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A CHARACTERIZATION OF CONNECTIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF ONE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION TEACHER

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with describing and understanding teachers' professional knowledge. Personal, practical and pedagogical knowledge, micro-political and contextual knowledge, and a recognition of the inherent unity of thought and action, were incorporated into the conceptualization of teachers' professional knowledge. The research employed the life history method with one participant, an experienced teacher of adult basic education, in a community college in a large and ethnically diverse suburban municipality in metropolitan Toronto, Canada. An intensive, year-long phase of data gathering utilized life history interviews, classroom observations, interviews and discussions about teaching practice and both personal and public documents. Data were analyzed according to phenomenological and hermeneutic techniques.

The non-reductionist analysis of the teacher-participant's practice, within her unique life story and its particular contexts, produced a characterization of the individual's professional knowledge. This richly descriptive representation illustrates the structure and nature of the teacher-participant's world view, her philosophical stance, a set of operating principles which guide her behaviour, and the image or facade she presents to the public. The results demonstrate the coherence and consistency of this teacher's life outside the classroom, over time, and her behaviour and thoughts as a

classroom teacher. In addition, the findings illustrate the idiosyncratic nature of teacher knowledge, resulting from the unique interpretations of life's varying experiences.

The significance of the study rests in the contributions it provides through deeper understanding of one teacher's professional knowledge. The inquiry provides compelling support for increased appreciation of the complexity of the phenomenon. It offers confirmation of the conclusive role of the interaction between the teacher's personal history and contextual factors in the construction of professional knowledge. The study provides evidence to support the notion of teacher knowledge as an essentially idiosyncratic phenomenon and contributes to the formation of the case for a more holistic and in-depth approach to appreciating and understanding teacher knowledge and teacher development. The context of the participant's work as a teacher of adults in a community college makes an important contribution to widening the perspective on teacher thinking and teacher knowledge and provides important foundational knowledge for those concerned with understanding the knowledge and practice of adult educators.

Implications of the research include support for teacher development efforts which recognize the legitimacy of self-direction within the context of endeavours which emphasize a wide variety of strategies for assistance and support. Further, the study suggests the need for additional attention to and respect for the voices and views of individual educational workers within organizational development activities. From a methodological perspective, the study demonstrates the potential of the life history method for developing understanding of teacher knowledge through accessing the personal, social, historical, economic and political circumstances which contribute to the construction of professional knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has two equally important objectives. Its first purpose is to present a rationale for engaging in systematic inquiry of teacher knowledge generally, and more specifically, the notion of professional knowledge. A second objective is to introduce concepts which form the basis of the thesis. The chapter begins with an outline of the personal origins of the study, followed by a synopsis of the literature tracing the course of research related to teacher knowledge. A brief overview of several current notions and the rationale for the selection of professional knowledge as the focus of this inquiry follow. The chapter then examines the development of the concept of teacher knowledge within the field of adult education. The significance of research into teachers' professional knowledge, followed by the purpose of the study and an introduction to its methodology conclude the chapter.

Emergence of the Study

This inquiry arose from aspects of my personal history which culminated in an interest in understanding teachers of adults. It became a formal research project because of the potential this presented for examining the issue in a deeper and more thorough way. I began my working life as a classroom teacher in small, isolated communities in the Northwest Territories. My first experience, teaching primary grades in a one-room school in a native village in the western Arctic, came about because I had a reputation as a kind person who enjoyed children.

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The fact that my mother was the principal of the nearest elementary school was, in hindsight, probably another important factor in the minds of those who selected me for the job. The years I had spent in staff rooms and assisting with various aspects of running a school--from everyday lessons and schoolyard discipline to Christmas concerts and class trips--provided a practical grounding in the culture of elementary schools. It was normal for my siblings and me to help our mother with the preparation of materials for the workshops she led for teachers and principals. In addition, I had acquired a rudimentary second hand knowledge of educational theory as a teenager. My mother had enlisted my help to type her course assignments for her master's degree in educational administration and she often shared the reading material and discussed what occurred in the classes with me.

At the age of twenty, I found myself looking for full-time employment in the Northwest Territories. I had recently completed an undergraduate degree in sociology and Canadian studies from the University of Guelph in southern Ontario but I had no formal preparation in teaching or in the subjects of reading, arithmetic, basic science, et cetera. I soon discovered that I had much to learn if I was to help the children learn! I developed knowledge and skills by reading, attending workshops, working on committees, tapping into the resources of helpful teachers and soon, through participating in a master's program in education myself. Teaching, at first with elementary children and later with adults, was absorbing, fulfilling, challenging and sometimes incredibly frustrating work.

After several years, I moved out of the classroom and became an administrator of educational programs for adults and adolescents in the Keewatin region of the Northwest Territories. I recruited, oriented, and supervised teachers of adults and tried to support them in their development as educators. Most of their careers had similar beginnings as my own, with some experience in instruction but no formal preparation in learning and teaching. I noticed tremendous variation in their teaching: from their understandings of the purpose of our work, to the techniques they used to help students master new concepts, to their abilities managing small and large groups, and so on. My major concern was rooted in students' success in achieving academic, employment or personal goals and I found that the ability of students to achieve these varied with their teachers. I organized and implemented a variety of professional development activities with the teaching staff, in the hope that these would have the desired effect on classroom practice and student achievement. As my experience in the field grew, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my efforts to improve the quality of the educational experiences we provided to students. There were, it seemed to me, good teachers, not so good teachers and abysmal teachers. I was not confident that I or anyone else could help teachers develop the skills and knowledge that I felt the students needed and deserved.

My formal knowledge of adult education developed as a result of the reading and studying involved in the coursework for the master's degree at the University of British Columbia and other professional development activities. I became

increasingly aware of the lack of congruence between theory and practice in the field. My assumption was that practice should commence in theory and that theory should originate with outside experts. The authority of the literature supported my developing notion of the dissonance between theory and practice in which deficits in the knowledge and skills of practitioners explained the 'problem.' Later, as I shifted my practice from the Canadian arctic to southern areas of the country and from adult basic education and employment preparation to staff development, my disappointment in the practice of adult education grew. Nowhere, it seemed, were educators doing what they were supposed to be doing, the way it was supposed to be done! My master's thesis was an attempt to understand the gap between practice and theory in adult education. In that study (Buckerfield, 1990), I asked practitioners to identify procedures they used to evaluate educational programs and to provide specific information about their own backgrounds and their organizations. My intention was to identify individual and organizational variables which would explain the different levels of adherence to theory that were apparent in the self-reports of evaluation practices. The notion of an alternative to the deficit approach in understanding the variations in practice never occurred to me.

The rather lengthy concern of my inquisitiveness regarding the knowledge teachers of adults acquire and use has taken another twist with my participation in doctoral studies in educational psychology. I discovered colleagues with similar interests and concerns and studied various conceptualizations of practitioners'

knowledge. I moved away from a position of comparison and judgment to a perspective which aspires to establish insight through understanding. I developed an appreciation for alternative research paradigms founded on the notion of the existence of multiple realities and truths. This study emerged from the confluence of my interests and was fabricated within the framework of my own biography with its individual contextual influences. The purpose of the inquiry was to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the professional knowledge of teachers of adults, a phenomenon which, I am certain, will continue to arouse my curiosity.

Theoretical Background of the Study

In addition to the personal framework, this inquiry exists within a body of research which provided its foundation. Rather than following the traditional format of one chapter comprising the review of the literature, this aspect is interspersed throughout the thesis. The intent is to offer pertinent references to the literature at appropriate junctures in order to adequately inform readers regarding particular aspects of the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This section of the chapter grounds the current study in the relevant literature through the introduction of concepts which are particularly significant. This is not intended to be exhaustive in any sense as an overview of teacher knowledge. Rather, the literature is presented as it grounds my beliefs as a researcher and provides a rationale for this particular study.

Research into teacher thinking and teacher knowledge has emerged from

the common desire to make a contribution to the provision of beneficial educational experiences for students. Between researchers and other members of the educational community, notions of what constitute a positive educational experience continues to vary tremendously. The social, economic and political contexts in which the social sciences evolved also played an important role in the development of the epistemological path of educational research. The aspiration to 'do good' in educational research, consequently, has been a theoretical journey wrought with twists, turns, dead-ends and other hazards.

Through the early decades of this century, the rise of scientific management in the social sciences and of behaviourism in educational psychology caused educational researchers to focus attention almost exclusively on teacher action with a few notable exceptions. Dewey, for example, was a staunch advocate of reflection (1906/1933) and urged educators to be both consumers and producers of knowledge about teaching (1938). Teaching, however, came to be seen as a skill-based occupation with a resulting focus on the identification and mastery of specific skills. Preservice and in-service activities for practitioners were identified as 'teacher training'. Working from the positivist tradition, experimental studies "documented organized attempts to manipulate the professional growth of teachers via workshops and training programs" (Kagan, 1992, p. 129). Both research and practice, "characterized by assumptions of timelessness and teacher interchangeability" (Goodson, 1983, p. 152) reflected evidence of uncritical acceptance of principles of Taylorism and behaviour modification. Critical aspects

of the teacher's job, such as text and curricular selection, became an administrative responsibility (Apple & Jungck, 1992) as part of the effort to standardize and systematize education. The emphasis on behaviour and the sense of the teacher as only a small cog in a large and depersonalized bureaucracy is clear in Simonson's (1994) descriptive passage from her research into her own teaching:

> Familiar educational jargon such as implementation, classroom
> control, behaviour modification and classroom management,
> regulations, rules and disciplinary procedures indicate the flow of
> power from the top down. The administration control the teachers
> and the teachers control the students (p. 113).

Teacher behaviour continued to be the focus of much educational research through the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s. At the same time, however, an alternative current developed in which teaching was seen as a cognitive activity (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Jackson, 1968). As Zeichner (1994), reports, the shift from an emphasis on teacher behaviour and skills was partially,

> a reaction against a view of teachers as technicians who merely carry
> out what others, removed from the classroom, want them to do, a
> rejection of top-down forms of educational reform that involve
> teachers merely as passive participants (p. 10).

Research such as Casey's (1992) study of women who left teaching, links teachers' dissatisfaction to the principles beneath the bureaucratic system which imposed so

many conditions on their work in classrooms. Shifts in educational research began, and continue, to occur as fundamental assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning were questioned. The initial preparation of teachers was renamed teacher education and certain programs began to emphasize planning, reflection and other thoughtful endeavours to assist both novice and experienced teachers to enhance their classroom practice.

Still more recently, teaching has come to be seen as a minded act (Ryle, 1949/1990). It appears that some researchers appreciate the complexity of teachers' practice as they work with an enormous variety of learners in immensely diverse environments and contexts. A significant number of studies in which teacher thinking is understood to occur in unity with action have been undertaken (e.g., Beattie, 1991; Cole, 1987; Cordell, 1989; Diamond, 1991; Louden, 1989). Research into teaching, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), note, "has begun to give prominence to the complex interplay of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and the ways that these are used" (p. 1).

As notions of what teaching is began to change in educational research, so too did views regarding the teacher's role in research about teaching. Research which understands teaching as a complex interplay of thinking and action and teachers as intentional, reflexive creators and users of knowledge, has developed as a central assumption the view that teachers' knowledge of teaching "is idiographic in origin and therefore particularistic in character" (Bolster, 1983, p. 298). Indeed, the individuality of the teacher and of the influences which have

fashioned his or her teaching are increasingly recognized in research on teaching. Concurrent with increasing awareness of the importance of the teacher in research on teaching is the notion that understanding the teacher is essential to understanding teaching.

Prior experience and contextual influences are key features of this most recent conceptualization. Although many researchers have focused on the significance of either biographical or situational influences, the intensity of the capacity to assist in understanding increases as the two are united. The intuitive sense of this approach is clear in Krall's (1988) contention that although "we are not predetermined, neither are we free from our inheritance or the influences of environmental factors" (p. 475).

Experience is recognized as a primary source of perceptions and beliefs about teaching and about the meaning of being a teacher. Numerous researchers (e.g., Britzman, 1986; Bullough, 1989, in press; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Woods, 1986; Zeichner, 1994) have documented the importance of prior experience in understanding what teachers think and do. Knowles (1992) concluded that "personal biography seems to have profound effects on what occurs in the individual's classroom" (p. 126) following an extensive review of research into biography and teacher socialization.

Contextual influences emerge as equally significant as the importance of personal backgrounds in understanding the actions and thoughts of teachers in the literature. Ambient social, cultural, historical and political conditions of the

institution and the community in which practice is located have incremental influences on teachers. Considerations of time and place are imperative factors in the development of an understanding of the context in which teacher knowledge exists and is studied. The culture of the school as a social organization and as a workplace (e.g., Cole, 1991b; Hargreaves, 1992; Johnson, 1990) and its relation to teachers' practice is considered in a substantial body of research. It is clear that the shared values, beliefs, and mores of educational organizations "guide behaviour and give meaning, support, and identity to teachers and their work" (Knowles & Cole, 1994, p. 135). Context is so crucial to understanding teaching that Sockett (1987) maintains that research which ignores it is likely to be vacuous, redundant or limited.

Appreciation and consideration of both context and prior experience facilitate the development of meaningful insight into the complex phenomenon of teacher knowledge. As Knowles and Cole (1993) write, "who we are and come to be as teachers . . . is a reflection of a complex, ongoing process of interaction and interpretation of factors, conditions, opportunities, and events that take place throughout our lives in all realms of our existence--intellectual, physical, psychological, spiritual, political, and social" (pp. 4-5). Within the complexity of these multiple factors interacting in intricately serpentine patterns lies the challenge of appreciating and understanding teachers' knowledge.

Conceptions of Teachers' Knowledge

Within the approach which understands teaching as a minded act, several

notions of teacher knowledge are discernable. These views emanate from a common foundation and interest in the tacit realm Polanyi (1962) explored, and share the idea that teacher thinking and action are guided by a personally held system of beliefs and values (Clark & Peterson, 1986). The various notions of teacher knowledge differ, however, in the interpretation of teacher knowledge as a phenomenon: how it exists, is developed, can be accessed, and in how it can be represented. The current study is most closely aligned with Goodson and Cole's (1994) notion of professional knowledge. On the following pages, the features of several conceptualizations of teacher knowledge are presented to illustrate important similarities and differences with the notion employed in this study.

Hunt's (1987) notion of *experienced knowledge* refers to the "accumulated understanding of human affairs which resides in our hearts, heads, and actions" (p. 11). This collection of ideas and beliefs is mainly tacit, and therefore, is generally neither verbalized nor acknowledged. Hunt's work (1987, 1992), which was concerned mainly with the articulation and representation of the phenomenon, identified several discrete forms of practitioners' experienced knowledge. Self-awareness of one's own learning style is the first form, and implicit theories, the underlying perceptions and beliefs about one's work, is the second. The third articulation of experienced knowledge is the symbols and metaphors of one's work that Hunt (1987) labelled personal images. Studies based on a similar perspective of teachers' knowledge include Bray (1986), Cole (1987), Fox (1983), Hunt (1987, 1992), and Munby (1982).

Personal practical knowledge, a term coined by Connelly and Clandinin (1985, 1988), constitutes another perspective for understanding teachers' classroom practice. Knowledge, in this case, refers to the body of convictions which are expressed in an individual's actions. Defined as "a moral, affective, and aesthetic way of knowing life's educational situation" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 59), personal practical knowledge is the combination of tacit and explicit knowledge in action which renders teachers' know-how. Johnson (1984) describes it as "a contextually relative exercise of capacities for imaginatively ordering our experience" (p. 467). Aspects of personal practical knowledge include images, personal philosophy, rules, practical principles, rhythms, metaphors and narrative unity. A considerable number of studies have employed the notion of personal practical knowledge (e.g., Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985, 1990; Cordell, 1989; Elbaz, 1980; Simonson, 1994) resulting in the development of a significant body of literature.

Shulman (1986, 1987) is known as the formulator of the concept of *pedagogical content knowledge,* defined as "the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interest and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (1987, p. 8). Pedagogical content knowledge is founded on the argument that too much attention has been paid recently to the process of teaching and not enough to the content aspects of teaching. According to Shulman (1987), "teaching necessarily begins with an understanding of what is to be

learned and how it is to be taught" (p. 7). The notion understands teacher

knowledge as a phenomenon which can be apprehended, recorded and taught.

The extent of teacher knowledge can therefore be measured, an important aspect

for those in favour of standardized teacher assessment. Pedagogical content

knowledge is considered an exclusive body of knowledge available only to

professionally prepared teachers.

The current research is most informed by the notion of *professional*

knowledge Goodson and Cole (1994) proposed. This conceptualization of teachers'

knowledge recognizes the legitimacy of each of the previous notions but situates

them within a significantly expanded perspective. A truly comprehensive

appreciation of teachers' knowledge, they argue, is one which extends

> beyond the primarily personal, practical, and pedagogical notions to
>
> define a broader conception of professional knowledge and teacher
>
> development . . . that places teachers in the broader micro-political
>
> and contextual realities of school life (Goodson & Cole, 1994, p. 87).

This conceptualization is distinguished by its acknowledgement of the importance

of micro-political and contextual factors in the development and use of teachers'

knowledge. In contrast, previous notions define the phenomenon within the

boundaries of the classroom, thereby imposing severe restrictions on its potential

and use. Micro-political and contextual factors, Goodson and Cole (1994) argue,

are critically important because they "affect the lives and arenas in which

personal practical and pedagogical knowledge are utilized" (p. 86). The

conceptualization employed in this inquiry considers personal practical knowledge, experienced knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to be elements of teachers' professional knowledge.

This notion of teachers' professional knowledge rejects the perception of the world as a simple system of stimuli and responses, and is appreciative that humans exist in extremely complex webs of thought and action. As Goodson and Cole (1994) explain, "Events and experiences, both past and present, that take place at home, school, and in the broader social sphere help to shape teachers' lives and careers" (p. 88). Recognition of the influence of personal biography within a "genealogy of context" (Goodson, 1992b) is a distinguishing feature of this notion of teacher knowledge.

Concern for personal biography and various levels of context is apparent in methodological approaches employed by researchers interested in this conceptualization of the phenomenon. Acknowledging that every teacher's knowledge is rooted not in abstraction but in personal, social, historical, economic and political circumstances, Goodson (1992b) argues "that . . . in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is" (p. 234). Fundamental to understanding professional knowledge, a phenomenon not immediately accessible to either practitioners or researchers, is understanding of the life of its possessor and the context in which it is played out. A method which permits a perspective on an individual life along with wider socioeconomic and political circumstances as well as their effect on that

one life is required to access professional knowledge.

Representation of this conceptualization of teacher knowledge articulates

the significant features of the phenomenon, as described above. For example,

representation of a teacher's professional knowledge provides illustrations of both

the practitioner's thinking and behaviour in recognition of the inherent unity of

thought and action. In addition, it situates the individual's thoughts and

behaviour within his or her personal biography and further locates the story of the

individual within broader historical, social and other circumstances. In summary,

representation of professional knowledge is a characterization, developed through

a non-reductionist analysis of individual practice, within one life, within the

particular contexts of its existence.

<div align="center">Teacher Knowledge in Adult Education</div>

The issue of teacher knowledge has not captured the attention of the field of

adult education, as it has in other areas of education, for several reasons. Since

its initial recognition as a field in the early years of this century, concerted energy

has been given to the professionalization of adult education and to increasing its

legitimacy as an area of study. A deep, uncritical and enduring faith in the

tradition of positivist research coupled with the need to distinguish adult

education from other branches of education succeeded in establishing and

maintaining the focus of inquiry within the university. Removed from

practitioners and isolated from other educational researchers, inquiry in adult

education has overlooked the examination of fundamental questions and ignored

the development of alternative research perspectives. A brief review of the literature reveals connections between these themes and the lack of appreciation for practitioners' knowledge.

The consequences of focusing attention on the professionalization of adult education were significant. The development of a particular body of knowledge was a specific objective of those who promoted the field in the early years of the twentieth century. As Wilson (1993), explains, this was a crucial step for "without a body of knowledge and training in its use, an occupation cannot control a share of the market for its services and thus will not professionalize successfully" (p. 1). Legitimizing adult education as a field of study became the focus of much activity within the universities with significant implications.

In adult education, as in other occupational groups at the time, the scientific process was seen as the route to the creation of an authoritative and valid body of knowledge which would be accessible only to its members. The emerging field's authorities supported the empiric-analytic method in the development of guiding theory. Concurrently, the value of expert knowledge experienced a significant increase while the worth of practitioners' knowledge underwent relative depreciation. Wilson's (1993) analysis of the contents of seven editions of the Handbook of Adult Education, published between 1934 and 1989, confirms the transition:

It is no historical accident that university-affiliated contributors . . .

provided a fourth of the entries in 1948, and that by the 1980s provided

nearly every entry in the handbooks . . . a shift in authorship from the

dominance of practitioners in the 1930s is certainly indicative of a shift in .

. . what counts as valuable knowledge in the field (p. 13).

From the 1960s through to the 1990s the field continued to rely on the traditional

scientific method in cataloguing and classifying its activities in efforts to develop a

distinctive and exclusive body of knowledge.

A paradox is apparent in the manner employed within the field of adult

education to develop theory. Much of the literature labelled as theory in the early

years of adult education (e.g., Lindeman, 1926/1961; Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1980;

etc.) was in fact propositional knowledge. Consisting of prescriptive advice and

opinions regarding teaching approaches and techniques to use with adults, the

work was not based in solid empirical research but was, rather, produced in the

tradition of the exemplar. Those striving to legitimize adult education removed

from the literature, "the experience of practitioners in explicit institutional and

programmatic areas of adult education in the 1930s" (Wilson, 1993, p. 5) and

inserted their own voices. In a review of recent, mainstream (e.g., Brookfield,

1991; Galbraith, 1990, 1991; Heimstra & Sisco, 1990; Seaman & Fellenz, 1989)

books on teaching adults, Hayes (1993) remarks that "a striking fact is that all

texts emphasized the authors' experience as a primary source of the ideas and

strategies they proposed" (p. 185). That propositional knowledge developed by

university researchers maintains its legitimacy in adult education while

practitioners' knowledge is neglected, may be attributed to the paucity of research

on teaching in the field. The difficulties traditional research has with the production of useful guidance on the subject has also contributed to the situation. Both may be considered unanticipated repercussions of the move to professionalize adult education.

The development of a unique body of knowledge for the field also led to efforts to distinguish adult education from related areas of study. These influenced the level of concern and interest the field directed to practitioners. In mainstream education, tradition legitimized a focus on activities associated with teachers while in adult education emphasis has been placed on students' experience. Research and theory building in the field has occurred in program planning, history, philosophy, and policy analysis, but most attention has been paid to adult learning. As Merriam (1989) writes,

> beginning with Thorndike's 1928 classic, Adult learning, adult
>
> educators and others have investigated and written about how adults
>
> learn, why adults learn, adult learning ability, characteristics of adult
>
> learners, self-directed learning, and so on (p.1).

Participation, motivation, and retention are among the most popular topics of research in adult education (Boshier, 1985a; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Merriam, 1989). In addition, assumptions rooted in humanism, such as belief in the self-directed nature of adults, contribute to the focus on learners, and therefore, to the learning side of the teaching learning process. Attention to the chronological status of the learner was, and still is, critical to the creation of a

unique and separate body of knowledge for adult education.

The distinct body of knowledge developed over the years has such authority amongst members of the field that few researchers are inclined to look beyond its boundaries. Those who call attention to similarities with, or knowledge based in the world of education for children and youth, tend not to be heard in adult education. For example, Pratt's (1981) misgiving over the lack of concern in adult education with teacher effectiveness and his recommendation that "some of the work already done by researchers in pre-adult education" (p. 117) be acknowledged, fell on deaf ears. Later, he lamented that the "tendency to misrepresent teaching as simply a repertoire of technical actions and principles" (Pratt, 1989, p. 79) was still in existence in adult education. Similarly, little interest has been shown in the lives or careers of adult educators in comparison to those of regular teachers. Davie (1979/1988) researched careers of adult educators and expressed surprise that considering "the size of adult education activity, and the complexity of the job skills, few studies have focused on the . . . changes which occur in the lives of adult education practitioners" (p. 185). Others' suggestions that adult education expand its horizons and look at issues in the wider world of educational research, seem to be presented in vain. Attending to teachers and looking to other areas of education threaten to diminish those aspects which distinguish adult education from other fields of study. Hence teaching has failed to capture the attention of researchers and little inquiry into teaching or teachers has occurred in adult education.

Another factor which helps to illuminate the current situation is the limited perception of knowledge which exists in the adult education literature. Serious consideration of alternative epistemological perspectives was precluded by "constantly growing and largely uncritical endorsement of empirical-analytic science" (Wilson, 1993, p. 11) within the field. The assumption of separation between thinking and doing is reflected in the few studies which concern the proficiency of adult educators. Since the 1960's, research about practitioners has consistently employed definitions of competence which separate knowledge and skill (Chamberlain, 1961/1988; Daniel & Rose, 1982/1988; Rossman & Bunning, 1978/1988). The schism between theory and practice continues to exist in adult education, resulting in limited conceptualizations of practitioners' knowledge which are unable to represent the complexity and extent of the knowledge teachers of adults actually construct and use.

The split between knowledge and skills and theory and practice in adult education is reflected in the organization and delivery of education for practitioners. The preparation most teachers of adults receive is limited to "the apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) since no undergraduate or pre-service programs specifically devoted to teaching adults exist in Canada (Draper & Doucette, 1980; Boshier, 1985b; Merriam, 1985; Rivera & Gshwender, 1980; Selman & Dampier, 1991). Later in their careers, when practitioners become aware of opportunities for professional development, they select from programs with emphases on either theory or practice. The assumption of separation

between knowing and doing is visible in the distinct emphases of the professional development programs available, in universities at the graduate level and in community colleges at the certificate level.

In conclusion, an important relationship exists between professionalization and current notions of practitioners' knowledge in adult education. The decision to distinguish the field through an emphasis on the differences of the students served from those in other branches of education had significant consequences. A unique body of knowledge was developed and legitimized and programs to instruct practitioners on its use were created and accredited. The field, however, has been isolated from movements which have led to profound shifts in mainstream educational research. Notions of teacher knowledge, in adult settings, are likely to consider subject matter and, perhaps, a limited range of instructional skills. Most research in adult education is situated within a perspective which allows knowledge to be understood as discrete from practice. Ramifications of this limited conceptualization can be seen in practitioner development programs, as well as in the poor working conditions and inadequate compensation practices which exist in the field in comparison to conditions of employment for those working in mainstream educational organizations. The conceptualization of teacher knowledge is clearly an important issue which has been neglected by researchers in adult education.

Overview of the Study

<u>Significance of the Research</u>

The significance of this study of teacher knowledge lies in its contribution to theory and in implications for practice drawn from its findings and conclusions. Contributions to the development of theory concern further evidence of a perspective on the way teachers' professional knowledge is constructed and held as well as insight on the knowledge of teachers who have been neglected by educational researchers. Implications for practice involve the conceptualization and implementation of teacher and organization development efforts. Overall, the importance of this research rests in its ability to help shed light for educational researchers embarked on a journey to improve the educational experiences of teachers and students.

For more than forty years, researchers have attempted to identify and describe teacher thinking and teacher knowledge. An underlying assumption of many of these endeavours has been to find and prove the existence of one, "true" representation of the phenomenon. Contrary to allusions regarding the generalizability or universality of the particular structure or content of teacher knowledge, the richness and depth represented in the results of this study complement the conclusions of researchers concerned with the complexity of teachers' knowledge. This research adds to the literature forming a case for a more holistic and in-depth approach to appreciating and understanding teacher knowledge and teacher development (e.g., Cole, 1990a; Diamond, 1991; Hunt,

1992). In addition, the study presents further evidence supporting the perspective that inquiry into teacher thinking and teacher action necessarily indicates the need for inquiry into teachers' lives (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992; Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

An additional aspect of the inquiry's importance arises from the perspective it brings from its focus on a previously ignored type of teacher working in an unrepresented setting. The context of this research is indeed unique: studies of teacher knowledge have focused on teachers of children and adolescents (e.g., Bullough, in press; Elbaz, 1991; Kagan, 1992), working in schools which are more or less conventional educational organizations (e.g., Ball, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Goodson, 1992). The siting of this inquiry in a community college with a teacher working with adults makes an important contribution to those who proclaim interest in widening the perspective on teacher thinking and teacher knowledge. Finally, very little research has been reported in the literature of adult education which delves into the issue of the construction or content of teacher knowledge (Brookfield, 1988; Chamberlain, 1988; Finger, 1991). This study provides important foundational knowledge for those concerned with understanding the knowledge and practice of adult educators.

Practical implications which arise from the notion of professional knowledge explored in this inquiry provide one aspect of its significance. The conceptualization of teacher knowledge renders specific direction to teacher development and organizational development efforts. For example, recognition of

significant connections between teachers' personal and professional identities indicates the importance of development efforts which emphasize integration. An additional aspect of the practical implications arising from the research is the support it provides for development efforts which emphasize a wide variety of strategies for assistance and support, "rather than trying to find the one best way to develop teachers" (Cole, 1992, p. 378). Organization development efforts founded in the notion of professional knowledge recognize and feature the importance of the context of practice. Acknowledgment of professional communities as both locus and method for the recognition and facilitation of teacher knowledge is one component of the ramifications for educational organizations. From a practical perspective, a major contribution of the research exists in its explication of implications of the connections between the personal and the professional for both teacher and organization development.

<div align="center">

Purpose of the Study
</div>

The broad purpose of this study was to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the professional knowledge of teachers of adults through an intensive case study with one participant. Two main questions guided the inquiry:

1.   What constitutes the professional knowledge of this teacher?

2.   How have the particular life experiences of this educator influenced the construction of her professional knowledge?

The more specific intention of the study was twofold: first, it was to provide a substantive characterization of the teacher's professional knowledge; and second,

to illustrate how her knowledge was constructed and reconstructed through the processing of unique life experiences which occurred within particular social, economic and historical contexts.

Methodology

Assumptions concerning teacher knowledge compelled situating this research within the phenomenological (Husserl, 1965; Van Manen, 1990) and hermeneutic (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gadamer, 1976; Shutz, 1962) perspectives. The life history method (Goodson, 1983; Plummer, 1983) was employed because it provided a feasible opportunity to apprehend, understand and represent professional knowledge. A single case study, which allowed attention and emphasis to be focused on the phenomenon within the context of an individual life (Merriam, 1988), was used.

The complexity of teacher knowledge as a phenomenon was manifested in the requirement for data which allowed in-depth examination of the teacher, her practice, and her life (Van Manen, 1990; Cole, 1991a, 1994), as well as a broader understanding of the social, economic and political context (Goodson, 1992; Thompson, 1981) of her experiences. The study, consequently, employed an intensive, year-long phase of data gathering and utilized a variety of techniques. A series of life history interviews (Seidman, 1991), classroom observations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), interviews and discussions about teaching practice (Measor, 1985) and both personal and public documents (Woods, 1986) were used to collect information. The information gathered was transcribed and the resulting text

analyzed according to phenomenological (Polkinghorne, 1989) and hermeneutic techniques (Wolcott, 1994) throughout the inquiry. Analysis occurred initially in collaboration with the participant concurrently as data was collected. In later phases, additional analysis occurred individually. The aim of the research design was to allow the investigation of the phenomenon of teachers' professional knowledge as a whole in all of its complexity.

Summary

The objective of this chapter was to provide an orientation to the inquiry. The origins of the study, from both a personal and an academic perspective, were outlined. The rationale for engaging in the research was presented and a number of concepts fundamental to this inquiry were introduced. In the following chapter the basis of the methodological decisions which form the foundation of the study is detailed. In addition, the next chapter presents thorough descriptions of the research design and of the specific techniques employed in the collection and analysis of data.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

This chapter details the research approach and design used in the study. The rationale for situating this inquiry within the qualitative research paradigm and, more specifically, within the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective is presented initially. The next section of the chapter provides a description of the life history method and justification for its use in the study. The design of the research follows, including details of the strategies used in gathering information for the study. The next section outlines the techniques employed in the analysis and interpretation of the data. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the application of rigour to the study and a brief comment on ethical issues which arose during the course of the inquiry.

The Qualitative Paradigm

Assumptions about the nature of teachers' knowledge grounded this inquiry in the qualitative research paradigm. The first of these assumptions is that knowledge is a part of the human world and, as a phenomenon, cannot be quantified or categorized. Knowledge, a complex construction, can best be understood from the paradigm in which phenomena are treated holistically. As Krall (1988) writes, inquiry "should not reduce the complexities of human interaction and learning to simple formulas but rather should elaborate and accentuate their richness" (p. 474). The second assumption which led to undertaking the study within the qualitative paradigm is the notion that people

are both the creators and users of knowledge. An open and emergent research approach beginning with people was required to study professional knowledge, since the phenomenon itself is located within practitioners. These assumptions correspond with those underlying the qualitative paradigm.

Phenomenology and humanism have resulted in the development of an alternative research paradigm variously referred to as qualitative, interpretive, naturalistic, and post-positivist. The ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying this paradigm are fundamentally distinct from those underlying the positivist paradigm. Regarding the nature of truth or reality, the qualitative paradigm assumes the existence of multiple realities in contrast to the assumption of a single, tangible reality espoused by positivism. Furthermore, the possibility of the temporal and contextual independence of reality is rejected in qualitative approaches. The alternative paradigm is appreciative that phenomena must be considered as "wholes that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39).

Assumptions regarding epistemology underlie the paradigms and clearly differentiate the two. Within the positivist paradigm, a fundamental assumption is that separation of the knower from the known is both possible and desirable. This conjecture is summarily rejected within the alternative research paradigm. The concept of objectivity is dismissed, since "all science is grounded in the subjectivity of human experience" (Merriam & Simpson, 1989, p. 5). A second distinction arises from the assumption of linear causality. This evolved from

research into the natural or physical world in which objects, things, natural events, and the behaviour of objects are studied. The assumption of linear causality lead to the understanding that the purpose of science is prediction and control. The subject matter for study in the qualitative paradigm, on the other hand, is the human world, which as Van Manen (1990) writes, is "characterized by *Geist*-mind, thoughts, consciousness, values, feelings, emotions, actions, and purposes" (p. 3). The purpose of research undertaken within this paradigm is the explication of the meaning of phenomena, since explanation of phenomena within the human world is not possible. As Eisner and Peshkin (1990) write, approaches "based upon a deterministic causal model simply do not fit the arenas in which human action takes place" (p. 11). A final distinction in the two paradigms concerns understandings about the people who conduct research and those who participate in it. Positivism allows researchers to define themselves as self-determining intelligent beings while treating respondents otherwise. The qualitative paradigm supposes a more egalitarian environment, in which human behaviour is viewed as intelligent self-direction and congruence between respondents and researchers are required. Acceptance of subjectivity, a desire to understand rather than predict and respect for all roles tends to characterize research undertaken within the qualitative paradigm and distinguish it from more traditional modes of inquiry.

