state government and her mother is a registered nurse who works in the occupational health area. Diane has one younger sister who is also a nurse.

Diane grew up knowing that she wanted to teach--she describes it as a childhood ambition of hers. She thinks that she has always wanted to teach because she sees teaching as service to people. Diane worked for one year as an editor for international sales in a multinational company; she took the job because she could not find a teaching position. Diane resigned from that job because she was disturbed by the excessive concern with money and prestige which her co-workers displayed. She has taught for three years on a secondary level. Despite the fact that she talks about many of her expectations being so unrealistically high, Diane is very glad that she is a teacher and has no plans to change careers.

Diane went into teaching because she wanted to be in the company of "fellow learners, fellow explorers." She

first substituted in a private school for ½ year and then went to the public system. Diane was disenchanted with the private school system because "it was a big thing with the headmaster that he has the money and he owns the school so he does what he wants to. . . . And you become a person, like a governess. . . . So I quit that job. And it's not the kids. . . . It's if I can be the boss, the real boss."

Diane is a rapid-fire speaker who checks frequently to see that she is using words which are understandable to her listener and that she is making sense when she speaks. Her speaking style is a blend of stream-of-consciousness and associative leaps which make sense to her, but are not always clear to a listener; her frequent checking with her listener for comprehension shows that she knows that she may be making unclear allusions.

When I asked Diane to tell me about her first-year experience, she first talked about her colleagues. "First of all, I expected my colleagues to be different than any other colleagues in business or on the job or whatever. I expected them to be like fellow students--you know, fellow learners, fellow explorers, equally searching and cussing and fussing and groping and--you know, equally. Equally interested like in what's happening and why. Even if it's something terrible, at least equally fussing about it. I never expected there to be apathy on their faces or giant bags under their eyes and runs in their stockings. It's like

showing, 'Look, screw this place, I'm here to collect that paycheck.' And I never thought I'd see that in education. . . . And I've seen it lots, lots. Biding time--I never thought I'd see that. . . . I thought it would be elitist. You know, the quality and the cultural aspect that carries you. So I thought everyone would sort of have that philosophy, that they would walk straight because they knew, they were confident that they knew what they were doing. That's what I expected."

What Diane found among her colleagues was a great surprise, if not a shock, to her. "It all had a political--I mean just like business had a hierarchy or bureaucracy or something--even within teaching there is a pecking order." Diane talked about the backbiting and whispering in the hall that teachers seem to indulge in; "I didn't expect any of that in education."

Diane seems very disappointed to find that teaching, like her business experience, would have such small-minded people associated with it; she seems to have entered teaching expecting to find a haven from the mundane, the bureaucratic, and the petty; she expected that "all my colleagues would be just rushing to me and me to them at all moments of the day to share tidbits, you know. To share tidbits of guess what happened here and guess what happened there and sneaking each other candy bars, pats on the back, yelling at each other, throwing things at each other--in other words, open. I didn't find that either, because it goes in cliques."

Diane was disappointed not only to find that teachers were cliquish, but also to discover that their dedication did not seem to extend beyond the contractual hours. "I can't believe that they'd want to leave at quarter to four. . . . I didn't expect any of that in education. . . . The main thing in education is compiling philosophical knowledge and creative ways of presenting things. You spend all your time in what really matters and somebody else takes care of all the mundane stuff. . . . I think of that time from quarter to four til five or five-thirty as free time or planning time to get done what I've wanted to all day, to think about things or get things fixed. Cuz nobody can bother me; everybody's off. And yet I get criticized for that. . . . So, in the first year, I expected people not to observe the time rules. I thought after school we could sit down and regroup or hash things out."

Diane seems to have entered teaching with three main expectations about her colleagues--that they would be scholars, that they would be dedicated to the pursuit of "philosophical knowledge", and that they would not be concerned with such mundane matters as contractual time constraints. What she found was that teachers were none of these things in all instances; although she does not directly say so, she seems to have found that the people who enter teaching are no better and no worse than the people who enter any other field. The depth of her surprise at finding what she "never

expected in education" seems to be proportionate to the height of her expectations about teachers; perhaps had her expectations been lower, she might not have been so surprised by the behavior and values of her colleagues.

I asked Diane to talk more about her personal expectations for her behavior when she entered teaching. "The things I remembered from methods were to be human and be respected and, for God's sake, don't be sarcastic to the students. Not only to the students, but it sort of transcended that to all people. Respectful, warm, human, and compassionate but firm--that's a hard one which I'm beginning to master. If people will leave me alone, if the other teachers and all will leave me alone. . . . That's another thing--when I went in I expected my superiors or whatever and my comrades or colleagues to respect the fact that I was actively working on what I was supposed to be working on. I wasn't an expert--I did accept the fact that I was a beginner and just because I was enthusiastic did not mean that I thought I knew it all but that I was working on it vigorously--working on becoming a good teacher--which was resented. 'She's too enthusiastic, she's too unreal.' So, why not be enthusiastic, why not come in each day prepared, excited, and interested?" Throughout her discussion of her expectations, Diane reveals feelings of anger, hurt, and disappointment that her expectations were so far from reality.

I asked Diane to talk about the people who had been influential with her during that first year. "Well, it had

to have been, out of all the colleagues, it had to have been one or two people who were real people. There was only one or maybe two that saw that you were going through what they went through and would actually come to you and give you little helps, without patronizing you and all that. . . . And of course you're sitting there thinking 'What's the motive?' because you've already become defensive. My methods teacher in college helped by my being able to go back to her and say, 'God, I can't believe this!' and then her saying, 'You have what it takes, you do what you think is right.' . . . But, I get cut down so much because people seem to love to find my weaknesses, like my inability to know what the new raise for teachers is going to be." I commented to Diane that it sounded as though she had found much more negative influence than positive influence and I wondered if that fact had caused her to change or modify her behavior. She agreed that there had been a lot of negative influence, but denied that it had significantly changed her. "Well, see, I'm kind of hard-headed, so rather than trying to conform my methods, I might just go in the opposite direction. So, they didn't change me, not except--in some ways. I might act conservatively, I might act more conservatively than I really felt. Instead of running in in the morning being the way I felt--which, I feel great in the morning--instead of doing that I might curtail my feelings or I may keep things to myself that I knew wasn't going to be a big deal. But

it wasn't anything like they made me do like they did. They always gave me little hints like, 'Alphabetize your students'--little things like that." Although Diane denies that she has been changed by her colleagues, she does admit that she has learned to temper her enthusiasm when she comes to school in the morning.

Diane goes on to offer one interesting solution to some of the stresses she felt during her first year; "I wish there had been more male teachers. They batted it out better, they have different ways of releasing the stress and all. The women teachers shaped up because they didn't want to be such bitches in front of the men."

I agreed that it might be more pleasant with more men in the profession.

I asked Diane to tell me about the concept of "Teacher" which she carries around in her head. "That means, not to me, but to the world, means good person--stable person--knowledgeable person--person with no problems--motherly or fatherly person." I asked her if she thought that that was a good definition of a teacher. "Sort of. Because teachers are on a pedestal and good by their own definition. But, on the other side, teachers are usually the most radical thinkers sometimes or the most outrageous thinkers. And in order to be compassionate to such a large group of knuckleheads, you've got to be--you know--like a whore--you know--as far as values." The idea of comparing teaching to whoring

struck me as very novel and I burst into laughter at that point; Diane laughed too but then continued to explore the analogy to make sure that I understood what she meant.

"You see, if a whore is not good and a nun is, then in order to teach you'd better be a whore instead of a nun when it comes right down to it. You know, that says what I want it to say. You have to be able to accept so much and understand so much and cope with so many diverse--you know, for somebody to say "F---- you" and for you not to take that personally and for you to still like that student . . . and not to say "F--- you" back because you know it wouldn't do any good even though it might relieve you--on that basis, you're like a whore. Or to take it and take it and your ability to wallow in all this puts you in good."

In talking about the concept "Teacher" Diane also talked about the importance of keeping personal problems out of the classroom. "I don't think that we should have a whole lot of personal problems or let them see that we have a whole lot. I think we need to look kind of stable . . . because I think that they need it."

In talking about her department chairman, Diane reveals further aspects of the concept "Teacher". "She was one of those calm--like she was on Valium all the time. . . . Her classes were always organized and she could be absent with no trouble." Diane described this particular department chairman as motherly, supporting and protecting her people.

I asked Diane to tell me about times that she felt most and least in control at school. She talked first about the classroom; "Once I developed the courage to pretend that I was my own boss--I said if I'm not my own boss, why should I let them know? Why don't I pretend that I am the boss and see if I can pull it off. . . . I really used liberties that I couldn't in a lot of ways. A lot of people do things because 'I am the teacher' but I never did that. . . . I would take the liberty of stepping a little beyond what I could and make up little rules. And just hope to God that the students didn't take it to the principal. That was part of survival and my survival with the kids was to pretend that I was my own boss and that I could do whatever I wanted to do." While Diane's stratagem seemed to work for her in the classroom, she felt very differently about her relations with the principal.

"Oh, it's a fact that I am really--especially in the school I'm in right now--I'm pretty much like a day care, like a baby sitter or a social worker or a counselor, but least of all am I an English teacher in the situation I'm in right now. And see, I wasn't trained for that. It'd be a different story if I had at least one workshop for a whole week before I went into this, something to get me oriented. That's another thing that's very unfair and that makes you feel very peonish is the fact that you're thrown from here to here and that's supposed to make you feel good when they

say, 'Flexibility is a large part of your evaluation.' When, if you're extremely flexible, you'd better bet that you're also going to be an extremely slack teacher. Unprepared. I swear if you're that flexible, you can't be well-prepared and organized, there's just no way." Diane is presently situated in an alternative school for students who cannot handle a regular school environment. The background of a counselor or social worker might be very helpful to her. Diane seems to feel that when they--the administrators--stress flexibility so much, they are using the concept as a cop-out to avoid the necessity of training the teachers through workshops.

Diane cited two other instances with a principal where she felt that the principal deliberately tried to make her feel small. When she went to the office to complain about the number of interruptions during the previous period, he said her name three times slowly; "in other words, you fool--you idiot--you child. And he sits down--and I'm standing--and he sits down like 'Save me, Lord, from this neurotic teacher.' And all of a sudden I feel about three inches tall because this man has such a calm exterior and I'm the one who's upset. It's saying to me sort of non-committally that all of this that happened is my fault. If I had done whatever I was supposed to, none of that would have happened."

"Another time I go to the principal's office--he calls me in--and closes the door. Closes the door! And okay, I

already shrink. And I sit down and he says, 'What seems to be the problem?' I pretend I don't know what he's talking about and I really don't know. And he says, 'Well, you have a lot of referrals here,' and he holds up the discipline forms. And I say, 'Well, at the last meeting we had, when I brought up the problem of my students, you said to write it down.' And he said, 'Well, are you doing anything before you write it down? Are you calling the parents?'" Diane explained that in her school calling the parents is usually fruitless because the parents are not home anyway or don't care what their kids are doing in school. "And he knew that. . . . So, I'm still sitting there thinking, 'What is all this?' . . . I'm still feeling two inches tall because I really don't know what is going on here. . . . He treated me like a boss to an employee. . . . It all boils down to power. . . . I feel least autonomous with the principal, sometimes with the counselor. . . . I feel really good about the fact that I get to represent the English department at all the meetings because, see, I'm it. I'm the chairman and the peons. Sometimes you feel less powerful around the counselor and around computer people and around parents these days. . . . The parents see that you're a person and you have nice legs or you talk to them on their level or you go to their same swimming pool and . . . all of a sudden you're a real person and that just takes you off that pedestal. It puts you down there and all of a sudden it says that they

know what you are, and you become a person like a governess. So, I'm the governess and I feel diminished. . . . But I had one parent who called me and started crying and said, 'Please get him to come back to school; you're the only teacher that I know that can get him to come back.' And I felt big, I felt autonomous. I felt good."

Analysis

Overall, Diane's interview shows a person who entered teaching with tremendously high expectations of fulfillment and reward from her work. Diane entered teaching after experience in the private school sector and in business; each of these experiences had apparently left her unhappy with the attitudes and values she found. Of her private school experience, she says that she "felt like a governess. It was a big thing with the headmaster that he has the money and he owns the school. . . ." Diane also found that her private school teaching colleagues were very cliquish; "if you were totally withdrawn, totally eccentric, you were well accepted." Diane feels that she neither was nor is totally withdrawn, totally eccentric, so she was unhappy in that job.

She was also unhappy in the business world; although she admits that many people would have found her job in international sales to be a very glamorous one, she herself was not happy in that job. She felt that her co-workers showed too much concern with the "perks" of thejob--the money and prestige which they associated with working in middle

management in a corporation. She became disenchanted with the relentless push for monetary success.

From this kind of background, Diane entered teaching with seemingly inflated expectations, not about the job or task of teaching so much, as about the attitudes of her colleagues. Remarkably little of Diane's talking about teaching is concerned with the in-classroom teaching and learning experience; most of her conversation seems to turn on the various ways that her colleagues have shown themselves to be--according to the way that she perceives them--narrow-minded, cliquish, aloof, and (to her the most damning) ordinary or pedestrian.

Diane talks about the fact that her colleagues seem to ridicule her enthusiasm for her job; "but I get cut down so much because people seem to love to find my weaknesses. . . ." She admits that there may have been, "out of all the colleagues, there had to have been one or two people who were real people . . . who would actually come to you and give you little helps without patronizing you." When she said that, I had the clear impression that she thought that there must have been someone who helped her, not that she had an actual person in mind when she spoke of the help she had received. She speaks again and again of "not expecting to find in Education" people who were concerned only with collecting their paycheck, with putting in only the specified number of hours, with treating teaching as a job rather than

as a moral commitment to the development of "philosophical knowledge." She expected to find "fellow learners, fellow explorers"; what she found were people with "apathy on their faces and giant bags under their eyes" which said to her that they were unconcerned, uncaring about their profession.

Diane's expectations about her colleagues were so high that she is still being disappointed, even in her third official year, by the attitudes she discovers among her colleagues. She spoke of the belittling attitude she recently experienced from her colleagues when she tried to report on a conference she had attended; as she perceived it, their message to her was that they didn't care what she had learned and didn't want to hear about it.

In terms of influences on her during her first year, Diane admits that there was more negative influence on her than positive. Although she denies that this influence changed her methods, she also discloses that she learned to be more circumspect in showing her enthusiasm. "I might act more conservatively than I felt. Instead of running in in the morning being the way I felt . . . I might curtail my feelings or I may keep things to myself. . . ." From Diane's perception, her youth and her enthusiasm were the two things that her faculty colleagues were most upset by; "I was working on it vigorously--working on becoming a good teacher--which was resented. 'She's too enthusiastic, she's too unreal' . . . ."

In terms of the concept of "Teacher" which Diane holds, there seem to be two conceptions. One reflects her understanding of the general population's concept of a teacher--"good person, stable person, knowledgeable person, person with no problems, motherly or fatherly person." She "sort of" thinks that this is a good description of a teacher. At the same time, she thinks of teaching as akin to whoring--"to take it and take it and your ability to wallow in all this . . . to accept so much and understand so much and cope with so much . . . on that basis, you're like a whore." Diane seems to be torn between her feeling that "I don't see many other principles worth working for. . . . I am convinced that helping people cope with life--that's worth it" and her feeling that teaching is "tense and deserving of a lot more money and a lot more recognition because it's difficult and it's complicated. I guess the peanut money and the peanut recognition--the lack of recognition bothers me more than anything." Her conception of a teacher seems to reflect both what she had expected and hoped to find when she entered the profession and what she actually found when she began teaching. She expected a glorious experience with fellow learners; she found that many of her colleagues are small-minded. I have a sense that this dichotomy between expectation and reality has not been resolved in Diane's own mind yet.

Diane does not seem to feel in control or in charge in very many situations during a school day. She speaks of

"pretending that I am my own boss . . . I would take the liberty of stepping a little beyond what I could and make up these rules, and just hope to God that the students didn't take it to the principal." Although this pretense seems to have worked for her some of the time, she also feels that she is pretty much "like a baby sitter or a social worker, or a counselor, but least of all am I an English teacher, in the situation I'm in right now."

When she has to have interaction with her principal, Diane feels belittled, "peonish"; "I'm still feeling two inches tall because I really don't know what's going on here. . . . He treated me like a boss to an employee." In Diane's eyes, "it all boils down to power" and she seems to feel that she has no power in her situation; she feels good about being sent to represent the English department at meetings because "I'm it. I'm the chairman and the peons." In all of our discussions, Diane mentioned only one incident--when the parent called to ask her to convince a student to return to school--where she "felt big, autonomous. I felt good." She made that observation with such passion that it seems to be the only time she has felt "big and good" about her teaching.

Follow-up Interview

As Diane read her words and my conclusions about what she had said, she kept muttering, "It's true, it's so true." She reports that she still finds her colleagues trying to restrain her enthusiasm and her outspokenness.

Diane also related several recent incidents to show that the cliquishness of her faculty has not diminished.

Overall, she seemed pleased with her interview write-up and seemed to want the opportunity to talk more about the issues she had raised. We were unable to finish talking, however, because the afternoon school session was just beginning.

Initial Summary

Before considering the larger issues involved in the process of teacher socialization and the development of a sense of professional identity, I think that it is important to distill these interviews more carefully through my perceptions of what the teachers revealed during the interview.

Before considering their broader implications, I would first like to present a composite of the responses to my questions. The specific questions I asked were:

1. Tell me about what happened to you during your first year of teaching.
    a. What did you expect teaching to be like?
    b. What did you find it to be like?
    c. Who influenced you during that year?
    d. What about you changed during that year?
2. Describe for me your perception of a "good" teacher.
    a. Has it changed as a result of your teaching?
    b. If it has changed, how is it different?
    c. If changed, how did the change occur?

d. What behaviors and attitudes characterize a good teacher for you?

e. Where do these ideas come from?

3. Tell me about your feelings of being in charge or in control in the classroom.

a. Where and when do you feel most in charge?

b. Where and when do you feel least in charge?

c. What happens to those feelings when you have visitors in your room?

d. How are those feelings affected by the observation or evaluation visit of your principal?

In talking about their expectations, all four teachers said that they expected teaching to be demanding, fun, intellectually stimulating, and as enjoyable as school had been for them when they were students. Al was the least effusive in his expectations, thinking only that it would be better and easier than student teaching, while Nancy and Diane were the most exhilarated in their expectations, both of them thinking that it would be what Nancy called an "intense, personal, cognitive" experience. All four teachers seem to have expected more intellectual challenge and stimulation than they found in the classroom.

What these teachers report that they experienced is a far cry from their expectations. They all found teaching to be less fun and more work than they had anticipated. Both Theresa and Al were surprised that the students were not as

respectful nor as interested in school as they had expected. Diane was most surprised to find that her colleagues were, in her words, "ordinary human beings" rather than the "fellow learners and fellow explorers" she had expected.

In talking about the influences on their practice, all four teachers reported that they drew on their "memory" of their own teachers for a model of teacher behavior. I will consider the implications of this reliance on memory later in this analysis. The varied responses to this question show the personal nature of the perceived influences. Al says that he had few direct influences beyond memory because he was left pretty much on his own during his first year. Nancy is now able to realize that her first department chair had a great influence on her practice although she was not able to appreciate the influence at the time. Theresa mentions specifically one particular group of students with whom she felt comfortable as being very influential in her teaching. Of the four, Diane is the only one who mentioned her college methods teacher as an influence on her. Diane is also the only one of the four to talk about her colleagues in terms of negative influence. She seems to feel that her colleagues tried very hard to influence her behavior, but mostly as a control on her enthusiasms, not as a guide to practice.

When we talked about personal changes during the first year, all four teachers agreed that there had been changes

in them; of the four only Theresa insisted that the change would have occurred in her no matter what kind of work she did. The other three teachers report that they learned, in varying ways with varying degrees of success, to accept that their expectations had been too high. Nancy says that she learned to relax, while Al reports that he learned to be more adept and confident about his teaching. Diane seems to have learned to accommodate her behavior to the apparent school norm, even though the accommodation did not always seem sensible or right to her.

When our talk turned to the teachers' definition or description of a good teacher, certain characteristics were common among all four teachers. All four defined a good teacher in terms of interpersonal traits as warm, human, compassionate, friendly, and emotionally strong. All of these characteristics have some connection to the teacher's relationships with the people in the school building. Although Al describes a good teacher as one who is orderly, organized, and wise, most of the discussions of the definition of a good teacher tended to conceive of a good teacher primarily in terms of relationship-building skills.

During our talks, I also found remarkably little indication of growth or change over time in the ways that good teaching is defined by these four people. Despite as many as seven years of experience, none of the four teachers seemed to have changed his/her basic definition of teaching

as a result of experience in the classroom. All of them, in various ways, indicate that they rely on their memory of expectations of teaching derived from being students.

My questions to the teachers about feelings of being in charge or in control during the school day elicited the most varied responses. Both Al and Diane say that they feel most in charge in the classroom, although Diane states that she feels in charge there because she pretends to be the boss in the room. Theresa rejects any notion that she can be in charge of anyone but herself, while Nancy feels most in charge before or after the school day when she is alone in her classroom and she can get everything in order.

When I asked them to tell me about the times and places where they felt least in charge, the responses again show great variance. Nancy feels least in charge during the class period because there is so much going on and so many demands are being made of her. Al feels least in charge when he is in the public areas of the school--the cafeteria or the hallway--where he is liable to encounter students who don't know him. Diane feels diminished, like a peon, when she has to have any interaction with the building principal. Theresa did not express any feelings of being more or less in charge in any particular place. As with their responses to my questions about good teachers, these responses about feelings of autonomy show little evidence of change over time; it seems that these teachers feel as autonomous today as they did on their first working day.

My last questions asked for their feelings during the principal's evaluation visit. Both Al and Nancy feel fearful, threatened by the visit; Theresa says that she does not mind the visit because she feels that her principal "earns his salary" and is generally a good principal. Diane did not talk about any instances where she had been observed. Diane's comments about her principal concern individual conferences she has had with him in his office.

From all of the responses to my questions, a picture begins to emerge of what these four teachers expected and what they found in the classroom, along with some indications of what happened to them. On the whole, the four expected teaching to be enjoyable and personally rewarding; they found that teaching is hard work, partially because of their uncooperative and underachieving students, their uninterested colleagues, and their distant or fearsome administrators. In this unfriendly atmosphere, the four teachers sought the advice or support of some other adult; mostly this support came from previous teachers or department chairpeople. In some instances, the teachers also found support from their students. All four learned through their first-year experiences to lower their expectations for both themselves and their students. Although the four people continued to define for themselves good teachers as those who were exceptionally warm, compassionate, understanding, and firm but fair, they also came to the realization that they could not be all those things to all their students all the time.