Recognition of the different assumptions underlying the alternative paradigm has led to the development of new perspectives, methods, and

techniques as well as to the modification of existing ones. Known collectively as the qualitative approach, these types of research are appropriate when the purpose of inquiry is deeper and more holistic or contextual understanding. In research undertaken within the qualitative paradigm there is "substantive concern with exploring the meanings attached to behaviors by actors and with understanding these individuals' meaning systems" (Brookfield, 1983, p. 1). Consequently, the approach requires the collection of data which are rich in descriptions of people and their contexts. Qualitative research methods rely on strategies in which questions and concepts are emergent and an inductive approach to theory development is generally taken. The value of the approach is its ability to allow a phenomenon to be investigated in all of its complexity.

<u>The Hermeneutic Phenomenological Perspective</u>

Within the qualitative research paradigm, phenomenology and hermeneutics are considered two of the major perspectives in which to situate inquiry. Both philosophies are rooted in the German school of thinkers. Dilthey (1976), Husserl (Ricoeur, 1967), and Schutz and Luckman (1973) identified the concern of both to be with phenomena of the human or life-world as opposed to aspects of the physical world. This critical distinction led Dilthey to denote the objective of inquiry into human life to be understanding as opposed to explanation which he viewed as the purpose of research into the physical world. The notion of the existence of an alternative path to knowledge followed Husserl's (Ricoeur, 1967) central emphasis on the 'essence' of phenomena. Consequently, the aim of

phenomenology is to develop insightful descriptions of pre-reflective experience of the life-world. Schleirmacher, writing in the eighteenth century, Dilthey, in the nineteenth, and Gadamer, in the twentieth, each associate understanding with interpretation and develop the notion of hermeneutics as a means of interpretation. These two philosophies, developed primarily by the German school, have become major perspectives for qualitative research.

<u>Phenomenology</u>

The goal of phenomenological research is to produce clear description of the internal meaning structures of lived experience. It aims to uncover the essence of structures, "those aspects of an experience that are invariant and essential," according to Polkinghorne (1989, p. 42). The notion that meaningful experience is at the centre of knowledge is fundamental to the phenomenological perspective. Rich depiction of lived experience through retrospective reflection, "without being obstructed by preconceptions and theoretical notions" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 184), is required to produce accounts of lived experience. A fundamental assumption of the philosophy, and therefore of the perspective, is that reality is subjective and individual, making phenomenology "a philosophy or *theory of the unique*" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 7).

On its own, pure phenomenology would have offered a limited perspective for this study; however, the assumption of the existence of multiple truths allows significant contributions to knowledge in an additive rather than transformative way. As Van Manen (1990) notes, phenomenology "offers us the possibility of

plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world" (p. 9) and,

thus, clearly provided a satisfactory starting point for the location of this inquiry,

which dealt with phenomena of the human world.

Hermeneutics

In contrast to phenomenology, the fundamental assumption of the

philosophy guiding hermeneutics is the notion that reality is a social rather than

individual construct. Hermeneutic philosophers consider misunderstanding the

natural state of affairs of the human or life-world. The objective of research

undertaken within the hermeneutic perspective, therefore, is to develop

understanding, or *verstehen*, "the attempt to achieve a sense of the meaning that

others give to their own situations through an interpretive understanding of their

language, art, gestures and politics" (Smith, 1983, p. 12). Situations in which, as

Linge (1976) writes, "we encounter meanings that are not immediately

understandable but require interpretive effort" (p. xii) are suitable to the

hermeneutic perspective. Phenomena created by or of people, both alien and

familiar, are clearly suited to inquiry within this perspective.

Interpretation is the foundation of the hermeneutic tradition and has both

dialogic and dialectic qualities. The dialogic characteristic of interpretation refers

to the back and forth movement between the interpreter and text, which occurs in

seeking meaning. The dialectic quality refers to the logical, critical nature of the

examination of the text which occurs in the act of interpreting. Since meaning is

thought to be socially and historically bounded, knowledge of the historical

situation or life-context of both the text and the interpreter are essential elements to understanding in hermeneutics. Understanding occurs, according to Dilthey (1976), as "the reader's own prejudices are thrown into relief and thus come to critical self-consciousness" (p. xxi). The notion of reality as social construction, the goal of understanding and the process of interpretation indicated that hermeneutics was an appropriate perspective in which to situate this inquiry.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Phenomenology and hermeneutics are complementary philosophies and perspectives and when brought together form *hermeneutic phenomenology* -- "a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of *other*, the *whole*, the *communal*, or the *social*" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 7). Phenomenology affords a way of understanding the phenomenon as it exists within individuals, respecting the uniqueness of subjective perception of a phenomenon while attempting to uncover its essence. The emphasis is on the idiographic and particularistic nature of reality and on perception rather than interpretation. Within hermeneutics, however, reality is assumed to be intersubjective and context, therefore, is of utmost importance. Interpretation is the process employed to develop deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology provides a conceptual framework for understanding human phenomena. The combination of hermeneutics with phenomenology is based in the belief that understanding is possible, for as Van Manen (1990) writes, we must

have "faith that we can share this world, that we can make things understandable to each other, that experience can be made intelligible" (p. 16).

Together, phenomenology and hermeneutics provided the most suitable perspective for the development of understanding of teachers' professional knowledge. This was accomplished because the perspective encouraged attention to two levels of comprehension. At the first level, apprehension of the experience without conscious inference occurred. At the second level, developing understanding involved interpreting the nature of the experience and its meaning in the context of the person and the situation. The inquiry sought to develop the notion of *verstehen*, regarding one teacher's professional knowledge. The possibility of representing intersubjective truth regarding this phenomenon existed in hermeneutic phenomenology.

The Life History Method

The life history method is grounded in the epistemological and ontological assumptions of both phenomenology and hermeneutics. Because of its roots in phenomenology, life history may be considered an emic-idiographic research approach. Researchers who employ the method are concerned with understanding the particular rather than the general and attend to the specific and unique richness of a phenomenon. The process of engaging in a life history study is compellingly subjective, both in the creation and the interpretation of text used to investigate and understand human phenomena. As Plummer (1981) writes, the life history method "advocates getting close to concrete individual men and

women, accurately picking up the way they express their understandings of the world around them" (p. 1). This ability to allow people to speak for themselves is one of the greatest strengths of the method (Goodson, 1988) and one of the main benefits cited by researchers who employ it (i.e., Elder, 1981; Finger, 1988; Goodson, 1981; Marsick, 1989; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985; Thompson, 1981).

From the hermeneutic perspective the life history method broadens interest in personal truth by considering wider socio-historical factors, *"even if these are not part of the consciousness of the individual"* [italics in original] (Goodson, 1988, p. 80). The dialectical compound of the individual and society is an important notion, which, according to Plummer (1981) means that "body, mind, context, society -- *all* are in constant engagement with each other, and *all* need to be taken into account" (p. 54). The actual concern of the method is with the concrete lived experience of the individual within social and historical context. Goodson (1988) suggests that researchers "locate the life history of the individual within 'the history of his [sic] time'" (p. 84) to grasp the context in which meaning has been made. As subjective meaning is sought in the analysis of the processes through which individuals enact and create social reality and through the hermeneutic process of interpretation, understanding becomes possible.

The life history method was appropriate for this study for several reasons. First, it permitted an understanding of phenomena as process since the present was interpreted within the perspective of time (Goodson, 1988; Thompson, 1981). Allowing the personal situation to be viewed as an evolution is clearly important

in understanding phenomena such as teachers' knowledge and teachers' careers. Researchers agree that "the greatest strength of the life history is in its penetration of the subjective reality of the individual" (Goodson, 1988, p. 79). The method encouraged intense focus on the phenomenon under study through attention to describing and understanding the circumstances of one teacher. As a result of this aspect, the method, Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) write, "restores some much-needed balance to the runaway tendency in the social sciences to reduce people to categories and abstractions in the service of model building and model testing" (p. 27). In addition, life history's appreciation of individual life experience within historical and social context, allowed the questions guiding the research to be adequately formulated. This consideration was significant, for as Mills (1970) reminds us, "the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations" (pp. 247-248).

The Single Case Study

In congruence with the paradigm, perspective and method of the research, the inquiry was designed as a single case study. Ontological assumptions underlying the qualitative paradigm support the use of one participant in life history research. As Peshkin (1993) notes, "The assumption behind the story of any particular life is that there's something worth learning" (p. 25). In addition, the single case study provided an opportunity to appreciate the individuality of experience. The value of this type of research, according to Merriam and Simpson

(1989), is that:

> by concentrating upon a single phenomenon or entity ("the case"), this
> approach seeks to uncover the interplay of significant factors that is
> characteristic of the phenomenon (p. 96).

Furthermore, the single case study encouraged a focus on the context in which the phenomenon existed, an important aspect of the research which was rooted in the assumption that meaning is socially and historically bound.

Single case studies are supported in studies of teachers' lives and teachers' knowledge conducted from a variety of perspectives. Examples from academia include the doctoral theses of Elbaz (1980), Beattie (1991), and Louden (1989). Elbaz (1980), found the single case study "particularly well-suited for attaining an understanding of the teacher's knowledge from her own point of view" (p. 55). Beattie (1991), worked with one participant in a narrative study of the construction and reconstruction of personal practical knowledge. In a study of the process of change, Louden (1989), who worked with an elementary teacher, argued that the full and vivid interpretation hermeneutics demands requires such extensive field work that only one participant was practical. Bullough's (1989) First-year teacher, another example of a single case study, is a well-known and respected report of an individual's experience. Within popular literature, several publications are based on work with a single teacher. Kidder's (1989) Among schoolchildren, an account of one year in the life of a fifth grade teacher, and Small victories (Freedman, 1990), the story of an inner-city high school teacher,

are both ethnographic case studies. Other respected and well-known accounts of teachers in the popular and academic press report studies based on the experiences of individual participants and provided the precedent for working with a single participant in this study.

The Research Design

The intention of this study was to understand what constitutes one teacher's professional knowledge and to gain an appreciation of how it is has been constructed and reconstructed through her life experiences. A broad and non-reductionist approach to gathering and interpreting information was appropriate. The study was loosely structured in order to explore the phenomenon and to place it within the context of an individual life (Seidman, 1991). The life history method, because of its regard for both biography and context, allowed the inquiry to focus on both the personal and the professional aspects of the teacher's practice and knowledge (Goodson, 1983). In the first phase the biographical and historical context of the teacher's knowledge was established. In the second phase, the teacher's professional knowledge was investigated within the social and political context of her life. An essential feature which distinguishes life history from similar research methods is the importance of cross-validating the information gathered (Cole, 1991a). Hence, throughout the life of the project, multiple techniques were used, ensuring "more bits of the jigsaw," (Goodson and Walker, 1991, p. 135) were included in the picture. In the third phase of the research design, the phenomenon was reflected upon, analyzed, interpreted, recounted and

reconstructed. The design facilitated analysis of information for the participant and myself both during its collection as well as later in a more structured process. Specific details of the techniques employed in each phase of the research follow.

Gathering Information

Gaining Entry and Negotiating Participation

The first phase of the study, gaining entry and negotiating participation, occurred in the fall of 1992. The tasks involved absorbed a considerable amount of time but were a significant component of research which was understood to be a social process which therefore entailed the development of relationships and trust (Measor and Sykes, 1992). Arlene[1], a teacher at a local community college, was identified by a mutual acquaintance as a possible candidate for participation in my inquiry. I contacted her by telephone and after preliminaries about myself and the research, agreed to send material for her to read. A week later, I contacted Arlene again and found that she was indeed interested in pursuing the project. Consequently, we met to review the study and as I outlined the research design, we discussed why it was important and how we might work together. Appendix A contains the project outline provided in the initial meeting. I emphasized my intention to modify procedures based on her concerns, interests, and constraints. Negotiating conditions for participation in the research was a crucial step in the project for several reasons. As Cole and Knowles (1993) note,

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Throughout this thesis, the research participant is referred to as Arlene, a pseudonym she selected. Pseudonyms are also used in reference to family members, colleagues, students, the community, and the college.

new forms of partnership research are based on fundamental

assumptions about the importance of mutuality in purpose,

interpretation, reporting, and about the potency of multiple

perspectives (p. 478).

Negotiating participation was a significant demonstration of my intention to

develop a collaborative and non-hierarchical relationship in keeping with my

philosophical stance regarding research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In addition, I

was cognizant that the focus of the inquiry would necessitate intrusive probing of

the participant's personal and professional life (Cole, 1994) and needed to be

certain that this was understood and agreed to. Realizing that the decision to

participate in the study would be a major commitment of time and energy, we

agreed to speak again after Arlene had considered her decision and I left her with

a copy of the research proposal. Several weeks later, we met again and negotiated

the conditions of her participation in the study. We agreed that the most

important considerations were to be flexible with our time and respectful of each

other. After further discussion of roles and responsibilities, Arlene read and

signed the material I had prepared to ensure that her consent was informed. A

copy of the final agreement appears in Appendix B. Although the first stage of

data collection had not formally begun, I had already gathered considerable

information about my participant.

Gathering Life History Information

Several techniques were used to gather information about Arlene's past and

about the social and historical context of her life. Life history interviews were enriched with family photographs Arlene shared with me. Public documents such as a newspaper article written by a classmate of Arlene's about their childhood neighbourhood and schools provided additional information. More data were gleaned later in the research process through discussions I labelled context conversations. These techniques are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

Arlene and I organized several meetings to conduct the life history interviews over the next month. We scheduled our appointments for evenings, and since confidentiality was a potential problem at her worksite, met at Arlene's home. A pattern to the process of interviewing was quickly established which became integral to our relationship and to the sharing of information. Before each meeting I telephoned to confirm the appointment and found myself engaged in discussion about teaching and students and our lives in general.

Over the next six weeks, Arlene and I engaged in three life history interviews. Each continued for two to three hours and was audio-taped and later transcribed. Advice from Taylor and Bogdan (1984) formed the basis of the first interview: Arlene drew a lifeline to outline the dates of key events and experiences in her life. This lifeline became the guide for organizing the life history interviews, which were informal and unstructured yet in-depth, according to Taylor and Bogdan's (1984) explanation:

repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and

informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (p. 77).

Arlene shared her memories and reflections of various aspects of her life such as early childhood experiences, relationships with her immediate and extended family, friendships, school, university and teaching experiences. Later, as the rapport between us grew, Arlene confided deeply personal information, including, for example, her experiences with marriage, motherhood, separation and her parents' deaths. Our conversations delved into happy and satisfying times in her life as well as experiences which were painful and troubling. The intention of asking such intrusive questions, however, was "to elicit information that will assist in developing a contextualized understanding of human phenomena . . . influenced by a complex array of historical, political, societal, institutional, and personal circumstances" (Cole, 1994, p. 2). Immediately after each interview I composed field notes and transcribed the tapes of the notes and the interview itself. Files of these interviews were labelled LHINT, followed by the numeral representing its order in the sequence. In order to protect Arlene's anonymity, an example of these is not included in the appendices. After proofreading the transcript, I sent a copy to Arlene along with a note outlining times or experiences she had not yet shared with me in order to focus the next interview.

Between interviews, Arlene and I maintained telephone contact. The casual, unstructured conversations we had this way were important to the

development of a comfortable rapport between us. During these talks, I took note of important issues and when possible, created field notes for myself immediately after our conversation concluded. After the completion of the three lengthy life history interviews, the information gathered was arranged in chronological order. A comprehensive picture of Arlene's past, of who she was, and of the major events and relationships in her life, developed. However, I again made notes for myself on periods which required clarification to be filled in during our regular phone calls or further interviews.

Gathering Classroom Practice Information

In the second phase of the research a variety of information about Arlene's teaching practice and the immediate social and historical context of her work was gathered. For a six month period I made regular calls at the college where Arlene teaches English, Math, and Life Skills to adults. Each of the techniques used to gather information is described in the following section.

Observation provided an immense quantity of high quality information about Arlene's practice and the context in which it existed. During each visit, I consciously worked to make the familiar strange to myself (Spradley, 1980; Hunt, 1987). Contextual information about the community, the larger social and economic setting for Arlene's practice and the college, the closer background to her practice were observed and noted. I recorded information about physical settings, people, their activities, events, emotions, and the general feel of the space and time (Spradley, 1980) on hard copy draft field notes or on audio tape recordings

which were later transcribed. Filenames for field notes contained initials representing the type of encounter (e.g., LH for life history, O for classroom observation, C for context conversation) followed by the initials FN and a number representing its order in the sequence. An example of a field note is provided in Appendix C. These data contributed essential details to the portrait which emerged through the process of analysis and interpretation.

Observation was also employed to gather information regarding Arlene's classroom practice. I was a regular visitor through the winter, spring and early summer to watch and/or participate in both routine and special sessions. Throughout the project, I assumed the role of a supportive but curious equal and a descriptive rather than evaluative or judgmental stance regarding Arlene's practice. My function in her classroom varied depending on the students, the type of class, and the length of time the group had been together. In Math classes I assisted Arlene by working individually with students while in Life Skills classes I was cast as a participant or an observer, rather than an assistant. Observation provided such quantity and quality of information that it confirmed Eisner's (1991) position that "we not only know more than we can tell . . . we tell far less than we know" (p. 68). A record of each observation was made at the earliest possible moment. In some cases, they were composed as I viewed an activity (i.e., during part of a lesson); in other cases, notes were recorded on audio tape or drafted immediately after the observation concluded. All spoken notes were later transcribed and affixed with the filename ON followed by a numeral representing

its order in the sequence of visits. A sample of an observation note is included in Appendix D.

Many of the questions which arose from observing Arlene and her students were addressed in interviews which followed immediately. These were, as Glesne and Peshkin (1992) write, "an occasion for depth probes -- for getting to the bottom of things" (p. 85). Most observation interviews took place in nearby restaurants or the college cafeteria where we were confident we would not be overheard. Observation interviews were grounded conversations Cole (1991a) in which Arlene and I reconstructed classroom activities, discussed students, materials she used, and other aspects of what had occurred in a particular lesson. At times I introduced questions developed from notes taken at a previous observation or after the conclusion of a conversation. Arlene shared her interpretation of these and sometimes came to subsequent observation interviews with further thoughts on the matter. The open research relationship we developed made it possible to raise questions about contradictions and ambiguities and we often spent entire afternoons in discussion ranging from life experiences to philosophy to staffing practices. Each conversation was audio taped, transcribed and labelled with the filename OINT, followed by a numeral, in order to indicate which observation interview it was. An excerpt of this data is provided in Appendix E. As previously mentioned, field notes were made at the conclusion of each observation interview.

Another technique employed in gathering and interpreting information was

the series of unstructured discussions which I labelled context conversations.
Arlene and I spoke frequently between interviews and continued to talk after the
formal stage of data collection was concluded. Small pieces of information
provided additional insight into Arlene's views on teaching, the college, and her
life. Some of these data were captured in journal entries and some were recorded
on audio tape or through field notes as a context interview and labelled CINT
followed by a numeral. An extract of a context conversation file is included in
Appendix F. Most information gleaned from these conversations was not recorded.
It has, however, greatly informed my developing understanding of Arlene for each
time we spoke I knew Arlene a little bit better and felt another piece of the puzzle
falling into place (Goodson, 1981).

A variety of documents provided supplementary information and validity
checks against data obtained in interviews and observation sessions (Woods,
1986). For example, municipal sources were contacted regarding the
socioeconomic situation of the community where Arlene's practice is located and a
newspaper article supplied similar material on her childhood neighbourhood. At
the college, I accessed newsletters, calendars, brochures, and other documents for
contextual information related to the programs, staff, and students. In addition,
Arlene shared materials she produced herself for the classroom along with several
newspaper articles concerning her program and her students which she had
collected in recent years. These public and private documents expanded the depth
and breadth of information collected and helped to clarify and substantiate data

gathered with other techniques.

Each of the techniques employed to gather information -- observation, interview, conversation and documents -- contributed to the collection of rich and detailed information regarding Arlene and the social and historical context of her life. The combination of these techniques led to the collection of a significant amount of detailed data which was analyzed according to the procedures outlined in the following section.

<u>Analyzing Information Gathered</u>

Analysis of the information gathered was a multi-level task which began during the fieldwork and continued long after its conclusion. A major concern throughout the process was ensuring that the approach employed was consistent with the perspective the inquiry was undertaken within. Initially, this was extremely perplexing since few specific guidelines exist regarding analysis in the life history method (Goodson, 1981; Kelchtermans, 1994; Langness & Frank, 1981), partly because the method is employed in studies undertaken in various disciplines and grounded in different perspectives.

This study was situated in hermeneutic phenomenology and its goal was "explicating the meaning of human phenomena . . . and . . . *understanding* the lived structure of meanings" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 4). The perspective necessarily incorporated both description and interpretation within the process of analysis. The research methodology literature advised dialoging with the data and proceeding in the manner of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Kockelmans, 1972; Tesch,

1990), and constructing meaning as each part of the text is considered in relationship to the whole. These instructions, while valid descriptions of what occurs between researcher and text, were too ambiguous to help in decisions regarding what to actually do with the data. Indeed, as Wolcott (1994) notes, "*analysis* refers quite specifically and narrowly to systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features and relationships" (p. 24). Details of the systematic techniques which were identified as appropriate for the perspective and the life history method and which were employed in the analysis of the data follow.

Life History Analysis

The goal of the first level of analysis was the development of a vivid description of Arlene's life story. The purpose of this account was to respond to the question, "What is the nature or essence of this?" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 4) regarding Arlene's life. Analysis began with the creation of transcripts of the life history interviews and field notes. As I read the text I recorded thoughts and questions for further interviews and then gave a copy to Arlene which she reviewed for accuracy. After Arlene had judged the information correct and complete, I organized the data chronologically and added further anecdotes related to her life history contained in other interview transcripts, field notes and documents gathered during the research process.

I read through the revised transcripts several times and divided the data into sections representing pivotal periods, such as Arlene's early childhood

experiences, university graduation, her early years of marriage, the birth of her children, her adjustment to life in Toronto, et cetera. I then identified anecdotes and supporting quotations to illustrate the flavour of each period and assembled a narrative outline of each of the major sections of Arlene's life story. As Simonson (1994) notes, "voice is an ongoing negotiation" (p. 133) and determining whose voice to use in reporting this story was difficult. Arlene's life history was imparted within the context of a dialogue and the meaning of her words was not always immediately clear. Some sentences and thought patterns were disjointed and lacked clarity because of the conversational quality of the interviews. This being the case, I decided that my voice would be used for the story's structure, to assist in relating a fluent and cohesive account. Direct quotes from interviews and conversations with Arlene were used to provide an additional layer of colour and texture to the story.

When the first draft of the life history was complete, a copy was sent to Arlene for comments and corrections. We met a week later and revised the draft together, collaborating to insure that what the text presented was a story which both Arlene and I could live with. She checked the accuracy of the chronology of events and the people involved and revised passages she felt did not convey or emphasize what she felt was important. More importantly, however, Arlene identified aspects she wished not to be disclosed in the thesis for a variety of personal reasons (Cole, 1994). Later, the final version of her story was edited and quotes and anecdotes to support the interpretation we had arrived at together

were inserted. The final version appears in Chapter 3.

Classroom Practice Analysis

The second phase in the process of data analysis involved the development of a thick, descriptive account of Arlene's classroom practice. The enormous quantity and the variety of forms of data made the task formidable; however, Wolcott's (1994) assertion "the procedures impose order on the management of data, no matter how unruly the data themselves" (p. 27) bore truth. An approach similar to that employed with the life history transcripts was used with the classroom practice data.

The very first step of analysis occurred during the fieldwork. As previously mentioned, hand written observation notes, audio tapes of observation interviews and field notes were transcribed after each classroom visit. These were arranged in chronological order along with documents gathered during the visit. After reading the transcripts and documents a summary of the observation and a set of questions was prepared for Arlene. The written record focused subsequent conversations and contributed to the development of unified interpretations (Cole, 1987) through ensuring mutual agreement of an event or anecdote.

Analysis continued beyond the conclusion of the fieldwork as the classroom practice data was approached with the question "What is the nature or essence of this?" (Van Manen, 1990). Transcripts of observation interviews, field notes, observation notes, journal notations and documents were read carefully. As I read, I highlighted key phrases and statements that stood out from the text and

paraphrased longer statements which seemed significant. Recurring topics identified at this point in the analysis included, for example, "You've got to be fair"; "Student rights and responsibilities"; "Teacher's rights"; "Teaching is a solo performance"; and "Tests are important." The entire collection of classroom practice data was then scrutinized for evidence of each of these topics. A new file was created for each topic and one by one each data file was retrieved into the new file. Everything except text which referred to the topic of concern was deleted. Once all of the information was in place, the new file was read again for the purpose of capturing the overall meaning of the text collected. A word or phrase which named this key aspect of Arlene's practice was then selected as the title of the theme. Themes designated at this point included: "Look out for yourself"; "One at a time"; "Teacher knows best"; "If you enjoy it you'll muddle through somehow"; "You've got to be nice to be popular"; and many others. Following the apprehension of these themes, descriptive paragraphs or anecdotes were composed to illustrate each.

The next step was the development of a structure to recount the story of Arlene's practice within its social, historical and economic context. I prepared a description of the community which I followed with a portrait of Municipal College (a pseudonym) and finally with an outline of Arlene's program area. Quotes from the classroom practice data, as well as information from sources such as the college calendar, newspaper articles and government publications provided supporting documentation. The accounts of various aspects of Arlene's classroom

practice were then organized into the framework of a teaching day in order to render a sense of narrative unity from disjointed pieces. The story presents a unique, subjective perception of the essence of Arlene's practice within the context of program, the college, the community and the times.

The result of the completion of the first level of analysis of the life history and classroom practice data was a set of descriptive accounts. These were fashioned to comprise three chapters which are essentially re-presentations of Arlene's life story, the context of her practice, and her classroom practice. In this account, Arlene's practice is understood to occur within the context of a life history and across social and historical points. The stories presented in the following three chapters emphasize the themes which form the basis of the next level of analysis.

Professional Knowledge Analysis

The objective of the succeeding level of analysis was to develop *verstehen* or understanding, regarding the phenomenon of professional knowledge. Wolcott's (1994) instructions to "Identify patterned regularities in the data. . . . look for and discuss the relationships, the what-goes-with-what that realizes in the study of a single case the potential for understanding something beyond it" (p. 33) formed the foundation of the procedures employed in this phase of the data analysis. The results of the process are presented in Chapter 6, A Characterization of Connections.

At this level, analysis involved the separation of the data into small,

distinct pieces and a subsequent search for patterns, contrasts and contradictions among them. In separate exercises, the life history and classroom practice data were labelled and then sorted. Interview transcripts, observation and field notes were classified for the presence of one of the twelve themes previously identified in the classroom practice data (e.g., "You've got to be fair"; "One at a time"; "No talking please"; etc.) or one of the eleven themes in the life history data (e.g., "You stand alone"; "The destination matters more than the journey"; "Always be fair"; etc.). Following this classification, pieces of the data which were representative of each theme were sorted and grouped together, resulting in pages of supporting evidence for each.

The next step in the data analysis involved a search for patterns and relationships among the themes, initially within the individual sets and later between the two. The first result of hours of examination was a reduction in the number of themes in both the classroom practice and the life history data as more important or more inclusive themes subsumed others. Following this step, the sets were scrutinized for patterns, irregularities, contrasts and contradictions. Similarities and differences were discerned, the meaning of contradictions became distinct, and relationships were clarified as a structure emerged from the themes. This endeavour constituted the dialogic and the dialectic of the hermeneutic philosophy, which Tesch (1990) so aptly summarized:

> once each part becomes better understood, through this association
>
> with the whole, the whole itself becomes more transparent. In the

light of this new understanding of the whole the parts are interpreted

again (p. 94).

Finally, a metaphor was identified which assisted with the developing portrait of

the phenomenon. Later, alternative techniques were identified which assisted in

articulating the complexity of the relationships between and among the major

aspects of the phenomenon. The final results of the phenomenological

hermeneutic analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

Ensuring Quality

The issue of assuring the quality of the research was addressed in multiple

ways from the inception of the study, from the initial conceptualization of the

methodology through the collection and analysis of data to the final reporting of

the findings. The importance of rigour and attention to the appropriateness of

techniques used were inherent components of the research process because of their

connection to the development of meaningful and defendable results. Indeed, as

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) note, "the extent to which the research design is

tightly defined and credible, the data are dense and comprehensive, and both data

and analysis address the original research questions determine the persuasive

power of the inferences upon which interpretive statements are based" (p. 278).

In planning the study, the perspective and research method were important

in formulating criteria which would manifest the calibre of the inquiry. The life

history method was selected because it represented a process of inquiry which was

fundamentally appropriate, given the epistemological and ontological assumptions

which underlay the inquiry. "Good" research, according to Krall (1988), "should not reduce the complexities of human interaction and learning to simple formulas but rather should elaborate and accentuate their richness" (p. 474). In order to accomplish this, the methodology must appreciate the importance of context and must address "an abiding and authentic concern" (Krall, 1988, p. 476). From a technical perspective, the research design incorporated the notions of triangulation (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), or "structural corroboration" to produce "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Eisner, 1991, p. 110).

During the collection of data, I was extremely conscious of the necessity of approaching situations and circumstances with an open mind and of expecting surprises (Hunt, 1987, 1992). To compensate for my familiarity with the context, I often asked questions which aroused in Arlene a certain amount of amazement at my ignorance. I was conscious of presenting myself, as Wolcott (1990, p. 128) advised, "as a bit dense, someone who does not catch on too quickly and has to have things repeated or explained." Using a variety of data sources and gathering information over a lengthy period of time contributed to the development of a comprehensive and trustworthy assortment of material to analyze. Finally, meticulous care was taken to ensure that information was recorded accurately. For example, during observations of Arlene's teaching, handwritten notes were used to record events and interactions in the classroom as they occurred. These handwritten notes were supplemented with spoken field notes recorded immediately after departing from the site, which along with the notes taken

during the observation, were then transcribed.

Several techniques were employed during the analysis phase to ensure that the processes employed were rigorous. One technique applied was the notion of cross checks (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 99) in which information Arlene supplied in interviews was compared against itself for consistency. In addition, her observations and recollections of the context of her experiences were checked against other sources, such as newspaper accounts and scholarly reports. Arlene scrutinized the descriptive reports of her biography and classroom practice in order to ensure the accuracy of facts and her concurrence with this level of analysis. The comments and suggestions she offered regarding the interpretation of people, places, times, and events were incorporated into final accounts.

The quality of the final level of analysis was also ensured in important and different ways. My ongoing relationship with Arlene from the beginning of the fieldwork to the completion of the study provided a unique aspect in the analysis. As Wolcott (1990) notes, conducting fieldwork over a lengthy period of time and keeping in touch with a participant "so that events observed can be reviewed from the perspective of time" (p. 129) contributes to the complexity of the interpretation rendered. Judgment on the research inevitably centres on the final product, and its satisfaction of the intention of the study. In this case, a description of one teacher's professional knowledge in the form of a characterization fulfils the aim of the study by producing a deeper understanding of Arlene's professional knowledge. The results are credible and veracious because of the care which was observed in

all steps of the research process.

Ethical Issues and Concerns

Undertaking research within the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective and employing the life history method required careful consideration of various ethical concerns in the implementation of the research design. Definitive procedural guidelines for collaborative research, such as this inquiry, have not been written (Goodson & Walker, 1991) and there are still many grey areas in the ethics of educational research (Burgess, 1989). The scarcity of authority necessitated reflection on issues encountered at all stages of the research process: from negotiating participation (Hunt, 1992; Measor & Sykes, 1992), as information was gathered (Cole, 1991a; Cole & Knowles, 1991, 1993), during analysis of the data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Wolcott, 1994), and while preparing reports on the study (Cole, 1994; Noffke, 1991). A detailed discussion of the issues and their resolution appears in Chapter 7.

Summary

This research project was situated within the phenomenological (Husserl, 1965; Van Manen, 1990) and hermeneutic (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gadamer, 1976; Shutz, 1962) perspectives and employed the life history method (Goodson, 1981; Plummer, 1983). The study was conducted in a community college located in a large and ethnically diverse suburban municipality within the metropolitan area of Toronto, Canada. The complexity of the phenomenon manifested itself in the requirement for data which allowed an in-depth examination of the teacher,

her practice, and her life (Van Manen, 1990; Cole, 1991b, 1994), as well as a broader understanding of the social, economic and political context (Goodson, 1992; Thompson, 1981) of her experiences. Consequently, the study employed an intensive, year-long phase of data gathering and utilized a variety of techniques. A series of life history interviews (Seidman, 1991), classroom observations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), interviews and discussions about teaching practice (Cole & Knowles, 1991) and both personal and public documents (Woods, 1986) were used to collect information for the study. The information gathered was transcribed and the resulting text analyzed according to phenomenological (Polkinghorne, 1989) and hermeneutic techniques (Wolcott, 1994).

The results of the first level of data analysis are presented in the next three chapters. First, in order to outline significant biographical influences on her practice, the story of Arlene's life is recounted. The following chapter outlines the broad social context of her teaching practice in a descriptive account of the economic and social conditions of the community and the college at the time of the data collection. Finally, Arlene's teaching practice is represented in a thick, narrative account of one teaching day.

CHAPTER THREE

ARLENE'S LIFE STORY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the biographical and historical context of the teacher-participant's professional knowledge. This information, which along with current contextual influences, comprises the essential elements required in the development of an appreciation of the construction and re-construction of the phenomenon, is integral to the purpose of the research. Anecdotes and vignettes are used to recount Arlene's life story in order to advance a rich description founded in the themes which emerged during analysis of the life history data. Contextual details, significant relationships, and key experiences and events of Arlene's approximately fifty years of living are arranged in chronological order accompanied by analytic observations. Additional data are employed to locate Arlene's experiences within the history of her time (Goodson, 1988) and place. Arlene's voice, my voice and others are combined here to render a rich verbal tapestry of lived experienced. The chapter's conclusion consists of a summary of the analysis of the life history data and a prelude to the two chapters which follow.

Significant Themes in Arlene's Life Story

As reported in the previous chapter, themes were identified in life history interview and context conversation transcripts using phenomenological and hermeneutic analytic techniques. A total of ten themes emerged from the life history data; some were evident in anecdotes throughout Arlene's entire biography

while others were apparent only during specific periods of her life. Although themes represent complex notions which are difficult to convey in single words or phrases, they were abbreviated to simplify the process of analyzing and displaying data. The following table displays, in no particular order, the title conferred upon each theme and the notion it represents.