That diminished expectation seems to be a major change in the four teachers during this time.

With these types of responses, it seems appropriate to speculate about the origins of the expectations about teaching and some possible causes for the feelings and behaviors which these teachers demonstrate.

In talking about their first-year experiences, Nancy, Theresa, Al, and Diane all talk about their high expectations for their students, their colleagues and the system, and for themselves as teachers.

In general, Nancy, Theresa, Al, and Diane had each been adept students. They had all enjoyed school and had been successful students. Theresa talks about school being a secure, happy place for her; although the other three do not say so directly, I think that they all share Theresa's assessment of a school as a good place for them to be.

The school was not only a place of academic success for these four people, but also probably a place of social success as well. The four teachers all talk about the social connections they were able to make during their high school years. From their comments about their memories of high school, I think it is safe to assume that these four people were probably involved in a variety of extracurricular activities in their schools. They were probably also involved in a fairly typical adolescent stage where they perceived authority figures as fools, autocrats, or sometimes both.

While they report liking school, I suspect that their liking did not extend to all their teachers all the time; there were probably times when they thought disparagingly about their teachers, that the assignments were meaningless and boring, and that the rules of the school were to be broken rather than observed. As with many high school students, there were probably times when these four people gathered their friends into various minor and quite possibly major infractions of the rules which surrounded them. They most probably felt themselves to be allied with the students and their social activities more often than with the teachers and their educational assignments.

Many of my conclusions about the social aspect of schooling for these four teachers are based on the teachers' reaction to the students that they found in their classrooms. By and large, these four teachers report being very surprised to find that the students who faced them were not much like the students among whom they used to sit; most probably as students, these teachers sat among like-minded people while they were in class. Both Theresa and Nancy remark that they knew that there were students in school with them who did not like school and were not very successful at school but this observation was made in the tone one might use when acknowledging that Siberia must be cold--it is a fact that Siberia is cold, but the person has no direct knowledge of the cold. In much that kind of way, Theresa and Nancy talk

about the uninvolved, apathetic students who attended school with them. I do not think that any of the four people associated with students who were markedly dissimilar from themselves. It may be that, in a sense, these teachers expected to be teaching themselves; that is, to be teaching students who are as the teachers were, or remember themselves as being.

It is as though the four teachers expected that neither the school nor the types of students with whom they were familiar had changed or would change during the four-year teacher-training hiatus. What they left as high school seniors--in terms of their feelings about school, their teachers, and the students--they expected to find preserved through a kind of time-warp when they returned to school as teachers themselves. Time and again the four teachers talk about their surprise at finding students unlike those in their memories of their own student days--students who dislike school and the teachers, who are largely unsuccessful at school, and also unconcerned about their lack of success.

While they were students, the four teachers did not tend to see their own teachers as people, but rather, as Al describes them, as distant "taskmasters." Theresa talks about her surprise at finding that teachers have private lives, separate and distinct from their lives as teachers. Although she has been teaching six years, Theresa still has trouble separating her professional life from her personal

life--"Am I a teacher 24 hours a day? Do I ever stop being a teacher?" Diane reveals most clearly her high expectations for her colleagues and her shock at finding them to be rather ordinary people in some respects. While they do not say so as directly, I sense that the other three teachers experienced a similar kind of let-down in their expectations about their colleagues.

As students, these four people had apparently had good relations with their teachers; they had also apparently had positive reinforcement in the form of high marks from their teachers. In some ways, I suspect that these people, when they themselves became teachers, expected the same high marks from their colleagues that they were used to from their teachers. School, to these people, had usually meant an affirmation of their work and, by extension, of themselves as good workers. When they first entered a school building as a teacher, I think that each of them expected the same kind of positive affirmation of work and self from other people in the building. Most of them experienced from their colleagues at least lack of interest in, or, in Diane's case, what she interprets as outright hostility to their attempts to play the role of a teacher.

Their disappointment in their students and their colleagues became translated, I think, into a disappointment with the system of schooling as a whole. What they had experienced--because they were good, successful students--as

a nurturing personal environment became for them as teachers a massively neutral environment. Rather than the positive reinforcement which they were used to receiving in a school, each of these four teachers encountered what seemed to each of them to be system-wide indifference to them as individuals. Diane's exasperated comment that the system uses teacher flexibility as an excuse to transfer people at administrative whim shows a certain level of disappointment if not despair with the system. Nancy's plaintively expressed desire to be recognized as a person doing valuable work, not simply as an impersonal position, also reflects some disappointment with and bitterness about the system of schooling as she has found it.

Throughout the four interviews, as these teachers talked about their first-year experiences, I detected an undercurrent of disappointment and some resentment that the positive feelings which they associated with schools seemed to these people to be reserved for their student days; now that they have chosen to spend their professional lives in the classroom, the teachers have discovered that most of the people with whom they interact during a day--the students, the other teachers, and the administrators--do not value and reward their efforts in ways that they had come to expect from schools.

These disappointed expectations may help to explain the importance these people seem to attach to any relationships they are able to find among the school personnel. Nancy,

Theresa, Al, and Diane all speak of the relationships they have been able to form with at least some of their students; the evident pride they feel in the fact that students return to see them indicates to me that the teachers feel a need for affirmation from someone with whom they interact on a daily basis. When these teachers turn to their colleagues for professional affirmation as teachers, they usually find indifference; since the need is not met from among their colleagues, the teachers turn to another available source for judgment of their performance as teachers, to the students. As Al says, "They <u>are</u> the experts." While the four teachers rely on their students for support, I think that they would also like to have the affirmation from their colleagues.

Theresa talks about the fine line she has to walk between being the nice friendly teacher and the authority figure; I think the teachers turn to their students for the personal judgment as being nice and friendly. The four teachers have not found anyone yet who can confirm them as an authority on teaching and an expert.

When these teachers turn to the other source of professional judgment of their competence, to the principal or evaluator, they find little meaningful affirmation. Much of the scorn which Theresa, Nancy, Al, and Diane express about the evaluation process in their respective schools stems at least in part from their perception that the principal

"does not see a meaningful lesson." Although their evaluations are usually good, the four teachers do not seem to feel that the principal knows what transpires in their rooms, so his judgment of their effectiveness or competence is flawed in their eyes.

This scorn for the opinion of the building authority can also be seen as a continuation of the time warp expectations which I discussed earlier. That is, when these teachers were students themselves, they probably tended at least part of the time to see the authority figures as foolish, arbitrary, or unreasonable. Now that they themselves are teachers, they may still, in some hidden part of their consciousness, think that the authority figure who is judging them is not to be taken seriously, and therefore is unable to render meaningful judgment of them as teachers.

This concern for their own competence is revealed in their responses to my questions about the definition and description of a good teacher. I was interested in the fact that each of the four teachers, when I asked them to define or describe good teaching, relied on what they call their "memories" of their own high school teachers. Additionally, when I asked these teachers to tell me about how their idea of a good teacher has changed either as a result of their experiences or the influence of some other person, none of them could describe any significant change in their definition of a good teacher. This constant reference to the

term "memory" has, I think, several implications for a discussion of teacher socialization.

"Memory" seems to encompass several elements at once. When a person speaks of his/her memory of an event in his/her past, he/she may be referring to a particular moment in the past when he/she experienced a new understanding of or insight into a previously accepted phenomenon. He/she may be referring to a particular, specific moment of his/her history which carries symbolic meaning to him/her. A person may also be referring to some combination of the impression of the event and the specific details of the event as the impression is perceived in light of new maturity or insight. Memory combines details from a moment in time and the perception of that moment in terms of subsequent insights or in terms of the increased maturity of the individual. Memory seems to be a fragile and elusive entity; it can be said to serve the particular needs of the person at any given moment as well as to provide the person with a blueprint or map of action in a given situation.

A specific example may serve to help illuminate these aspects of a person's memory. Looking back on my first day as a classroom teacher, I like to remember myself as a calm and competent beginning teacher; I like to think that I felt comfortable in front of the class. This impression of calmness is the one I usually remember. There is also my memory of that same first day as a very confusing day with

seemingly arbitrary demands, and endless class periods. When I stood in front of that first class, I began to understand that teaching is more than a matter of standing before a group of adolescents and lecturing to them. My specific memory is one of calm competence; experience and maturity have helped me to realize that I was probably much less calm and much less competent than I'd like to remember. This perception of my first day of teaching has changed because I bring new insight and new understanding to the specific events of that day.

The process of remembering can be called the crucible of the construction of a person's history. The construction of memory serves as a reminder of a person's particular actions in a given situation and as a distillation of all the events, feelings, and people he/she has experienced.

In a sense, when these teachers speak of "memory," they seem to be using a form of verbal shorthand. The process of remembering very likely expresses a complex dialectic--memory simultaneously seems to preserve the events, people, and feelings of the past and to enable a person to re-evaluate these same events, people, and feelings in the light of newer insights, more detailed knowledge, or perhaps increased maturity. Memory can be seen as a fluid process which, while it presents to the conscious mind details of events, people, or feelings, also allows for a process of continuous reconstruction of memory, and more particularly the meaning of

past events. What I remember, for instance, of my first day as a teacher, has been changed or modified as my awareness of the dynamic relationships in a classroom has grown. While I used to remember that my actions and words were appropriate to my students, I have come to realize, as I filter my memories through newly acquired language and conceptual schemes, that my meaning-making of prior events changes--e.g., what was once calm and serene now seems to me to have been over-compensation. The details which memory supplies to the conscious mind are usually those details which the conscious mind can accept and process at any given time. The process of selection and presentation of detail from memory to conscious mind seems to be related to the meaning-making of the individual. Memory helps to define a person in terms of past experiences and to predict a person in terms of future reactions to new experiences. At the same time, memory usually serves only as a potential guide to action since the things stored in a person's memory are subject to revision and re-remembering, if you will, as experiences accumulate for the person.

It is difficult to describe exactly what the four teachers with whom I spoke meant when they indicated that they rely on their memories of their high school teachers in determining their attitude or their course of action in their own classes. They may be remembering their overall impression of their teachers; they may also be remembering

some specific event or emotion from their high school years. They may be projecting onto their students what they themselves experienced, and acting in response to that memory. It may be a combination of the various types of memories which give them some guidance in determining action in their own classrooms. When these teachers speak of their memory of their high school teachers, they are speaking of both a complex and a simple process. Memory is both a contributor to and a predictor of a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The four teachers' reliance on all the dimensions involved in what they called "memories" also raises collateral issues about not only what is selectively remembered, but about what is selectively forgotten--e.g., what these teachers sought, found, and retained from their teacher-training programs. From the conversation of these four teachers, it would seem that they have never encountered anything like a teacher-training or methods course. Except for Diane's comment that she used to call her methods professor for reassurance, there is no mention of college courses as influential with the teachers either in terms of their expectations or their actual practice. I think there are several possible explanations for the lack of any mention of college courses or instructors. These teachers may have seen college as a continuation of high school, offering them mostly more of the same in terms of perceptions of the teaching role. It may be that time spent in the courses is a

factor--typically, college students do not choose and concentrate on a major until their junior year. This means that the student spends two years learning about how to be a teacher, while he/she has spent three to four years in high school observing teachers and internalizing at least some parts of what he/she perceives it means to be a teacher. In high school, the student sees the same teacher every day while in college the student typically sees the ins ructor once a week. Many high school courses are year-long, while college courses typically last for 15 weeks. It may be that the best definition of good teaching for the beginning teacher is the teaching which they experienced over a longer period of time and in a more consistent manner--their high school teaching.

It is as though the beginning teacher had a choice of several voices to attend to--each voice sending slightly different messages about what good teaching means. The voice of his/her own experience in a secondary classroom may be slightly more compelling than the voice of the college instructor. The voice of his/her experience when combined with the voice of his/her own high school student days may be strong enough to drown out the voice of the college experience. Part of the loneliness and insecurity which these teachers experienced during their first years may be attributable to this reliance on history and memory, or to the holding of one set of expectations--those based on their

high school experience, or listening to one voice instead of another as they try to formulate a definition of good teaching which is valid for them. As I indicated previously, they seem to define good teaching in terms of the ability to have and keep relationships with others in the school building.

Based upon my perception of these teachers' concerns for relationships, concern about their own competence, and reliance on memory and history, as well as on my speculations about some reasons for these feelings, I think it is possible to sketch several alternative or possible scenarios of what happened to these beginning teachers.

Consider that these four people each entered teaching with good feelings about themselves as learners and with positive feelings about school generally. These feelings are the result of the teachers' history as successful student who has found positive reinforcement in the classroom. When these people began practice they expected to find students like themselves--eager, competent learners. They found instead that they faced at least some students who could not or would not learn, who were uninterested in successful classroom performance, who resisted the teachers' efforts to involve or motivate them. Faced with this kind of circumstance, the new teacher looks to colleagues for help and direction. Instead of a helpful colleague, a teacher may find a very busy person who can not spare time for a new

teacher, or an apathetic colleague who seems to ridicule the new teacher's efforts. Deprived of collegial support, a new teacher falls back on the best methods he/she knows about--the methods he/she observed while still a student. The new teacher listens to the voice of his/her own experience.

Despite the fact that a new teacher knows that these methods have worked in the past, they do not always work in the present on the different kinds of students. When the method does not work, a teacher becomes increasingly insecure not only about what he/she is doing, but also about how to do it. With little support from colleagues and with only infrequently successful methods, the new teacher may fumble his/her way to some sort of method of dealing with the students. Sometimes this fumbling produces an embattled feeling where all the teacher can think to do is to "keep 'em busy" and hope that the students are learning something. The only way to judge how the students are doing seems to be to seek feedback from the students themselves. Students will provide a teacher with indications about personal judgments--either the students will or will not like the teacher--but the students can only provide a flawed or muddled assessment of a teacher's professional competence. The students themselves may have only a vague concept of what makes a good teacher. Just as the teachers themselves do, the students will also probably have mixed definitions of good teaching; some may prefer a friendly teacher, while others might prefer a stern

taskmaster who does not seek the students' approval or friendship. Some students prefer a male teacher for certain subjects, while others don't care about the teacher's gender. These differing descriptions of good teaching may result in differing student reactions to the personality and style of a teacher. If a teacher tries to rely on his/her perception of student reaction to him/her, he/she will probably detect a variety of judgments about his/her competence. This informal assessment process, based on student reaction, does not offer a new teacher a clear picture of others' perception of his/her competence.

When observed as part of the formal evaluation procedure, a teacher feels justified in trying to present a good, not necessarily representative, sample of events in the classroom. The evaluation which results from this semi-staged observation does not provide the teacher with what he/she can feel is an impartial judgment of competence. The cycle then repeats itself with a teacher soliciting informal peer evaluations, finding few of them, and continuing his/her reliance on student reaction for judgment of professional competence.

While this hypothetical sequence of events and feelings can help to account for a teacher's feeling of impotence in the classroom, there is another possible explanation for these feelings which I would like to explore.

The new teacher has emerged from a fairly short professional preparation for teaching in college with some ideas

about what constitutes good teaching practice and some theories about how to be a successful teacher. When this teacher enters a high school building for the first day of his/her professional career, there may be a great sense of deja vu; the teacher is used to experiencing the building and the people in a certain way--as a student. I think that it is safe to postulate that the teacher experiences flash-backs to his/her own student days when he/she enters the building. In the student days, the teacher found friends among the student population and quite possibly considered the adults in the building to be foolish or autocratic at times. Although the teacher still has some of these feelings, he/she is expected to ally him/herself with the adults in the building and to accept the person whom he/she formerly saw as foolish--the principal--as a guide and helper in professional practice. The new teacher is delicately poised between the two worlds of the school--the world of the students which he/she knows quite intimately--and the world of the adults which is brand new to him/her.

The new teacher faces then two choices--he/she can act in ways which are comfortable to him/her in a school, that is act more like a student, or he/she can begin to act like the adults in the building. There is great tension and role confusion possible for the new teacher during the first part of the teacher experience. With whom should he/she identify? Most probably the new teacher is not consciously

aware of the tension between the two potential roles. Nor is there at first a clear conscious choice to play the part of the student or the teacher. The choice of which role to play will probably be situation specific for the new teacher. Deprived of the support and affirmation of the adults in the building, the new teacher will at times lapse more into the student role; during this time, possibly the teacher will see both the other adults in the building and the rules of conduct which apply to the students as arbitrary and ignorable. During other times, when the teacher role has been affirmed by someone, the teacher will feel more comfortable in that role and be able to play the role with comfort. It is as though the new teacher had to wear two sets of clothes simultaneously--the tee-shirted, blue-jean costume of the student and the formal adult garb of the teacher. Neither set of clothes fits very comfortably; in the twitching and hitching to make the clothes comfortable, the new teacher will probably devise a set of behaviors which enable him/her her to function in the school. In the teacher role the new teacher may want to be seen as a competent adult, able to handle most situations; in the student role, the teacher may want to be seen as affable, friendly, accessible, as one of the gang. The walking of the fine line between the two roles could account for much of the tension and insecurity which new teachers seem to demonstrate. The tension between the need to demonstrate competence and the need to build

relationships among the school people leads to feelings of confusion and displacement among the new teacher.

This hypothetical sequence of events and feelings can also help to account for the teachers' feelings of impotence in the classroom. Each of the people with whom I spoke indicated that he/she seldom felt in charge or in control in his/her own classrooms. Nancy explicitly said that she felt most in charge in the hours before and after the school day. This feeling of lack or loss of control can be attributed to three phenomena which are apparent in the interviews: the unrealistic expectations entering teaching, the lack of peer or superior reinforcement during the early years of teaching, and a continuing concern for reassurance that they are competent teachers.

The teachers with whom I spoke seem to feel buffeted by forces and events which are largely beyond their control or influence--such things as their subject area assignments, the frequent disruptions of their classroom routine, the lack of a sympathetic support network, the inappropriate observation/evaluation procedure, and the unrealistic expectations they held about teaching. It seems, from listening to these teachers, that they seek assurance from a variety of sources--their memory of their own teachers, their perceptions of their students, colleagues, and superiors--some judgment of their own performance which will hold validity for them. What they all seem to find are ambiguous messages about competence.

Each of the groups of people to whom the teachers look for reassurance has a differing set of expectations about proper behavior for a teacher. The students seem to them to want a friendly teacher, the colleagues and supervisors seem to want a cooperative, nonradical teacher, and they themselves simply want to be good, as they remember their own teachers being good. Because of the conflicting expectations about a good teacher, each of these teachers receives a confused judgment about competence.

When the four teachers talked about what defines good teaching or a good teacher, they mostly talked about attitudes. Remarkably little of the discussion centered around the skills which identify a good teacher. This may be the result of the confused and unclear judgments about their own competence which these teachers have received. The differing groups in the school setting seem to define good teaching by judging the attitude of the teacher; this in turn could lead to the four teachers' concern about attitude rather than skill and insecurity about competence.

I think Diane reveals this concern and insecurity about competence most clearly in her analogy of teaching to whoring. Among all the possible professions and occupations, whoring seems to be the one where a person needs only certain biological equipment and a willingness to "take it" to survive; I don't think that the average whore needs special training or schooling to perform for her clients. It is this lack of

special competence or intelligence which Diane seems to reflect when she draws the analogy. Diane implies that teaching, like whoring, can be accomplished by anyone.

As I thought more about Diane's analogy, it struck me that there were several other interpretations possible beyond the one which she offered. I think it is possible to argue that Diane sees teaching as the bastardization of some natural act in the same way that whoring is a bastardization of the act of love. Although she did not directly say so, I think Diane thought teaching would be a free and natural interchange of ideas about life and philosophy in a group of interested committed people; she seems to be saying through the analogy that she has found that teaching is a bastardization of that interchange in that neither the students nor most of her colleagues are especially interested in an open exchange of ideas. The students are there by law, not by choice; Diane seems unsure about why her colleagues are in the profession.

In defining her own work through the analogy of the whore, Diane also implies that she feels somewhat betrayed and used in her teaching. What she had expected to be a lovely and natural act has become a distasteful duty to her. Diane's analogy shows, I think, a teacher who feels betrayed by a system which had always given her support and affirmation. Diane had expected to be able through her teaching to devote her time to "compiling philosophical knowledge";

she found instead that she had to be concerned about the number of discipline referrals which she sent to the office. Of the four teachers, Diane displays most keenly the gap between expectation and reality in the school.

Given these feelings of disappointed expectations, loneliness, and insecurity, I think it is legitimate to speculate about why these four people have chosen to stay in education.

When I asked them if they were sorry that they had chosen education as a profession, each person said that he or she was very glad to be a teacher. When I asked if they planned any kind of career change, they all indicated that they plan to continue as teachers; only Nancy said that she might change jobs to become a teacher of English as a second language, but that she would remain a teacher.

I wondered aloud to them what attracted them to teaching since it did not seem to fit their expectations; all four facetiously responded that they liked the vacations, especially the long summer hiatus. I feel that there was more to the decision to stay with teaching than the attraction of long vacations, but the four teachers did not seem inclined to examine too closely their reasons for staying in the profession. I suspect that the four teachers fear that verbalizing their reasons for remaining teachers would sound, as Al said, "kind of trite." Even though the teachers do not articulate their reasons, I think it is possible to

infer their reasons for remaining teachers from their responses in the interviews.

Each of the four people indicated that teaching holds a strong appeal for them, one that does not seem to have diminished despite their experiences. All four think of teaching as a form of service to people; each chose to be a teacher partly because of this service component in teaching.

In an interesting anomaly, each of the four seems to have chosen to remain in teaching because of the potential for helping even one student. While the four teachers decry the lack of support and encouragement from the people who surround them, they seem to require the demonstrated need of only one person to remain in teaching. Each of the four people, during the course of the interview, related to me a story of how he or she had been able to help one student with some problem; the satisfaction which that instance offered seems to be enough for each of them to decide that teaching is where he or she belongs.

On a slightly deeper level, I think it is arguable that each of these people has chosen to stay in schooling because it provides them with the safe environment which Theresa describes. With the exception of Diane who spent one year outside of a school environment, each of these people has been in a school atmosphere since the age of five. With all its frustrations and disappointments, school must

be a comfortable place for these people. They are accustomed to the rhythms of the school day and the school year. They have a fairly clear sense of their place in the school society and find that position to be a comfortable one. The adult personnel who surround them remain esssntially unchanged year to year; the subject matter does not substantially change from year to year. Only the faces of the students change; even in that change there is some consistency in that students of a given age will act and react in certain fairly predictable ways.

These teachers will remain teachers then because they enjoy the feeling of being able to help even one person, they have found a comfortable niche for themselves, and, despite the drawbacks, teaching offers them a feeling of doing something important with their lives. The background and family experience of the four teachers indicate that there is a commitment to education which was instilled in them from childhood. When I asked if they planned to remain teachers, a look crossed their faces as if to say, "Of course, what else would I do?"