Table 1:

Titles and Meanings of Life History Themes

Title	Meaning
You stand alone	A sense of being virtually without support in a world full of unexpected dangers and the ensuing responsibility for oneself
Always be fair	Equity or fairness is a cardinal rule for self and others
The destination matters more than the journey	Greater concern for a goal than for the means by which it is accomplished
Be nice	To do what is expected by virtue of one's social position; often involves an optimistic or positive stance
The pragmatist	The tendency to approach situations from a practical, matter of fact perspective
Respect privacy	Sensitivity concerning the disclosure of personal or family information
Trust intuition	Belief in fate and others' ability to foresee the future
Use logic	Trust that order will prevail if reason and common sense are applied in making decisions and solving problems
Women are dependable	Women are strong, reliable and constant in contrast to men
It's important to belong	Acceptance by a group is extremely important; conformity brings belonging

On the following pages, passages and anecdotes from the life history data

illustrate the major features of Arlene's life story and demonstrate evidence of the themes displayed above. For ease of reading, titles of themes within blocks of text are underlined.

Arlene's Future

Here, the story of Arlene's life begins with glimpses into the future she envisions. From this brief introduction, the story circles back to the experiences and events which led her, through twists and turns, to the circumstances which brought us together, sharing the past and the present in this research. Arlene is a full-time teacher at Municipal College in a suburban community within Metropolitan Toronto. For the most part, she enjoys her work, in which she continues to find challenges and satisfaction. Separated from her husband of more than two decades, Arlene has two bright, attractive and pleasant teenaged daughters. The elder is doing a degree in commerce and the younger is still in high school. In her mid-fifties, Arlene is looking forward to retirement as a welcome change of pace, even though it probably will not happen for a long while yet. She dreams about leaving the city when she retires and relocating in a smaller community. There, with lower costs of living, she will have the choice of working part-time or volunteering her time in community activities. She plans to be physically active in golf, curling and tennis, and to have time to relax and enjoy the grandchildren she is confident her daughters will produce. These hopes and dreams for the future embrace the motifs and themes of a life time of experiences shared as collected memories and organized here as narrative accounts.

Wartime Baby

Arlene's life began in a small city on the Canadian prairies approximately fifty years ago. She was the only child of a young couple brought together through the circumstances of Canada's involvement in the war in Europe.

> *My parents had a wartime marriage. My mum was a nurse, my*
>
> *father was injured and a patient and then he went back off to the war.*
>
> *I was born when he was overseas and they divorced after he came*
>
> *back* (LHCHR, p. 1).

Significant from this early period is the understanding that she was unlike others and the consequences this situation brought. Conformity, an important feature of postwar North America, extended to the family. As Breines (1992) notes, "every major institution . . . promoted the home, togetherness, and the family . . . . family-size carton, family room, family car, family film, family restaurant, family vacation" (p. 52). Characteristics rooted in domestic circumstances which distinguished Arlene included her father's absence, the brevity of her parents' marriage and the unspoken insinuation of their illicit behaviour. Soon after she was born, Arlene's mother joined her husband's family in their small, rural community in British Columbia's (B.C.) Fraser Valley. Arlene relishes the stories told over the years about the happy times and favourable experiences she had with the large extended family on her father's side during the war years.

> *I had lots of attention as a young child. I was an only child and the*
>
> *first grandchild on my dad's side of the family . . . I was probably*

very spoiled . . . . I had a grandmother who played games with me by the hour and never complained ever about mess or anything else. I could do anything (LHCHR, pp. 1-2).

At the conclusion of the war, Arlene's father returned to B.C. but not to his marriage and her mother soon arranged to leave his hometown.

Paid employment was difficult for women to find in the new peace time economy, particularly in smaller communities. Discrimination against women in employment was systemic and sanctioned. The conservative ideology regarding women in the postwar period, according to Breines (1992) was

> part of an effort to ensure that women went home and stayed home after the war, a policy of containment. There was an unprecedented campaign both in government and industry to make sure returning soldiers were given priority over women in jobs and education. Women were encouraged, even forced, to defer to men in the public world and at home (p. 33).

There was no question that it was necessary for Arlene's mother to work, and her decision regarding a new place to live was influenced by the possibility of employment and family support.

I was only two when they separated and Mum and I moved to Vancouver. She had a sister there and then her mother moved out from the prairies (LHCHR, p. 2).

The theme <u>you stand alone</u>, is conspicuous in Arlene's memories of this extremely

difficult period of her childhood.

I never had my dad as part of the picture. We moved a lot, my mum

and I, after my dad came back from the war. We lived in rooming

houses and she nursed, always finding day care for me (LHCHR, p.

4).

The sensation of profound vulnerability reverberates through the anecdotes Arlene

related about her mother's struggles to provide basic parental obligations in the

postwar, pre-social assistance environment.

Arlene's pride in her mother's determination and strength in the face of

great difficulty was countered by the embarrassment of having a female parent

working outside the home. As Simonson (1994) explains, working outside the

home had particularly depressing and negative connotations for women in that

era. It signified low social status and for women who had been raised to expect to

not have to work to support their families, the notion was somewhat degrading.

The disgrace of divorce and the resulting financial hardship precipitated the

conviction in women's strength and dependability, rather than men's, a theme

repeated in stories throughout Arlene's experiences.

The difficult straits Arlene and her mother endured contrasted with the

secure and comfortable life her father enjoyed. He attended the University of

British Columbia and after graduation, returned to the Fraser Valley community

where he remarried and fathered two more children.

My dad was busy as a student when he was still in Vancouver and I

didn't see a lot of him. I had lots of contact with his relatives but I

probably only went out with my dad three or four times a year and

never once in my entire life did sleep over at my dad's house. Yet I

knew that he loved me, and I knew that he was very proud of me but I

had very little time or contact . . . I would have liked to have spent

more time with him and his new family (LHCHR, p. 3).

While Arlene and her mother struggled, her father's charmed existence represented the archetype of the way life was supposed to be, "defined by a well-equipped house in the suburbs, a new car or two, a good white-collar job for the husband, well-adjusted and successful children taken care of by a full-time wife and mother" (Breines, 1992, p. 2). He was a financially stable professional and had social status in the small community where his practice prospered. His new family belonged to the golf and country club, his second wife never worked outside the home, and their house was filled with books and music and toys. Arlene's half siblings both went on to higher education and completed graduate degrees which ensured their success in well-paying careers.

The themes <u>be nice</u>, and <u>always be fair</u>, are evident in the anecdotes and memories Arlene shared regarding her father and their relationship. Intense pride in her father's accomplishments mingles with a poignant sadness that she did not have a more central role in his life. Regarding special occasions such as birthdays, graduations and a wedding, her father was a generous man. Concerning the day to day expenses of raising a child, his contribution was less

generous and less willing. Arlene recalls that each month her mother needed to remind him to send the small amount of support he had agreed to. The theme be nice, concerns a wariness of appearing bitter or selfish, both of which were condemned in women by the culture of the time. The origin of the continuing significance of fairness in Arlene's life is visible in the stories she shared in which her awareness of its inherent absence in the world she inhabited.

When Arlene was in the third grade, she and her mother made one final move and settled in Kerrisdale, an established, privileged neighbourhood minutes from downtown Vancouver.

We lived in apartments over stores or behind a store and my friends

lived in homes. It was a really nice area that I loved and I had the

same friends virtually from grade three to university (LHCHR, p. 1).

Arlene remembers her mother's belief in the importance of surroundings and her insistence on raising her child in a good neighbourhood. A schoolmate of Arlene's, now a journalist, describes the area:

Kerrisdale . . . in the 1940s and 1950s was a tightly knit, culturally

and economically homogeneous, stable, self-contained village . . . The

mothers stayed at home. The children joined Brownies, Cubs, Guides

and Scouts . . . They defined WASP [White Anglo Saxon Protestant]

(1993, p. A6).

Except for Arlene and her mother, Kerrisdale families were stable units with two parents and multiple children. The others lived in pretty English style homes

built on large landscaped lots facing wide, tree-lined streets. There was a community centre, and parks and recreation facilities were plentiful in the neighbourhood. Growing up in this community, Arlene was anxious to avoid the stigma associated with her parents' divorce and was acutely aware of the contrast between her family's financial situation and their neighbours'.

Awareness and experience of hardship and deprivation are repeated throughout Arlene's stories of her childhood and contribute to the impression that she perceived the world as a dangerous place. Perhaps in response to these early difficulties, Arlene developed a pragmatic approach which values no-nonsense, practical solutions to life's problems. A primary model must surely have been her mother, raised in a farm family during the depression of the 1930s. Arlene remembers that although her mother was quite musically talented, she played the piano only at functions where she was paid, never at home simply for pleasure. Similarly, by the time Arlene was a young teenager, she too had found a practical outlet for her talents.

> *I quit babysitting in about grade nine and started sewing for my*
>
> *mum's friends. Not from scratch though--I'd make curtains or alter*
>
> *clothes or make a dress or whatever. I didn't create. But I made more*
>
> *money at that than I did at babysitting* (LHCHR, p. 9).

Many hours were occupied with money making or money saving activities and there was little time for pleasure or hobbies. Evidence of the theme the pragmatist, occurs throughout the anecdotes Arlene told, particularly in situations

in which the inherent unfairness of her world was emphasized.

Acceptance and Approval

From an early age, Arlene learned from her mother's model that suitably directed effort and achievement led to approval and acceptance. As a child, she was conscious and extremely proud of both parents' accomplishments and the ways these set them apart from others and contributed to their stature within the family and community. For example, her mother's achievements distinguished her from members of the extended family and were an acknowledged source of respect from an early age.

> *How did she become a nurse? Well, she was the youngest of a family*
>
> *of twelve. The sister two before her had gone through nursing and*
>
> *then she financed my mother. They're the only two from the whole*
>
> *family who have a formal education. None of the rest and none of the*
>
> *men have that* (LHCHR, p. 2).

These feelings of pride were complicated, however, by her lack of success according to the most important criteria of cultural norms of the time, finding fulfilment in the family as a wife and mother (Breines, 1992; Kaledin, 1984). Her father's achievements, on the other hand, were very much in tune with societal expectations and produced tangible results, even though they were not extended fully to Arlene.

> *I was very proud of his profession . . . it was one of the things that*
>
> *was interesting and appealing about him* (LHCHR, p. 3).

Effort, accomplishment, acceptance and approval were forged together into a causal link which has remained with Arlene through many life experiences.

The desire to be accepted, identified as it's important to belong, is an important theme in Arlene's anecdotes of her school years. Conformity was seen as a symbol of harmony and togetherness during the postwar period and deviation from established norms was discouraged through social censure. The tradition, according to Valpy (1995), had the following results in Kerrisdale during the years Arlene attended school there.

> Jewish families were not welcome, their children were wickedly
>
> tormented in "the school." Kids with disabilities were hidden. One
>
> high-school classmate was terrified to admit he was homosexual.
>
> Classmates who could not keep up with the academic requirements
>
> dropped out and nobody cared (p. A19).

In these times of powerful group interests, being different invited the potential for isolation and loneliness.

> *I was very embarrassed about the divorce. I only told my closest of*
>
> *friends because I honestly believed that children wouldn't be allowed*
>
> *to be my friends if their parents found out that I only had a mother*
>
> (LHCHR, p. 3).

The theme, it's important to belong, is evident in these memories which illustrate how desperately Arlene wanted to be from a 'normal' family, to have two parents and a mother who stayed home and baked cookies like other mothers.

Recollections of elementary school include performances in dramatic presentations, indistinct teachers and a principal Arlene really liked because she knew she was his favourite. Her introduction to organized sports during the later grades of elementary school in Kerrisdale was the beginning of a lifelong interest in and involvement with group athletic activities.

> *I loved school but not so much because of the education as because of all the sports. I was really tied up in athletics. I played on all the teams, I was in charge of the referees and scorers, I was the athletic rep on council. Sports played a really big part in my life* (LHCHR, p. 5).

As a child and teenager, Arlene excelled in organized games in which uniformed team members played in accordance with rules clearly set out in books and enforced by others. Her preference for this type of activity is congruent with valuing group membership, recognition of the importance of fairness and of compliance with external authority, all of which are themes visible across Arlene's lifespan.

While adult approval remained important during Arlene's high school years in the late 1950s, the acceptance of peers became increasingly critical, providing additional evidence of the theme, it's important to belong. Arlene and her peers, "born during the war years, before the baby boom, were the first who could be called teenagers" (Breines, 1992, p. 93). The media, marketplace and other societal institutions accepted teenagers as a separate group and promoted the

ideas and artifacts of teenage culture across North America. Teen culture, disseminated through magazines, music, television, and other avenues, had its own mores and norms about membership. As a separate group, the culture dictated acceptable forms of behaviour, which were necessarily different from those used to garner favour with extended family members, teachers and other adults.

Even at Arlene's high school, the institution with the highest academic standards in the city (Valpy, 1993, p. A6), the culture of teenagers determined that serious academic over achievers were deviant.

My grades gradually went down. The closer I got to finishing, the more they levelled off. They were really high in grade nine and I won the top all around girl at school. And then [I won] a citizenship award and stuff like that. By grade ten I had my double big block [an award for outstanding athletes] and this kind of thing for activities and all around. But I didn't care about getting top marks. Whatever I got was fine (LHCHR, p. 5).

So strong was the pressure to conform to norms ascribed according to gender, Breines (1992) notes, that "it is not uncommon for girls who grew up in the 1950s to talk of the stigma of being 'too smart'." (p. 73). At times Arlene deliberately undermined her own abilities so that she would not stand out from other students or make the top of the list. An example is the story of how, in her senior year, she extricated herself from a citywide sewing competition. After being nominated

three years in a row by teachers for the contest which was sponsored by the city's

major department store, Arlene determined that she had different ideas about

what she wanted to be recognized for. She concocted a lie about faults with her

garment and was excused from the competition. Peer acceptance, a symbol of the

theme, <u>it's important to belong,</u> was crucial compared to high grades or a symbol

of achievement from the world of adults.

<u>Future Visions</u>

The values Arlene absorbed from the comfortable middle class families of

Kerrisdale in the 1950s as well as from the broader popular culture included

pervasive beliefs about women's place in society. Prevalent notions in that

community regarding the propriety of education for women were fairly progressive

and although they were expected to be full-time homemakers, higher education

was valued and accessible. At least some university experience was considered a

necessary step in the preparation of daughters for their eventual roles as wives,

mothers, and community members.

> *It was just accepted that probably ninety percent of our school was*
>
> *going to university. My friends were all going on. It was never even*
>
> *discussed that I was going on, it was just a given* (LHCHR, p. 5).

The paradox of higher education for a life of homemaking was lost to all but a few

at the time. One of these, according to Kaledin (1984), was Margaret Mead, who

in 1957 wrote an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, in which she noted that

although women were often educated like men, they were "then denied the right to

dedicate themselves to any task other than homemaking. 'They were expected to regard homemaking as the ultimate career and the needs of a husband and a few children as sufficient for the most gifted and ambitious among them'" (p. 58). In keeping with the notions of the middle class which surrounded her, Arlene fully assumed that she would marry and have children and was confident that her entire work life would consist of a few years in an interesting position before marriage. The expectation that she would need or want to make a living outside the home as a married woman was anathema.

Arlene's compliance regarding her future concerned more than just the assumption that she would attend and graduate from university. Although women were present in higher education during the 1960s, the choices available were clearly restricted by the cultural and social attitudes of the times. Indeed, Arlene's choice of study was determined more by social forces beyond Kerrisdale than her own interests and abilities.

Back in those days girls went into education, nursing, home ec., or arts. Drafting or architecture wasn't something that I even thought about as a possibility then (LHCHR, p. 7).

Quite honestly, if I hadn't had that home ec. teacher I would have done something else entirely. She was just everything I wanted to be. She was well-groomed, she was informed, she was interesting, she was well-organized (LHCHR, p.5).

In spite of her love for athletics and physical education and what she sees as a

family aptitude for building and construction--architecture, engineering, carpentry--she gravitated toward home economics. The invisible and unspoken pressure to conform, through acceptance about notions of suitable subjects for study and work, for example, conspired to limit the role models available to Arlene and her eventual selection of a career path.

In addition to social and cultural factors, geography and technology played a major role in restricting the post-secondary alternatives available to students in Vancouver. Universities in other parts of Canada were simply too distant for a young woman from Kerrisdale to consider. The only other university in British Columbia at the time was in Victoria, on Vancouver Island, and beyond the range of a daily commute in those years.

> *It was just assumed. Probably ninety percent of my class went on to*
>
> *U.B.C. We lived 15 minutes away from it. So it was just a given, it*
>
> *wasn't even discussed. We were all going on to university there and I*
>
> *didn't even think about going somewhere else. There might have been*
>
> *the occasional student going east but none of my friends. We all lived*
>
> *at home and went to university* (LHCHR, p. 8).

Consequently, Arlene enroled in the home economics program at the University of British Columbia (U.B.C.) in September of 1960. There, she maintained her friendships from high school and continued her involvement in athletics and neighbourhood social activities.

<div align="center">

Belonging

</div>

It's important to belong is a particularly significant theme in the stories of Arlene's years as a university student. Confidence, happiness and security colour this period in contrast to the anxiety which imbued the experiences of her earlier years. University life, with additional freedom, no responsibilities, few worries and best of all, a sense that she belonged, was a major improvement on high school for Arlene.

If I could go back to any one time in my whole life, I'd go back to my

university years (LHCHR, p. 7).

The academic challenge and the volume of work involved in the home economics program was a major surprise to Arlene who had never had to study or work very hard at her schoolwork.

People thought home ec. was easy--I like to cook, I like to sew. But you

had to get through the chemistry, the physics, the biology, physiology

and all that. We started with 105 [students] in the first year and only

40 graduated. A lot failed after first year and switched out into arts

or education (LHCHR, p. 10).

Balancing a busy social life and heavy studies was more difficult than she had expected and for the first time in her life Arlene was not completely successful. In that time she failed two of her six required courses, an unpleasant new experience. The courses had to be made up but Arlene could afford neither the tuition nor the time for summer school. The result, the story of a bold appeal to the dean who was then convinced that Arlene could carry the extra courses in

second year, is an example of the theme, the pragmatist, the approach she used to deal with life's difficulties. Indeed she did manage the extra heavy load, pass all her courses and maintain the social life so important to her.

Arlene's experience at university--classes, the library, team sports and the sorority and fraternities--was more concerned with the development of confidence and social skills than academic or employment skills.

We all lived at home and did things together--basketball, field hockey,

softball. We'd all go ice skating on a Friday night and then have a

sleep over. Lots of back and forth (LHCHR, p. 8).

Memories of these years indicate that she was a popular girl during these years with the poise characteristic of a middle class girl from the right neighbourhood.

Arlene recalls, however, that the home economic program consisted of a challenging combination of academic subjects and a strong practical component that appealed to her interests and values.

I did pattern drafting and design and one half year of tailoring. I

had a general introduction to cooking course but it wasn't how to cook,

it was exposing us to different methods of cookery. I'll never forget

that lab, tasting all the organ meats in one day! (LHCHR, p. 8).

In addition to the conventional lecture format, the students were exposed to a variety of nontraditional, experiential teaching formats.

There was the home management house that we lived in for three

weeks. We lived at the poverty level for a week, then middle income

level and then the wealthy level. We had to do it all--our budgeting,

managing, entertaining. Of course there was a home management

lady for a chaperon who lived with us for three weeks but still it was

all very experiential (LHCHR, p. 9).

We did learn a lot of team work. Getting along in a group, tolerating

people's individual differences and things like that (LHCHR, p. 9).

For Arlene, the significance of the university academic experience lay not so much

in the content or skills learned as it did in the recognition she received for

completing the program. Her graduation ceremony, the symbol of this

achievement, was accompanied by a well-remembered celebration with family and

friends. The scholastic aspect of these years is a demonstration of the theme, the

destination is more important than the journey.

The four years she spent in post-secondary study, a buffer before the shock

of work and adult responsibilities, continue to occupy a special place in Arlene's

heart and memories.

Being in university is a rather utopic situation--you're sort of semi

independent and yet not totally responsible (LHCHR, p. 15).

These years are the times of her life she recalls most clearly and with the greatest

fondness.

During Arlene's final year of university, she met and began dating the man

she would later marry. She was enchanted with Jim, a sensible and stable

commerce student, as they spent time together during the months leading up to

Christmas.

> *I thought "this guy's really different . . . He's so work-oriented and so*
>
> *organized." . . . I felt he was stable, reliable, kind and caring*
>
> (LHCHR, p. 13).
>
> *I think because I'd grown up so poor and with just my mum, he*
>
> *seemed like the type to marry. He adored me and he cherished me*
>
> (LHCHR, p. 13).

During the winter, Jim was recruited by a multinational firm for a position to start the following September in Toronto. He and Arlene were engaged that spring and arrangements began for a wedding the following summer.

A Practical Nature

The pragmatist, a strong theme in Arlene's early adult years, is evident in the practical approach she applied to problem solving and decision-making. For example, long before graduation and wedding plans, she developed a strategy for finding work. This involved many hours applying for teaching jobs in the Vancouver and lower mainland area of B.C. during her final year of university. In February she was hired to teach grades 8-10 home economics and physical education forty miles away the following September in a farming community.

> *But I got called in before that. They phoned me in April to say they*
>
> *needed a supply teacher. Would I come and finish the year? I just*
>
> *barely finished exams and walked into that classroom having done no*
>
> *practicum, having never been in a classroom in my life. I went in and*

did the end part of April, May and June. It was horrific (LHCHR, p.

11).

I guess I thought I wanted to teach but I never learned anything about

how to teach. Not in home ec. Not ever (LHCHR, p. 9).

The provincial teaching certificate required an additional year of university study

but because of the tremendous demand for teachers during the 1960s, completion

was also possible through summer school sessions. Another year's tuition and

living expenses would have been difficult to manage so Arlene chose to attend

teachers' college during her summer vacations. That year Arlene received her

first formal teacher training at the Faculty of Education at the University of

British Columbia in Vancouver. The pragmatist theme is evident in anecdotes

which outline the approach Arlene used in making these important decisions.

The first year of teaching was a period of extraordinary change for Arlene

and encompassed leaving home, planning a wedding ceremony and reception,

induction into an occupation and adapting to a new community. She recalls that

had she not boarded with a local family that year, she might not have ever eaten,

so preoccupied was she with work and personal obligations. Her reliance on

women and her association of strong women with family during this time are

manifestations of women are dependable, another theme which cuts through all

periods of Arlene's life story.

My first year of teaching out there was great. Being a farming

community, people just sort of took me under their wing. There were a

lot of mature women who looked after us new teachers. People

couldn't have been nicer (LHCHR, p. 11).

I worked nonstop. I went to school, coached sports after school, came

home, had dinner, did school work, went to bed, got up, went to

school, and did it all again (LHCHR, p. 11-12).

Arlene left the community almost every weekend, either returning to Vancouver to

complete one of the numerous chores related to the upcoming wedding or visiting

relatives of her father who lived nearby.

Arlene and Jim were married in Vancouver in August of 1965 and

immediately moved to Toronto. The timing of their arrival in the new city meant

that Arlene was unable to find a teaching position for the year. Abandoning her

knowledge and skill in home economics and her experience teaching, she quickly

found an interim job in another line of work.

I worked at Bell as a Customer Service Rep. for a year. Interesting,

though, I guess teaching was always there because when I left at the

end of the year they told me they had me slated to become a trainer. I

would have enjoyed doing that (LHCHR, p. 16).

Arlene spent the fall and winter applying and interviewing for teaching positions

in the Toronto area and in the spring was contracted as a long-term substitute

teacher for grades 7-9 science and home economics in North York, a suburb of

Toronto.

I got called in to finish the year and they'd already had so many

supply teachers. These kids were so noisy and bossy and aggressive. I

thought if this is what it's going to be like, I'll never survive. I'm

going to have a breakdown (LHCHR, pp. 16-17).

The themes, you stand alone, the pragmatist, and the destination matters more

than the journey, are evident within the anecdotes of these early experiences in

Toronto.

The first few years of teaching in Ontario were extremely challenging for

Arlene, a novice in a series of schools with little support.

It took me the first three years to decide that maybe I was cut out to be

a teacher. It was my fourth year teaching in Toronto, when I had

taught everything the same as the year before and I had a timetable

that didn't require a new subject. I actually had nights where I didn't

have schoolwork and I thought "Hey, this is okay, I think I can do it

and I think I really like it" (LHCHR, p. 17).

Arlene recalls some of the factors which helped her to endure those very difficult

early years of teaching. She had, for example, time in the evenings and weekends

to devote to her preparation and marking because her husband was occupied with

his own career and had enroled in a master's degree that kept him out of the

house for several nights each week. A large part of her persistence was related to

the expectation she held that the pace of life as a teacher was to have a limited

lifetime.

I never thought of teaching as something I'd do forever. It wasn't like

it was a lifetime goal. I just wanted to teach until we had enough

money for a house and then I was going to have a family and stay at

home forever after (LHCHR, p. 17).

Developing a career was definitely not a concern during these years for Arlene,

raised when the institutions of society were dominated by the "insistence on

biological destiny as the source of happiness" (Kaledin, 1984, p. 20). Her practical

nature and pragmatic approach to life led her to tolerate the difficulties and

disadvantages of teaching for the future it allowed, in keeping with the theme, the

destination matters more than the journey.

Contradiction and pragmatism feature prominently in Arlene's recollections

of the expectations she held for her future. Although she did not imagine working

after becoming a parent, she actively ensured that she would be able to have

regular and relatively well-paying work if she needed it.

I wasn't going to start a family until I had a permanent Ontario

teaching certificate. So I went to summer school in B.C. and then I

went for two summers here. So I did that and then I took science so I

can teach science up to grade 10 and home ec. up to 13 (LHCHR, p.

7).

Additional teachable subjects increased her employment options and the

permanent certificate enabled Arlene to feel confident in her ability to support

herself and her family, if necessary one day in the distant future. The significance

of this recollection rests in the shift it represents from the application of the

theme, <u>women are dependable</u>, from others to Arlene herself. In effect it is a symbol of her sense of belonging in the world of adult women.

The teaching certificate, as well as being a symbol of security, was a mark of professional recognition to Arlene. It signified society's confidence in her abilities as a teacher and provided her with the authority to use her own judgment and creativity in the classroom.

You had a provincial curriculum that you had to go by until you were

inspected. Until then you taught prunes and cereals and eggs. It was

all very structured and laid out (LHCHR, p. 19).

Arlene strayed from the official guidelines as she saw fit in order to provide the individuality within the program she believed her students needed to make their learning relevant. As she did, her self-assurance and confidence as a teacher soared.

Following the Beaten Path

Arlene was comfortable and happy when her own life corresponded with society's portrayal of what was typical and normal. The main purpose for working outside the home, as a married woman, she believed, was to make a contribution toward the down payment for a house. With that goal accomplished, Arlene looked forward to a different role, that of full-time wife and mother.

I had enjoyed teaching but I never thought I was going back to work.

It was just something to do until I had my family (LHCHR, p. 20).

After five years in the classroom, her first pregnancy prompted what she believed

at the time was a permanent resignation from teaching. Jim had a series of promotions in his work and they began a series of transfers to cities in southern Ontario. During this period Arlene found contemporary notions of fulfilment were indeed satisfying and she led a very happy existence as a housewife.

> *Living in Sarnia was amazing. The university women's club was very*
>
> *active and you could be in gourmet dinner clubs, play bridge, you*
>
> *name it* (LHCHR, p. 22).
>
> *I was a volunteer worker, taught night school and did all kinds of*
>
> *casual stuff--working at elections, enumerating, doing the census--that*
>
> *you do when you're at home* (LHCHR, p. 27).

During these years, Arlene's life--her marriage, family, friends and community involvement--represented the dreams and goals evinced as a standard for North American women (Breines, 1992; Kaledin, 1984). She notes the ordinariness of her experiences with satisfaction, the transformation of a strong implicit awareness of cultural norms into the actuality of her life. The theme, it's important to belong, is evident throughout the data referring to this period of Arlene's life.

During the period of early adulthood, Arlene coped with the death of both parents at relatively young ages. The stories of her father's unexpected death and mother's terminal illness demonstrate the existence of a belief in fate and a conviction in other people's intuition, a recurring motif in Arlene's life stories titled trust intuition. She attributes, for example, a sixth sense to her father's

visit shortly before his unexpected death of a heart attack.

> *I think my dad knew that he wasn't in great health. No one else did .*
>
> *. . but he phoned and said he was going to come for Debbie's*
>
> *christening which was very unlike my dad. He brought my half-sister,*
>
> *and he died the next June* (LHCHR, p. 21).

Arlene credits her mother with a similar sense of foresight during the period

leading up to her early death.

> *She wanted to be near her only grandchild and she went to her sister's*
>
> *in London, Ontario and--didn't ask our input about this--got a job at*
>
> *the hospital there. She'd lived for 28 years in Vancouver, was*
>
> *established and all her friends were there, but she wanted to be here*
>
> *with us. She up and moved here and within a year she got cancer*
>
> (LHCHR, p. 24).
>
> *She was in hospital from the end of November until Christmas. She*
>
> *was determined to be home for Christmas Day . . . and she was home*
>
> *with us until five days before she died in February. I gave her the*
>
> *needles because the VON [Victorian Order of Nurses] nurse could only*
>
> *come three times a day. When she got so she needed stronger*
>
> *medicine, she went back in the hospital, but she only had five days.*
>
> *She fought really hard to stay alive* (LHCHR, p. 25).

Arlene remembers that her mother was extremely reticent to let others know of

the illness and how this lead her to protect her mother's privacy and dignity. She

has no speculations to offer on the reasons behind her parent's strong belief that difficulty and sadness are not to be shared with outsiders. The memories of this painful experience are coloured with poignant pride in her mother's determination and strength in the face of severe suffering and illustrate the existence of the themes, you stand alone, and respect privacy.

While Arlene mourned the loss of her parents, she nevertheless resumed the activities of family and community life and in 1974 gave birth to her second daughter. Jim's work brought the foursome back to Toronto and they settled into a large home in a new middle class suburb to the east of the city. Arlene continued in her role as full-time mother, and occupied herself caring for the children, pursuing crafts, entertaining, and coaching her children's sports teams.

I had a great time, being a parent. I loved being at home with the

kids until they got into school full time and then I volunteered to

death--in the classroom, going on trips, helping with Guides and

teaching Sunday school (LHCHR, p. 22).

Anecdotes of this period denote the happiness and security Arlene experienced as life's events unfolded as the norms and mores of middle class North American culture prescribed. Manifest in these is the theme it's important to belong.

The Pragmatist

In the years since Arlene formed the expectation that the primary role she would occupy was that of homemaker and that it would be forever, women's place in the western world had changed significantly. In the 1950s, Kaledin (1984),

notes, "young women who wanted families were actively discouraged by institutional and attitudinal barriers from also playing professional roles or competing with men for better jobs . . . few efforts were made even to disguise the discrimination against women" (p. 40). During the following two decades, restrictions on women's employment lessened and additional opportunities became available as the consciousness regarding women's roles and fulfilment expanded. After ten years as a full-time parent, Arlene felt considerably less satisfied in the role than she had at its outset.

> *I went for some counselling . . . and I realized I needed to get out of*
>
> *the rut that I was in, being at home. As if this is all there is to life,*
>
> *being a wife and mother. I had to get myself out of being a servant to*
>
> *everybody and to do more for me* (LHCHR, p. 39).

Her daughters were increasingly independent and community activities that had once been so compelling now seemed mundane and repetitive. Gradually, Arlene's awareness was raised and her ideas about the elements of a happy, middle class woman's life expanded to include work outside the home. The theme, use logic, is evident throughout the data relating to Arlene's thoughts and actions during this period of her life.

Arlene devoted considerable attention and energy to her return to paid employment in keeping with her trust that reason and common sense would result in favourable ends. The themes, the destination matters more than the journey, and use logic, are both apparent. Although she enjoyed teaching and was

confident of her abilities in the classroom, she had serious reservations about returning to work as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in the late 1970s.

> *Once I had my own children and volunteered in so many of their*
>
> *activities I wasn't sure that I wanted to go back and work with kids*
>
> *again* (LHCHR, p. 29).

Not enthusiastic about the prospect of hours, days and months spent in children's company, Arlene was also critical of many of the changes implemented within the Ontario public education system during the decade of her absence. She was disturbed by the decreasing amount of responsibility she believed parents were taking for their children's education and behaviour and did not support the increasing role schools were playing in children's lives. On the other hand, Arlene had had positive experiences teaching cooking in general interest courses at night school programs organized by the local board of education while she had been at home full-time.

> *One of the things teaching night school showed me was how much I*
>
> *enjoyed working with adults* (LHCHR, p. 29).
>
> *In most things that I do, I'm just good, a little above average. I don't*
>
> *think I've ever had a passion for anything so that I had to be*
>
> *outstanding at it. I just had to be good enough to feel comfortable*
>
> *doing it* (LHCHR, p. 9).

This prudent and frank assessment of interests, skills and circumstances, a

feature of the theme, <u>the pragmatist,</u> directed Arlene toward several other possible courses of action.

Arlene's mid-life career transition took four years to implement through a meandering series of activities which included training, networking, volunteering and job search. Initially, she was attracted toward the prospect of instructional work in organizations, influenced by her husband's career in human resources with a large corporation.

> *At first I was going to be a trainer. I was thinking of going into the*
>
> *business world and doing training and development* (LHCHR, p. 29).

She enroled part-time in a certificate program in human resources development at the University of Toronto to augment her credentials in home economics and teaching. The effects of the recession which devastated the manufacturing and related sectors of the Ontario economy were still present in 1982 when Arlene completed the program and she was insufficiently prepared to compete for the scarce jobs available. In accordance with the theme, <u>women are dependable,</u> she turned to women friends for advice and assistance in furthering her employment plans.

> *I didn't know in what capacity I could work with adults. It was a*
>
> *friend who said, "I really think you'd like women's programs. Get*
>
> *yourself off to Life Skills." I owe her* (LHCHR, p. 20).

As a result of her networking, Arlene enroled in an intensive, six week course at the Y.W.C.A. in Toronto and earned a certificate as a Life Skills Coach. The

Y.W.C.A. program, "developed for professionals working in the fields of corrections, rehabilitation, health care, teaching, counselling and social services" (Zapf, 1983, p. i), was (and still is) highly respected in the field and accreditation from the organization was a necessity to work in many organizations. Prospective coaches learned to lead life skills classes for women which would "build self-confidence, teach us how to interact more creatively in any of the groups we belong to (including our families), help us stand on our rights, get and hold jobs, and use or contribute more to community services" (Bennett, et al., 1980, p. 1). Through practicum and volunteer experiences, Arlene formed contacts with organizations that delivered life skills and adult basic education programs.

Slowly, Arlene became a member of a small group of teachers working in non-traditional programs at community colleges and alternative community organizations in and around Toronto. In keeping with the theme, use logic, she weighed the risks and benefits of possible paths as her employment goals became more specific.

> *I think I would have done okay at the Y because my instructor really thought highly of me . . . but then I did volunteer work and then the assisting. I figured it might have taken me five years to get anything there, full-time. And I would have had to take little bits and pieces, all the crumbs . . . . plus the politics that they go through, the people you have to kowtow to* (LHCHR, p. 30).

The compensation and benefits, hours, and other working conditions of

instructional staff within the community college system were considerably more attractive to Arlene than those of staff in community-based organizations.

> *I thought if I could ever be [a] permanent [staff member] I'd have*
>
> *enough time off in the summer to still enjoy parenting. I wasn't about*
>
> *to just give up the kids. I like to put a lot into what I do but I really*
>
> *value parenting. And this way I was able to do both. I don't think I*
>
> *could have been a year round worker* (LHCHR, p. 32).

Initially, she worked as a substitute, and later landed a contract to teach math part-time at a college on the extreme western edge of the metropolitan Toronto area.

> *I caught the six a.m. train and it cost me $10.50 a day. But I'd been*
>
> *away from the work force a long time and I had to get my foot in the*
>
> *door. And that did pay off* (LHCHR, p. 31).

Clearly visible themes within the anecdotes of this period are <u>you stand alone</u>, <u>the pragmatist</u> and <u>the destination matters more than the journey</u>.

In 1984 Arlene received information from a friend that the college in her own community would soon be delivering special, non-traditional programs and was looking for instructional staff. She was hired, although only on a half-time basis, to teach in the Job Readiness Training program (J.R.T.), a federally funded course for adults, which was intended to consist mainly of life skills but often had an academic upgrading component. Arlene was thrilled to have the opportunity to apply what she had learned in the life skills coach program.

I did the recruiting, the administration and taught all day long. I had no resources. I had youths out on probation and middle-aged women returning [to formal education]. I was up until 2:00 every night. I don't know how I survived but I loved it (LHCHR, p. 33).

The program was popular, classes were oversubscribed, and there was a healthy waiting list for participants. Within a few months, Arlene was designated as the full-time coordinator of the program.

The following year, she was appointed to another part-time life skills position at the college. This turned out to be the only seriously negative experience Arlene encountered since her return to teaching.

I really wondered how I was going to work with the coordinator. He didn't think a woman should teach JRT and INTO [Introduction to Non-traditional Occupations] because a lot of the women students had had bad experiences with men and what they really needed was male teachers . . . . If it was a woman to be hired, he wanted it to be part-time and it should be somebody who didn't dress in three hundred dollar outfits. Those were his criteria--I found out after . . . but then the strike came up. I don't know how he and I would have been able to work together, it would have been to barely tolerate each other. I was much too middle class, conservative for him. He was a hippie-- bare feet and sandals (LHCHR, p. 34).

Instead of dampening her enthusiasm for life skills coaching or her aspirations for

a full-time position with the college, Arlene chose to focus on the positive aspects of the experience. She recalls that it helped her to clarify the desire to be part of a larger team and to work with a more stable group of teachers who were more like herself and with students who were somewhat less volatile. Always be fair, and it's important to belong, are clearly visible themes in Arlene's recollection of this period of her biography.

As a qualified life skills coach with experience in a variety of college programs, Arlene was in demand to teach in a number of pre-employment and college preparation programs. Still determined to obtain a secure position, she was more cautious about the fit between her own values and the other teachers with whom she worked. In 1985 Arlene learned about the Ontario Basic Skills (O.B.S.) program set to start at her college and joined the staff on a part-time basis soon after.

> *O.B.S. was really different. We had meetings every single solitary*
> *week from 3:00 to 5:30 and we hashed over every student and every*
> *part of the curriculum. We worked our butts off to get stuff sorted out*
> (LHCHR, p. 35).

The following year she was appointed as a full-time, regular member of the faculty of the college. In the time since, she has remained in the O.B.S. program, providing individual counselling to a group of adult students and teaching arithmetic, English and life skills.

> *The bottom line is that I found the job that I best fit into. It's that*

simple. I found the perfect job for me (OINT3, p. 1).

Arlene's opinion that personal responsibility and fate came together magnificently to situate her in the Ontario Basic Skills program at Municipal College is in keeping with the contradictory themes, use logic, and trust intuition.

Mid-Life Change

Arlene's reentry to the paid, full-time workforce heralded significant changes at home, particularly in her role as the wife of a middle class executive. The 1950s values on which her marriage was based, "above all the home, the ability of children to bind a couple together, the sacrifice and fulfilment of parenthood, companionship rather than pleasure or love as the basis of marriage," (Breines, 1992, p. 58) were considerably less apparent in 1980s society.

I think when I went back to work that's what helped to do it. I discovered a whole new world, had fun, did all these things and did them independent of Jim . . . . It opened up a whole new world. I found I got my sense of humour back, my sarcasm, all these things that I only used with my children but not married (LHCHR, pp. 39-40).

The majority of Arlene's colleagues were younger, single people whose ideas about relationships and marriage did not include self-denial and martyrdom.

Full-time participation in the labour force was also a positive influence on her self-esteem and increased her awareness of life's possibilities. As a life skills coach and a college faculty member, she felt knowledgeable, skilled and valued.

At work, Arlene rediscovered aspects of her personality and experienced fun in ways she had missed for years.

I looked at [my husband] with my eyes open . . . . I always perceived

Jim as the bright person and looked up to him. He had his master's

in business administration and I was always so proud of him. I

would have said that I was not nearly as intelligent as him. I don't

feel that way any more, since the separation (LHCHR, p. 43).

Course work and practical experiences in the life skills coach program had encouraged Arlene to pay more attention to her own happiness and goals. She also improved her communication and assertiveness skills in the program and through individual counselling and applied these in her changing relationships with her husband and children. Her recollections of events precipitating this major change in her adult life are examples of the theme, use logic. Rather than accepting the situation as something for which fate was responsible, Arlene sought reasons and ascribed responsibility for various events. The search for fulfilment which ended, for Arlene, teaching in the O.B.S. program at Municipal College was fuelled by a changing sense of self in relation to increasingly independent children as well as escalating dissatisfaction with marriage.

Several years of difficulties finally led Arlene and Jim to separate in spite of her concerns about the effects this would have on the children. Separation and divorce were beyond the boundaries of Arlene's perception of socially acceptable behaviour; certainly not situations she wanted others to know about. The decision

to separate coincided with their elder daughter's first year of university study in another city and Arlene recalls that she was particularly worried about Debbie's ability to cope with the news.

> *So we agreed to just pretend until Christmas . . . . We lived in the*
>
> *same house for a full year and then he finally moved out the next*
>
> *September into a room in a house* (LHCHR, p. 42).

The themes <u>be nice,</u> and <u>respect privacy,</u> are evident in Arlene's descriptions of her manner of coping with the separation and its repercussions.

In hindsight, she acknowledges that the protective stance regarding the children was probably not necessary any more than it was possible. Arlene gradually realized that the stigma of divorce had disappeared amongst her middle class friends and neighbours. One-parent and blended families had become commonplace in Canadian society and children were no longer isolated because of their parents' marital circumstances.

> *My younger daughter who was in grade 11 when we separated, came*
>
> *home and said "You know, I really feel like one of the group now."*
>
> *She said she could relate to what most of the kids were going through.*
>
> *It was abnormal to have parents who were married. There was*
>
> *certainly no embarrassment on their part when it happened, with their*
>
> *friends, telling them about it* (LHCHR, p. 38).

The persistence of the theme, <u>it's important to belong,</u> is evident in Arlene's interpretation and recollection of the meaning her younger daughter made of

parental separation and divorce. Rather than the considering the financial ramifications of divorce, or its emotional effects, Arlene contemplated its consequences on her daughters' relationships with her peers. This extension of the theme to her children, perhaps the most important figures in Arlene's life, is an indication of its continuing significance in her life.

Arlene provided for her children all of the conditions for a happy and secure upbringing that she had not enjoyed as a child. As a full-time mother in a nuclear family unit, she had the time, interest and energy to devote to their activities and relationships. She also ensured that they had a live-in father who provided a middle class income and that they lived in a pleasant, middle class community. They were virtually indistinguishable from neighbours and the typical portrait of Canadian family life. Arlene's responsibilities as a parent were not yet complete, though, and she has struggled to maintain the most important aspects of socioeconomic stability for her daughters.

With no reconciliation possible after several years of separation, Arlene and Jim divided their assets and sold the large home they had jointly owned. Instead of a lawyer, Arlene insisted they use a mediator to settle the division of property and resolve issues of financial support for the girls.

We divvyed things up. We sat with our coin collection and change and everything, and went, "There's six for you and six for me, four for you and four for me." There was no being sneaky or pulling the wool over the other's eyes. I really think we've been mature adults in terms of

what we've gone through (LHCHR, p. 42).

Evidence of the theme, you stand alone, is visible in Arlene's need to ensure a reasonable outcome through her own physical presence in this transaction. Similarly, the manner used to divide assets and her pride in their conduct are testimonies to the themes, always be fair, and be nice. All three themes are prominent in memories of major and minor events of the months following in which Arlene assumed, with no dissension from Jim or her daughters, the role of custodial parent. Following the dispersal of assets, Arlene bought a modest bungalow in a pleasant and respectable neighbourhood not far from the girls' friends and activities.

Although fairness has always been important to Arlene, recent events have impressed upon her once again that justice does not naturally exist in the world. Similarly, she is playing an increasingly active role, speaking up for equity and applying assertiveness techniques in situations to influence outcomes.

I forget exactly what came up at Christmas [but] there was a real

inequity in terms of Jim's gift giving with the girls so I had to deal

with it (LHCHR, p. 49).

Her recollection and description of playing the role of advocate in financial matters between her daughters and their father demonstrate the existence of the themes, always be fair, and you stand alone. Arlene's determination to provide the same opportunities and standard of living to both daughters under very different circumstances provides further evidence of the significance of these themes in the

life history data.

Two additional themes, the pragmatist, and the destination matters more than the journey, emerged from contemporary anecdotes, particularly those which concern financial difficulties. Although home ownership is a struggle on a single income, Arlene feels she needs to maintain the house until her daughters have finished university. Furthermore, she is adamant that neither of her children will be denied traditionally meaningful experiences, such as attending one of Ontario's more prestigious universities, or owning a dress she really loves for a formal dance, or participating in an exchange program, because of financial hardship caused by her separation from Jim.

I'm not terribly happy with my situation right now but it could be a

heck of a lot worse (LHCHR, p.47).

Freelance sewing and alterations and part-time work cleaning houses have been fit around her full-time job at the college. While Arlene's no-nonsense approach to making ends meet is confirmation of the theme, the pragmatist, her stoic acceptance of the present circumstances is representative of the theme, the destination matters more than the journey.

The notion that women are dependable, is a dominant theme in Arlene's acceptance of the responsibility of ensuring a middle class lifestyle with a considerably decreased family income. Although work of one sort or another takes up most of Arlene's days, she is optimistic that this pace will relax once her daughters have completed their degrees. As the present becomes the future, the

vigour and constancy of the themes in the stories of Arlene's past and present confer strong indications which assure their continuation as events and experiences, both expected and unanticipated, unfold.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand what constitutes one teacher's professional knowledge and to gain an appreciation of how it has been constructed and re-constructed through the specifics of her life experiences. This chapter presents the biographical and historical context of Arlene's professional knowledge, findings related to one significant component of the research. The process of hermeneutic analysis allowed the emergence of themes manifest in the anecdotes Arlene recounted in life history interviews and context conversations. Significant themes which echoed throughout the times of her life include <u>always be fair</u>, <u>the pragmatist</u>, <u>respect privacy</u>, <u>it's important to belong</u>, <u>the destination matters more than the journey</u>, <u>women are dependable</u>, <u>you stand alone</u>, <u>trust intuition</u>, <u>be nice</u> and <u>use logic</u>. Arlene's recollections of distant and more recent events thematically outline major biographical influences and present a vivid portrait of a complex woman who has occupied multiple roles during more than half a century of living. The anecdotes, however, necessarily impart an incomplete account of a life lived and one interpretation of the biographical influences on this individual's professional knowledge.

The chapter has several possible limitations as a result of the data and the techniques used to gather, interpret and display it. The scope may have been

limited by Arlene's selection, before and during the life history interviews and context conversations, of which information to provide. Further, the process of analysis used or the choice of anecdotes to illustrate the themes may have produced additional limitations. Finally, the decision to display the life history information and the results of analysis in a chronological narrative format may also prove restrictive. These limitations, though, are balanced by the descriptive account through which the reader can call up the portrayal of one teacher's life.

The presentation of findings from the initial level of data analysis continues in the following two chapters. The immediately subsequent chapter broadly situates Arlene's practice during the data collection phase of the research. As the current chapter relates biographical and historical influences on Arlene's professional knowledge, the next establishes current contextual influences. Since the social, economic, and political context of the teacher's practice is understood to also be an important influence on professional knowledge, this information is crucial to the development of an appreciation of the phenomenon. The ensuing chapter presents a descriptive account of Arlene's classroom practice. Themes which emerged in the analysis of the life history information, and which resurfaced in the analysis of this data set, accompany narrative anecdotes of Arlene's teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTEXT OF ARLENE'S PRACTICE

The notion of professional knowledge employed in this study emphasises the influence of both biographical and historical and social, economic and political circumstances on the construction and reconstruction of teachers' knowledge. As the previous chapter presented Arlene's life story within historical context, this chapter outlines elements of its current context. Descriptive accounts of the times, the community, and the college locate the teacher-participant's personal and professional existence. This delineation of contextual influences is essential to the development of an understanding of the individual teacher's unique professional knowledge. The following chapter presents a descriptive account of Arlene's classroom practice, accompanied by analytic observations in which the themes reported in her life story emerge once more in the anecdotes of teaching.

The Economic and Political Context

Although one of the prime assumptions beneath this research is the importance of context in the construction of all teachers' professional knowledge, the magnitude of this conjecture was particularly conspicuous in Arlene's situation. The data collection phase of this study occurred during 1992 and 1993, a period characterized by a persistent serious economic recession and by a political agenda distinguished by its social justice focus. The community where Arlene lives and works, the college, and the program in which she teaches, were all directly linked to the economy. Similarly, the political response to the significant

changes reached deep into the community and touched the lives of individual teachers and students in the period surrounding the research.

The recession of the early 1990s, and its effect on the labour market, was different from previous economic downturns. Although the 1990-91 recession was not as deep or prolonged as the recessionary period of the 1980s, "for the labour market, the recent downturn was certainly a more traumatic experience" (The Conference Board of Canada, 1995, p. 3). This period of decline "affected more age groups and occupations than any preceding economic downturn. Canada lost 465,000 jobs" (Government of Ontario, 1994, 1.3), two thirds of them in Ontario (Jackman, 1993, p. 1). Although more white collar than blue collar workers lost their jobs during these years, the deindustrialization which began during the 1980s continued to have a devastating impact. Jobs in manufacturing, once the most robust sector of Ontario's economy, and the cornerstone of communities such as Arlene's, disappeared. Concerned that they would not find work, fewer people in Ontario changed jobs and it became more difficult for those who had lost work to find new employment. The average duration of unemployment for someone permanently laid off in Ontario in 1992 was 29 weeks, more than double the length of time in 1988 (Government of Ontario, 1994). The majority of the jobs which were lost during this recession disappeared entirely, the result of organizational restructuring, global competition, high interest rates, an overvalued dollar and the application of new technologies.

As Ontario's economic crisis continued through the early years of the

decade, government revenues from personal and corporate taxes dropped. The

provincial government responded, however, with several deficit budgets designed

to increase investment "in jobs and training . . . rebuilding roads, schools and

other infrastructure" (Jackman, 1993, p.2) and in programs which provided public

assistance for food, shelter and clothing for the more than one million unemployed.

Following this introductory outlay, the government decided to reduce provincial

borrowing and to take action to control the mounting debt. In addition to reducing

direct expenditures and raising revenue through new taxes and the sale of assets,

negotiations with the entire broader public sector began in the spring of 1993.

These talks, which ended in the passage of the Social Contract Act, envisioned

openness, negotiation and partnership as the best approach to managing the fiscal

difficulties (Jackman, 1993, p. 4). Transfer payments to municipalities,

universities and colleges, boards of education, and public general hospitals were

subsequently reduced and expenditures within the public service curtailed.

Broader public sector organizations rushed to identify methods to reduce

expenditures and increase revenues. In the colleges, increasing attention was paid

to the development of revenue generating partnerships with business and

industry, and to alternative means for raising funds for capital and program costs.

Concurrently, budgets were reduced, programs cut, contracts for sessional

instructors were not renewed, and the fees students were charged for tuition and

services began to mount.

At Arlene's workplace, uncertainty about the repercussions of the economic

circumstances and political responses resulted in a climate of apprehension. On the one hand, statistics indicated an increasing demand for post-secondary education. During the years of the recession, 640,000 jobs requiring less than a high school education disappeared while 450,000 were created which required post-secondary education (Government of Ontario, 1994). On the other hand, the slow recovery from the recession, dropping government revenues, and the increasing deficit indicated that reductions in public sector spending would continue. Projections about the future prospects of Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology were difficult to make. These institutions, which exist to provide education and skills training for adults, were so firmly dependent on government funding, that only obscure forecasts and ambiguous plans could be made.

Political circumstances in existence during the data collection were a significant aspect of the context of the period. In 1991, the New Democrats, the party known for its alliances with labour and social democratic philosophy at both the federal and provincial levels, won an unexpected and decisive victory in the provincial election and formed a majority government. For Ontarians, this represented a major ideological shift from the *laissez-faire*, individualist philosophy of the party most often in power during the last century and of the liberal democrat philosophy of the party which had formed the most recent government.

Principles of social justice, the cornerstone of the government's agenda, are

of particular interest to this study. Equity, in employment, education and other institutions of society, was conceptualized differently than ever before by this government which perceived the status quo as unfair and recognized within its foundation systemic discrimination. Policy direction was based upon "principles of fairness and human dignity; respect for the environment; and an abiding concern to provide for the vulnerable among us" (Jackman, 1993, p. 5). Programs developed and implemented to achieve the new notions of fairness were considerably different from any seen in the province under previous governments. These included, for example, employment equity legislation which strongly encouraged employers to implement policies to achieve improved levels of diversity in the workforce for members of designated groups, legislation which conferred greater power to unions in labour management relations, programs to fund employee ownership agreements in industry, an extension of groups eligible for pay equity and increased support for early childhood education (Jackman, 1993). Making the world a fairer place for those perceived to be disadvantaged was key to the government's objectives and strategy.

The economic situation and political circumstances in Ontario during the time data were collected represented great change. It was widely recognized that the context of employment and living, anywhere in the province, was not as usual. The uncertainty was evident across the college, but especially so in the conversations of support staff and faculty. As rumours of impending layoffs grew among faculty and staff, job security became a regular topic in offices, preparation

areas and hallways. Differences of opinion about the existence and causes of fairness and the government's plans to change the status quo were also heard among teachers and students. The economic and political circumstances which created a large and growing pool of potential students for the college created as well circumstances in which many ideas accepted as absolute truths were challenged. Within this context of recession, change and apprehension, Arlene's professional knowledge continued to evolve.

The Community

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Arlene lives and works in a suburban municipality on the outer edge of Metropolitan Toronto. The city she inhabits is an amalgamation of several smaller communities, linked since the 1960s by suburban sprawl. Wide, multi-lane roads lined with strip malls and low-rise apartments, and devoid of trees or landscaping, reach from its outer reaches to Toronto's downtown core. Arlene's community is a typical suburb in that it comprises 23% of Metro's population while only 14% of its jobs are located within its boundaries.

The city has been particularly effected by the recessions of the 1980s and early 1990s. For example, the number of jobs in manufacturing and warehousing, which constitute a high proportion of its economic base, declined significantly from 1989 to 1992. The community, in fact, experienced a seven percent decrease in total employment from 1989 to 1991. Not surprisingly, given these statistics, empty offices and vacant manufacturing plants line the roads and signs

advertising real estate for sale or lease are abundant on the commercial and industrial property along the community's main arteries.

The socioeconomic characteristics of this city vary considerably from one geographic area to the next. The population of the community as a whole, however, is considerably poorer than citizens in the other cities which combined, comprise the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. For example, the average annual income was approximately $5000 less than the overall mean for Metropolitan Toronto in 1989 (Metropolitan Toronto Key Facts 1992). Similarly, the community does not fare well in comparison to other areas of Metro in other indicators of economic well-being such as the proportion of social housing to free market housing. Large tracts of reasonably priced, undeveloped land, still available here in the 1970s and 1980s, made the community the preferred site in Metropolitan Toronto for the construction of new public housing units. Approximately 15% of its housing is financially subsidized by the three levels of government (Metropolitan Toronto Key Facts 1992); only one other community among the municipalities which make up Metropolitan Toronto has a higher rate of public housing.

The demographic characteristics of the community differ from those of other areas within Metropolitan Toronto in several respects. The proportion of recent and first generation immigrants, for example, is considerably higher than it is in other communities. This is attributable to both the large stock of social housing and the existence of formal and informal institutions to assist in

immigrant settlement. In addition, the citizenry, originally composed of people whose ancestry was European or American, has been transformed over the last two decades because the countries of origin of the immigrants have changed recently. Metropolitan Toronto Key Facts 1992 summarizes changes in immigration and the results on the community:

> A greater diversity in the origins of international migrants began in the seventies with more emphasis on Asian and Caribbean countries. This has increased the diversity of ethnic groups . . . with a corresponding increase in the number of people whose mother tongue is not English (p. 1.0).

In addition to changes to the ethnic makeup, immigration has lead to a substantial increase in the population. While the population of most parts of Metropolitan Toronto has decreased or remained stable, this community experienced a 67% increase in its population from 1971 to 1991.

Within the community, a wide variety of public and private organizations exist to provide education and training services to resident adults. In addition to the college where Arlene teaches, a satellite campus of one of Toronto's universities delivers a variety of undergraduate programs to the community. The local Board of Education has a large centre, with several extension locations, for adult education classes and individual study. A number of community agencies provide English as a Second Language training and also deliver literacy and life skills programs to adults. Occupational skills training programs are available at

the college of applied arts and technology and at private trade schools and vocational institutes throughout the city. Delivery agents operate as distinct entities, without recognition of the duplication which exists or of the benefits of coalitions or partnerships.

In summary, the community where Arlene lives and works is unlike others which comprise Ontario's provincial capital in many respects. Its population, dispersed over a wide geographic area, has experienced tremendous growth in the last several decades due primarily to immigration from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. The economic restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s had a particularly severe effect here because of the high proportion of manufacturing industries, and unemployment continues to cause problems. Individual incomes are considerably lower and reliance on various forms of social assistance, including public housing, is higher than in other areas of Metropolitan Toronto. Within this context sits the local college of applied arts and technology, one of the community's largest employers and the adult education institution with the greatest number of students.

The College

Municipal College[2] is an established and well-known institution within the conglomeration of smaller villages and neighbourhoods which constitute the city. One of the first colleges of applied arts and technology established in Ontario, it

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[2] Municipal College is a pseudonym assigned to protect the anonymity of the participant, other faculty and students

has a substantial tradition both in the community and the province. Founded in the mid-1960s on one small campus, it has since spread to four campuses and serves the adult population from a geographic catchment area of approximately 200 square kilometres. The college has 500 faculty members, 9,000 full-time and 50,000 part-time students. It is known for its Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, and Transportation programs but also has schools of Applied Arts, Business, Communications and General Studies, and Continuing Education. A major expansion recently completed at one campus focused on improving its facilities for training apprentices and tradespeople. Municipal College experienced the end of an era shortly before this research began, as its first and only president retired. Immediately after her arrival the new president dismissed administrators and installed a new senior management team, effectively communicating the intention to establish significant change within the college.

Buildings on the main campus are surrounded by several large parking lots on a substantial parcel of land devoid of trees or landscaping, in an area of the city zoned for industrial use. A huge water reservoir is situated on one side of the campus and a hydroelectric right of way runs behind it. The college is located several blocks away from a major transportation artery, but within the line of sight of the city's declining economic circumstances. With each trip to Arlene's classroom, additional evidence of corporate and individual financial difficulties were clear: advertisements for low interest loans in the car dealerships lining what used to be termed "the golden mile," the vacant automotive assembly plant,

strip plazas with "for rent" signs in storefront windows and empty parking lots, and dismal low-rise apartments.

The vacant land surrounding the campus created drifting snow on the parking lot surface during the winter and blistering asphalt in summer. Enforcement of a smoke-free policy throughout the building created clusters of young men at the doorways of the institution, where their cigarette habit was protected from the wind. The main building of the college is a sprawling flat-roofed, three story brick structure with numerous entrances and tall, narrow windows facings its front elevation, similar in design to the scores of secondary schools which sprouted across Ontario two and three decades ago. In the technical wing of the college, male students, dressed casually in jeans and baseball caps, sauntered through hallways lined with metal lockers painted in tones of gaudy yellow and orange. A large student activity centre was crowded with groups of young men enthusiastically playing pool and video games while young women wearing tight jeans hovered in clusters around the edges, watching the boys and preening themselves. Beyond were open classroom doors, which revealed traditional lecture and laboratory set ups with middle-aged male instructors in coveralls at the front of classrooms speaking and gesturing to groups of students.

In spite of its initial similarity to the technical high schools of 1960s Ontario, careful attention to the characteristics of the students and faculty of Municipal College expose differences. The economic and social changes of the community are reflected in the transformation of the student body since the

inception of the Ontario community college system in the 1960s. At that time, "the colleges were mainly for young, English-speaking, high school graduates who needed full-time career-oriented programs" (Vision 2000, pp. 52-53). Municipal College in the 1990s is reflective of the community's population, with a corresponding increase in the diversity of racial and cultural backgrounds, employment status, educational achievement and age.

College faculty are a unique group of teachers in several respects. The majority are older, experienced teachers with significant tenure at individual institutions, recruited as instructors when the system was organized in the 1960s and early 1970s to meet growing demands for skilled and technical workers. This cohort is now approaching retirement age and attrition forecasts indicate that large numbers will leave by the turn of the century. Teaching is not the first career of most faculty, who tend to be "hired because of their practical work experience and move into the community college setting from some area of business, industry, technology, trades, or the professions" (Goodson & Cole, 1994, p. 87). In contrast to teachers in Ontario public elementary and secondary schools, most have no formal preparation for their instructional responsibilities. The faculty of Municipal College appear more representative of the community in the 1960s than 1990s in terms of ethnic background, language and culture.

Ontario Basic Skills Program

In a quiet wing of the building, away from the technical and occupational skills programs, the Ontario Basic Skills program is accommodated along with the

General Arts and Sciences program and the college administration offices. Here, the ambience is more in keeping with a liberal arts tradition, with a focus on the written and spoken word. Students walk with an air of purpose, carrying stacks of textbooks and binders, and visible from the doors of classrooms are moveable tables and chairs, flipcharts, audiovisual equipment and personal computers. The people in this area, mainly mature students and women teachers, are clearly different from those in other areas of the college.

Ontario Basic Skills (O.B.S) is a provincially funded adult basic education program delivered in colleges of applied arts and technology across Ontario. The objective of the program is to prepare adults over the age of 25 for entry to skills training courses, post-secondary programs, or employment. According to the provincial Ministry of Education and Training, it consists of basic skills training, which "includes reading, writing, and math and science skills; basic computer skills; and life skills" (Government of Ontario, 1995, p. 326). The program is tuition-free to students, most of whom receive some form of financial support to cover living expenses and training related expenses such as child care and transportation. O.B.S. is a year round program at Municipal College, delivered in 16 week terms in both fall and winter and a 12 week summer term. Approximately 75 students are enroled in this program at Municipal College at any one point during the year. Six full-time faculty and several sessional and part-time instructors comprise the faculty complement.

A large, clearly lettered sign in the hallway directs students and visitors to

the Ontario Basic Skills offices. Immediately inside is a small reception area, furnished with a threadbare couch, several unmatched chairs, and a coffee table littered with out of date newspapers and magazines. A waist high counter with several trays for mail and paperwork divides the waiting room from the administrative area. The words "no students beyond this point" are displayed in uppercase letters on a large sign hung from the ceiling over the counter. One computer sits on the secretary's desk, along with the master attendance register for all O.B.S. students.

Hidden behind a row of portable office dividers is a maze of carrels which function as individual work stations for the O.B.S. and General Arts and Sciences faculty. Each has a modest writing surface with a built-in fluorescent light fixture and a small upper shelf. Some instructors use the carrels' wrap around walls as bulletin boards and the majority are piled high with folders spilling papers, periodicals and books. Communal telephones and file cabinets are located amongst the desks and a huge, east-facing window wall fills the room with sunlight and warmth.

Students in the Ontario Basic Skills program are notably different from those in programs delivered in the college's technical wing. For example, these participants are older; the majority appeared to be over thirty. The age factor, according to Arlene, is a particularly attractive feature of teaching in O.B.S., in contrast to General Arts and Science or College Preparation programs.

The middle-aged people, particularly, are no nonsense. They're here to

learn. We have all kinds of problems, mainly around day care, abuse,

life issues, but we don't have the immaturity to deal with when you

have the youth, the 18 to 24 year olds (CINT1, p. 10).

She has a definite preference for working with older students who have weathered

some of life's ordeals and relates to their particular concerns. In addition, there

were more women than men in this part of the building. Although many wore

jeans, these students were dressed much more conservatively than those gathered

near the video games of the student activity centre in the technical wing.

Students in this part of the building carried briefcases in contrast with the gym

bags and tool boxes seen elsewhere. Although the atmosphere in the hallways and

classrooms was informal, an atmosphere of seriousness and maturity about the

O.B.S. participants distinguished them from students in other parts of the

building.

Another feature which distinguishes Ontario Basic Skills from other

programs at Municipal College is its continuous intake operation. In contrast to

programs which enrol a cohort of students at specific points during the year, many

adult basic education programs in colleges and community agencies use a

continuous intake admission process. Students are assessed before entry and

begin when a space at their level becomes available rather than at fixed points

throughout the year. The program is individualized and students move through

its various levels at different rates. Some students remain with the program

throughout the term or for several terms, while others exit at various points

during the term. After completing Ontario Basic Skills, students embark on a variety of activities: some enrol in high school completion programs run by the local Board of Education while others enter job skills training programs at Municipal or other colleges as space becomes available. Others, of course, find employment or leave for personal reasons.

Authority for many of the administrative decisions in the program has been delegated from the coordinator directly to teachers. Faculty, for example, have considerable autonomy in determining who is accepted and who is allowed to continue in the O.B.S. program. According to Arlene, the decision-making process teachers use is efficient and effective:

We weed out the ones we're not going to keep in the first two weeks. I

say "we'll give you three days to sort out your bus schedule or

whatever and after that you're on your own" (OINT3, p. 9).

These teachers apply a no nonsense approach to problems which they feel affects a student's ability to attend regularly or make a positive impact on others in the program. High risk students are quickly identified and are counselled to leave soon after problems appear.

Faculty also have considerable freedom regarding instructional decisions, both those which have a program-wide influence and those which are classroom or subject specific. The group determined, for example, that Municipal College O.B.S. students must participate in all aspects of the program and that instruction would be individualized. Each teacher determines the techniques he or she uses

to allow students to progress at their own speed. The degree of individualization, consequently, varies across subjects and instructors. Municipal College teachers also developed the instruments they use to screen and assign students to one of three levels in the mandatory subject areas of math, communications (English), and life skills before entry and to regulate their progression through the levels.

The responsibilities of each faculty member in the O.B.S. program include both teaching and counselling a group of students. Most switch either a subject or a level each year in an effort to maintain a sense of freshness and challenge. The counselling duties of O.B.S. teachers involve working with individuals to develop solutions for academic difficulties or attendance problems reported by instructors and assisting students with educational and career planning. Faculty refer students who need help with personal or family problems to appropriate resources in the community.

The Ontario Basic Skills program at Municipal College is an anomaly in its community, an island of tradition and stability in a rapidly transforming environment. In spite of the tremendous change encroaching upon the institution, life appears to carry on much as it has for years now among teachers and support staff. The program's objectives and procedures remain unchanged. Lesson plans and materials of years' past are updated and recycled by well-meaning faculty. Students, however, reflect the community, and have changed considerably. Whispered hallway conversations markings the beginning of anxiety over job security are a new phenomenon and an indication that events outside the college

might affect those within. The unruffled facade of the community's premier adult education institution belies the significance of the economic and political change swirling around it.

Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined significant features of the conditions affecting Arlene's personal life and practice at the time information for the study was collected. Social, historical, economic and political circumstances are recognized as influences equal in importance to personal biography in the conceptualization of teachers' knowledge portrayed. Details regarding the recession in Ontario and its disproportionate impact on regions such as Arlene's, heavily reliant on the industrial and manufacturing sectors, contribute to an awareness of the circumstances of life at the time. Similarly, information about the provincial government--its attempts to first bolster the economy through spending, and then to impose a program of fiscal restraint while advancing the cause of social justice-- further develops the picture of the larger environment. Factual information regarding the community where Arlene lives and works provide finer details to the emerging illustration. Finally, descriptions of the college's past and present and of the program Arlene teaches in, contribute necessary detail to the narrative representation of context. This chapter serves to illustrate the complexity and uniqueness of the context of one teacher's professional knowledge and to recognize the influence of this context on the construction and reconstruction of her professional knowledge. These descriptions ground the vignettes of classroom

practice presented in the following chapter, comprise yet another aspect of this particular teacher's professional knowledge.

CHAPTER FIVE

ARLENE'S PRACTICE

The goal of this chapter is to render a vivid account of Arlene's practice.

First, the significance of practice to the objectives of the study is outlined, followed

by a brief review of the process used to analyze classroom practice data. The

chapter continues with the presentation of the results of analysis, arranged within

the temporal structure of one of Arlene's work days at Municipal College. This

pattern illustrates significant themes while recognizing the narrative order and

continuity which exist within the teacher-participant's practice. The chapter

concludes with a summary of key findings from the classroom practice data and a

preamble to the next level of analysis presented in the following chapter.

Significant Themes in Arlene's Practice

Underlying assumptions in the study were the notions that practice is the

application and expression of an individual's professional knowledge and that

practice is, therefore, the embodiment of both thought and action. Appreciation of

practice was clearly an essential aspect in the development of a deeper

understanding of Arlene's professional knowledge. Production of the account of

Arlene's classroom practice which follows required the apprehension and analysis

of thought and action. Negotiating a role which allowed a classroom presence

permitted access, through observation, to Arlene's actions. These were captured in

field and observation notes which focused on Arlene's spoken words and nonverbal

behaviour in the college environment. Access to Arlene's thoughts came about

during the interviews which followed classroom observation sessions as well as through the many conversations we had throughout the data collection period. Audio taped recordings and transcripts of these dialogues permitted the apprehension of those thoughts. Together, these transcripts and field and observation notes provided the data of Arlene's classroom practice to which I applied phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis techniques.