I think that the teachers are not comfortable talking about their reasons for remaining teachers because they may not have analyzed their feelings about it. There is an element of simple inertia which would help to keep them in a classroom; the inertia, when combined with their ability to find rewards for themselves in teaching, probably means

that these four people will remain teachers throughout their professional lives.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

I undertook this study for both professional and personal reasons. I wanted to look at the socialization process for teachers not only because I thought that there were some clearly identifiable processes at work to produce someone easily identified as a teacher, but also because I wanted to explore why, during my years as a secondary school teacher, it seemed that I wore an invisible mark or sign which identified me, even to strangers, as a teacher. I wondered through what process I had so well and carefully learned the distinguishing marks of a teacher largely unaware that I was doing so. I wondered what these marks and signs were that seemed to label me to other people. Since I had not studied education as an undergraduate, but rather had learned my profession on the job, I deduced that the socialization to teaching occurs in practice, not in teacher-training courses. Having conducted this study, I am more inclined to believe that there is no clear and simple process which turns a person into a teacher, but instead a complex, interwoven set of forces, personalities, and circumstances seems to contribute to the professional identification of a teacher. I have learned much more about

these processes than I had anticipated and have raised more questions than I can answer.

I have discovered that there are particular personal aspects involved in the socialization of teachers. I had to give much more attention to the background and history of the individual than I had expected. I also had to take stock of my own reasons for becoming a teacher, and then choosing to remain a teacher, as well as my own background and history in education.

Since so much of my analysis is dependent upon my own interpretation of a teacher and the reasons for becoming a teacher, I shall present my own background before addressing the issues which developed during the course of this study.

I am from a family of teachers; so my view of teaching and teachers was formed partly through very intimate observation of people who teach. I share with my respondents a history of good performance in a school and an affection for the classroom atmosphere. Despite this history and affection, teaching was not my first career choice; after two years' work in social services, I chose to take a teaching position more out of dissatisfaction with social services work than out of a passion to teach. Once in the classroom, I found that I enjoyed teaching and remained a classroom teacher for 12 years. I made the decision to remain in teaching despite all the difficulties because, like my respondents, I was able to find sufficient reward in helping

the occasional troubled student and the student li e myself who shared a passion for literature.

With this kind of background and feeling about teaching, I discovered, in talking with the four teachers, that I had experienced many of the same needs and disappointments that they had. In working through the data from the interviews, I began to realize that there is a personal dimension to the socialization of teachers which originates in the feelings about school and the decision to enter teaching, as well as in the personal need for friendship and affirmation. Once in the classroom, this personal dimension becomes mixed with the professional dimension involved in defining one's self through one's work and in establishing a standard for competent work performance. These personal and professional dimensions to socialization are embedded in a bureaucratic setting which has its own personality and which influences the people involved in it in a variety of ways. I have also come to realize that there are methodological implications for this type of study which affect both what is studied and how the investigation is conducted.

Although I will draw on the background which I have established in the preceding chapters of this study, I will depart from the style of those chapters by presenting my musings, guesses, and intuitions about the themes and issues which arose during the course of my investigation. Many of my insights are more speculative than absolute in nature;

they are designed to stimulate further thinking and clarification of the issues, not to provide definitive analysis.

I have organized my presentation of the socialization issues and implications around a three-dimensional view of the problem. I will first consider the personal issues involved in the development of a sense of identity as an adult, the need for affirmation through personal relationships, and the personal decision to enter teaching. I will then address the professional issues involved in the development of a sense of professional identity through the development of a definition and description of teaching generally, and the need for professional affirmation as a competent teacher. Both of these areas have implications for the bureaucratic setting in terms of the climate of the school and its effect on the people at school; I will present some of my thinking on these issues. Finally, I will consider the methodological issues which develop from the use of a qualitative research design.

Socialization Issues

For the Individual Person

On a personal level, all of us have a need to find a friend--someone who is supportive and caring of us. A friend provides affirmation of our personal worth as a human being and helps us to endure the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." A friend usually knows our faults but accepts us as ourselves anyway. A friend can provide

tremendous emotional support for us, assuring us that we are valuable people who are engaged in some worthwhile work.

On a professional level, all of us seem to need to find a colleague whose professional judgment we respect. A colleague is able to give us confidence that we are performing our professional duties competently. A colleague need not be a friend, but he or she is a person whose opinion we respect and whose judgment we trust. A colleague is the discreet person to whom we turn for professional affirmation. For the classroom teacher, I think there is an expectation, or possibly a hope, that the roles of personal friend and of professional colleague can be blended into one person. As I shall explain later in greater detail, this expectation contributes to a classroom teacher's concern with relationships.

As I think about the possible relationships which one can have with the varying people at school, I realize what a complex dilemma a teacher faces. As a result of my conversations with the four teachers and my personal experience as a classroom teacher, I realize that there is an interlocking network of relationships which can affect the emotional health and well-being of a teacher. While it is certainly true that some of these relationships are common to any professional or human interaction, I think at least some of them are unique to the circumstances of teaching.

In the case of the classroom teacher I think that there are several sub-categories of relationships with people which

fall into neither the friend nor colleague category. The students are a significant subgroup, providing instantaneous and unavoidable judgment of professional practice while they are also dependent on a teacher to provide them with some measure of their self-worth. The teacher is the person who judges the students' efforts and decides if they have met some standard of excellence; at the same time, the students are judging the teacher's efforts and deciding how the teacher rates when compared with their other teachers. This symbiotic relationship between teachers and students means that a teacher cannot draw much personal assurance of worth or professional sense of competence from the students' judgments. A teacher may sense or believe that his/her students like him/her as a person and think that he/she is a good teacher, but the impact of the judgment is colored by the students' dependence on the teacher's judgment of them.

Teachers are also involved in employer/employee relationships and supervisor/subordinate relationships, as well as in a tangle of subsidiary relationships with the parents, the community, the ancillary school staff, and their former students. In all this network of people, a teacher seems to experience confusion about the differing relationships possible and to have difficulty in finding both a friend and a colleague. Any of these people can act as a friend to the teacher, giving moral and emotional confirmation of the teacher's value as a person, but it seems very difficult for

a teacher to find a person whose judgment he/she respects who is willing to provide professional confirmation of the teacher's value. This difficulty may exist because a teacher has trouble identifying those who can or should provide confirmation, or it may reflect a teacher's own insecurity about accepting judgments of competence. Those who are charged with a professional judgment about a teacher's practice are often those people--principals, administrators--who a teacher feels do not know enough about what happens in the classroom, or those people--friendly colleagues--who a teacher feels know the teacher too well personally to provide objective evaluation.

From comments about the family and social activities, I do not think that the teachers with whom I spoke are lonely personally, but it seems undeniable to me that they are professionally lonely people. In all the conversation we had, they seldom spoke with affection, fondness, or respect for their colleagues or of a sense of community. Yet they seem to thirst for a relationship with colleagues and some sense of themselves as a community.

Without much of a sense of professional connection with or verification from colleagues, teachers often seem to find themselves faced with several alternatives: they can turn more aggressively to their colleagues, actively seeking affirmation and validation, or they can turn to their students for these things. The additional alternative--that of

ignoring the opinion of both colleague and student and relying on personal self-judgment--does not seem to be a powerful enough alternative for teachers, nor for anyone in any profession. A human being's need for affirmation, recognition, or verification from fellow human beings seems to be fairly well established; in the extensive network of potential relationships in a school, it seems highly unlikely that a teacher would choose to ignore any avenue which promised connection with another human being. The decision to rely on either colleagues or students for affirmation seems to be an extremely difficult one for teachers, especially since they would probably like affirmation from both groups.

In a consideration of a teacher's need for affirmation, there are several issues which require attention: What is a teacher looking for from colleagues or students? What kind of relationship can either group provide? What kinds of affirmation does a teacher need?

It is both deceptively simple and very complex to say that a teacher probably looks to both colleagues and students for expressions of approbation of and respect for his/her competence, and expressions of personal liking and affection because colleagues and students often use different criteria in judging a teacher as a professional or as a person.

Colleagues may look for indications from a teacher that he/she is knowledgeable about subject matter and pedagogical

techniques, and that he/she does not seem to jar or upset the prevailing climate of the school. For instance, if the school has a strict discipline policy and a teacher is perceived as lax or inattentive to that policy, he/she may be judged as less than competent by the other staff members. Or, if the school has a history of faculty participation in most extracurricular activities and a teacher is perceived as denigrating or belittling this participation, he/she may be judged as a deficient teacher. The perception of a teacher's "fit" or match with the culture of the school frequently has an effect on colleagues' assessment of that teacher.

The same process--involving checking a teacher's overall match with the prevailing climate--occurs in personal decisions about a teacher. If a faculty consists largely of teachers who project a cynical attitude and a new teacher is perceived as enthusiastic, he/she may subtly be belittled or ridiculed for that enthusiasm. Of, if a new teacher somehow unknowingly violates the informal power structure among the teachers--either by ignoring or bypassing the resident teacher authority, that new teacher may be ostracized by his/her colleagues or dismissed as an upstart or know-it-all type.

Establishing connections among colleagues can often be a hazardous undertaking for a new teacher. There are many undercurrents and hidden obstacles which can hinder a new

teacher's efforts to find either approbation and respect or personal liking and affection.

Although the criteria used by the students are often different from those used by the faculty, a similar process of judgment occurs about a new teacher. Students will often closely monitor a new teacher's words and actions and weigh them against what they know of other teachers' words and actions. Students also seem to be quite sensitive to the faculty's feelings about one another. In an academically demanding school, students may perceive a teacher who asks them to reflect upon, but not write about, an issue as either soft, lazy, or possibly foolish. In a highly competitive school, a teacher who asks students to cooperate on assignments may be perceived as a deficient teacher by the students. Students seem to like order, stability and predictability in a classroom; they may perceive an innovative or unconventional teacher as an unstable or unsettling teacher. In these and similar cases, students frequently base their assessment of a teacher on their perception of the same intangible "fit" between school and teacher as the faculty uses.

In the personal realm, students also frequently use contradictory criteria to decide if they like a teacher. A teacher who is perceived as a stern taskmaster in the classroom, and as a fair and understanding person, may find more affection from the students than a teacher who tries to be

overly sympathetic to the students at all times. Students tend to see teachers as having two nearly separate personalities--the in-class teacher, and the out-of-class advisor, friend, and confidant. Sometimes these two personalities are perceived by students as very different, yet sometimes the distinction between in-class and out-of-class is quite blurred or nearly nonexistent. This distinction which students seem to draw between the two sides of a teacher's personality complicates their feelings of respect and affection for a teacher. If conceived on a continuum, student perception of a teacher can range from "She's a tough old bird but I trust her" all the way over to "He's a fool and I don't trust him." Many teachers spend much of their professional lives sliding along this continuum as the student perceptions, the teacher's actions, and the school climate change or modify.

In this ambiguous twilight world of potential relationships and connections, a teacher frequently experiences an intellectual-emotional dialectic. That is, intellectually a teacher may value and desire approbation and respect from both colleagues and students. On an emotional level, however, a teacher may discover that he/she prefers signs of affection or liking from the students over other possible combinations. This preference for emotional, personal support may be attributable to several circumstances. In the first place, a student's demonstration of affection for a teacher often seems

to be spontaneous and unstudied; this impulsive quality gives the demonstration additional warmth and value. Secondly, a teacher may perceive a student as the most accessible source of support; a teacher and his/her students spend proportionately more time together than do the teacher and any other members of the school commnnity. Thirdly, a student may be the only source, not just the most accessible, of affection or approbation a teacher can find among the people at school.