As with the life history data, I first perused the text in a methodical and thorough search for the meaning of passages. I used a categorization process to separate information into manageable pieces, following Wolcott's (1994) advice to "keep breaking down the elements until there are small enough units to invite rudimentary analysis, then begin to build the analysis up from there" (p. 30) I then summarized the sense of both large and small pieces of text and grouped repetitions present amongst the data together in order to compare and contrast them. The bases of differentiation helped in the determination of working titles for the categories, which were later replaced with brief quotations which succinctly expressed the essence of each theme in Arlene's own words.

In the next phase of the analysis, another thorough reading of the entire classroom practice data set established the appropriateness of the categorization. For each of the categories of themes identified, I gathered together all of the supporting passages into individual documents. The product of this activity was a series of files which contained passages of text that illustrated each of the topics, themes, and patterns I had discovered within the data (Knowles & Cole with

Presswood, 1994). Arlene's words were used as labels or titles of the themes generated from the analysis of the data from the classroom practice and include: you stand alone, always be fair, the destination matters more than the journey, be nice, the pragmatist, respect privacy, trust intuition, use logic, and it's important to belong. Here, as in the chapter of Arlene's life story, anecdotes accompanied by reflections arising from the analysis recount Arlene's practice. The section which follows, intended to represent an unexceptional day in Arlene's work life at Municipal College, was created through a synthesis of vignettes which occurred over the period of the data collection.

An Ordinary Schedule

Eight a.m.: A Workday Begins

A ten minute drive through the back streets of a residential area of modest homes built in the 1950s and 60s brought Arlene to the faculty parking lot of Municipal College at 8:30 a.m. Her genuine satisfaction with her teaching position at Municipal College was unmistakable in her conduct from the moment of her arrival at work in the morning.

The bottom line is that I found the job that I best fit into. It's that

simple. I found the perfect job for me (OINT3, p.1).

It seemed that other people agreed with this opinion, for Arlene was well-liked by both students and faculty and had been nominated for a 'teacher of the year' award several years previously. She had a deep respect for and belief in the value of her main teaching subject, life skills, and enjoyed working with students she

felt were able to benefit from it. In addition, however, reasons for Arlene's fulfilment reveal evidence of the theme, the pragmatist. Arlene was aware, for example, of how favourably her working conditions compared with the circumstances of other teachers.

I will never go back to the high school system if I can help it. Lots of

faculty have no idea how good they have it at the college (CINT2, p.1).

One of the benefits of working at Municipal College that Arlene took advantage of was a compressed work week. She taught a full teaching and counselling load in four days each week and used the extra day to make income elsewhere. Arlene's compressed work week and outside commitments resulted in a brisk pace in her daily schedule.

The freedom from extracurricular duties allowed Arlene to time her arrival for ten or twenty minutes before her first class and her departure for soon after her teaching or counselling appointments were completed. She preferred to do her lesson preparations and marking in the evenings or during weekends at home and had made a habit of it since her return to the workforce in order to be home from school at the same time as her daughters. Arlene enjoyed being able to spread materials out on the family dining table and allowing them to spill onto the floor in contrast to working in the restricted space of her carrel in the communal office area. Tedious or repetitious duties such as marking were done in front of the television while work that required concentration was accompanied by popular music. The ability to choose when and where to conduct specific aspects of her

job's duties contributed in a practical way to the sense of freedom Arlene had concerning her teaching. The significance of this feature of the work for her provides further confirmation of the theme, the pragmatist, in the classroom practice data.

Upon her arrival at the college, Arlene went directly to the O.B.S. (Ontario Basic Skills) office, where she cheerfully greeted waiting students. Without stopping to chat, she slipped quickly behind the counter to the receptionist's desk, picked up a handful of pink message slips from the slot with her name and checked for mail. Arlene glanced at the messages and swiftly manoeuvred her way to her carrel and deposited her coat, purse, books, mail and messages. Her load lightened, she returned to the kitchenette where the faculty and staff maintained a communal coffee pot. After pouring and fixing a cup for herself, Arlene made her way back to her desk, acknowledging colleagues along the way.

As a teacher, Arlene was particularly concerned about the environment in which teaching and learning occurred. She was a firm believer that conditions of security and comfort facilitated the learning process for adults and was conscientious about her role in the creation and maintenance of the environment. The theme, it's important to belong, is conspicuous in data which concerns setting since, to Arlene, one of the primary conditions of a suitable environment was the presence of feelings of affiliation and security. She emphasizes similarities among individual members of the groups with whom she worked and either ignored or downplayed their differences. While Arlene distinguished herself from her

students because of her role, she included herself as a member of the O.B.S. community she wanted them to feel a part of. For example, one difference which she recognized and addressed with numerous indirect means was the gap between her students' and her own financial circumstances.

I am sort of typical middle class, but I grew up poor, so I know what

it's like to not have enough (LHCHR, p. 35).

In addition to expressing empathy for the difficulties her students faced because of their economic status, Arlene disclosed tidbits about her humble upbringing and the fact that she was now a single parent struggling to support two daughters. Through offering an understanding rooted in personal experience and entrusting students with details about her life beyond the college, Arlene told the adults in her classes that she was, in some ways, a member of their group.

Arlene's wardrobe was also significant in the creation of the type of environment she considers essential for helping adults to learn. Her physical appearance, which communicated two important messages, is further confirmation of the theme it's important to belong within the classroom practice data. The first was her identification as an O.B.S. teacher as opposed to one of the "less friendly" faculty members of the General Arts and Science program. Her clothing also conveyed the message that her financial circumstances were not too dissimilar from her students. Arlene felt strongly that an expensive wardrobe or costly jewellery was inappropriate attire for teachers in a community college working with students of modest means. Today, dressed in navy blue slacks, red mock

turtleneck sweater, colourful scarf and flat-soled navy loafers, she emitted positive energy and good will while also signalling her empathy for the adult students in the program.

At Municipal College, no bells or buzzers announced the beginning or end of class periods, and the halls and locker areas were busy with students throughout the day. In the O.B.S. program, faculty and students individually watched the time but were flexible when classes ran overtime or finished early. Shortly before nine, Arlene packed up the materials she needed for her one and a half hour math lesson and, carrying her unfinished coffee, made her way to the hallway. The atmosphere in this wing of the college was friendly and relaxed and a sense of goodwill radiated from the faculty and students. On the short journey to the room where she taught basic math, Arlene cordially greeted the majority of the students she passed. As she glanced into an open classroom door along the way, two women already seated in a classroom called out good morning and added, "We miss you. Can we come back to your class?" Laughingly, Arlene answered that she missed them too, but no they could not return, and continued on her way.

Nine a.m.: Math Class

A few minutes after nine, Arlene arrived at the classroom door and quietly moved over to the battered metal desk, centred in front of the blackboard. Students, four men and fourteen women, were seated with their heads bent over open books. The only noises in the room came from rustling papers, calculators beeping and the rubbing of erasers on worksheets. Physically, the classroom

environment was dismal. A low ceiling was covered with acoustical tiles and fluorescent light fixtures which cast a greenish tone onto the skin of everyone present. Grey industrial carpet covered the floor. One narrow window at the back of the room allowed weak shafts of winter sunlight to penetrate a few feet into the room. The wall separating the classroom from the hallway was completely covered by a blackboard. The two side walls were semi-permanent, convenient for quick and inexpensive classroom renovations although noise from the teaching activities in the classroom next door passed through them easily. Inexpensive plastic chairs and small rectangular tables for two were arranged in a U around the outside walls of the room. Several rows of tables and chairs filled the centre of the U. The stark, rather grimy walls held no bulletin boards, posters, or student work.

Arlene's students were diverse in age, race and ethnic background, but as a group appeared to have homogeneous characteristics as well. Admittance, continuation, and success in the O.B.S. program involved understanding and adhering to a complex set of explicit rules and unspoken mores. The teachers, as mentioned in the previous chapter, decided who was enroled and allowed to continue in these classes. Arlene's decisions to terminate students from the program reflect the theme, you've got to stand up for yourself.

Sometimes you devote too much time to a student and they end up quitting on you anyway. So now we try to get those people out in the first four weeks (CINT1, p. 7).

Ensuring that she was not taken advantage of by students was balanced by the

need to be fair in her dealings with them.

> *Kevin started in the fall . . . and he was a very good student, on the*
>
> *days that he was there. But he was fighting for custody of his child,*
>
> *so he had all these court dates, then he had all his workers' comp*
>
> *appointments, and other things and he was just missing too much.*
>
> *Finally I reached a point where I said "Kevin, this just isn't the right*
>
> *time for you. But I guarantee that if we exit you now and you take the*
>
> *time now to get your personal life in order, we'll take you back in,*
>
> *under certain conditions"* (OINT3, p. 10).

The due process consideration Arlene used in making final decisions regarding student dismissals from the program, her appreciation for the reasons for their behaviour, and her willingness to allow the student another chance is evidence of the important theme, always be fair.

The students in Arlene's class ranged in age from the mid-twenties to sixty, with the majority appearing to be between thirty and forty. Although most of the women had immigrated to Canada from Caribbean and Southeast Asian countries, two had been born and educated in this community but had dropped out of school as teenagers. One man, a miner from northern Ontario, had received a brain injury in an underground accident and was sponsored by the Workers' Compensation Board to re-learn the basic skills he would need to train for a different line of work. Another, recently arrived from South America, carried his school books and materials in an expensive leather briefcase, a Christmas gift, he

explained to me one day, from his children. He enroled in the O.B.S. program

because there were no seats available in English as a Second Language programs

in the community.

Arlene deposited her books and papers at the teacher's desk and sat down

to organize herself before greeting anyone. The ritual of marking attendance at

the beginning of every class is consistent with the notion of individual

responsibility and the theme you've got to look after yourself.

> *I like to catch who's late. I want to make sure it goes in as late.*
>
> *They'll come to me and tell me the reasons they're not coming. I say I*
>
> *can understand that but you have to take on the responsibility to be*
>
> *here* (OINT3, pp. 8-9).

Giving the impression of cool indifference, Arlene glanced around the room

casually and jotted a few notes onto a piece of paper which she slipped into a file

folder. After every class, she transferred each student's attendance onto their

individual records which were maintained in the O.B.S. office. There, she checked

to see if students who had been late or absent from her classes exhibited similar

behaviour with other teachers. The agencies which sponsored students had

different attendance policies but Arlene considered meeting their requirements for

regular and accurate reports a serious commitment.

In keeping with the theme, you've got to look after yourself, Arlene made a

point of waiting for students to initiate conversation with her on attendance or

punctuality problems.

I feel I don't make a big deal of it. The student will come to me and say the reasons they're not coming. I say "I can understand that but you have to take on that responsibility. If you keep coming late and you haven't prearranged something with me I'll mark you late. If you say to me, my babysitter can never come until 8:30 and I can't get here until 9:00, then I won't take your attendance until 9:15. It's up to you to initiate that." I'm not going to waste time to track everybody down every time they're late!! (OINT3, p. 9).

In addition to her concern about individual accountability, Arlene's attention to her students' self-esteem reflects the themes be nice and respect privacy. She used a nonjudgmental and non-threatening approach to raise concerns about absenteeism, tardiness and other problems with students in private conversations. Often, she referred those who needed assistance identifying a problem, developing an appropriate solution, or accessing resources to their assigned program counsellor.

Variations on the notion of individualism which imbue the omnipresent theme you stand alone, were evident in Arlene's first interactions with students. Immediately after finishing attendance, Arlene was up from her desk with an armful of papers, which she silently distributed to individual students. As each received a paper, he or she pushed books and calculators aside and turned their attention to the returned papers--tests Arlene had marked the night before.

To do a really good job with low level students you have to give a lot

of feedback and a lot of corrections. It doesn't do them any good to get

something back that says "well done" (CINT3, p. 1).

Grading tests and papers provides Arlene opportunities to communicate her

comments and suggestions directly and privately with individual students. This

approach to marking is consistent with her appreciation of the teacher-student

relationship and reflects her understanding of roles and responsibilities in the

classroom.

Arlene moved from student to student returning papers, pointing out where

errors occurred, quietly praising a test result, or suggesting where corrections

needed to be made. For most of the adults, this class was not a refresher but a

final attempt at academic success after repeated failures. In recognition of their

vulnerability and unique difficulties in understanding math concepts and

mastering basic arithmetic skills, Arlene established the type of ambience she

believed would be most helpful. Her hushed conversations with individual

students were consistent with the theme respect privacy, as her encouragement of

individual, silent work was consistent with the theme you stand alone.

In less than ten minutes, Arlene returned to her desk to pick up a new

stack of papers which she quickly distributed face down on each student's desk.

Her concern for continuing assessment is reflected in frequent use of written tests,

inventories and indices and congruent with the theme the destination matters

more than the journey, another significant motif in observations of classroom

practice. The students, clearly familiar with the routine of the quiz, left the single

sheet of paper on their tables untouched and focused their attention on Arlene who was moving fast and talking quickly.

You have one and a quarter minute for this test. The extra fifteen

seconds is for your name. Everybody ready? GO! (ON2, p. 2).

The class fell immediately to the assignment, and each student worked swiftly down the page in an effort to complete the quiz within the allotted time. Arlene circled the room briskly, glancing at her wrist watch, and looking down at papers, wordlessly checking that students were on task. Time was up quickly, and in a firm voice she instructed the group to stop. Arlene repeated her instructions, "Please put pencils down now," several times to the keener or more competitive individuals.

In a flash, students were up and moving about noisily and with much confusion to exchange papers with one another, collectively preparing to take the quiz up.

Who would like to read out the answers to the first seven questions?

(ON2, p.2).

Volunteers' hands shot into the air and Arlene quickly identified whom she wanted to respond. She paced smartly across the front of the classroom, responding to correct answers with a nod, a yes or mhm and to wrong answers, with a request for help to the large group. When the entire quiz was taken up, Arlene instructed the class to record the total number of correct answers as a fraction out of 30 at the top of the page.

Let the owners have a quick peek. Anyone with less than 25 should be

reviewing their multiplication facts (ON2, p. 2).

Reflecting concern for her students' privacy and pride, Arlene stopped short of

identifying those whose performance did not meet the minimum standard and

directed general advice about improvements to the entire class instead of

particular students. Checking on the results of individual students, she directed

the large group to leave their quizzes out for collection so that the marks could be

recorded in her grade book. As the papers were collected, students opened their

books, arranged their papers and within seconds, the room was silent again as

heads bent over individual work.

Arlene ascribed to a "just do it," philosophy of teaching. A moderate

amount of planning, preparation and evaluation was useful, but action--the

implementation and in-process modifications of plans--was more important to her.

She tended to act, rather than to fret, about challenging situations such as the

direction to provide individualized programs for large groups of students.

Modestly confident of her ability to handle whatever arose in the classroom on a

daily basis, Arlene used an optimistic and matter of fact approach.

I wasn't sure how to handle 30 or 35 students that first couple of

weeks starting out. But I figured, if you enjoy what you're doing,

you'll muddle through somehow (OINT3, p. 15).

The quotation embodies the notion of coping, of contending competently with a

situation or problem, which suffused Arlene's approach to the realities of life as a

college teacher. A significant theme in this data set, the motif encompasses the idea of modest expectations and quiet rewards rather than extravagant hopes and magnificent achievements. The phrase, <u>if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow,</u> the label for this theme, exemplifies the notion.

Arlene's opinions about the roles of student and teacher in the learning process were closely aligned with her beliefs about individual responsibility and closely related to the theme <u>you stand alone.</u>

> *I feel that if they listen and they follow what I suggest they do, then*
>
> *it's not my fault if they don't learn. They must seek out and take*
>
> *responsibility for their own learning* (OINT3, p. 14).

She subscribed to a theory of learning which incorporated the notion that listening and following instructions resulted in understanding and mastery. It assumed teacher competence in the content knowledge and reduced teaching to skilful showing and telling. Assuming that the teacher was knowledgeable in the content and both skilful and persistent in relating it, the doctrine expeditiously burdened the student with responsibility for lack of progress. Arlene's theory belied the learning difficulties of many of her adult students as well as the instructional challenges she faced on a daily basis.

Arlene returned to the front of the room, unlocked the filing cabinet, carefully extracted more tests and pre-tests, and re-locked the drawer. Tests were the centre of the O.B.S. math program: pre-tests were intended to be diagnosis instruments, a means for students to identify their own skill deficiencies and

inform the direction of their learning and practice, while unit tests were expected to insure mastery of a constellation of concepts and skills before the student moved on to the next set.

> *If you've got some knowledge of the unit, go to the post-test first . . .*
>
> *and through the test's difficulty, you discover what you don't know.*
>
> *And then you can go back and only do the sections that you don't*
>
> *know* (OINT3, p. 15).

Students attempted tests at their own paces with the ultimate goal of satisfactory completion of all tests in the particular level of math during the semester. Arlene's reverential treatment of the tests, including her attention to security and restricted access, heightened the aura of importance which surrounded them and confirms the centrality of the theme <u>the destination matters more than the journey</u> to her practice.

Arlene's support of the test focus in her math class had both ethical and practical dimensions. Above all else in the classroom, she was concerned with creating and maintaining an environment in which students would experience a sense of justness and equity.

> *I think that people like to think they've been treated fairly. And with*
>
> *respect. I try to treat people that way so that they can feel that way*
>
> (OINT5, pp. 8-9).

The tests produced an objective indication of students' achievement, and therefore, a "fair" grade. The theme <u>always be fair</u> was also evident in an unusual practice

Arlene had adopted regarding the marking of the instruments she valued for their

ability to produce an objective assessment.

> *I'll mark as far as they want me to go. I always tell them to double*
>
> *check everything they've done that's going to be marked that night . . .*
>
> *If they're not sure, if they've rushed something, they'll draw a line and*
>
> *say please don't go past here* (OINT3, p. 13).

Arlene felt that this technique was appropriate for her adult students and was

unconcerned about its effects on the validity of the tests.

Quite apart from the ethical reasons for supporting the tests, Arlene also

appreciated their practical value. The continuous intake basis of the program

guaranteed that new students would enter the class throughout the term

whenever space became available as others moved on to different levels or out of

the program. The tests facilitated the never-ending assessment demanded by the

nature of the program. In addition, though, Arlene used them to individualize

instruction for her ever-changing and large class of students with widely diverse

levels of ability, in congruence with the theme the pragmatist. As she delivered

different unit tests and pre-tests to particular students, for example, Arlene issued

distinctive instructions regarding corrections, sections to ignore, and so on to each.

Marking the tests, however, allowed her to communicate specific remarks intended

to instruct, correct or encourage a student.

> *If I come to a section where they've done the whole thing wrong, I'll*
>
> *mark the first one wrong and give them zero and then write "see me."*

Perhaps I'll write on the side, "you're making the same mistake over

and over," or, "you're doing super up to here, keep up the good work."

Or I'll state the rule--"remember the rule for percent"--or say to check

all of question five again. Whatever. So it takes me a long time to

mark their papers (OINT3, p. 13).

Arlene was perpetually short of time and this technique allowed her to augment

the amount of individual attention she gave to each student without substantially

increasing her own work load.

After disseminating the tests, Arlene returned to the front of the room,

where she sat down in the upholstered swivel chair by the large, battered

teachers' desk. The continuous intake process of the O.B.S. program meant that

students entered and left on an ongoing basis throughout the term. One

consequence was that groups were difficult to establish and sustain and

opportunities for teaching small groups or for employing peer teaching were few

and far between. For the remaining hour, Arlene worked with one student at a

time, moving around the room and seated at her desk in a demonstration of

important features of her understanding of the nature of the formal learning

experience and her role in its facilitation.

I just wish I had more time with individuals (OINT2, p. 3).

Students approached Arlene with their workbooks and seated themselves in an

armless plastic side chair pulled closely up to the teacher's desk. There, the two

worked through a problem or checked a response together. If the student was

with her more than a moment or two, and another wanted attention, he or she wrote their name in chalk in a corner of the blackboard. When there was a lull, and no one waiting for help, Arlene circulated around the classroom, stopping to check on the progress of individual students.

I just try to get around and see what they're working on to check if

they have any problems. Just a quick, "do you need any help?" and if

they say no, then that's fine, I move on (OINT3, p. 4).

Working in hushed tones, she actively engaged the student in working through a question or solving a problem. Her manner of instruction demonstrated the emphasis she placed on respecting privacy and her appreciation of students' vulnerability in their academic abilities. Arlene sat down beside the student, pulled her chair in close, and worked on the question directly with him or her in their book. The inflection of her voice became more pronounced when she worked with an individual student, rising in a non-threatening question mark at the end of each sentence. Directing her warm smile and friendly laughter, Arlene displayed her confidence that the student would master the task and masked any signs of disappointment or discouragement with their achievement.

Arlene supported the individualized approach to instruction for several reasons. The notion of the student working at their own pace on developing the specific skills they need to progress is congruent with the theme you stand alone. Arlene felt strongly that students should not be hindered by others and that individualizing instruction was a key factor in helping students persevere and

progress.

> *I just want these learners to stay enthusiastic and motivated. The*
>
> *worst thing you can do--it doesn't matter whether they're children or*
>
> *adults--is to make them move at the same pace* (CINT1, p. 3).

In addition to the ethical foundation of her support for individualism, Arlene's experience also provided her with a practical rationale. She found it difficult to establish and maintain instructional groups with the ever-changing group of students with such diverse abilities her class always seemed to consist of.

> *I've tried having a group of three or four, calling them up to the front*
>
> *and just turning the flip chart around. I run into several things doing*
>
> *that. First of all, people could be writing a unit test that day, but*
>
> *they're watching me. Secondly, I get so engrossed that I give too much*
>
> *time to the small group and no one else gets help that period because*
>
> *they don't want to interrupt* (OINT3, p. 3).

Arlene believed that with fewer students in her classes she could devote more of her time to providing individuals with the assistance they needed to succeed.

Individualism is a particularly important notion within Arlene's practice and suffused with complexity and contradictions. It includes, for example, the assumption of self-knowledge which, in the classroom, is extended to students as the responsibility for identifying their own learning needs and directing a path of self-instruction.

> *They know why they're in this level of math. For some it's the*

language--they're ESL students--but others have never done parts of

this before and for some it's just that it's so long ago that they have

big gaps . . . . But we'll sit down together and narrow down what they

want to do in that level (OINT2, p. 2).

Arlene believed that the adult students of the O.B.S. program have both the

ability and the responsibility to determine their own academic path.

It's up to them to seek me out . . . . I can't take responsibility when

people are all over the map to start making sure they get the help they

need if they don't ask for it (OINT3, p. 14).

She was equally confident, however, that it is her right and responsibility as

teacher to direct and manage students' learning.

I try not to spend too much time on people who are too needy. I want

to see if they're going to make it on their own (CINT1, p. 7).

If they give themselves enough time, they'll sort out their own rhythm,

their own pattern that will be right for them. But if I think they're

trying to rush things too much, I'll suggest they slow down. If they're

not taking tests often enough, I'll suggest they take them more

frequently (OINT3, p. 11).

The rights and responsibilities of both student and teacher were continually

adjusted to maintain the delicate balance required for the support of key beliefs

and values.

The informal, one-to-one lessons which Arlene conducted with her students

generally involved diagnosing a problem and either teaching or correcting a technique.

> *There's an informal setting in my classroom. I think the only stress*
>
> *that exists is the stress within themselves--from wanting to move faster*
>
> *or from not understanding something. I don't think I put pressure on*
>
> *them* (OINT3, p. 11).

Her continual grading of unit tests provided up-to-date information on each student's successes and difficulties in the various skill areas. In addition, though, Arlene identified deficiencies and errors by observing a student as he answered a question or solved a problem. She then demonstrated a technique, or read a textbook explanation aloud, or offered the student a series of direct instructions in order to clarify a concept or teach a skill. This tendency to use a variety of approaches with students is further evidence of the ways in which pragmatism is manifest in Arlene's practice.

> *I'll never be a whiz at teaching math, but at least I'm not rigid*
>
> (OINT3, p. 2).

Following each mini-lesson, she moved on to allow the student time to absorb what they had discussed and to practice the task.

Another facet of the learning environment which concerned Arlene is the materials available for O.B.S. students to use.

> *It's really important to have the right books and it's terribly hard to*
>
> *find them* (OINT3, p. 17).

Her thoughts and behaviour regarding teaching and learning aids reflect the application of the theme <u>you stand alone</u> to her responsibilities as a teacher. Arlene diligently reviewed texts and workbooks for all of her students and often discovered errors in the commercial materials used in the program.

Last night I went through the book up to page 43. It's supposed to be

self-explanatory but I wanted to make sure that there wasn't anything

in there that needed to be actually taught. You know, are the rules

clearly laid out and is it easy to follow (OINT3, p. 17).

In addition, she was concerned about the vocabulary and sentence structure of the materials, which were often inappropriate for adult basic education students. Finally, she noted that the formatting of commercial programs, such as the size or style of the print and the amount of text on a page, was also problematic. These complications made learning basic arithmetic more onerous for students in the individualized O.B.S. program. Difficulties were exacerbated for the many students for whom English was a second language. Arlene surmised wistfully that these issues would be resolved if she developed her own materials. This, however, would be a sizeable project which she was not prepared to commit the necessary time to and so her search for good quality materials continued throughout the term.

As the hands on the clock over the classroom door approached eleven, one student silently packed his books and papers into his briefcase and moved toward the door. Without a backward glance or a goodbye, he slipped quietly out of the

room. Arlene paid no attention and before long, most of the others had followed his example. A few stragglers stayed behind, waiting for additional help from Arlene, after the period officially ended. Arlene remained at her desk for another twenty five minutes, working with the students who remained. Finally, when all had gone, she placed a few papers in the file cabinet, locked it, and packed up her books. As she picked up her purse from its perch on the teacher's chair, her eyes glanced around the room to make sure all the desks were clear. This done, she slung her bag over her shoulder, picked up the stack of books, and turned out the light before closing the classroom door.

The hallway was quiet as Arlene made her way back to the O.B.S. office. Her first stop was the receptionist's desk where she picked up the attendance binder and recorded details of the students who had been late or absent from math class that morning. Arlene then retrieved her lunch from the staff kitchen and returned to her small carrel in the teacher's preparation area to scan her lesson plan and make last minute notes for her afternoon life skills class as she ate her mid-day meal.

One p.m.: Life Skills Class

Shortly before one o'clock, Arlene packed up the books and materials she needed for the afternoon and made her way to the classroom she used for her life skills course. Although this space was considerably larger than the one used for math, it still had only a single small window and bare walls. Blackboards lined the front wall and a flip chart was stationed by the door. To the left of the

blackboard an older model television monitor hung from the ceiling mounted on a metal arm and an old black dial telephone, linked solely to the college's audio visual department, was mounted on the wall beneath. A four-drawer metal file cabinet and an empty bookcase leaned against the opposite wall. Centred in front of the blackboard was the requisite metal teacher's desk. Eight groups of tables and chairs were scattered around the room which had space to accommodate approximately forty adults.

A major issue for Arlene concerned her responsibility to meet the real needs, as opposed to the felt needs, of the adults who participated in the O.B.S. program. She believed that adults returning to school had needs in the areas of self esteem, personal management and interpersonal relations. Congruent with the theme the pragmatist, Arlene was convinced that development in these aspects would result in tangible improvements in the lives of her students in contrast to the questionable benefits of improvements in basic arithmetic and English skills.

> *You could probably just do life skills alone, forget the academics and*
>
> *they'd be a lot better off. Except they wouldn't see it that way* (OINT5,
>
> p. 4).

Many of the students understood their difficulties in life to be the result of poor educational achievement. When they returned to school, they wanted to focus their attention on what they believed would benefit them the most--academic upgrading in math and English--and traditionally resisted participating in the life

skills course.

Years previously, the O.B.S. faculty had dealt with the issue of resistance to life skills by declaring all aspects of the program mandatory. Although this policy allowed Arlene to fulfil her responsibility to provide students with what she perceived to be an appropriate educational intervention, it conflicted with her value of respecting others.

> *How do we design a program that works for people? It would be nice*
>
> *to have the option to do one of three [math, life skills, English] but we*
>
> *can't do that . . . . It's all mandatory if you come to our college. If*
>
> *you're not interested . . . there are other colleges* (OINT2, p. 3-4).

As the changing economic circumstances brought students whose experience reflected mainstream notions of success to the program, Arlene was developing a growing discomfort with its lack of flexibility.

The recession was bringing students with different backgrounds and different expectations to Municipal College and Arlene's classes. The manufacturing plants which continued to downsize and close in the community were a source of mature workers who would do whatever was necessary to return to the labour force.

> *As the economy has changed, more and more men have come into*
>
> *O.B.S. and most of them say they need more life skills now. They're*
>
> *interested in being more assertive, dealing with authority, job search*
>
> *skills, that kind of thing* (OINT2, p. 4).

Arlene had adapted the topics addressed and the processes employed in her life skills course in response to the changes in the composition of the student body.

When I used to work with all females there was more comfort. They're

more comfortable with sitting in a circle and talking--that kind of life

skills. I think the men are more comfortable with structure and with

tables and chairs. More a career, impersonal approach, not your

innermost self and that kind of touchy feely stuff (OINT5, pp. 2-3).

The diversity of the students in one class ensured that identifying needs and developing appropriate activities and experiences were constant professional challenges for Arlene.

A true believer in the value of teaching life skills, Arlene asserted this as the method of choice to help adults returning to formal education build self-esteem and confidence. She posited that courses such as hers help people to develop a variety of skills they can use throughout their lives in a variety of personal and work relationships. The theme you stand alone, is clearly visible in the goals Arlene articulated for the course.

All I really want people to do is to learn that the responsibility for

their life is their own and that they have the power to make choices.

They must learn to take responsibility for some of these and stop

letting others control what they do (CINT1, p. 5).

The intention of increasing students' sense of personal accountability was visible in the focus of lessons she prepared, activities organized and materials she

selected. Similarly, the notion of individual responsibility was a conspicuous feature of Arlene's practice in the life skills program and a source of professional pride.

>*No one tells me my curriculum. I have free choice of what I want to*
>
>*teach, however I want, whenever I want and I can go with the flow of*
>
>*the class* (CINT1, p. 2).

Unlike English or arithmetic courses, the life skills course was free from prescriptive college or ministry guidelines. Arlene modified the course every term to meet the needs each group of students express but generally includes units on career and life planning, skills for working in groups, communication, assertiveness, and so on.

>Informally throughout the term, and formally at the end of the term, Arlene solicited students' opinions of the course and ways she could improve it.

>*They had some really good ideas on their evaluations . . . . bring*
>
>*former students back . . . more on racism, prejudice and*
>
>*discrimination* (CINT3, p. 4).

Seeking and incorporating student feedback into classes served several purposes for Arlene. It provided a way for her to get to know the interests of her students, which she believed to be an important consideration in teaching.

>*If you like what you're doing, then you're going to get more motivated*
>
>*than you would if you didn't like what you're doing* (OINT2, p. 2).

Secondly, student evaluations were a source of additional ideas for themes or

topics of her lessons. Arlene developed or adapted materials from a wide variety of popular sources including self-help books, magazine and newspaper articles, television and radio programs, as well as from more conventional sources such as the YWCA life skills materials and commercially developed products. Within her approach to developing and delivering lessons, the theme teaching is a solo performance is clearly evident.

> *It's up to you to carry it off. So that the class and you can learn*
>
> *something you don't already know* (OINT5, p. 6).

Above all, Arlene tried to be open to new ideas and ways of doing things in the classroom so that her students would feel enthusiastic and motivated.

When Arlene arrived, ten minutes after the official start of the period in the third week of the winter term, most students were already in the room. The noise level was considerably higher than it had been in the morning math class. Students chatted and laughed with each other, discussing a multitude of topics including their children, assignments due, weekend plans, and the weather forecast. The distinctly social ambience was part of the environment that Arlene felt was crucial for an adult life skills class and congruent with the theme it's important to belong.

> *I don't want dead silence when I walk into the room--everybody shuts*
>
> *up immediately . . . . I think the socializing is a really important part*
>
> *of coming back to school and it's nice to see them interacting* (OINT5,
>
> p. 6).

Although Arlene greeted several students individually, her attention for the moment was on organizing herself and discreetly marking attendance at the teacher's desk. Next, she arranged the flip chart so that its back was to the students and, using colourful markers, made notes on several sheets. These preliminary tasks finished, Arlene moved casually around the room greeting students individually. Each student was presented with a small square of paper and those who were sitting alone were directed to join one of the groups before the door to the hallway was finally closed.

As if the curtain had risen and the stage lights come up, a hush came over the room; it seemed as if the show was about to begin. Arlene stood front and centre in the room and turned the flip chart to face the class. The single word "Change," in large, bright, uppercase letters was written on the flip chart.

Good afternoon everyone, can I have your attention please? Today's class is about change. Before we get started I'd like to know what your reactions to change are. I want each of you to jot that down on the paper I just handed out. Take two minutes. Don't sign your name (ON4, p.1).

Circulating around the room, Arlene stopped to quietly help a few individuals who seemed unsure of the task. Addressing the large group, she asked students to fold the squares in half when they were finished so that they could be collected in a few moments. After gathering the squares, Arlene unfolded and scanned them swiftly before reading and paraphrasing several out loud to the class. All eyes were on the teacher as she delivered select pieces, perched on the edge of a table

in the middle of the room. In this brief warm-up exercise the theme <u>you stand</u> <u>alone</u> applied to the solo performance Arlene provided.

Arlene returned to the front of the room and picked up a paperback from the teacher's desk. As she held the book up for the class to see its cover, she revealed that it had had such a tremendous influence on her a few years ago that today's lesson was based on its contents. Following this trace of personal disclosure, Arlene lead the group into a discussion about their experiences with change. Using a gentle, non-threatening voice, she directed open-ended questions one at a time to specific individuals and invited others to share their thoughts on the subject in order to draw out the group's assumptions about the topic.

> *Change happens to you. You don't choose it. For example, if my*
>
> *husband just walked out on me, I have to change. Does this strike a*
>
> *chord with you Donovan? . . . You have to hit bottom before you can*
>
> *change. What do you think of that, Hazel?* (ON4, p.2).

Arlene had moved to one of the tables near the front of the room and half sat on it, listening intently, nodding and maintaining eye contact with each person as they reacted to her prompts. No student remained mute in response to Arlene's gentle probes and stories of change wrought by family problems, illness, accidents, alcoholism and similar types of difficulties were divulged. As each conversation concluded, Arlene, in search of experiences which included positive and self-directed changes, turned to another student and began a new dialogue. In the guise of group discussion, a dozen or more individual conversations occurred

between Arlene and the students, demonstrating an application of her custom of engaging in individual interaction even within a large group setting.

In spite of the leading questions and broad hints, Arlene was unable to elicit the types of anecdotes she had expected to use as an introduction to the next exercise. As the stories became more and more devastating, it was clear that the individuals in this group perceived change as a response to stressful, unpleasant or dangerous situations imposed upon them. Arlene moved over to the blackboard, signalling that the introductory phase of the lesson was complete nonetheless.

I think you have to keep them on task, keep it structured to some

degree . . . . I do my best when I'm in there (OINT5, p. 9).

In spite of Arlene's good intentions with the activity, the theme if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow emanated clearly from her actions and words during this brief period.

Standing by the board, Arlene picked up a piece of chalk and hurriedly drew a horizontal line across the middle of the board and with a dramatic flourish marked large Xs on both ends of the line. As the chalk moved over the board, Arlene described what she was doing with an upbeat, questioning voice. Beside the X on the left side of the line, she wrote the word BIRTH and by the X at the opposite end DEATH. Slightly to the right of the centre of the line, Arlene placed another X and wrote 1993 beside it. With a flourish, she drew a semicircle which connected the Xs from 1993 to DEATH. As she replaced the chalk on the ledge of the blackboard, she pointed to the semicircle and issued instructions:

This is the rest of your life. I want you to take a piece of paper and draw your lifeline on it. In this net here, this semicircle, I want you to jot down all the things you want to happen in your remaining life (ON4, p. 3).

Immediately, papers were pulled from binders and pencils from cases and the students proceeded to copy the diagram on the board. Once this aspect of the task was complete, discomfort rippled through the room. In the small groups, some students tittered and quipped that what they wanted to happen in the remainder of their lifetime was to win the lottery. Arlene roamed around the room, helping the class to settle down by stopping and speaking individually with those who were not approaching the task with the seriousness expected.

Several times Arlene reiterated versions of the instructions to the large group, encouraging those who said they were perfectly content with their present life situation to try to write just one thing down. Years of experience working with adults who resisted life skills had tempered her expectations and taught Arlene not to take students' disinterest personally.

It's not downright rudeness, just the fact that they don't know how. With their age and the number of experiences they've had, they're as respectful as they're able to be (OINT5, p. 9).

In class I can let an awful lot of little stuff go by--as long as I see a student doing good work. It takes a lot before I get upset (CINT1, p. 8).

In this context, Arlene's explanations of inappropriate behaviour were likely to excuse students and contradict the notion of individual accountability which was such a strong presence elsewhere in her practice.

The goals of the life skills course concerned the development of an understanding of middle class norms and progress in the personal and social skills that this world required of individuals. It's important to belong, a central theme in Arlene's classroom practice, is evident in this crucial, tacit goal for her students. Techniques Arlene applied to encourage students to adopt these norms were directed at individual students and included modelling, gentle prodding within the classroom, subtle hints that behaviour was unacceptable through ignoring or not acknowledging it and meetings outside of class time. Students who had difficulty fitting in to the O.B.S. culture were provided with explicit behaviour expectations and the opportunity to reform.

> *I talk to them and tell them what I'm seeing. I say, "first of all your*
>
> *attendance hasn't been good, you're late frequently, in class you seem*
>
> *like you don't want to be there, you're not participating. Why are you*
>
> *coming? If you want to stay, well, we'll have to agree to some*
>
> *conditions. What are you prepared to change? This is what I expect*
>
> *of you and if you can't comply with this, it's out." No questions asked*
>
> (CINT1, pp. 6-7).

Arlene's tolerance and patience expired swiftly with those who demonstrated that they would not embrace the status quo and they were quickly "weeded out" of the

program.

One group at a time, students stopped their conversations and applied themselves to the task. A calm settled over the class as individuals considered personal goals to mark in pencil on their hand-drawn lifelines. After ten minutes of this seat work, Arlene approached the two students in the room who sat by themselves and directed each to take their papers and join a group. She then instructed the class to spend the next ten minutes sharing their lifelines and goals with those who were seated in their groups. Six of the eight groups followed the instructions immediately, revealing the diagrams they had drawn to reflect their lifelines and disclosing their goals with those at their tables. The other two, however, seemed to have difficulty focusing on the directions issued and were not on task. Arlene ignored the jokesters and strolled around the room, confirming her instructions one group at a time. A table of five women close to her own age caught her attention and after a moment, she pulled up a chair and joined in their discussion, listening to their stories and sharing some of her own. Ten minutes later, Arlene excused herself from the conversation and moved on to check others' progress. At her next stop, a man in his 40s leaped up to fetch a chair when she indicated that she would stay and all rose from their seats as Arlene sat down. The theme it's important to belong is evident in this activity which provided the teacher and her students with opportunities to learn more about each other beyond their college roles. Developing this level of rapport and connecting on a personal basis with the adults in her life skills class was extremely important to

Arlene.

As the level of noise in the room rose, Arlene extricated herself from the small group and returned to the front of the room, calling time to debrief the exercise. She directed questions about personal reactions to specific individuals and nodded and smiled at the responses each of the students supplied. The comment was then paraphrased to the large group and, after a check with the originator, summarized with a word or a phrase in marker on the flip chart at the front of the room. Several students said that the exercise was difficult because it caused them to really think about what was important in their lives. Arlene read the comments on the flip chart to the class and concluded aloud that this had been a worthwhile activity. She said that one of the goals of life skills is to develop self awareness and that this had been the purpose of the activity. They would go on to goal setting in the next class, she said, and would need to remember to bring their lifelines for that.

Forty five minutes remained in the period and, rather than let the students go early, Arlene announced that they would be shifting gears and moving into a slightly different topic for the rest of the class. She asked the large group to recall what they had talked about the last time together and when no responses were volunteered, directed her question again to specific individuals. Laughter rippled through the class as, one by one, the chosen students suggested a variety of topics until, finally the correct answer, assertiveness, was offered up by someone from the back of the room. Arlene declared that a week can be a long time to

remember what happens in class even though, in her opinion, the topic is essential.

> *I just think assertiveness is so important . . . I think you have to start*
>
> *stating your needs before you start feeling more confident about*
>
> *yourself* (OINT5, p. 3).

Briefly, she explained her reason for introducing the notion of assertiveness by connecting it with the idea of personal goals and wilful change which had been the focus of the earlier segment of the lesson. Arlene's rationale, which explicitly outlined the potential for conflict when personal goals were pursued, typifies the aspects of singularity and danger which comprise the theme you stand alone.

> *It's difficult for others when you change. They might not like what*
>
> *you're trying to become and may try to manipulate you. It's important*
>
> *to make changes slowly and that you know what to do if someone*
>
> *wants to control you* (ON5, p. 3).

Arlene informed the class that she had a video today which would demonstrate assertiveness techniques. She particularly liked this one because it was made with a real life skills group in Toronto and because she knew the leader, who had been an assistant instructor when she had taken her life skills coach training from the Y.W.C.A. It was short, about twenty minutes, and she was sure they would enjoy it.

Arlene walked to the front of the room and picked up the old black phone attached to the wall and asked the Audio Visual Department to start the tape.

She moved over to the television which hung from the wall on a sturdy metal arm and asked the group if there were any questions before they saw the video. As the T.V. came on, its screen filled with snow and loud crackling noises filled the room. From their seats, the students issued a barrage of directions on adjustments. Within minutes a student in his forties was up at the front and offering Arlene his assistance. Arlene gratefully accepted and moved to the middle of the room where she provided a running commentary as Aneil adjusted various dials and knobs. The two conferred and Arlene used the phone again to have the A.V. Department rewind the tape and play it from the beginning once more. As the video began again, Arlene announced to the class that although the sound was good, the picture quality was too poor to continue. Aneil volunteered to pick up a portable VCR and television for the class from the A.V. Department and left the room.

At the front of the room, Arlene withdrew a stack of papers from the file on the teacher's desk. Quickly, she counted and distributed the sheets and announced that the class was to work on these while awaiting Aneil's return with the equipment.

> *I just refocused my thinking as things happened. I always take in more than enough so if one thing goes wrong I've got something else to go with (OINT5, p. 7).*

> *I might not even have got to the inventory today ordinarily. But as soon as we got delayed, I thought "my God, we'll be lucky to see the video, let alone get it all summarized." And I decided to do the*

inventory then (OINT5, p. 7).

Arlene's explanation of her actions reflect the themes the pragmatist and you stand alone. The profound sense of personal responsibility for the identification, organization and delivery of activities within the classroom is congruent with the traditional beliefs of teacher and student roles which Arlene initially developed during teacher training and which each of the educational institutions she has worked for has supported. Her plans for every lesson include several contingency activities related to the overall objectives of the course which will also serve to keep the students quiet and occupied through a class period.

The students focused their attention on the sheets which had been passed to them. In Arlene's life skills class as her math class, paper and pencil instruments such as quizzes, pre and post tests, examinations, checklists and inventories were frequently employed. In addition to their activity value, these types of activities were an important element in Arlene's teaching because they provided a measure of student progress, attitudes or traits against predetermined criteria, in keeping with the theme, the destination matters more than the journey. Arlene circulated around the room and directed the class to ignore the instructions written on the exercise.

This inventory measures how assertive you are. I want you to leave those questions that don't apply to you blank. But I want you to change the answering system slightly. I don't like five point scales, it's too much. Just use 1,3, or 5. Okay? Any questions? (ON5, p. 4).

In keeping with her practical nature, Arlene frequently borrowed materials from a variety of sources which she then modified or revised to use in class. Her decision to change the instructions for scoring the exercise was also unexceptional. Arlene was indifferent to the confusion which resulted from this type of change, both in the moment and long term, in congruence with the theme, if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow.

Aneil announced his return with a light tap on the door and quietly entered the classroom pushing a cart loaded with audio visual equipment. He connected the VCR, inserted the tape and adjusted the controls and, finally satisfied, nodded to Arlene as he returned to his seat. The themes, the pragmatist and if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow are both evident in Arlene's actions at this point in the lesson. She circulated again to check on the group's progress one last time and offer a few last suggestions. It was obvious that even without the benefit of a watch or clock, Arlene was concerned with the time passing as she addressed the class and hit the VCR's play button.

> Okay--is everyone all set? Anyone not finished can do the remainder
>
> on their own. Otherwise we won't get the video in before the class is
>
> over. Can everyone hear? (ON5, p. 5).

After adjusting the volume, Arlene moved to an empty table on the side of the room. Several times during the video's twenty minute play time she gently hushed students whose comments rose above the volume. At its conclusion, Arlene nodded to Aneil who assumed responsibility for rewinding the video,

unplugging the equipment and preparing the cart for its return to the A.V. Department. In the meantime she posed questions to the class to elicit comments on the video. Her final direction was to ask the students to think about their own level of assertiveness at home and in personal situations in preparation for a discussion in the next class.

Students packed up their books and left the room individually and in groups as Arlene returned the papers she had used into her file folders at the teacher's desk. Several students advanced with questions: had she approached an assignment from the angle Arlene wanted; would Arlene take a look at an application form one was completing for a skill training program; another wanted to talk in an appointment with Arlene. Individual appointments were made with each of the students for specific times the next day since it was nearly three o'clock. Arlene wanted a break and quickly, slung her handbag over her shoulder and carried her books and papers down the hall to the O.B.S. office. There, she recorded students' attendance in the program binder at the receptionist's desk and went directly to her carrel by the window. There, she dropped her books and sat down to decide whether to leave for the day or take a break.

<div align="center">Three p.m.: Time for Home</div>

Arlene stopped at the cafeteria for a coffee which she took outside to enjoy with a cigarette while she planned her evening's work: quiz results to record in her grade book, several students' math tests to correct and an exercise to prepare for tomorrow's life skills lesson. It would not be a heavy night's work and after

finishing her coffee, Arlene returned briefly to her office. There, she packed her bag before bidding a hasty farewell to the receptionist.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a descriptive account of Arlene's classroom practice. It began with a statement outlining essential features of the particular notion of professional knowledge used in the research and of how the conceptualization employed structures the content and organization of this level of findings. Vignettes of practice collected over many days of observation were woven together into one "typical" workday to illustrate themes which emerged from the analysis of the classroom practice data. The intention was to provide vivid description as well as substantial confirmation of significant aspects of Arlene's practice. Additionally, this descriptive rendering of practice serves as an introduction to the characterization of professional knowledge which follows.

The aim of re-presenting one teacher's practice brings several limitations to the chapter. The collection and analysis of Arlene's thoughts and actions in the classroom were essential since a fundamental assumption of the inquiry is the notion that practice embodies professional knowledge. This assumption informed the manner in which her workday thoughts and behaviour were accessed and represented. A limitation of the chapter results from the fact that the story presented here is a narration, with particular emphasis and interpretation of select anecdotes from the many observed during the course of the data collection. These limitations, however, are balanced by the result--rich description which

allows the reader to readily envision this particular teacher at work within a specific institutional, social and economic context. The following chapter presents the results of further phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis of the personal biography, classroom practice and contextual data.

CHAPTER SIX

A CHARACTERIZATION OF CONNECTIONS

This chapter recounts the results of further phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis of life history and classroom practice data related to Arlene's professional knowledge. The specific techniques employed in the analysis, which revealed the essence of each of the previously discussed connecting themes, the relationships between the themes as well as to the entire entity, are briefly reported first. The findings, presented as a "characterization," comprise the body of the chapter. This form of representation was selected to honour the results of a non-reductionist analysis of Arlene's practice, within her unique life story, and within the particular contexts of its existence. The intent is to articulate the significant features of the teacher-participant's professional knowledge by imparting its distinctive qualities in a descriptive and thorough manner. Recognizing the inherent unity of thought and action in the notion of professional knowledge employed, the characterization draws upon both thinking and behaviour. The chapter concludes with a summary of this final level of analysis and a preamble to implications of the findings presented in the final chapter of the thesis.

The Analysis Process

As mentioned in previous chapters, the presence of the connections in Arlene's professional knowledge emerged from a rigorous and methodical analysis of the large volume of personal history, classroom practice and contextual data

gathered. The product of this phase of the analysis was a series of documented themes inherent within the sets of data. Four major themes were present in the data and essentially bridged the aspects of the teacher-participant's life explored through the research. The meanings and the structure which underlay themes which connected the data, however, were enigmatic. Additional investigation was necessary to elucidate the obscurity within the data.

The next stage of the analysis, therefore, involved the application of the principles of the hermeneutic circle (Kockelmans, 1972) to the identified connecting themes. While phenomenological techniques revealed the surprising similarity of the themes present in the data, the dialogic and dialectic tradition of hermeneutics disclosed an additional level of complexity and richness. As Tesch (1990) notes, the process of engaging in hermeneutic interpretation means that as

> each part becomes better understood, through this association with
>
> the whole, the whole itself becomes more transparent. In the light of
>
> this new understanding of the whole the parts are interpreted again
>
> (p. 94).

To understand the pattern beneath the primary connecting themes, I first explicated the meaning or essence of each. From these, an understanding of the structure of the meanings (Van Manen, 1990) was generated. Attention to the themes' dialogic and dialectic (Tesch, 1990) qualities revealed the distinct function of each theme as it related to the phenomenon of professional knowledge. Following the realization of the themes' essences, I heeded Wolcott's (1994) advice

to:

> look for and discuss the relationships, the what-goes-with-what that
>
> realizes in the study of a single case the potential for understanding
>
> something beyond it (p. 33).

Alternative forms of expression were helpful in capturing and evoking the

complexity of the meaning and relationships inherent within the data. In search

of an appropriate configuration for the themes, I moved from words to symbols

and pictures and created rough sketches to sample various combinations as a

skeletal outline emerged. Eventually, a distinct order became apparent from the

data and an organizing structure was visible. The final stage of the analytical

process involved the identification of individual pieces of data to support the

structure which had emerged from this final level of analysis of the connecting

themes. The application of hermeneutic analysis techniques acknowledged the

complexity of the phenomenon and contributed to the development of enhanced

appreciation and understanding of the phenomenon of this teacher's professional

knowledge.

## A Characterization of Connections

The essence of each of the connecting themes was found to concern its

specific role in Arlene's professional knowledge. Analysis exposed the presence

and nature of Arlene's world view, her philosophical stance, a set of personal

operating principles which guide her behaviour, and the image or facade she

presents to the public. The meaning of the theme, if you enjoy what you're doing

you'll muddle through somehow was revealed as a facade which Arlene expresses in all aspects of her personal life and work. The essence of the pragmatist, on the other hand, concerns a personal philosophical stance Arlene has embraced. Analysis revealed that the meaning of rules Arlene lives by, a superordinate theme which encompasses the motifs always be fair, maintain the status quo, it's your responsibility, and respect others, relates to operating principles Arlene has developed to guide her conscious and unconscious behaviour. Finally, the essence of the theme, you stand alone, concerns Arlene's particular world view or paradigm.

The relationship of the substantive meanings of the connecting themes to each other was a further consideration of the analysis process. The role or function each theme performs was shown to be central to its position and relationship within the overall configuration. Figure 1 provides a schematic display of this level of analysis of Arlene's professional knowledge. While recognizing the potential for reductionism of the findings, the following diagram is intended to offer a visual representation of the characterization of connections.

Figure 1:

A Visual Representation of a Characterization of Connections
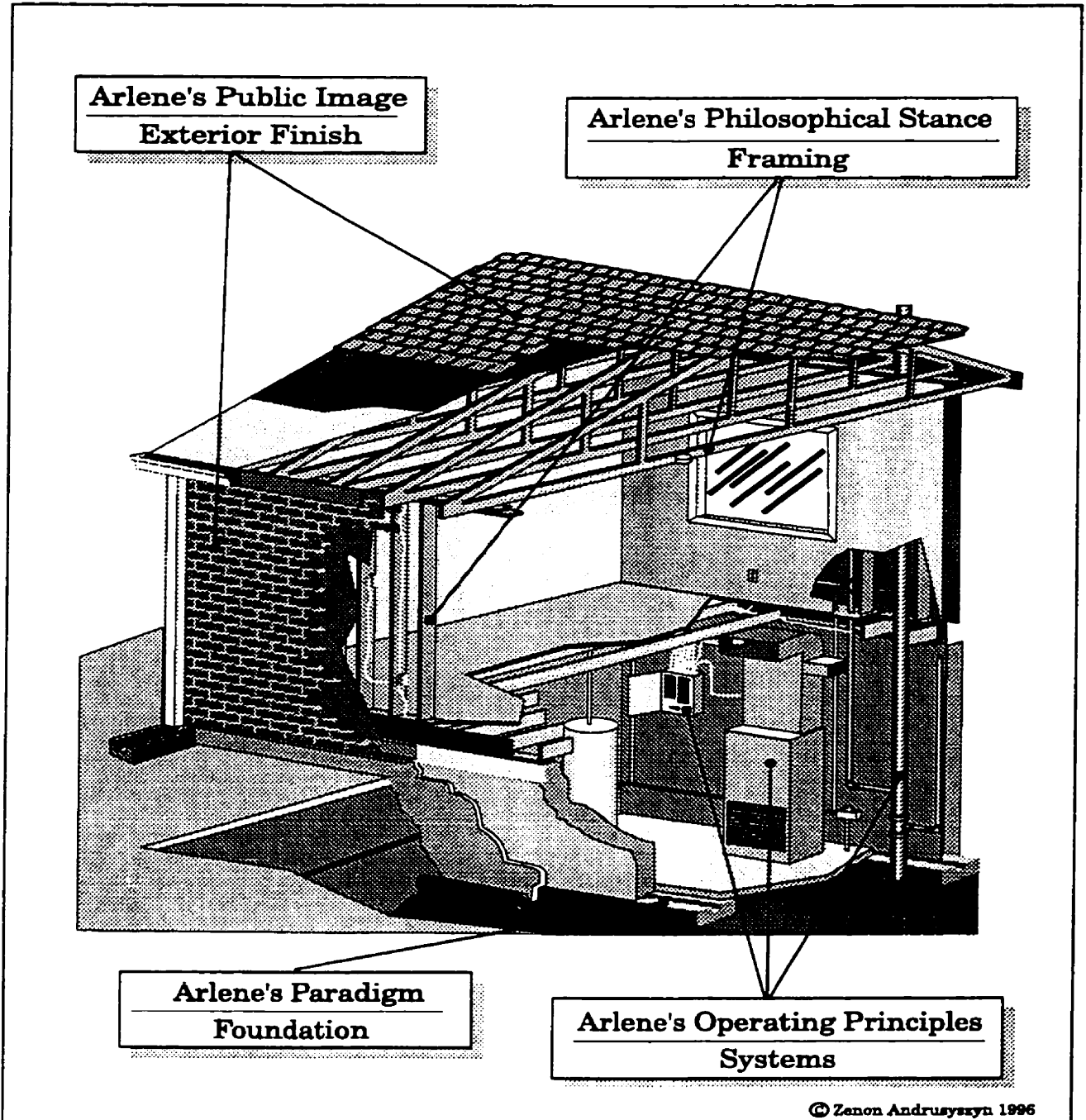
A building emerged as a metaphor for understanding and articulating the structure which was revealed. <u>You stand alone</u>, Arlene's personal paradigm, is the foundational component of the structure. As the footings of a building form the basis of what takes shape above ground, this aspect is a substantive element of her professional knowledge and the interpretive filter through which all of her experiences pass. <u>The pragmatist</u>, the philosophical stance Arlene applies in both her personal and professional life, exists within the confines of the world view she holds. Like the framing of a house, the philosophical stance provides a structure for those aspects of professional knowledge which are explicitly expressed as well as for those which are tacit. The set of operating principles is the complex and sometimes contradictory system of ethics lying within her philosophical stance. As the heating, plumbing and electrical systems of a building monitor and regulate its environment, so do Arlene's operating principles serve to observe and govern her behaviour and interactions with others. <u>If you enjoy what you're doing you'll muddle through somehow</u> is the image or facade of Arlene's professional knowledge which is displayed to the world. In addition to its declarative function, this aspect encloses and protects her philosophical stance, operating principles and world view, much as the exterior finish of a building safeguards the foundation, framing and systems from the environment. The following section provides further description and documentation of the essence and the nature of each connecting theme and of the relationships between and amongst them.

Arlene's Paradigm

You stand alone, a prolific motif in both the classroom practice and personal history data, is a central connecting theme. Situated within and extending from Arlene's personal experiences, the essence of you stand alone concerns her overarching view of the world. Significantly, it encompasses Arlene's view of the world from the perspective of her multiple roles, including that of classroom teacher. All of the themes linking Arlene's personal history and classroom practice are grounded in this principal feature of her professional knowledge.

The theme you stand alone was invariably conspicuous in many of the sources of data relating to Arlene's personal biography and classroom practice. Its presence in stories from every period of Arlene's life story and in all aspects of her professional role demonstrate that the paradigm is clearly the result of myriad personal interpretations of experience. A definition of the relationship of self to the universe, the nature of Arlene's paradigm concerns remoteness and detachment within a state of danger. Further, its essence embraces notions of stalwart individualism and of constant, impending danger coiled together.

The existence and nature of Arlene's particular world view were first evident in the memories she selected to describe her birth and the circumstances of her upbringing. The only child of a nurse and a Canadian Forces serviceman who divorced immediately after his return from World War II, Arlene was essentially raised by her mother alone. The social, economic and emotional consequences of this fact in the postwar era were substantial and long-lasting.

I never had my dad as part of the picture. We moved a lot, my mum

and I, after my dad came back from the war. We lived in rooming

houses and she nursed, always finding day care for me (LHCHR, p.

4).

A sense of profound vulnerability reverberates through anecdotes Arlene related

about her mother's struggles to provide basic care in a period prior to the advent

of social assistance. Society condoned the tremendous disparity between men's

and women's wages and ascribed to mothers fault for numerous individual and

social problems. Marginalization was the just reward for those who ignored the

conventions of middle-class North America. The development of the theme <u>you</u>

<u>stand alone</u> as a world view is consistent with the difficulties, intolerance and

isolation Arlene experienced throughout her childhood and adolescence.

Evidence of the paradigm's continuity is the reappearance of the theme in

Arlene's recollections of decisions made and actions taken in early adulthood. In

keeping with societal expectations for a woman married to a rising executive with

an M.B.A., Arlene did not expect to work outside the home after motherhood.

Unlike other young married women of her time, however, she actively ensured

that regular and relatively well-paying work would be an option for her if she

needed it.

I wasn't going to start a family until I had a permanent Ontario

teaching certificate. So I went to summer school in B.C. [British

Columbia] and then I went for two summers here . . . and then I took

science. So I can teach science up to grade 10 and home ec. up to 13

(LHCHR, p. 7).

Additional teachable subjects increased her employment options and the

permanent certificate enabled Arlene to feel confident in her ability to support

herself and her children. The theme you stand alone is evident in the thoughts

which prompted this behaviour which was, significantly, uncharacteristically

nonconformist at the time. Not surprisingly, the presence and nature of Arlene's

paradigm of remoteness and detachment amidst a dangerous world, were

increasingly apparent in personal history anecdotes which followed her separation

and divorce.

Evidence which demonstrates the essence of the theme you stand alone as

the role of a particular view of the world or personal paradigm as well as its

particular nature is pronounced throughout the classroom practice data. Arlene's

behaviour and the thoughts and opinions she shared about the O.B.S. program,

her teaching, the students, and other aspects of her work world, provided insight

into the meaning and significance of the theme.

The notion of individualism, clearly and frequently articulated in Arlene's

classroom practice, is an important aspect in the identification of the theme's

essence. The quotation below, an excerpt of a conversation in which Arlene

explained how she worked with other faculty or guest lecturers, illustrates the

significance of this aspect within the theme.

It's up to you [the teacher] to carry it off, so that the class and you can

learn something you don't already know (OINT5, p. 6).

Her conviction that "teaching is a solo performance" means that as the classroom teacher, responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a suitable environment for the students' individual success is Arlene's alone. The matter-of-fact explanation she offered and her portrayals of this particular view as an obvious truth contribute to the interpretation of the theme as a personal paradigm.

Contextual clues within the text of the classroom practice data also assist in discerning the meaning of the theme. The quotation below, an example of <u>you stand alone</u>, was embedded in Arlene's reflections on the reasons she prefers the college milieu to secondary or elementary schools.

No one tells me my curriculum. I have free choice of what I want to

teach, however I want, whenever I want (CINT1, p. 2).

The regard for self-sufficiency evident within these words espousing her fierce sense of pride in the autonomy she has established from ministry bureaucrats, college administrators, publishers and colleagues suggests that the essence of the theme concerns an outlook on the world. Responsibility and rewards fall squarely on her shoulders as manifestations of a paradigm which evinces resolute individualism in the face of constant challenge. The sense of difficulty and of a potentially hostile world exists for Arlene as a classroom teacher in congruence with the feeling of ever-present risk and possible antagonism which pervades her personal biography.

Arlene's Philosophical Stance

Throughout the biographical and classroom practice data, Arlene's no-nonsense approach to problems and matter of fact treatment of affairs comprises another dominant theme, the pragmatist. The function of the pragmatist was obscured by idiosyncrasies and contradictions, and became intelligible only after in-depth analysis. The essence of this theme concerns Arlene's philosophical stance--the position she has developed as a general explanation of how people, events, and things work in the world. Pragmatism permits an approach to life which is tolerant of the contradictory and conflicting thoughts and behaviours which occur in Arlene's daily encounters as friend, teacher, mother, sister, colleague and community member. The nature of her philosophical stance is respect and admiration for no-nonsense and practical approaches, ideas, opinions and things and disdain for the idealistic, imaginary and theoretical.

The relationship of the pragmatist to other themes and its meaning within the context of understanding the phenomenon of professional knowledge emerged as its function became apparent. As Arlene's philosophical stance, the pragmatist arises from and is closely linked to her particular view of the world as a dangerous place in which one must look out for oneself. As an individualized, overall interpretation of the world's workings, it provides an outline for the basic configuration of the overall structure of Arlene's professional knowledge. In addition, the philosophical stance furnishes an orientation for the operating principles which in turn support and sustain the entire set of beliefs and practice

which constitute Arlene's professional knowledge.

Arlene's regard for pragmatism, the doctrine which evaluates any assertion by its practical consequences and its bearing on human interests, is conspicuous in both the personal biography and classroom practice data. This philosophical stance is unmistakable in recollections Arlene related about her mother, a supremely practical and hard working woman raised in a large farm family on the Canadian Prairies during the depression of the 1930s. For example, a talented pianist and singer, her mother used her musical skills to earn money as a performer at weddings and social functions. In keeping with a basic tenet of pragmatism, she demonstrated the notion that the value of competence was the practical results it could garner and not simply the pleasure it might produce.

Lifelong preferences for craftsmanship over artistry and a belief in the importance of ends versus means are evident in anecdotes from the personal biography data. Arlene's memories of choices she made as a young teenager and of the reasons behind these illustrate acceptance and appreciation of the philosophy of pragmatism.

> *I quit babysitting in about grade nine and started sewing for my mum's friends. Not from scratch though--I'd make curtains or alter clothes or make a dress or whatever. I didn't create but worked from a pattern. I'm not very good at creating. But I made more money at that than I did at babysitting* (LHCHR, p. 9).

These thoughts and actions demonstrate specific beliefs about her perception of

reality and preferred ways of getting along in the world.

Arlene recognized the existence of originality, creativity, and emotional intensity, but clearly held higher regard for moderation, reason, and proficiency. These, she believed, were essential traits for survival given her understanding of the inherent laws of the universe. Throughout the personal biography data, she modestly presented herself as an individual with superior technical skills in activities such as cooking, sewing, and sports.

I'm a little above average in most things that I do. I guess I've never

had such a passion for anything that I had to be outstanding at it. I

had to be good enough to feel comfortable doing it (LHCHR, p. 9).

Arlene's competence was developed as a result of attention to verbal, spatial, and kinetic directions which were modelled and perfected with practice. The parallels between the expression of this philosophical stance in life experiences and its application in Arlene's classroom practice, as detailed further in this section, are striking.

The role of pragmatism as a philosophical stance is apparent also in the stories Arlene told about coping with adversity during various periods of her life. As a child, for example, she learned to accept in a matter-of-fact way the many hours she and her mother occupied with money making and money saving activities and of the little time this left available for pleasure or hobbies. As an adult, a similar aspect of this philosophy is evident in the explanation Arlene provided regarding the source of her strength and perseverance during the first

few arduous years of teaching.

> *I never thought of teaching as something I'd do forever. It wasn't like*
>
> *it was a lifetime goal. I just wanted to teach until we had enough*
>
> *money for a house and then I was going to have a family and stay at*
>
> *home forever after* (LHCHR, p. 17).

The stance is again apparent in the thoughts and actions Arlene recalled of her

return to the labour market after many years as a full-time homemaker. After a

frank assessment of skills and circumstances she enroled in certificate programs

in Human Resources Development and in Life Skills Coaching where the emphasis

was upon the development of practical skills which were supposedly in demand in

the job market at the time.

Arlene's practice provided ample evidence of congruence with a basic tenet

of pragmatism, the evaluation of any assertion by its practical consequences and

its bearing on human interests. Her interest clearly lay in the development of

technique, skill and mastery rather than in the growth of students' capacities to

imagine, theorize and think abstractly. This was particularly apparent in Arlene's

life skills classes, in which the topics and activities reflected the notion that

success could be achieved through the application of highly developed personal and

interpersonal skills. Students worked on their resumes as one aspect of

developing job search skills, watched a video to identify assertiveness skills, sat in

small groups to practice interpersonal skills, and so on. Arlene supposed that her

comfort teaching life skills stemmed from her own preference for subject matter

which is concrete and useful in the "real world." She relayed the amazement she felt when she overheard General Arts and Science faculty members discuss theories amongst themselves. Every once in a while, Arlene said, in an effort to become "more knowledgeable," she would borrow library books which would then be left idle because really, she would "rather be active" (CINT5, p. 4). Arlene's thoughts and actions in and about the classroom reflect the philosophy which values the practical and deeply appreciates prudence, function, and experience.

In the classroom, pragmatism and its role as Arlene's philosophical stance are manifest in her understanding of the processes of learning and teaching. Both of these were congruent with her own successful experiences in developing competence and with the explicit objectives of the O.B.S. program. Arlene understood learning to be change which occurred as the result of reading or hearing directions, or through watching another's performance and reproducing it. In addition, she believed in the importance of repetition and practice in successful mastery of concepts and skills. The significance of the learning environment, in Arlene's conceptualization, is its propensity to support or detract students' ability to attend.

> *It could be hearing, eyesight, it could be a learning disability--things*
>
> *are not connecting the way they should. But [for] others, it's because*
>
> *they can't focus, they can't stay focused. I just think their*
>
> *concentration wanders and they get distracted very easily* (OINT2, p.
>
> 2).

These problems, Arlene surmised, were the most likely cause of the types of learning difficulties adult basic education students often presented. The remedy she proposed was essentially assisted concentration provided by a calm and quiet room. Arlene's appreciation of the practical and the concrete and her derision for the theoretical and unseen is apparent within the notion of learning she applies to her work.

The essence and nature of Arlene's philosophical stance are clearly visible in the conceptualization of teaching revealed through analysis of the classroom practice data. Her approach to teaching flowed from beliefs about the learning process, which were founded in her own experience and generalized to include others.

I try to teach them the way I like to be taught--to have lots of freedom

to make my own choices and to ask for help when I need it (CINT1, p.

2).

In keeping with the world view of individuality and danger described earlier, Arlene's thoughts about her preferred teaching style expose assumptions of singularity and regard for independence.

Teaching concerned the activities which she associated with facilitating learning as well as those involved in managing the classroom environment. Arlene's actions in the informal, one-to-one math lessons she preferred consisted of reading a textbook explanation aloud, demonstrating a technique, imparting direct instructions, observing a student as he or she answered a question or solved a

problem, and pointing out errors.

I'll never be a whiz at teaching math, but at least I'm not rigid!

(OINT3, p. 2).

When an individual presented problems, Arlene watched and questioned the student as he or she worked on a particular task and then tried to communicate the correct method either verbally or by modelling it. Following each mini lesson, she moved on to allow the student time to practice the task. Grading tests and other instruments was another significant component of the teaching process for Arlene because it continued her dialogues with individual students.

I'll make notes . . . if I come to a section where they've done the whole

thing wrong, I'll mark the first one wrong and give them zero and

then write "See me--you're making the same mistake." Or I'll write,

"You're doing super up to here, keep up the good work," or maybe I'll

state the rule or write "Check all of question five again." It takes me a

long time marking their papers (OINT3, p. 13).

The large volume of marking necessitated by Arlene's extensive use of written quizzes, tests, and other assessment instruments created considerable additional opportunities for her to monitor, correct and instruct students individually. Arlene's actions and the thoughts she shared about her teaching reflect the presence of pragmatism as her philosophic position.

Pragmatism and its function as the philosophic stance of Arlene's practice is further evident in a theme which represents the appreciation of ends over means.

The destination matters more than the journey, an important motif in the classroom practice data, is apparent in another of Arlene's attitudes toward both learning and teaching. In her basic level arithmetic class, for example, correct answers propelled Arlene's happy acceptance of nonstandard techniques from her students.