Part of the ambiguity which teachers seem to feel about relying on students for either approbation, or affection, or both may result from a teacher's suspicion that student reactions are not always honestly motivated. A teacher may sense that student expressions of affection and approbation are not always selflessly motivated. Students tend to depend on a teacher in the day-to-day interaction in the classroom as it affects a teacher's promotion/retention of the student. Students are also frequently less emotionally and psychologically mature, so students can be manipulated and fooled more often than a teacher's knowledgeable and capable adult colleagues. In a certain sense, a teacher does not turn to the students for affirmation, but he/she is more likely to be unwilling to turn away from this one potential source of affirmation. A new teacher, because of youth and inexperience, seems especially susceptible to reliance on student expressions of approbation and affection.

Whereas the more experienced teacher is more likely to have his/her memories of former students' approval, a new teacher has no such reservoir. A new teacher frequently seeks and needs some expression of approbation and affection from the most accessible group--the students.

About the importance given to relationships and the concern expressed about having relationships with various people in the school building, I sense the teachers' confusion and uncertainty. I think of my own years as a classroom teacher; I remember how much I wanted my students to like and respect me, how I wanted my colleagues to know that I am a good teacher, how I needed friends to whom I could turn for both a metaphorical and a literal hug or a shoulder to lean or cry on. Many teachers seem to have difficulty in finding or building some kind of support network. I experienced that difficulty while I was a classroom teacher, and I think the four teachers imply that they have experienced the same difficulty.

This analysis of a teacher's acceptance/rejection of affirmation from students and administrators seems complex and contradictory precisely because the dependence/independence of the teacher from these two groups of people is complex and contradictory. What a teacher wants in the abstract may be strikingly different from what a teacher finds in reality. In the abstract, a teacher does not want to have to depend on a student for a judgment of professional

competence. A teacher may also be caught in the dilemma attached to the ambiguity of role description for the teacher-administrator dyad. A teacher may imagine or expect to find a principal who is like a stern but loving father, or one who is a supportive colleague, or one who is, to use Diane's phrase, a "fellow learner, a fellow explorer." A beginning teacher may expect a school to have some of the hallmarks of a family in terms of intimacy and support. A beginning teacher may expect to have and value the opinion of the other professionals in the building as part of a network of caring and concerned individuals. A teacher often finds, however, that the principal seems aloof or preoccupied with paperwork and the minutiae of administration, and that the school seems more like an acrimonious or fragmented group than a loving family. So, a teacher often finds that the only kind of support and feedback about professional competence available to him/her on a regular basis is the judgment of the students. It may also be that, instead of professional judgment, they rely even more on student acceptance as a way to alleviate their insecurity. With so little else apparently available to him/her, a teacher will settle for what he/she perceives as support and affirmation from the students.

The whole issue of affirmation is further clouded by the fact that most beginning teachers are also dealing with the complexities inherent in the adjustment from adolescent

role to adult role and life style. Most teachers begin professional practice after completing college; so most of them are in their early twenties when they make the change from student to teacher role. At approximately the same time, a beginning teacher is also making the adjustment to post-adolescent or adult stage. For most beginning teachers, teaching is their first full-time professional employment. In a sense, teaching marks, for each beginning teacher, his/her entry into the adult world and the attainment of adult status. Beginning teachers often find themselves trying to develop a professional identity while, at the same time, they are struggling to find a personal identity as an adult. For many teachers, the first job marks the shift from home or dormitory life to a more autonomous life as an apartment dweller; for many the first job brings financial responsibilities unknown to them before. In many cases, the first job finds a beginning teacher trying to establish a professional and a personal identity in a new area, bereft of the continuing presence of family or friends. In these multiple beginnings, a new teacher seeks affirmation and relationships with colleagues to bolster his/her sense of competence in the adult world as well as in the professional world.

While none of these beginnings are unique to teachers, the situation in which they are met is, in many ways, different from that of other beginning professionals. Teachers,

unlike many other types of workers, are physically separated from their colleagues for a major portion of the workday; they are set apart in a confined space with an immature and frequently volatile group of people. The casual almost reflexive affirmation possible for people working in a group in an office or factory is not possible for the new teacher. To find affirmation, a teacher must go and seek out what he/she hopes will be an understanding and patient colleague who will not be too busy to listen to the problems, concerns, fears, and insecurities of this new teacher. For many teachers, such a person is not found in the school. A beginning teacher probably has to rely on family and friends to supply needed affirmation during the early years of practice. The only people with whom a beginning teacher interacts on a daily basis are the students; many teachers turn to their students for some measure of support even while they realize that this immature and volatile group of people may not be the best judge of professional competence.

In a classic Catch-22 situation, a teacher has immediate access to those people whose judgment of him/her is least impartial while he/she has least access to those other professionals in the building who could provide him/her with an informed judgment of professional identity. Compounding this situation, a teacher may, because of his/her history as a student, be identifying with the students in an attempt to bridge the gap between him/her and them. That is, a teacher

may be remembering situations from his/her past where a teacher was perceived as out-of-touch with the students, as an "old bag" who could not possibly understand the problems and concerns of the students; that person, him/herself now a teacher, may have decided to try to bridge the gap, to avoid becoming the "old bag" of memory, and to identify more with the students than with the other adults in the building. This attempt to identify with the students is more likely to occur on the senior high school level where a beginning teacher is chronologically and perhaps psychologically closer to the students. In either situation, a teacher either chooses to or is forced to use the students as a group to provide support and affirmation.

For the Individual Professional

Closely allied to the need to find some kind of personal and professional affirmation is the expressed concern about teacher competence--What is it? How is it measured? How do I know that I am a good teacher? How do others know that I am a good teacher? These are the kinds of questions which are implicit in much of the interview talk with the four teachers. As I indicated in the previous chapter, none of the four teachers seems to have a clear idea about the ways that competence can be manifested yet all four more or less directly express concern about their competence in the classroom.

The teacher's concern about competence seems to be most often expressed in comments about the supervision process in the school. As Theresa says, she has received "a sparkling evaluation--nothing negative--according to it I should be teacher of the year." Despite this positive report, Theresa's attitude is negative; "and I thought, 'You're not telling me anything.' I felt it was a terrible waste of my time."

Most of the time, a teacher seems to feel that the evaluation tells him/her nothing about the level of professional competence at which he/she is now working; in addition, the evaluation process does not seem to provide the teacher with any clues for the improvement of professional practice.

Some of the concern about a level of competence is traceable to the lack of professional affirmation for the individual teacher. Some of it is traceable to the imprecise nature of the teaching act itself and the ways that competence can be measured. Some of it is attributable to the cultural wisdom which says that "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." Some of it is attributable to the nature, extent, and focus of supervision as experienced by most teachers.

As Blumberg (1980) indicates, the interaction between teachers and supervisors is seldom a mutually beneficial one; more often than not the interaction is like a "private cold war" where the two parties are locked into defensive belligerent postures. Neither party seems able to concede

that the other party knows what either teaching or supervision is about; so neither party can adequately judge the performance of the other. The natural result of this sort of attitude is a stalemate, with mistrust on both sides.

This lack of communication results, it seems to me, from the imprecision of the teaching act and from the dearth of overt rewards for teaching performance. When a teacher looks to his/her supervisor for some tangible acknowledgment of competence, he/she discovers that supervision, as practiced in most schools, is not designed to provide acknowledgment of good practice nor even condemnation of poor practice. Supervision seems to exist in many schools for the purpose of ensuring a basal, uniform set of practices which will help to guarantee minimal disruption and maximal control of the students and the physical plant during the school day.

Supervision seems to many classroom teachers to focus on those behaviors by a teacher which demonstrate that the teacher is protecting both the life of the students and the property of the district. My own experience, readings, and my talks with the four teachers, indicate to me that supervision is usually more concerned with the appearance of the classroom, the appearance of the teacher, and the apparent docility of the students than with the substance of the lesson observed. Supervision, as practiced in many schools, does not allow for an examination of the rationale of the

lesson, the type and level of instruction, the appropriateness of the material being presented, nor the evaluation procedures used by the teacher. What seems important is the appearance of substantive work, not the reality of the work.

Teachers who experience this type of supervision may learn the lesson that what they do is not as important as how it looks to anyone who sees it. This lesson seems to have been internalized by many teachers and may be one of the causes for the importance given to attitudes in my conversations with the teachers.

There seems to be a concern, among the teachers with whom I spoke, about demonstrating that they have what Tom Wolfe has called "the right stuff." They seem to want to be wise, patient, understanding, fair, demanding, nice, friendly, and in charge. In their minds, and probably in the minds of many practitioners, if they can demonstrate that they have these attributes in sufficient quantity, then their competence will be undeniable. These attitudes seem to define good teaching for them, yet these attitudes are not the things on which their evaluators rate them. Left without the reinforcement that supervision could give them about these attitudes, they seek confirmation from other sources and are caught on the personal and professional treadmill again. Some conception of what skills denote a good teacher would probably be most useful to these and to other teachers.

Because of the imprecision in defining teaching, many teachers seem to rely more on the appearance of technical skill and acceptance of the building norm about competence rather than on their vision of the substance of good teaching. This reliance leads to a reliance on the testimony of one or several students as indicators of good teaching. It seems that, if a teacher can demonstrate that he/she has helped even one student, then the teacher must be doing something right and is therefore a good teacher. The precise nature of the "something right" is very difficult to pin down; it may be that the teacher talked to the student, reprimanded the student, refused to accept incomplete or poorly completed work, chided, admonished, teased, challenged, or ignored student misbehavior. It may be that the teacher does not know precisely what he/she did with, to, or for the student; it may be that the teacher did not consciously do anything, but simply that the student decided, for any one of a thousand possible reasons, to behave in a different manner than usual. In this kind of tenuous cause-effect linkage, the teacher may feel some sort of satisfaction that the student has modified his or her behavior, but the teacher will most probably not be able to take direct credit for the change in the student. The teacher cannot draw upon experience in dealing with a particular student and make inferences about the skills necessary to produce the same result in the future with another student. The

teacher cannot infer that he or she is skilled because the students exhibit change and maturity over time; a teacher knows or suspects that the same indicators of maturity might have appeared without any interaction between student and teacher. This knowledge is not the sort of thing to give a teacher confidence in his/her competence in the classroom.

Throughout each of the four interviews, there is little discussion of the skills of a good teacher. Part of this incomplete conception of a good teacher is observable in the fact that each of the four teachers talks a lot about the attitudes and behavioral marks of a teacher, but none of them is able to describe the skills or long-range goals of a good teacher. Theresa says directly that she is not sure what she is supposed to be doing; Al says that he is still not sure why he teaches certain things; Diane's conversation deals mostly with her relationship with her colleagues and, to a lesser extent, with her students; Nancy talks mostly about her fears and insecurities. The four teachers seem mostly to engage in "attitude talk"--their attitude toward school-related things and their perception of other people's attitudes. Their expressed concern for an external proof of their own competence seems, to me, to reflect the lack of a clear vision of what defines a good teacher.

There was in this study remarkably little indication to me of evidence of growth or change in the ways that good teaching is defined by my respondents. They all seem to rely

on memory and convention in solving professional problems. Part of this reliance on the old ideas may stem from the isolation and loneliness of the beginning teacher. Any new teacher is insecure in the role of teacher; he/she finds, when beginning practice, that there are very few models of good teachers and further, that those models exist mostly in his/her memory. Any new teacher is also physically isolated from the company of colleagues by the floor plan of most schools, and is liable to feel very lonely. The combination of insecurity and loneliness produce, it seems to me, a tremendous anxiety about success. This isolation and fragmentation also seems to undermine any possibility of teacher/teacher socialization and development of a sense of community among the teachers. Without the support that the teacher sense of community could provide for the beginning teacher, the opinion of the administrator as evaluator becomes increasingly important in the eyes of the teacher. Yet this importance is frequently overtly denied by the classroom teacher; the denial may reflect genuine feelings of the teacher. It may also be a kind of "whistling in the dark" behavior among teachers; fearful about their own competence, they may reject as inappropriate or misleading any judgment by a non-teacher of any part of their teaching. Rejection and scorn of the evaluation procedures and findings also seem to be part of the unwritten code of the classroom teacher. If "those who can't, teach" is true, then to

preserve some sense of self-definition as professional, it may seem necessary to a teacher to deny that any non-teacher could possibly judge what happens in the classroom. The denial may simply be professional self-preservation.

Beginning teachers are rarely given much of a margin for trial and error; the first day that they walk into the building as a teacher, they are expected to perform almost as competently as the most experienced member of the faculty. Anxious about their surroundings, their colleagues, the students, the administrative evaluation, and their own ability to perform well in the situation, many teachers seem to develop a nearly crippling fear of failure.

Several times during the interviews, Nancy, Theresa, Al, and Diane say that they are fearful of strangers in their room--the specific fear they express is the fear of being "found out," of being found wanting in some indefinable way. The appearance of success seems to be so important to them that they resist any visitors in the room; when they must tolerate a visitor, such as the principal, they usually deny the importance of whatever the visitor observes. As Nancy says, "It's just <u>real hard</u> to have someone in there . . . because I don't know exactly what's going to happen." A teacher's feelings of fear seem to be a result of the teacher's feelings of insecurity--about him/herself in the teacher role, about the volatility and unpredictability of the students' behavior, about his/her competence as a

teacher, and about the expectations which others seem to hold about teaching. The school, as a bureaucratic entity, does not seem to be able to alleviate the beginning teacher's fear and insecurity; this is true, it seems to me, in large part because of the nature and climate of the school.

For the System of Schooling/Educaton

In talking in this section about "the school," I am not speaking of the physical plant which houses a given group of children and adults for a given span of time over a legally determined number of days. I am speaking rather of the blend of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, hopes, disappointments, and expectations which tend to be shared among the people who inhabit that physical space and which tend to contribute, along with other interpersonal variables, to a climate for the school. Although none of the four people with whom I spoke expresses any particular opinion about the school as an institution, a picture emerges from their words of the kind of climate which they experience in the physical plant.

The perception of the climate of a school seems to be based in large part on the expectations of the people who inhabit the building and on the kinds of rewards which the school seems to offer to these people. Because the school population is an artificially skewed mix of children and adults, the school will be perceived and reacted to in different ways by the two populations. The new teacher tends

to find him or herself in an anomalous position because the student-centered expectations have not been entirely superseded by the adult-centered expectations.

A teacher who enters the building for the first year of teaching experiences the school as a confusing blend of the old student-centered and the newer adult-centered perceptions. A teacher's old perception of the school may be of a place for social interaction where authority-tweaking is part of the social role; the more fragile adult perception of the school is of a proving ground in the transition to adult and professional career status. As the new teacher enters the building these differing perceptions set up differing expectations. Much of the first year of teaching seems to be spent trying to reconcile these conflicting expectations. It is as though the new teacher were "untimely ripped" from the student-centered vision of the school and thrust, without adequate guidance or instruction, into the adult-centered vision of the school.

As I have already pointed out, the new teacher probably experienced the school as a rewarding place to be. This same person, expecting the same rewards in a school, enters the building without a clear sense of who he/she is and with little idea of how to act as a teacher. In trying to accommodate him/herself to the newer vision of the school, the beginning teacher experiences frustration, loneliness, and fear--of being found wanting, of failing either

him/herself, the students, or the administrators, and, perhaps more important, fear of the new role itself. This multilayered fear may help to explain the new teacher's apparent unwillingness or inability to carry over from teacher-training courses many of the ideals or models for behavior.

I see the school, based on my conversations with these four people, as neither especially positive nor especially negative; it seems to exist as an arena where the battle of a teacher with fear and anxiety takes place. The school does not seem to be perceived by the teacher as a warm, nurturing place, nor does it seem to be purposefully malevolent; perhaps the new teacher's experience of the school as monumentally indifferent and neutral is one of the most difficult adjustments which the new teacher must make in the shift from student-centered to adult-centered perceptions.

If this kind of change in attitude occurs among new teachers, then it seems reasonable to speculate about why the new teachers usually choose to remain teachers. Part of the reason may lie in the original reason for entry into teaching.

Putting aside the acceptable rhetoric which the four teachers used in explaining their choice of teaching as a career--that they can help people and that they enjoy school--I would like to postulate several other reasons for people choosing teaching initially and choosing to remain teachers

even after their expectations have been disappointed. My thinking is based partly on what the teachers told me and partly on my own experience.

Many teachers of my acquaintance talk about the feeling of fulfillment and reward which they experience when they are able to reach or "save" one child. The feeling of accomplishment which a teacher experiences when he/she is able to reach one student or is able to see tangible proof of his/her effectiveness in the change in attitude of one student seems very important to a teacher. Part of the reason that this feeling of saving one child is important is that there are so few tangible or psychic rewards in teaching. A further reason might be that the teacher, in saving one child, feels that he/she is also saving him/herself. I think that this view may be more prevalent in a high school setting where the beginning teacher is chronologically closer to his/her students than is the elementary teacher. The beginning teacher, as I have indicated, probably feels lost and afraid in the adult teacher role; he/she may project those feelings of fear onto the students. The beginning teacher is also close enough to the traumas of adolescence to remember the fears and insecurities which the typical teenager feels, and so may identify with his/her students on two levels--as a person who is unsure in a role, and as an "almost adolescent." In this double identification, if the teacher is able to feel that he or she has helped a student,

he/she may also feel helped. That is, for the teacher who feels insecure and fearful, it may appear that if an insecure and fearful student can be helped, then perhaps the teacher too will be able to find someone who can give assurance and support. Success with even one student may say to the teacher that one teacher can also be helped. It may be that the teacher, in helping or "saving" the student, is looking to the student to practice the same kinds of behavior on the teacher and give the teacher salvation. It seems that these feelings of accomplishment with one student occur just often enough to encourage the teacher and to keep him/her in teaching. A teacher knows he/she can find infrequent but satisfying rewards from his/her students; he/she does not know if the world outside the classroom would provide the same kind of affirmation.

Another possible reason for remaining in teaching is that the teacher is able to remain in a personally successful environment for a longer period of time. The socialization of teachers begins with the experience of being a student. As I have indicated, those who tend to become teachers are those for whom school is a successful, rewarding place. School is a place where the person knows the criteria of achievement and is usually able to exceed the criteria. School is a familiar place, where the person has spent at least 16 successful years. Why would anyone choose to leave the haven of the school and go out into business or industry

with differing criteria for success and a differing reward system? By remaining a teacher, a person is able to hold onto youth and success. Despite the fact that teaching is not rewarding in a materialistic sense, it is one way to remain among the artifacts of one's youth; where else can each year contain a senior prom and homecoming dance? Perhaps teachers choose to remain teachers in order to be as close as possible to the events and feelings of their youth.

Teachers may remain in the profession despite the drawbacks because it enables them to do what they enjoy and are good at. Many times while I was an English teacher, I justified spending time reading the latest best-seller by the simple expedient of claiming that my job required me to read the book. In a sense, teachers have the best of the student role they enjoyed when they were younger with the additional advantage that they are now able to pick their assignments.

Lastly, teachers may choose to remain teachers because they entertain the hope that they will be teaching themselves. They may think that each class which comes to them at the beginning of the semester or year will contain a majority of students like the teachers themselves--eager, competent learners. In that sense the teacher will be teaching him/herself. In another sense, the teacher may believe that he/she will be able to change or convert the apathetic uninterested student into a competent learner. In either

case, the teacher may greet each new group of students as either similar to the teacher or able to be made similar. Reaching that one student will affirm the teacher as savior of the student, reawaken the teacher's memories of his/her own student days, and offer the chance to do what he/she enjoys, be it talking about literature, history, science, mathematics or whatever the subject.

I intend none of these speculations about motive to impugn the expressed motives of any of the teachers with whom I have talked. Many teachers remain in teaching because they enjoy it, feel competent as teachers, and feel that they are doing important work by helping to shape the minds of the future. I also think that many teachers have remained in teaching because it offers them a chance to feel that they can save a child from ignorance, a chance to vicariously extend their youth, and a chance to teach people like themselves. Human beings seldom act for clear and simple reasons; teachers bring complex and sometimes contradictory motives to their decision to enter teaching and their further decision to remain in teaching.

I think that these speculations are important because of the potential they have for illuminating some of the various elements and motivations which can contribute to the climate of a school. The climate of the school has, I think, a significant effect on the socialization of the beginning teacher. That is, if a number of the teachers in

the building see themselves as saviors of the children, the beginning teacher in that building may internalize that saving function of teaching. Likewise, if most of the teachers see their function as preserving the best of what they remember from their high school days--the football games, dances, proms, sororities, fraternities, hazing rituals--then the beginning teacher is liable to see teaching as a way to stay in touch with his/her youth. If there is no dominant consensus about the role and function of a teacher, the beginning teacher will most probably internalize the confusion and conflict about the role and may remain confused and uncertain for a good part of his/her professional life. An understanding of the climate of the school can help to explain the differences in the socialization of beginning teachers and their differing, sometimes confused sense of professional identity.

Methodological Implications

As much as this study is an examination of the issues involved in the socialization of new teachers, it is also an examination of the qualitative mode of inquiry. As such, there are methodological considerations and implications which have become more apparent to me during the course of conducting this study.

In reviewing the literature on socialization and identity formation, I indicated that the methodology used in the social science studies on teacher socialization tends to

limit the studies to an examination of those phenomena which can be quantifiably verified. Although this is a valid way to conduct an inquiry, there are other valid methods of inquiry which can be used. Since the mode of inquiry--including the area chosen for study, the types of questions asked, the data-gathering method, the personal biases of the researcher, and the reactions of the subjects to the inquiry process--can all help to determine what is discovered, I think that it is important to draw on a qualitative methodology to provide a different vision of the truth which quantitative studies have addressed. To help explain the difference in the two broad modes of inquiry, I will examine the different lenses through which the results of the investigations are viewed. To help in developing this analysis of differences, I am drawing on the sociological and psychological concepts of a nomothetic and an idiographic type of inquiry as outlined by Bruno Bettelheim.

Bettelheim (1982) draws a distinction between two approaches to knowledge. One approach stresses a "positivistic-pragmatic knowing" which relies on what Bettelheim calls the nomothetic sciences as a way to discover general laws. Such an approach to knowledge, according to Bettelheim, requires "Verification through replication by experiment; [the] findings ought to permit mathematical and statistical analysis and, most important, ought to permit exact predictions" (Bettelheim, 1982, p. 70). This type of

approach is the one usually chosen by social scientists as a way of understanding such phenomena as teacher socialization. The works which I previously cited on teacher socialization tend to demonstrate this type of concern with the discovery of positivistic-pragmatic knowledge; these studies typically rely on mathematical and statistical analysis and usually attempt to control the variables so that predictions can be made based on their conclusions.