> *I say there's always more than one way of doing this math and as long*
>
> *as you get it right, use whatever way is easiest for you, what makes*
>
> *sense for you* (OINT3, p. 15).

The result, such as correct answers, completed unit tests, or a succinct two page resume, was an indication of a practical consequence of having been a student of Arlene's. Other incidents which reflect the theme the destination matters more than the journey indicate its congruence with her philosophical stance. For example, her tendency to appraise procedures according to practical consequences was apparent in the opinions Arlene shared about program evaluation at Municipal College. Informally throughout the term, and formally at the end of the term, she solicited students' opinions of the course and ways she could improve it.

> *They had some really good ideas on their evaluations. . . . bring*
>
> *former students back . . . more on racism, prejudice and*
>
> *discrimination* (CINT3, p. 4).

Arlene embraced the college's requirement to seek and incorporate student feedback because she was able to get from the process an outcome which benefitted her directly. For example, it provided a way for her to get to know her

students, which she believed to be an important consideration in teaching. More important, the process became a welcome source of additional ideas for lesson themes or topics which, without a fixed curriculum, Arlene constantly searched for.

Pragmatism, a consistently robust theme in both the classroom practice and the personal biography data, is a position adopted by Arlene in her personal and professional life. As a philosophic stance, pragmatism serves as a source of explanations for the ways that people, things, and events work in the world. Arlene's philosophy incorporates notions of the sensible and the practical, as well as distaste and distrust in idealism, theory, and imagination.

Arlene's Operating Principles

Four important, related motifs present in both the classroom practice and personal history data function as a set of operating principles for Arlene. Created from and connected to Arlene's particular world view and philosophical stance, this group of themes serves as a complex, unwritten, personal set of rules. These regulations, which include the principles always be fair, respect others, maintain the status quo, and it's your responsibility, are the criteria she uses to guide her own behaviour as well as to judge others'. Arlene's conviction in the legitimacy of these personal rules was manifest in the confidence displayed in her tone of voice when she referred to them in conversation. Declarative statements and commanding assertions containing words such as "should," "got to," "always," and "must" were obvious indicators of the essence of these themes. The following

section presents evidence to support the identified nature of each of the four

related themes distinguished as Arlene's operating principles.

Always Be Fair

A prominent theme in both sets of data, always be fair represents a

fundamental principle articulated in personal and professional contexts. "You've

got to be fair!" was a predominant rule governing Arlene's interactions with the

world and her appraisals of other people, whether familiar or unknown. As an

operating principle, "always be fair" concerns both process and result. In addition,

it encompasses notions of justice, objectivity, equality, legitimacy, and concurrence

with established rules. For Arlene, the rule regarding fairness was axiomatic in

that she assumed that family, students, teachers and society held similarly lofty

regard for the policy as she did.

The issue of the importance of fair treatment was a prominent feature in

every period of Arlene's life. Perhaps the reason for her strong promotion and

support of fairness was the fact that she, clearly, had not always been the

recipient of it. Many of the memories Arlene shared of her childhood and

adolescence relate instances where the principle was conspicuously absent. For

example, Arlene was raised with considerable economic hardship in comparison

with the circumstances her half siblings enjoyed. The lack of equity between the

two families was the result of several factors over which she had no control,

including her parents' divorce, societally sanctioned disparity in men's and

women's wages, and prevailing attitudes toward the financial obligations of non-

custodial parents. Arlene's recollections of the consequences and the implications of the circumstances were accompanied by strong feelings of powerlessness, sadness, and anger.

Arlene's concern for fairness remained a strong presence through the stories she related of school and athletic achievements, university failures, the joys and challenges of parenting two daughters, and of marital separation and divorce. Evidence of its function as a principle exists, for example, in her insistence on the use of a mediator to settle the division of property and resolve issues of financial support for their daughters when she and her husband divorced.

We divvyed things up. We sat with our coin collection and change and

everything, and went, "There's six for you and six for me, four for you

and four for me." There was no being sneaky or pulling the wool over

the other's eyes. I really think we've been mature adults in terms of

what we've gone through (LHCHR, p. 42).

In keeping with earlier experiences, Arlene was not confident that someone other than herself could or would apply the standard of fairness. More recent events in the personal history data reinforce the importance of this first operating principle in Arlene's life and her role in facilitating it.

I forget exactly what came up at Christmas [but] there was a real

inequity in terms of Jim's gift giving with the girls so I had to deal

with it (LHCHR, p. 49).

Her recollection and description of playing the role of advocate in financial matters

between her daughters and their father demonstrate the continuing significance of the rule of fairness in personal situations.

The principle of fairness was a deliberate aspect of many of Arlene's practices in the classroom, and was especially explicit with habits relating to the important issues of grades, awards, and attendance. Arlene's world view did not incorporate justice, equity and impartiality as naturally existing conditions, and hence, her notion of fairness concerned both process and its product. The principle of fairness, as a process, was visible in a deeply held belief in the potential for and superiority of objectivity. Arlene's frequent use of tests and other assessment instrument is attributable to her desire to institute procedures which would contribute to objectivity and help to achieve the goal of fairness in grades and promotion.

The axiom remained evident in circumstances in which Arlene's role as teacher was shared with colleagues. The following anecdote is illustrative of an explicit, conscious application of the rule to other faculty.

We purposely changed Dave's [a student] schedule. We decided it

would be better to have a fresh start. . . . So he would have a fair new

beginning. . . . None of the teachers disliked him but they'd have been

looking for every little repeat of things that had occurred before

(OINT3, p. 10).

In addition to revealing evidence that the theme always be fair concerns an important personal and professional rule, Arlene's description of the situation

discloses her lack of faith in other teachers' ability to be unbiased. At work, as in personal circumstances, her assumptions about others illustrate an understanding of the world as a dangerous place where vigilance and care are constantly necessary. In keeping with her rule of fairness, Arlene applied conscious effort to counter what she believed to be her colleagues' natural predisposition to treat a student unfairly.

The rule "always be fair" was also visible in Arlene's daily routines in the classroom. In addition to the tests and quizzes which played such a strong role in her practice, she habitually employed techniques which she felt would ensure fairness while not requiring significant ethical considerations. For example, in one lesson, Arlene distributed the marking scheme she had developed with the class a few days previously.

> *Does this look like what we agreed on? Let's do a quick review for those who were away. You're going to evaluate your classmates using the same criteria and keep a running tally of everyone* (ON5, p. 1).

The question posed was rhetorical and an example of the type of procedure she used to seek students' explicit concurrence on regulations and routines.

Respect Others

Another theme, respect others, also evident in both sets of data, was classified as an operating principle as its function emerged. Although not articulated as forcefully and plainly as the principle "always be fair," "respect others" was clearly an important personal rule of Arlene's. The regulation alludes

to Arlene's delineation of a certain level of consideration and regard for others and entails never purposely degrading or insulting another.

I think that people like to think they've been treated fairly and with

respect (OINT5, p. 8).

The postulate was based in a fundamental moral code of Arlene's which encompassed her personal notions of right and wrong and basic courtesy.

In the classroom practice data, evidence of the function of <u>respect others</u> as a principle was present in Arlene's description of the foundation of the trust and familiarity which developed in the relationships she cultivated with her students.

I guess I treat people the way I like to be treated myself, like a human

being. There's a certain way that people deserve to be treated. It's not

that you always can do it that way. But I try very very hard (OINT3,

p. 1).

Arlene weighed how a situation might make her feel to determine how she would deal with or interact with another. For example, she made a point of not asking students questions in front of others if she thought the work might be too difficult for them. The principle prohibited actions which had the potential of embarrassing a student in front of his peers.

In her basic math class, Arlene's rule concerning respect for others resulted in individual instruction for most of the students most of the time. After one class which was particularly hectic because of this practice, Arlene outlined her reason for not employing group instructional techniques.

For the lowest levels, people with such varying degrees of confidence,

half those people would have been petrified to be sent up to the

blackboard. They'd just die rather than go up to the front. . . . Who

would feel okay going up and being there? (OINT3, p. 5).

The nature and the essence of the theme are both apparent within the explanation

Arlene offered. She was unusually empathetic to the feelings of inadequacy and

embarrassment some of her adult students experienced because of their unhappy

histories learning math concepts and skills. Her reticence to use small group and

whole class techniques with the participants of the O.B.S. program is partially

based in her notions about acceptable behaviour toward others. Employing

individual tutoring techniques allowed Arlene to establish and maintain a sense of

privacy regarding each student's ability and progress, an essential component of

the respect she felt each was obliged.

The essence of <u>respect others</u> as an operating principle was also manifest in

Arlene's recognition that her students had full and complete lives as adults

outside the college. She was fastidious about acknowledging those aspects of her

mature student's lives which recognized their status in the community while

respecting the privacy she felt they deserved. Her approach to attendance

problems illustrates the nature of the theme.

I call the student for a counselling appointment and talk to them

individually. I don't like embarrassing them in front of the class

when they're late (OINT3, p. 9).

Similarly, Arlene was sensitive to people's comfort levels disclosing information about themselves to others in the classroom setting. Field notes from observations of life skills classes note the deeply personal experiences some students shared in the class setting along with the meticulous care Arlene took in not directing individuals to reveal personal stories or opinions to the group.

In the data of Arlene's personal biography, examples that respect others functioned as a personal rule appeared in anecdotes of difficult or painful times she or her family experienced. Through the expression of respect, Arlene was more concerned with maintaining the other's dignity than with communicating compassion and empathy. For example, in relating the story of her mother's battle with terminal cancer thirty years earlier, Arlene recalled the reticence her mother showed in letting others know the prognosis of her illness. Although she did not understand or share those feelings, Arlene appreciated her wish for privacy and dignity. The rule regarding respect was a tacit yet significant edict unmistakeably present in Arlene's relationships in her universe of family, friends and community.

Maintain the Status Quo

In the analysis of the themes which connected the classroom practice and personal history data, uncovering the essence of the third motif was an immediate and uncomplicated exercise. The most obvious of the operating principles, this originated in the theme it's important to belong where, as a personal rule, the notion of maintaining the status quo clearly serves as the method of achieving the

ever-important sense of affiliation. Its function as a personal rule is evident in Arlene's proclivity for conformity and in her silent, taken-for-granted insistence upon others' acceptance of the notion.

The third operating principle is a critical and consistently significant aspect in every period of Arlene's biography. It emerged from numerous stories Arlene shared, including experiences as a fulfilled homemaker and full-time mother in the suburbs, an unsatisfactory work relationship with a sandal-wearing, long-haired "hippy" supervisor, to the hopes and dreams she carries for her adult daughters. During her childhood and adolescence in the postwar years, conformity was seen as a symbol of harmony and togetherness while deviation from established norms was discouraged through social censure. In that period of powerful group interests, being different, as she clearly was, invited the potential for isolation and loneliness.

> I was very embarrassed about the divorce. I only told my closest of
>
> friends because I honestly believed that children wouldn't be allowed
>
> to be my friends if their parents found out that I only had a mother
>
> (LHCHR, p. 3).

The essence of the theme as a rule concerning the need for conformity is rooted in these memories which illustrate how Arlene wanted desperately to be from a "normal" family, to have two parents and a mother who stayed home and baked cookies like the mothers she thought other children had. It is clear that the happiest periods of her life were those when she felt she fit in, was like others,

and was involved in what society deemed as acceptable activities, relationships, and roles.

While "maintain the status quo" is a tacit, unspoken rule in Arlene's teaching practice, it is nevertheless a pervasive consideration in her thoughts and actions regarding her work with students. It is present, for example, in the very nature of her employment as a community college teacher of adult basic education. Deliberately directed toward helping adult students learn to fit into mainstream society, the philosophy of the O.B.S. program is inherently conformist. Knowledge and skills which children of the middle-class usually develop through indirect processes of enculteration were explicitly and implicitly taught in Arlene's classes. Her lessons, for example, were a combination of information about middle-class values and instruction and practice in the personal, interpersonal and academic skills needed to get along in that world. Beneath the objectives of Arlene's courses lay firm and unquestioned beliefs about the desirability of middle-class society and the morality of effectively remediating adults so that they might become members of that group.

Evidence that the essence of the theme, it's important to belong concerned an important operating principle was also explicit in the data related to Arlene's classroom actions and thoughts. "Maintain the status quo," the rule she applied to help her students achieve the tacit goal of middle class sensibility and acceptance, was visible in the techniques she employed to encourage students to adopt the norms she valued. Directed at individuals, these included modelling, gentle

prodding during individual and group instruction, subtle hints that behaviour was unacceptable through ignoring or not acknowledging it, and meetings outside of class time. For example, Arlene described how she might deal with a student whose behaviour was problematic,

I talk to them and tell them what I'm seeing. I say, "first of all your

attendance hasn't been good, you're late frequently, in class you seem

like you don't want to be there, you're not participating. Why are you

coming? If you want to stay, well, we'll have to agree to some

conditions. What are you prepared to change? This is what I expect

of you and if you can't comply with this, it's out." No questions asked

(CINT1, pp. 6-7).

The principle was also visible in Arlene's behaviour toward students who demonstrated that they did not embrace a modicum of appreciation for the status quo. Her tolerance and patience expired swiftly and they were quickly "weeded out" of or "exited" from the program. Valuing middle class conventions and displaying an eagerness to learn to fit into the mainstream was a fundamental yet tacit expectation Arlene held for her students.

It's Your Responsibility

The fourth operating principle is titled "it's your responsibility," in honour of another expression Arlene favoured both at home and at work. The theme's function as a personal rule is conspicuous in the actual terminology she employed as well as through contextual clues. Words such as "should," "must," "got to," and

"always" relayed the innate sense of conviction and determination which is characteristic of Arlene's operating principles. Her rule of personal responsibility has process and product qualities similar to her rule regarding fairness. It is a corollary to the inventory of rights which Arlene articulated as part of the basic respect owed to every individual. Furthermore, "it's your responsibility" functions as an explanation and justification for outcomes, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, which Arlene did not attribute to fate or a higher power. In the manner of a "tough love" position, Arlene recognized the challenge the principle of personal accountability creates for individuals, including herself at times. However, she enforced the rule in the belief that this is one technique to make the perilous world a little safer for the individual.

The theme of individual responsibility echoed through many aspects of Arlene's practice. Its function as an operating principle was visible in the focus of lessons she developed, in the activities she organized, the materials she selected to support her teaching objectives, as well as in her interactions with students. For example, Arlene's explicit goals for her courses and the O.B.S. program relay the importance of the theme to her practice as an adult basic education teacher.

> *All I really want people to do is to learn that the responsibility for*
>
> *their life is their own and that they have the power to make choices.*
>
> *They must learn to take responsibility for some of these and stop*
>
> *letting others control what they do* (CINT1, p. 5).

Her choice of forceful words and the sense of resolve conveyed by the tone of her

voice and its inflection mark the theme as a significant personal rule.

Arlene's approach to coffee breaks during class time for students offers an illustration of the process and product aspects of the principle and a glimpse into the "tough love" thinking inherent in it. Although adamant that a break was a right, Arlene was equally resolute that responsibility for getting that time off belonged solely to the student.

If they don't remind me that time is up and I miss it, that's their

problem (OINT5, p. 8).

The notion of unequal power or the cultural appropriateness of students demanding a recess from a college faculty member did not enter Arlene's thinking in this instance. Placing the onus on students to watch the clock and ensure their break was forthcoming was a small step in standing up for themselves, a goal Arlene valued so highly that she evolved a tacit statement of policy to enforce its achievement.

Evidence of the operating principle concerning individual responsibility appears throughout the personal history data in stories Arlene related about herself and others. As a university student, for example, she made up two failed courses while balancing a full course load in second year. Tuition for summer school was an expense her mother could not afford and the opportunity to earn money at a summer job was one Arlene could not pass up. Conspicuously, Arlene blamed no one but herself for this major upset nor did she ask anyone else to share the burden of the consequences.

The operating principle "it's your responsibility" is also evident in Arlene's memories of her return to the paid workforce. After 15 years of full-time homemaking, her first step in the direction of a career was in a job as a substitute teacher. Her position was at a college on the extreme western edge of the metropolitan Toronto area and required a commute of more than 200 kilometres daily by bus and train.

> *I caught the six a.m. train and it cost me $10.50 a day. But I'd been*
>
> *away from the work force a long time and I had to get my foot in the*
>
> *door. And that did pay off* (LHCHR, p. 31).

The distance, the inconvenience and the cost of the travel were not in proportion with the compensation the position offered. These were, however, conditions Arlene accepted as necessary in order to build the career she now wanted. Staying at home had been a privileged choice, the consequences of which only she was responsible for. Arlene's pride in the accomplishments she achieved under difficult circumstances, evident in stories such as this, reflect the outcomes she believed her rule of personal responsibility would produce for others.

Arlene's Public Image

As with each of the themes which bridge Arlene's personal history and her practice as a classroom teacher, the essence of the theme if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow, relates to the function it performs. This motif serves as a public image for Arlene. A facade, it proclaims the particular attitude she is comfortable exposing to the world and also protects complex,

contradictory, and aspects of herself which she might not want others to know about. The image she portrays provides a veneer for the paradigm, philosophical stance and operating principles which constitute the body of Arlene's professional knowledge.

If you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow imparts the perception that Arlene holds a philosophy which I have labelled as optimistic fatalism. The nature of this facade embodies an inclination to present favourable views of events and people and a proclivity to maintain and display a cheerful bearing. In addition, it encompasses a conviction in predetermination which offers a framework of exoneration for unpleasant or unsuccessful experiences, and effectively negates the conviction in personal accountability. Together, the notions of optimism and fatalism exude the view that current circumstances, whatever they may be, must be accepted for they are actually good. The public image Arlene displays purports an outlook of carefree hopefulness and both the acknowledgement and acceptance of fumbles and blunders.

The theme and the meaning it held as a facade were likely to arise in conversations with Arlene which took particular twists and turns. In data related to her personal history, if you enjoy what you're, doing you'll muddle through somehow, emerged in the instantaneous, off-the-record explanations she offered for matters which had gone awry. Anecdotes which referenced the condition of her car (perpetually near collapse), her kitchen when she had not had time to tidy it, or her tendency to procrastinate and suffer from last minute panics, for example,

provided evidence of the theme and its essence. Similarly, Arlene's public image, the facade of optimistic fatalism was presented as a rationalization for significant unresolved issues and unpleasant or unsatisfactory circumstances in her life. Inherent within the facade is recognition and exoneration for the disorganized and haphazard approach which characterized Arlene's everyday activities.

The facade of optimistic fatalism which the theme if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow reflected was frequently visible in Arlene's classroom practice. A homelike sense of disarray, inconsistency, and uneven results achieved in spite of good intentions signified its presence in the classroom data set. For example, although Arlene expressed a conviction in the benefits of structure and of providing activities to keep students on task, the actuality of the procedures she usually implemented with her classes resulted in a scenario of disorder and confusion. For example, in a life skills lesson one afternoon during a unit on self-directed change, Arlene distributed a "wellness inventory" for students to complete individually. The concept, she said, is "how good you feel about your own life. It could be the beginning of identifying things to change" (ON4, p. 3). Using the handout, Arlene described the major components of wellness--time alone, good nutrition, having a listener in your life, exercise. Following this, individual students read aloud, and Arlene paraphrased, sections of the instructions for the inventory. After asking if there were any questions, she directed the class to spend fifteen minutes to complete the exercise and a further ten minutes to discuss their results with those at their tables. To make sure

students understood the directions, Arlene checked quickly with several of the groups, before joining a table of middle-aged women for approximately ten minutes. Among the other groups, there was a low level of conversation and movement as students got up to ask others about the meaning of terms, whether they were to rank every one of the criteria or just one, and so on. Arlene carried on her conversation, and then joined a group of older men, unaware or unconcerned about the difficulties students were having with the exercise. At the end of the period, she explained that the purpose of the inventory was to help them develop greater self awareness and that the results would be helpful in their next class. Politely, students nodded, packed their belongings and left the room. Discussing the lesson later, Arlene shrugged her shoulders and circumvented questions on the meaningfulness of the exercise for the students. Congruent with the facade of optimistic fatalism, Arlene assured me she was not perturbed by the day's events and that perhaps she might present the concept alternatively in another class, when the time seemed right.

The use of tests and instruments is another aspect of Arlene's practice which reveals the function and nature of if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow. Arlene frequently employed paper and pencil instruments such as quizzes, pre and post tests, examinations, checklists and inventories to provide an ostensibly objective measure of student progress, attitudes or traits against predetermined criteria. Very often, however, she made last-minute changes, such as the following directions which were issued in a life

skills class.

> *This is an Assertiveness Inventory and it measures how assertive you*
>
> *are. I want you to leave those questions that don't apply to you blank.*
>
> *And I want you to change the answering system slightly. I don't like*
>
> *five point scales, it's too much. Just use 1, 3, or 5, okay?* (ON5, p. 4).

Efforts to modify instruments or the conditions under which they were employed were routine and unexceptional in Arlene's practice. She seemed unaware or unconcerned that the consequences of her attempts to simplify procedures often confused students and affected the validity and reliability of any instrument's results. Arlene's descriptions of her end of term scramble to reconcile students' final grades with those she had recorded on her own versions of the post-tests was an apt demonstration of the notion of optimistic fatalism and its function as her public image.

The facade within <u>if you enjoy what you're doing, you'll muddle through somehow,</u> reverberated through Arlene's personal and professional life in the explanations she offered for actions which were well-intentioned but ineffective. It encompasses a general satisfaction with the status quo and acceptance of a certain level of confusion and contradiction. Contradictory in many ways to other aspects of Arlene's professional knowledge which emerged during the process of analyzing data, the public image of optimistic fatalism carries Arlene through her interactions on a daily basis.

Conclusion

The emergence of themes which bridged the data of Arlene's personal and professional lives is significant for several reasons. First, it illustrates the robust connection between this teacher's life beyond the college, through her background and personal life, and her practice within the classroom. Recognition and analysis of these bridging themes further the understanding of the professional knowledge of the teacher-participant in the study in two ways. The first contribution concerns increased appreciation of the coherence and consistency of Arlene's life outside the classroom, over time, and her behaviour and thoughts as a classroom teacher. The contiguity of the themes from the two data sets is representative of the unity of the essence of her professional knowledge. The second contribution concerns the distinctive nature of the themes which emerged. As the analysis demonstrates, each of the themes is unique to this particular teacher, the result of her individual interpretations of life's varying experiences. This finding acknowledges the idiosyncratic nature of teacher knowledge.

The discovery of the connections between Arlene's personal history and professional life represented only one component of the understanding I had set out to develop in conducting the study. These richly detailed descriptive findings in the tradition of phenomenology (Polkinghorne, 1989; Van Manen, 1990) required additional interpretation and analysis in order to answer the questions which guided the inquiry. The characterization presented in this chapter is the product of this further level of interpretation and analysis. It consists of

explanatory descriptions of the relationships and patterns which exist amongst the themes which bridge the participant's biography and classroom practice.

The characterization which emerged from further analysis of the connecting themes focused upon describing and substantiating the essence or meaning of each of these motifs. Comprehending the function of the themes as paradigm, philosophical stance, operating principles and public image offered insight into the structure and makeup of this particular teacher's professional knowledge. The essence and the nature of each of these themes are clearly specific to this individual, references to the unique interpretations Arlene has constructed from a lifetime of experiences in a multitude of contexts. The characterization is not intended to represent a model or theory of how knowledge participates in processing but rather a conceptual framework for appreciating and understanding the phenomenon of teacher knowledge. The following chapter presents reflections and conclusions on the process of the inquiry and also delineates the importance of the findings and implications arising from the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a resolution to the study. The first section presents reflections and conclusions regarding a number of ethical and political issues encountered during the study. Aspects of the significance of the inquiry for both research and practice are detailed in the following section. The chapter concludes with a discussion of implications drawn from the research findings and the methodology of the study.

Reflections on the Research Process

From its inception, the nature of the phenomenon investigated indicated that technical, procedural, ethical, and political issues, questions and problems were likely to arise. The decision to use the life history method and the specific techniques which were employed in planning, gathering and analyzing data created a particularly intensive focus on this one individual's life and teaching practice that necessitated thoughtfulness and ongoing attention. Undoubtedly the most difficult issues to resolve during the major phases of the inquiry were rooted in ethics and politics. The following pages delineate specific concerns and dilemmas encountered during the course of the research and the approaches used to deal with or resolve them.

Ethical issues were highlighted because the nature of the phenomenon under investigation was deeply personal and because it was approached from a perspective and method which entailed intrusive techniques. Procedural

guidelines for alternative forms of research such as life history have not been written (Goodson & Walker, 1991) and many grey areas exist in the ethics of educational research (Burgess, 1989) undertaken within the qualitative paradigm. As Smith (1990) notes, "ethics has to do with how one treats those individuals with whom one interacts and is involved and how the relationships formed may depart from some conception of an ideal" (p. 260). The challenge of ethical issues, therefore, was embedded in the evolving research relationship between Arlene and me. The scarcity of advice and the need for reflexivity throughout the research process necessitated reflection on issues encountered from initial steps in planning the study through the collection and analysis of information, to the preparation and dissemination of reports of the research.

During the preparatory stage, the key ethical consideration involved determining, for this project, the meaning of collaboration and how to implement the notion. Key to resolving these issues was the "set of attitudes toward research subjects" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 290) within the research perspective. The hermeneutic phenomenological perspective conceptualizes respondents as persons with agency--thinking, creating and constructing social reality. Consequently, in the design of the study I attempted to find ways and means to realize this radically different understanding of the research participant in developing initial schedules and procedures. In the absence of interest from a potential participant at this stage, the main ethical concern was finding a balance between aspects of the research which were negotiable and those in which flexibility would not be possible.

During the design phase of the study a model of a research relationship, "based on fundamental assumptions about the importance of mutuality in purpose, interpretation, and reporting, and about the potency of multiple perspectives" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 478) was adopted. The model attributes each partner's contributions to the inquiry according to his or her individual expertise and institutional requirements rather than to power rooted in position. The application of this model during the design of the study and again during the analysis of data helped to clarify the meaning of collaboration and issues associated with this notion. Opportunities for a potential participant's contributions were identified as were aspects of the project in which his or her input would not be expected. Resolving this quandary resulted in a research design in which the participant had a high degree of involvement in planning the logistics of data collection, as well as the strategies and techniques proposed to gather information.

Negotiating participation and gaining access prompted consideration of several aspects of the notion of informed consent. The first aspect of the issue concerns the appropriateness of engaging in the process of ensuring informed consent only once, at the beginning of the study. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) note, changes in the degree of trust between researcher and participant are inevitable and "the researcher may be invited to participate in ways he or she hoped but could not have sought access to in the beginning" (p. 112). They neglect to address, however, the ethical implications of the fluctuation in the information

and the researcher's obligations. As it is almost certain that the research will twist and turn and lead the participant into areas that were not formally considered, it would seem more in keeping with the spirit of informed consent to identify opportunities to reconsider the participant's permission or concurrence as the research continues. The issue of informed consent, rather than being limited to the stage of gaining access and negotiating participation, perseveres, although it is not often explicitly addressed, through several phases of the research process.

The second aspect of the informed consent issue involves the inclusion of peripheral but essential participants in the research in negotiating access and participation. Because this research primarily concerned the teacher, I felt, during this phase of the inquiry, that students' consent was not fundamental to the collection of data. Practical considerations were also a factor, for as Eisner (1991) notes, "we cannot get consent from everyone who contributes information to our work because to do so would make our work impossible" (p. 225). Arlene, as their teacher, assumed an obligation for ensuring the ethical treatment of the students and agreed to their participation with minimal opportunities for discussion or negotiation with either her or me. In collaborating in what was essentially the usurping of individuals' agency, I unwittingly deemed the students objects needing protection. The necessity of explaining the research and my vision of the students' role in it simply had not been considered and I was introduced to members of the class in the following way:

Remember I told you about Lynn? This is her. She's working on her

doctorate in education and she's here to observe me--to see how I teach,

not to observe you (ON1, p. 3).

For Arlene's students, the adjunct participants in this study, "it could be argued that individuals were not fully informed, consent had not been obtained and privacy was violated" (Burgess, 1989, p. 63).

The issue of informed consent was encountered again during the data collection phase of the research. At this stage, the concern was centred in the extent to which it was possible to inform the participant about the potential nature of the information to be gathered. Balancing the desire to get the research underway with obligations to ensure that Arlene understood the potential implications of what she was about to engage in required careful attention. As Goodson and Walker (1991) note, "if the teacher's practice was a vulnerable focus, the teacher's life is a deeply intimate, indeed intensive focus" (p. 149). Delving into the deeply personal with a participant in a way that maintains the integrity of her agency required a new form of researcher-researched relationship. During this stage of the research, major concerns were centred in the quality and authenticity of the relationship. Reciprocity had been a goal of the research from its inception and I was intensely uncomfortable with the disparity I felt between the value of what Arlene was providing to me and of what I could offer in return. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) write, "questions of exploitation . . . tend to arise as you become immersed in your research and . . . you may feel guilty for how much you are receiving and how little you are giving in return" (p. 112).

During the course of the data collection it became clear that the contributions Arlene and I had agreed to in our original negotiation, an exchange of classroom assistance and summaries of observation for participation and data, were not adequate. With this participant, conceptualizing the tasks of research as a business deal and negotiating compensation for her time were not appropriate. Arlene's bottom line could not be articulated in tangible currency of time or products because it consisted of the intangible aspects of a relationship based in the notion of mutual benefit. Over time, I came to understand the currency system Arlene employed and learned to engage in the give and take she valued. The situation demonstrates that "respecting, listening to, and giving attention to how the research act and process fit with the every day lived experiences of teachers" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 479) needs to occur throughout the inquiry.

One of the ethical problems which arose from the shift in the relationship from a transactional, business association to something closer to a friendship concerned the extent to which information gathered outside strict research encounters could be employed as data for the study (Buckerfield, 1993). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) advise researchers to consider whether "their narrative truly has to include all that their friends tell them" (p. 117). Although "troublesome bits" of data can be excluded from reports, the role these play in informing analysis should not be diminished. Riddell (1989) describes the need to respect privacy while providing in-depth information to ensure rigor as "the balance between responsibility to those who have participated in the research and the

wider audience who will finally read or listen to accounts of the work" (p. 94). To discount information which may be significant to understanding the phenomenon, even if not explicitly employed in reports of the research, would be less than honest or rigorous.

Questions concerning the nature and extent of researcher/participant collaboration were revisited as the process of data analysis advanced. A distinguishing aspect of research which understands reality as intersubjective construction is the expansion of the participant's role in inquiry from data source to partner in the process of understanding the meaning of information gathered. Collaboration in the analysis of the data, consequently, was a feature of the study's design. Questions such as "What happens in the case of conflicting impressions and interpretations? How are differing positions negotiated?" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 490), were anticipated and responses considered in advance. For example, Arlene contributed occasional feedback on the summaries of transcripts and observation sessions provided to her as information was gathered. The analysis at this point in the research did not yield interpretations in need of complex negotiations to reflect a unified rendition; rather they were tenuous and rather vague impressions which prompted additional discussion. Sometimes Arlene's explanations or interpretations of incidents or thoughts were offered and accepted while other times her reactions provoked additional discussion until we arrived at mutual understanding. I believe that the evolution of the researcher/participant relationship from a transactional, business orientation to an

interpersonal, social orientation had a significant influence on the approach taken in the issue of differing interpretation in this study.

Further along the analytical continuum, ethical and practical issues of collaboration became increasingly complex and interwoven. As I spent countless hours poring over the data in search of themes and patterns, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the weightiness of my role in contrast to Arlene. Although the research design assumed active and equal participation from both parties in the analysis, following the completion of data collection, it was apparent that the process of analysis and interpretation was substantially more arduous and protracted than I had anticipated. From a practical perspective, the time we each were prepared to commit to the project over an extended period differed substantially and had an impact on the nature of collaboration during this phase of the research. Here again, the model of a research relationship (Cole & Knowles, 1991, 1993) based in institutional requirements rather than power was helpful. The issue, however, remains significant, both from ethical and methodological perspectives since the consequences of an individualistic analytical process will likely result in a product which reflects "my voice, 'speaking for' rather than 'speaking with'" (Noffke, 1991, p. 21).

The research relationship model was also used to address the issue of possible conflicting interpretation of the data, this time from perspective of the different expertise Arlene and I brought to the specific tasks of analysis. Indeed, as Riddell (1989) notes, researchers "may have access to interpretations which are

not immediately accessible to the actors themselves" (p. 79). In grappling with the dilemma of collaborative interpretation, an appreciation that although the product of this inquiry would ultimately be my own, a concomitant awareness of the mutuality of the research results slowly developed. My experience has led me to surmise that recognition and respect of the different but equally significant contributions of the researcher and participant at various points in the inquiry is key to resolving the ethical and practical dilemmas of collaboration.

During the process of developing reports of the research findings, my concerns turned to the representation of the data and ultimately the portrait I provided of the participant. The conception of teaching on which this study was based and the use of the life history method ensured that the research was both personally and professionally intrusive. While preparing reports, I became increasingly aware of effects the study's products, rather than its processes, might have for Arlene. As Eisner (1991) writes, "the people described become real, and even if no one else can identify the situations or people studied, those studied can; hence, the potential for pain as well as elation is always there" (p. 221). I remembered the promise made to Arlene at the outset of the study that the work was not intended to be evaluative or judgmental and used this as one of the criteria for assessing the drafts produced. Consideration for the participant's perceptions and feelings was an important factor in drafting reports of the research. I recognized the need to be responsive to the research and to the field, however, in addition to the teacher-participant. The questions and concerns

confronted as the inquiry proceeded were resolved by considering the potential

implications of particular actions for each of these.

Protecting the participant's identity and control over distribution were two

issues encountered as I considered the dissemination of the study itself and

additional work associated with it. My concern for Arlene's anonymity endures

even though she has chosen to discuss her experiences as a participant openly

with colleagues, friends and family. Within her professional communities of

regional college faculty and adult basic education teachers, the potential for her to

be recognized exists. The preparation and delivery of a presentation on my

experiences conducting qualitative research for an event at a local community

college (Buckerfield, 1995) required special attention to otherwise inconsequential

details such as the campus or program in which she teaches and the types of

students with whom she works. Measures to protect Arlene's anonymity generally

include substituting the names of people, communities and institutions with

pseudonyms and altering other identifying references in all reports. These

measures should assure ongoing confidentiality and also permit the level of detail

required in a rigorous, high quality life history study.

As plans proceed regarding the distribution of reports on various aspects of

the research, questions about the balance of researcher-researched control arise.