Dan Lortie's research, as reported in Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study (1975), is an example of social science research based on nomothetic principles. Using an extensive research sample, Lortie draws general conclusions about teacher socialization; Lortie's work is not as concerned with the individual experience of socialization as it is with the presentation of general or abstract statements about the process. Lortie seems to draw support for his conclusions from the volume of response generated in the study. Looking at some of Lortie's conclusions can help to illustrate some of the implications of employing a nomothetic orientation in a research study.

Lortie defines socialization as "something that happens to people as they move through a series of structured experiences and internalize the sub-culture of the group" (Lortie, 1975).

Using this definition as his focus, Lortie examines the experiences of teachers as they internalize the subculture

of teaching. Lortie presents his analysis of teacher socialization in terms of those attributes, experiences, and feelings which seem to be common to the majority of his sample. Lortie finds that "the ways of teachers are deeply rooted in traditional patterns of thought and practice" (p. 24); he identifies these patterns of thought as presentism--the lack of historical antecedents for their work, conservatism--the emphasis on tradition and unchanging method, and individualism--a feeling of being isolated from fellow practitioners (p. 212). Lortie also identifies three special conditions which affect teachers:

1. the low degree of voluntarism in the teacher-student relationship, which requires that a teacher "forge bonds" with the students to achieve their cooperation;
2. the problem of extracting work from immature workers, which means the teacher compensates for deficits in work capacity;
3. the grouped context of teacher endeavors where goals must be met and relationships managed in a group situation. (Lortie, 1975, p. 137)

This brief exposition of some of Lortie's research findings helps to illustrate the application of nomothetic principles to a research study. In his study Lortie seems to be attempting to derive general principles of teacher socialization by concentrating on several broad categories

which help to shape and define the teacher's role in the classroom and in the school. While Lortie's findings help to illuminate aspects of teacher socialization, a research design which is predicated on an idiographic approach to knowing can complement and elaborate on several of Lortie's categories.

Bettelheim describes an idiographic approach to knowledge as a "hermeneutic-spiritual knowing"; idiographic sciences, such as history, "seek to understand the objects of their study not as instances of universal laws, but as singular events . . . which can neither be replicated nor predicted" (Bettleheim, 1982, p. 70). The idiographic approach used in this study seeks to discover and report on the individual teacher's experience of and reaction to events and feelings during teacher socialization. The process of discovery and reporting can help to expand on the insights which Lortie is able to provide and to provide additional insights which Lortie's nomothetic research stance is not intended to discover.

As a result of my idiographic research, for instance, I have discovered that Lortie's "traditional patterns of thought and practice" are understandable in a different way than Lortie presents. Although he finds evidence of feelings of presentism, conservatism, and individualism common among most of his respondents, I now realize that there is considerable reliance by the individual teacher on memory

(as I previously described it), history (in terms of a teacher's history as a student), and tradition (in terms of both memory and history). This is not to say that my findings contradict Lortie's but rather to indicate that his nomothetic research stance washes out or blurs some aspects of socialization for some teachers which an idiographic stance helps to preserve.

To use another example, Lortie talks about the "special conditions which affect teachers"--the low degree of voluntarism, the immature workers, and the grouped context of teaching. While these categories have significance for Lortie's respondents, I find that my subjects express little direct concern about them; feelings reflecting concern about individual competence and feelings expressing a concern about the kinds of relationships which a teacher seems to need--these seem to be special conditions which affect the teachers with whom I spoke.

Neither Lortie's nor my findings should be thought of as definitive. These two approaches to our research question are based on differing orientations--Lortie's approach reflects a more nomothetic stance while my approach reflects a more idiographic stance. Neither approach can be relied upon as the sole way to understand a given phenomenon but the two approaches, taken as complementary ways of knowing, can provide a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.

To summarize, a quantitative research paradigm is a categorically based, nomothetic method of research. It

enables the researcher to draw some conclusions about the phenomenon based upon an observation of the processes at work in a given setting. With its nomothetic character, quantitative research is interested in presenting general, or abstract statements about the phenomenon. A qualitative research method tends to be more concerned with the discovery or illumination of the idiographic aspe ts of the phenomenon. This approach asks the researcher to try to begin to understand what the process means to the people who are experiencing it as well as to discover how the people feel about what is happening to them.

In choosing to use an idiographic qualitative method, I have chosen to focus on the individual's feelings and reactions to events and people as a way to discover some aspects of the socialization process for beginning teachers. Choosing this method has also meant that I have to take cognizance of my own experiences and feelings as I hear and record the feelings of others. The idiographic approach requires that I, as a researcher, give credence not only to what is said to me and to my reactions to the words, but also to the role of intuition as a way of knowing. Both my intuitions about my subjects and their intuitions about me and my motives become a part of the research process.

As a researcher, it is nearly impossible for me not to have intuitions and feelings about the four people with whom I talked. Some of them I liked personally better than others;

some of them I judged professionally more competent than others of them. My feelings toward them as individuals and as professionals helped form part of my interpretation of what they said to me.

I became more aware of the role of intuition in a study like this as I reflected on my reactions to hearing Al, Theresa, Diane, and Nancy talk about their concern for relationships with various people in the school building. As they expressed their concerns, I could hear my own fears and insecurities. Because I could identify so closely with their feelings, I may have projected my own feelings onto their words. I remember, from my days as a classroom teacher, the difficulty I had in finding a network of support; when Al, Theresa, Diane, and Nancy talk about their insecurity, I hear my own voice as well.

An idiographic researcher's potentially close identification with his/her subjects' feelings is both one of the strengths and one of the weaknesses of the design. It can be a strength since it can help a researcher to hear subtle nuances in what a subject chooses to express and not to express. It can also be a limitation since too strong an identification with a subject can lead a researcher to hear more about those parts of a subject's feelings which resonate with the researcher's feelings, and less about those parts which do not resonate.

An idiographic researcher can find him/herself in a methodological bind: a researcher tries to understand, as

completely as possible, the research subject, yet over-identification or under-identification with a subject may mean that the researcher does not hear all aspects of the subject's feelings as clearly as possible. For instance, when my subjects spoke of their professional loneliness, their insecurities, and their feelings, I could empathize with them because I had experienced similar emotions. However, in talking with Theresa, when she first mentioned that she was not bothered by her principal's evaluation visit, I could not identify with those feelings at all, since I had always dreaded any evaluation visit. Since I could not share her feelings, I wanted to skip over that part of the interview and get back to feelings I could understand. While transcribing the tapes of the interviews, I had to work quite slowly and to listen very carefully to the words to get an accurate transcript. That process of re-hearing Theresa's words at a time when I did not have to react to her physical presence helped me by giving me the opportunity to consider her talk about the principal in the context of the entire interview, and to attend to the nuances of her words in a way I could not during the actual interview. What began as a kind of under-identification with Theresa became, through a process of listening, reflecting, and writing, a partial understanding of her feelings. This type of process of intimate involvement with and reflection on the data is the part of the qualitative idiographic research

process which helps the researcher uncover different aspects of the phenomenon.

It is not a process which is restricted exclusively to the researcher. As the subject of such research, I suspect that each of the four teachers had feelings and intuitions about me as a researcher, about me as a person, and about my research subject. They probably experienced at least some part of the process of reflection and judgment; they all decided based on what to them are valid criteria and after reading what I had written about them to trust me to honor my pledge of confidentiality to them and to present them fairly to the reader. There is a mutual dependency between a researcher and a subject in a idiographic study; each trusts the other to be as fair and accurate as possible with the other.

The conclusions which I have drawn as part of this research are filtered then through a multiple set of lenses--the lens of the person speaking to me, my own personal lens as I listen to and interpret what is said, and the lens of a researcher who seeks to know, to reveal, and yet to protect the research subject. A researcher's intuitions play a part in the perceptions possible through these multiple lenses.

With this review of the two modes of inquiry as background, I would like to propose another view of the process of teacher socialization and formation of a sense of

professional identity. My view is based on my research journey with the four teachers, my readings and reflections, my own prior experience as a classroom teacher, and the special lenses which a qualitative, idiographic methodology gives me for this study.

Alternative View of Socialization

Socialization to teaching cannot, it seems to me, be accurately called a process. The use of the word process implies to me a definable beginning, middle, and end of a transaction involving at least two people, one of whom is somehow changed as a result of the actions and opinions of the other. Conceiving of socialization as a process means that awareness of the dialectic between the emerging person and his/her individuality and the culture of the school and the profession is blurred. Conceptualizing socialization as a process blurs the effect of the interaction between the person, his/her expectations, wishes, fears, hopes, and the institution of the school and the profession of teaching. The traditional view of socialization as a process says that when a new teacher begins practice, he/she encounters several people who directly affect his/her thinking and belief about teaching. As a result of this interaction and the changes in attitude which result, the new teacher is no longer new, but identifiable as an experienced person.

It seems more accurate to me to think of socialization as a gradual growth and change in the individual person as a

natural result of the maturation we all experience. A beginning teacher brings to the start of professional practice certain beliefs, values, and expectations about what he/she will find in the classroom. Many of these beliefs are based on the teacher's previous experience of the classroom. I can think of no other occupation which people enter with as much personal experience of the conditions of the workplace as teachers have when they begin practice. As a beginning teacher is discovering that these beliefs and expectations do not always match the reality of the classroom, he/she is also discovering the demands and limits of the adult professional role in a society which extends beyond the confines of the classroom and the school. A new teacher is simultaneously learning to be a teacher and learning to be an adult.

Rather than seeing socialization as a separate process, I think it is more useful and more illuminating to think of it as part of a larger process of growth and change. Since each person brings a unique background and history of school to the beginning teaching experience, each person's socialization will reflect more the individual adjustments to expectations which each will make than some objective process which affects all new teachers in nearly the same way. Conceptualizing the experience in this personal and individual way has implications for ameliorating the fear and anxiety which beginning teachers seem to experience.

Rather than seeking to change something which has been called a process of socialization, I think that it is more useful to think about creating a climate in the school which will allow both the beginning teacher and the students to experience an environment which nurtures the differing developmental stages of these people. Although I do not have a detailed definitive answer to the ways that the school climate should or could be changed, any change made should foster the development of a sense of community among the school participants and encourage a sense of cooperation among them, rather than pitting the two groups--the students and the teachers--against each other as the present system of schooling frequently does.

Such a change in the climate of the school would facilitate the formation of relationships among the adults in the building as well as with the students. The beginning teacher's concern for relationships demonstrates to me that the school as it now exists largely ignores this important area of human interaction. Such a change might also reduce a beginning teacher's role confusion; in a more cooperative supportive atmosphere, the beginning teacher's transition from the adolescent student role to the more adult teacher role might be made easier. Certainly greater understanding of this area of beginning teacher confusion should alert the people who interact with these teachers to some of the causes of strain and anxiety among new teachers.

From this analysis, it seems clear to me that much more work needs to be done in the area of school climate as it affects the beginning teacher's adjustment to a new role and to interaction with individuals. Such investigation might help us to make school a place where both adult and student can become more fully engaged in learning. As Maxine Greene says, "The more fully engaged we are, the more we can look through the others' eyes, the more richly individual we become" (Greene, 1978, p. 3). Helping the people in a school to become more richly engaged and individual seems an appropriate goal for education. Before we can reach that goal, however, the experience of school for both student and teacher must be made more personal and individual.

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