The development of plans to disseminate the research involves decisions about

purpose, audience, media, format, content and timing, for example. The notion

that "it is not *necessary* to *use* others. We can engage them, and invite them to

engage us," (Lincoln, 1990, p. 293) begs consideration at this stage of research. Arlene is aware of my need to publish and agreed at the outset of the study that control over the distribution of the research was to rest with me. In spite of this, discounting her involvement would seem antithetic to the spirit of collaboration fundamental to this inquiry. It is apparent that agreements entered in good faith at the beginning of a research project do not preclude the development of ethical concerns or the renegotiation of aspects of the study.

Institutional guidelines prescribing a general set of rules for the conduct of the study did not prevent the development of "ethical tensions, controversies, and dilemmas that accompany qualitative research" (Eisner, 1991, p. 213). The assumptions about reality, truth and knowledge which served as the foundation of this research informed the conceptualization of the participant as an individual with dignity, agency and self-determination rather than as a passive subject. This acceptance of the teacher-participant as a whole and real person was crucial because it emphasized the need for reciprocity, caring, and truthfulness. Within this context, the relationship between us became, over the extended period of the entire study, "multi-faceted and *not* powerfully hierarchical" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 478). Ethical issues and concerns which permeated the study were resolved through the application of principles of egalitarian relationships important to Arlene and me.

Significance of the Inquiry

The importance of this research is not in the discovery or creation of

universal truths regarding teacher knowledge. Rather than the generalizability of the findings, the significance of this study rests in the contribution of deeper understanding of one teacher's professional knowledge. The characterization delivered through extensive interpretation and analysis offers an in-depth portrait of the practical expression of one teacher's professional knowledge. The findings substantiate the notion of this phenomenon as one which is by nature intricate and inherently unique. The richly detailed accounts of Arlene's personal biography, the current circumstances of her personal and professional life, and her practice in the classroom and the college, reveal the striking parallels between the personal and the professional aspects of teachers' lives. Further, the context of the study extends the developing body of knowledge concerning teacher knowledge and links this work with others which share a concern with the thoughts and actions of teachers of adults.

First, the results of this inquiry provide a compelling illustration of the complexity of the phenomenon of teacher knowledge. The structure of Arlene's professional knowledge, evinced through the emergence of the essence of each theme through several levels of interpretation and analysis, shows teacher knowledge to be an enigmatic and complex phenomenon. The paradigm, philosophic stance, operating principles, and public image which constitute this individual's professional knowledge comprise both congruent and contradictory elements representative of this rich intricacy. The findings refute suggestions that teachers' professional knowledge is a simple, rational phenomenon easily accessed

through observation, interview or the individual's own written expression. One of the most significant aspects of these findings for those who study the phenomenon is the recognition and appreciation of this complexity.

Secondly, the findings strengthen support which exists among the educational research community regarding the notion of the unity of the personal and the professional within teacher knowledge. The study reinforces the conclusions of researchers such as Ball and Goodson (1985), Goodson (1981, 1992a), Keltchermans (1993), Knowles (1992, 1993), Nias (1989), and Pajak and Blase (1989), "that being a teacher is a job that strongly involves the teacher as a person" (Keltchermans, 1993, p. 200). Confirmation of the conclusive role of the interaction between the teacher's personal history and contextual factors in the construction of this teacher's professional knowledge demonstrates the utility of developing a deep appreciation of the teacher as an individual.

A third aspect of the significance of this study's results concerns the evidence it provides to support the notion of teacher knowledge as an essentially idiosyncratic phenomenon. As noted above, every teacher's professional knowledge is unique, constructed from individual interpretation of multiple events and experiences which occurred in a variety of contexts. Recognizing this important actuality is important for the educational research community which, for more than forty years, has attempted to identify and describe teacher thinking and teacher knowledge. An underlying assumption of many of these endeavours has been to find and prove the existence of one, "true" representation of the

phenomenon. Contrary to allusions regarding the generalizability or universality of the particular structure or content of teacher knowledge, the richness and depth represented in the results of this study complement the conclusions of researchers concerned with the diversity of individual teacher's knowledge and the complexity of the mass phenomenon. This study contributes to the literature which is developing a case for a more holistic and in-depth approach to appreciating and understanding teacher knowledge and teacher development (e.g., Cole, 1991a; Diamond, 1991; Hunt, 1992).

An additional aspect of the study's significance arises from the perspective it brings from its focus on a previously ignored type of teacher working in an unrepresented setting. Since studies of teacher knowledge have focused on teachers of children and adolescents (e.g., Bullough, in press; Elbaz, 1991; Kagan, 1992), working in schools which are more or less conventional educational organizations (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Goodson, 1992a), the context of the research makes this study unique. Its situation in a community college with an experienced but not exemplary teacher working with adults makes an important contribution to those who proclaim interest in widening the perspective on teacher thinking and teacher knowledge (Pope, 1993). Similarly, since very little research has been reported in the literature of adult education which delves into the issue of the construction or content of teacher knowledge (Brookfield, 1988; Chamberlain, 1988; Finger, 1991; Goodson & Cole, 1994), these results may have significance for researchers in that field. Finally,

this study's focus on the professional knowledge of a teacher of adults could form a bridge between those who study and work with teachers of adults and those who study and work with teachers of children.

In addition to the support this inquiry lends to the established body of knowledge concerning teacher knowledge, the findings offer a significant contribution to educational research. The characterization which arose to re-present Arlene's professional knowledge is an original format. Unlike re-presentations which identify and describe elements of teacher's knowledge, this format yields in addition, information regarding the structure of the phenomenon. Through its attention to the relationships between and among its various elements, the characterization of connections exposes the systematic nature of the teacher-participant's professional knowledge. This unique format encourages appreciation of the complexity and inter-relatedness of linkages between the individual's personal history, contextual factors and classroom practice within the expression of professional knowledge. Future investigations of the phenomenon of teacher knowledge may find this aspect of the study especially useful.

Implications of the Research

This section of the chapter presents a number of implications drawn from the study's findings and methodology which have relevance for educational research as well as for the practice of teacher and organizational development. From a methodological perspective, implications for research developed from reflection on the design and techniques applied in the inquiry. Reflection on a

fundamental assumption of the study, that "understanding why and how teachers think and practice in classrooms is essential to understanding teaching" (Hamilton, 1993, p. 87), lead to the identification of the meaning of the findings for teacher and organizational development. In addition, consideration of the inquiry's contribution to the growing body of literature regarding teacher knowledge lead to the identification of implications for continued research into the phenomenon.

The research finding regarding the inherent individuality of every teacher's professional knowledge offers important insights for teacher development efforts. Clark (1992), for example, notes that because of the uniqueness of every teacher and the voluntary nature of adult learning, "it is impossible to create a single, centrally administered and planned programme of professional development that will meet everyone's needs and desires" (p. 77) and supports a model of self-directed teacher development. A more realistic implication, given the legitimate interests of the teachers' employers and teachers' representatives in professional development, is that the study provides a rationale for development endeavours which emphasize a wide variety of strategies for assistance and support, "rather than trying to find the one best way to develop teachers" (Cole, 1992, p. 378).

According to Zeichner (1995), even today, "much of the staff development for teachers . . . ignores what teachers already know and can do and relies primarily on the distribution of prepackaged and allegedly 'research-based' solutions to school problems often in the form of skill-training and often at great expense, by

some entrepreneur of staff development" (p. 161). Recognition of significant connections between teachers' personal and professional identities strengthens preparation and inservice efforts which emphasize integration rather than the teaching of specific skills in isolation from the individual's interpretation and from the context in which they are to be employed. The life history method and the techniques used to gather and interpret information relating to the teacher's biography, the historical and current economic, political and social circumstances which affect the individual's life and practice, along with observation and discussion of professional behaviour could prove to be a highly effective approach for the teacher's development. From a greatly expanded awareness of their professional knowledge, its origin and features, the teacher could choose, for example, to confront contradictions or pursue particular paths to enhance professional behaviour.

In spite of advances in teacher development, Thiessen (1992) notes that often "scant consideration is given to how teachers' work circumstances help or hinder the complex process of altering what they do" (p. 85). Raymond, Butt and Townsend (1992) contend that the context of teachers' work plays an integral role in professional growth.

> in teachers' life-histories the person the teacher is and the context in
> which the teacher works can be *congruent*. . . . However, there may
> also be dilemmas, paradoxes and contradictions between the person
> and the context which the teacher has to negotiate (p. 153).

This study's findings strengthen the argument for development efforts which recognize and feature the importance of context of teachers' practice.

This inquiry also provides suggestions regarding difficulties often encountered by those responsible for the intentional development of organizational culture (i.e., a shared set of beliefs and values). The findings substantiate Clark's (1992) argument that "our beliefs and personal theories set boundaries or frames around what we see and how we interpret experience. . . . Teachers' implicit theories are more than private matters of personal taste and opinion" (p. 78). In schools and colleges where teachers' backgrounds and experiences are likely to be diverse, the likelihood of common understandings resulting from the events and activities of organizational life is low. The study may thus indicate the need for extra attention to and respect for the voices and views of individual educational workers. In addition, it should act as a caution to leaders who would expect quick and/or painless change in the alteration of their organizations' culture and practice.

Educational organizations have an interest in supporting efforts to ensure that their staff are equipped to carry out their various functions in order to ensure the smooth operation of business. The deficit model of staff development, with its attendant focus on employees' weaknesses rather than strengths, is operational in the majority of organizations (Clark, 1992; Huberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). The professional development programmes of schools and community colleges generally include "ongoing collaboration between teachers, upgrading of

pedagogical repertoires, higher levels of content-matter mastery, tighter connections between school districts and external sources of knowledge and technical support . . . compensation for inadequate pre-service education and connections between the improvement of teachers' capacities and school restructuring" (Huberman, 1995, p. 193). The concern of most educational organizations continues to be with improvement in teachers' instructional skills and subject matter knowledge rather than the realization of its employees' professional potential.

The human resources management of educational organizations, including recruitment and selection, performance management, and compensation practices, demonstrates the lack of appreciation of the complex and deeply personal nature of teachers' professional knowledge. Indeed, during the development of highly bureaucratic educational organizations the personal has been deliberately repressed and devalued in favour of the perception of objectivity, standards, and interchangeability. Further, unions and professional associations, "which arose to protect teachers from the whims of managerial and political behavior and to advance teachers' interests" (Kerchner & Koppich, 1993, p. 19) have also contributed greatly to standardization. Collective agreements, a form of centralized rules, establish teachers' relationship with their employer and specify conditions of employment. Professional development, typically negotiated as a function of time (days away from classroom responsibilities) and expenditure (dollars available per employee), is an example of standardization in contractual

arrangements. The fact that professional development is either a bargainable entitlement or a requirement is a manifestation of its perception as either perquisite or punishment by both employers and representatives of teachers. One advantage of this understanding of professional development is the ease with which all parties can monitor the degree to which all parties have complied to this condition. In spite of the problems inherent within the current system, it is unlikely that the idiosyncratic and individualistic nature of professional knowledge as established in this research would be regarded as a notion with great practical value.

Neither employers nor teachers' bargaining agents appreciate the notion of teacher knowledge supported by the findings of this study with its emphasis upon biography and context. This lack of recognition means that neither is likely to accept responsibility for facilitating teacher development within this framework. Although ultimate responsibility for professional growth belongs with the individual educational worker, this too presents problems. As Clark (1992) explains, "On the one hand, each teacher's path and pattern of development is a solitary journey . . . On the other hand, there is no rule that requires us to pursue this solitary journey without any outside help. The paradox is that becoming a fully developed, autonomous individual is a process that we cannot make happen alone" (pp. 81-82). An implication of the research, then, is that the opportunity exists for universities to provide leadership regarding the development of teachers' professional knowledge. Perhaps only within this context would it be

possible to organize programmes of teacher development which are able to heed Day's (1993) advice to consider biography, organizational culture, career and life stages of development, and "the need to provide a balance of development opportunities for teachers as persons, professionals, classroom practitioners and school functionaries" (p. 230).

From a methodological perspective, coherence between the personal and the professional presents further evidence to support the perspective that inquiry into teacher thinking and teacher action necessarily indicates the need for inquiry into teachers' lives (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). It acknowledges that every teacher's knowledge is rooted not in abstraction but in personal, social, historical, economic and political circumstances, and provides further evidence for the argument that "in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is" (Goodson, 1992b, p. 234). Furthermore, its results demonstrate the potential for accessing professional knowledge through the application of a method which permits a perspective on an individual life along with wider socioeconomic and political circumstances as well as their effect on that one life (Cole, 1991a, 1994; Trapedo-Dworsky & Cole, 1995; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992).

On considering the insights developed from this inquiry, I am encouraged about the prospects of producing more and further understanding of teachers' professional knowledge. This case study of one experienced community college teacher offers a rich, holistic account of connections between personal history,

context and classroom practice. It would be instructive to revisit Arlene in several years to investigate the stability of the structure this study revealed and to inquire with her about processes and causes of changes in her professional knowledge. Additionally, studies similar to the current research with teachers of different backgrounds, at various stages in their lives and careers, who work and live in disparate contexts, would be valuable. Continuing research into the tacit realm of teachers' knowledge, such as beliefs, perceptions, and other such constructs in relation to professional behaviour and changes in practice, has much to contribute to the growing knowledge base of teaching and learning.

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APPENDIX A

Information Provided to the Participant at Initial Meeting

Project Outline

WHAT

The objective of the research is to understand your professional knowledge, including how it is presently constructed and how your life experiences have influenced its development. Professional knowledge includes pedagogical knowledge, and subject matter knowledge. In addition, professional knowledge concerns the social and historical contextual knowledge which affect how other aspects of professional knowledge are held and used.

HOW

Interviews:

A mutual awareness of your personal history and background will help to explain the context of your practice and professional knowledge. Several interviews focusing on your past would help to set the stage for understanding the present. I would like to tape record these interviews, transcribe them, and return them to you for corrections or additions.

Observations:

I would like to make several (3-5) visits to your classroom to learn about your teaching practice by observing you at work. During each visit I would like to tape record the activities and take notes to help my memory in our subsequent discussions. My purpose in observing is to learn about your practice and not to judge or evaluate.

Discussions:

After each of the observation sessions I would like to meet with you to talk about your practice. The objective of these meetings would be to learn how you understand your practice. I would like to tape record our conversations and transcribe them to provide a record.

Writing:

After each observation and discussion session I would prepare a summary of my observations and our conversation. This summary would be sent to you before our

next observation and discussion so that you will have time to consider my interpretations. It would be helpful to have a written record of your reactions to my interpretation as well as your reflections on the experience. Your writing could take whatever form you are comfortable with - perhaps letters to me or journal entries.

WHERE and WHEN

All of our meetings would be scheduled at mutually convenient times. I would like to schedule the interviews during the autumn months and the observations and discussions between November and June.

WHY

Your involvement in this project would make demands on your time and energy. I think that you would find this opportunity to reflect on your practice rewarding. However, I would like to offer some form of compensation for your involvement. For example, I would be prepared to act as a classroom aide for the remainder of each observation day or to help with a special project.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the project. I can be reached at xxx-xxxx (my home telephone number).

Lynn Buckerfield

APPENDIX B

Statement of Informed Consent

I agree to participate in this project under the following conditions:

* I am aware that this study is being conducted to partially satisfy the requirements for the researcher's Doctor of Education degree in the Department of Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education;

* I am fully informed of the purpose and procedure of the study;

* I will engage in up to 4 interviews which will focus on my personal history and background;

* I will allow up to 5 observations of my teaching practice arranged at mutually convenient times;

* I will engage in discussions about my practice after each observation session;

* I will engage in up to 3 interviews regarding my practice, professional knowledge and personal history following the observation and discussion sessions;

* I will allow interviews, observations, and discussions to be audio tape recorded;

* I understand that all acquired information about my practice will remain anonymous;

* I give permission for any information gained through my efforts to be printed in a publishable document;

* I understand that I am free to withdraw from participation in the study at any time.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

In return for your cooperation I will:

* present to you for your verification a final descriptive summary of our work;

* volunteer my assistance, according to previous arrangements, as a classroom aide, in a special project, or in a similar activity;

* abide by all previously stated conditions.

_____   _____

Lynn Buckerfield   Date

APPENDIX C

Field Note Excerpt

December 14, 1992

The interview took place at Arlene's home at 7:00 p.m. and lasted until 10:30. I arrived a little early in spite of the weather--I allowed extra travelling time because of a snowstorm the day before. Lots of snow was still on the ground and Arlene's street had not been plowed. She lives on a quiet crescent with detached single family homes which look cared for and front yards with mature trees and bushes. Some people on the street were out shovelling as I arrived but Arlene's driveway and front walk were already clear. Her home is a 1960s style bungalow and is very neatly kept indoors and out. The living room seemed a little bare, probably because she has only has half of the furniture she previously owned.

Arlene's younger daughter who is still in high school was out with friends so we were alone. We spent most of the evening in the dining room with the tape recorder between us as we talked. We sat at right angles to each other at the table throughout the conversation except for the times Arlene got up to let the dog in or out or to get something out of the kitchen. The living room and dining room are L-shaped and neither is large. The dining room has "good" furniture--a hard wood table, four matching chairs and a buffet. One wall of the room is covered with framed photographs of family and the other has a large window with sheer drapes.

Arlene served coffee and snacks and smoked as we talked. She explained that she doesn't like to smoke in the house when her daughters are home. She said that the girls give her a hard time about smoking and want her to quit so she normally only smokes in the kitchen with the window open. Smoking in the dining room tonight was an exception. Arlene seemed to be quite open and talkative but at the end of the evening told me that she had actually been quite nervous before we started.

The interview itself was about twice the length of time that I had intended. I was glad that I had brought an extra cassette tape but even when that ran out I felt that Arlene could have kept the interview going. As it was, we talked quite a bit beyond the end of the taping. I was tired after the interview but was worried that it might offend her if I left abruptly so I stayed and we chatted. She told me more about her school experiences in both elementary school and high school. Arlene was an over achiever as a child and won lots of awards. This was how she received recognition from her family--from her mother and her father and from the extended family she spent a great deal of time with. It was the acceptable way to receive attention. Apparently she loved school as a child and never had any

question that she would go on to university. She also was sure that she would do well. I did not ask how they covered the costs of university: Did she have a scholarship, did her father pay, did they struggle to make the payments?

Questions which I forgot to ask are recorded at the end of the summary I'll make for her and send before we get together again.

The time line was an effective aid for re-focusing the interview when we got off topic and I will use it in the next interview.

I think the interview went well generally and that we established the beginnings of rapport after the initial nervousness. I reminded her at the end that how we carry the interviews out is still negotiable.

APPENDIX D

Observation Note Excerpt

Classroom Visit #2 - February 25/93

Beautiful sunny morning -- like an Alberta sky. Had a big snowstorm two days before and lots of snow still remained. Arrived at college at 8:30. Had to park way out back in the student parking lot this time (parking attendant wouldn't let me into faculty lot). I had to walk through the entire college (from the most northern reach) to get to Arlene's area. She is in B wing and this was D. D and C wing seemed to be mostly tech wings - lots of shops, some classrooms like theatres, a car manufacturer's transmission or engine lab or something. The instructors were wearing long coats or lab jackets over their street clothes. I was surprised at how many classes were already in session as I went by. Many instructors leave their doors open. A few students were sleeping on benches but most were in classrooms. In the student lounge area there were only a few students drinking coke and coffee. Building was fairly quiet.

I went directly to OBS office. Arlene was there. She offered me a coffee from their faculty coffee area -- little room or corridor in the OBS/GAS faculty area which also holds a fridge, photocopier, bulletin board, and a small table -- not the cafeteria as during last class. When I went to pay, she said not to even though a sign saying .35/cup was posted right above the pot. Table held copies of the latest Staff Development calendar which I picked up. Arlene introduced me to the coordinator's admin assistant in the coffee area (she was there at the same time we were). Arlene and this woman chatted about the coordinator, who is away on holiday. They talked about how she did the really important work and that it's not a problem when he is away. Arlene and I went back to her desk area and had our coffee and chatted for 15 minutes or so. We talked about what a nice day it was, how much snow we're getting this year, what good moods we both are in, etc. During this time, Arlene introduced me to a few other instructors. Everyone seemed fairly relaxed. No rushing, no panic.

Arlene did not hurry out to get to her classroom. In fact, I think we were a few minutes late. We took our coffee in our mugs with us. As we walked down the hall to the classroom, another student came out of someone else's class and spoke to Arlene about getting back into her math class. Other students said hello to her. Students in the other classrooms were talking -- I did not see any group instruction going on as I had down in the tech wing.

Arlene commented as we arrived that most of the students were there. I went to sit in the seat I'd been in last time, but there was a knapsack or purse there and so I moved to the back of the class instead. One student said good morning to

Arlene and laughed (nicely) as if this was a formality or a politeness that was something special. Arlene handed out the marked tests to the students -- randomly -- all over the classroom. She told students in large group that because of the storm, one of their classes would not be held -- they would have a change in their schedules and would be done by noon. There was not a collective sigh of relief but several students had big smiles about that. Most students didn't comment.

Arlene handed out a one page multiplication review 'quiz' (hand written and photocopied). Students seemed to know exactly what to do with this, as if this was not a surprise -- a regular classroom routine? Arlene addressed the whole group -- said they had one and a quarter minute for this test -- and that the extra 15 seconds was for their name. Reminded them to put their name on their paper. As if they were starting a race, Arlene said to the class "Everybody ready? Go!" Students worked quietly and all got down to it immediately -- no one resisted or talked. Arlene circulated around the room, looking at her watch, not talking, but making sure all were working. After what seemed like longer than a minute to me but I didn't use my watch, she said "Stop!" and told students to put their pencils down. She asked students to exchange their papers with someone else. There was some confusion -- or last minute working on the papers.

Arlene made sure that everyone had a different person's paper -- remarks to individuals about this ("Pam, are you set?"). Then she said to the large group: "Who would like to read out the answers to the first seven questions?" A male student volunteered and they went through the answers (they did not read the question), just the answer. With each correct answer, Arlene said yes or mhm. Arlene moved up and down the side of the room where the first student sat while he provided the answers. After that student she asked for another volunteer and another male student volunteered. When he made a mistake she did not say 'wrong' but did not say 'yes' as she normally did and instead asked: "Can anyone help him out with that?" and when a student provided the correct response answered "OK." A third male student volunteered with answers for the next set and for the fourth set a woman volunteered to provide the answers. When all the answers had been provided, Arlene asked the students to put the number of correct answers at the top out of thirty. She then went to check on several students and gave the same directions individually. Arlene directed the students to show the owners their papers by telling the class to "Have a quick peek and then leave out for me to collect. Anyone with less than 25 should be reviewing their multiplication facts."

Arlene started to collect the tests randomly and one student (the young East Indian woman) began to help and collected tests as well. This all went so smoothly and people seemed so comfortable that I wondered how often they'd done this routine! Arlene stopped to speak to one student about her score on the test.

She spoke to another student and said "You're not supposed to be working on this." The activity around the quiz seemed to go very quickly but by my watch took until 9:20.

APPENDIX E

Observation Interview Transcript Excerpt

Observation Interview, May 17, 93

Following Life Skills class. Outside, on the patio. Very quiet. No students, few staff around. Classes (except for OBS) are over.

Lynn: I took copious notes in class today.

Arlene: (laughing) I just thought--Remember that first day when I didn't feel like being on? (laughing)

Lynn: Were you ever on today! It was amazing. I thought it was so interesting to watch because you were so different. Everything about it--the whole tone of the class was different.

Arlene: Oh yea. Just about everything. Everyone had questions about everything. Bhupindra off topic. People weren't listening to people. (laughing). Frank wandering around.

Lynn: What's going on with him?

Arlene: Well, I don't know exactly. He came back last week and I think he's keeping busy.

Lynn: Is this the way it normally goes?

Arlene: (laughing) Nope, there wouldn't normally be as many questions. It's because some of them have been away that there was so much discussion. They're responsible for catching up but I thought, there's certain things I want to be really clear about--missed presentation and marks and what not. This is what we agreed upon and this is how we're going to mark. They designed it.

Lynn: They did?

Arlene: I said it's got to be 20 marks, and what things should be marked on. And then we went back and said what's the most important thing--how much should we give to it? And they chose and they distributed it.

Lynn: Is that the way you normally do it?

Arlene: Yea, I like them to be involved in it.

Lynn: Do they normally do the marking as well? Or is that special because you're leaving?

Arlene: No, I like them to evaluate it.

Lynn: And how are their evaluations?

Arlene: Pretty much in tune. Except what really shows up somehow, I think, they don't keep out the bias if they like the person. Or if they like a topic or they don't. But otherwise they're pretty much within a mark or two of what I give.

Lynn: So they generally able to follow the criteria established?

Arlene: Yes.

Lynn: Is this the first time most of them have done that kind of thing?

Arlene: Except for the ones who moved up. Joan's not supposed to do it the same but she did. They need the practice anyhow so I just have to make sure they don't do the same topic. Mind you there weren't many good ones like last year's group. (laughing) Maybe they should do the same topic again (laughing). It wouldn't make a difference.

Lynn: So normally you wouldn't have to spend that much time going over things?

Arlene: Not if so many hadn't been away. Then they took magazines out and I knew they were all going to start returning them and they'd say I want this photocopied and I want that. And I'd think oh no we've only got an hour and twenty minutes.

Lynn: You squash a lot in to an hour and twenty minutes. It's amazing. Let me see what I wrote down. I was struck particularly by the difference between the older people and the younger people. And how you handled that and their concern over your leaving.

Arlene: They're really concerned. They get used to one teacher. I would be the same if I got used to it and I liked a person's way. The only way of reassuring them is the fact that they often get better than some of our other teachers. You know? Some of them are so far advanced and some of them are terrible. You know?

Lynn: Do the students recognize that too?

Arlene: Yea--after they met the people. And I've found in the past, last year, it

took them all of a week to adapt.

Lynn: And then it was fine?

Arlene: It was fine.

Lynn: Was today a normal reaction? Like what you said about sticking around and being here until the end of June?

Arlene: If they've started counselling with you and you know a fair bit about their private past, yes. But you see I don't counsel that level, so it was hard for me to say that. I counsel one's and I don't teach them. But that won't happen again. Next year I will counsel--Tom's going to be gone so I've asked for two's to counsel, because I teach them Life Skills. He's their English teacher and he counsels them. Which is effective for him but I only teach half of the class, about a third of the class, math. So I know that portion. See I don't even know who they all are yet.

Lynn: It's a big group.

Arlene: There's over--well, there's 28 in that class. Let's see, three were missing. So that's a large group.

Lynn: Although it was interesting too, when you were introducing the video, you said, notice they all sit in small groups, 8-10 people in the video, facing each other, no backs to each other. That kind of thing.

Arlene: That's the ideal. If I had a group of 15-20 that would be how I'd set up the room. But when you have to use the room for math too...

Lynn: Could you ever get rid of the tables?

Arlene: No, never because the room has to be used for English and math. So you don't have control over that. But you can at least make a horseshoe and have them in a U shape but you just can't do it when you've got 30.

Lynn: Do you find a big difference when you do set it up like that?

Arlene: No, not really actually. I think quite honestly when I used to work with all females there was more comfort--they're more comfortable. I think the men are more comfortable with the structure and with the tables. More a career, a more impersonal approach. Not tying it to the personal life too much. More career focused and relationships and friendships, not your inner most self and that

kind of touchy feely stuff. You have to watch. And immigrants, you have to watch that you don't offend them because a lot of that stuff is very private and is to be kept within the immediate family and you don't divulge that kind of thing to strangers.

Lynn: That's interesting. So, getting all messed up (the video machine, on a local network, would not work)--that was normal too?

Arlene: But what was so funny about that, I just have to tell you this. I resisted change for so long--until Louise did it last week. We piped in to both rooms and it worked so well. Finally, I said okay Arlene, today's your day to follow through with it and whoops!! Don't pick the portable unit up, which is what I normally do, so I can stop it as I go along and summarize it, or talk about it.

Lynn: That would be impossible to do when it's piped in?

Arlene: Oh yes, that's why I normally bring in the other unit.

Lynn: Why would they have this piped in system?

Arlene: Because they don't have enough portable units, and nearly all of the rooms have television, you know. Most of them have the TV, so they have 16 or 20 tracks down there now, that they can just pop the video in and make it serve us better. There's only about 3/4 of the people could use it before.

Lynn: Oh I see. But there's no way when it's piped in that you can stop it?

Arlene: No, so that's why I resisted it for so long. I'm more in control of it when it's here and it's me working the machine.

Lynn: Yes. It's hard when you're here and you can't operate the controls.

Arlene: But (laughing) holy shoot, why does all this have to happen?

Lynn: But it was interesting to watch. How you switched--okay now we're going to do this. Obviously, quick stuff, like the inventory.

Arlene: Yea. And I've only used it once before, the inventory! I guess I just thought, it's something to give an idea so that when we come to discussing the different techniques that they can each pick--I want them to clearly identify one area that they're going to really work at being more assertive in and develop a goal plan.

APPENDIX F

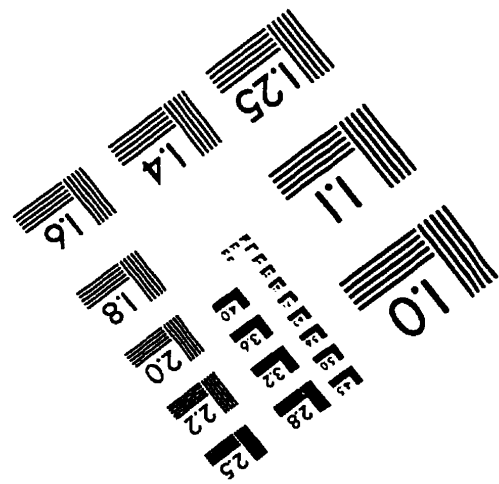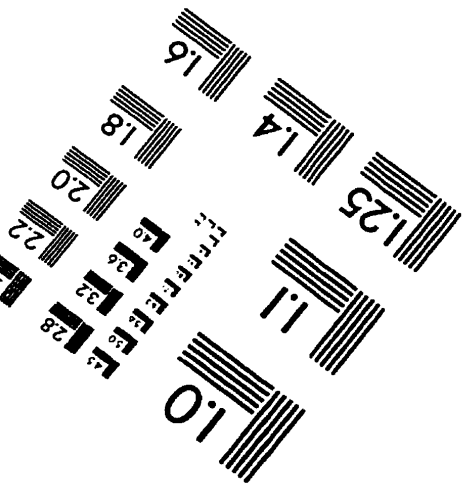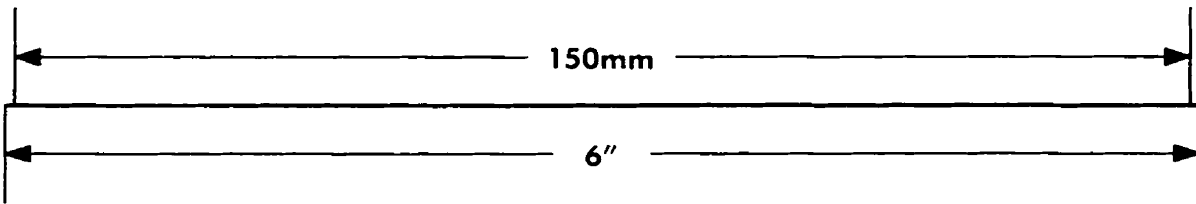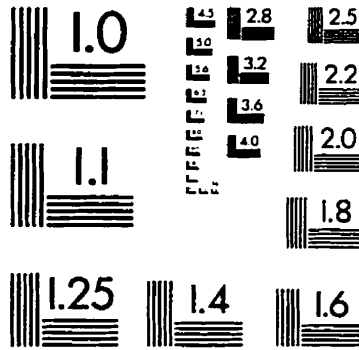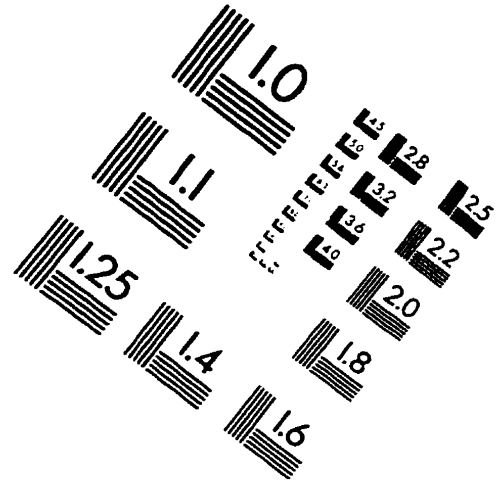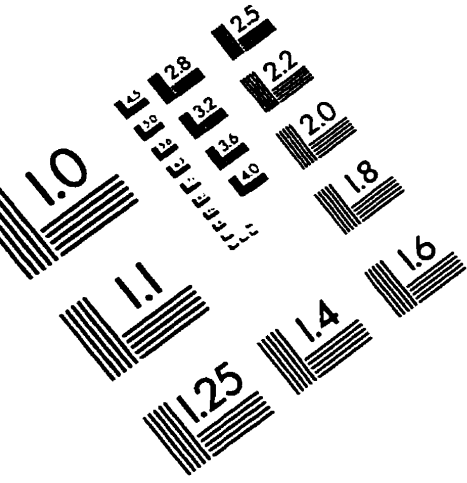Context Interview Transcript Excerpt

Telephone Conversation - March 18/93 p.m.

In arranging another observation, discovered that Arlene took Min of Ed Guidance & Counselling Part I course last year. She took it at xxx through the Board of Education. Wanted to do Part II this year but couldn't afford the tuition. In last few years she's taken Adult Ed Part I; and ESL Part I. So she has been working on improving her credentials and still wants to get a specialist certificate (Guidance) even though the college doesn't recognize these credentials and she doesn't get any more pay. Arlene said that she feels it's important to have her specialist certificate these days and that she feels less threatened than some of the other faculty at the college because she has her Ontario Teaching Certificate even though it's not required. She has more options.

I also learned about xxx program run by the Board of Education. It is located between xxx Campus and the xxx Campus but a new facility is being built right next to xxx. According to Arlene the board has all kinds of money--great resources and excellent faculty. She called the teachers there "the cream of the crop" and they are doing great stuff there. Exchanges are possible and do occur between Board of Ed. teachers and college faculty--although mainly in the counselling area. Arlene thinks it's good for this to happen because then college faculty learn how easy they've got it and how much more is expected of secondary teachers.

She said that she would never go back to teaching in a high school if she could help it. One big difference is the freedom she has at the college. She has 11.5 teaching hours/week plus her counselling time. A secondary teacher would have 17.5/week. Also, her schedule allows her to work four days/week so she's off every Friday and can use that for prep or other work. This year she's holding down a part-time job. In addition, according to Arlene there's the coaching and other activities teachers have to do that college faculty don't. One thing that's important to Arlene is the freedom her job allows. She doesn't have to be at the college except when she's teaching/counselling so she doesn't feel tied down like she would in a school. Overall, Arlene is very satisfied where she is.

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"