An Inquiry of Caring in the Classroom:

A Teacher Story

Maria K. E. Lahman

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Of Philosophy

In

Child Development

Committee:

Victoria Fu, Chair
Mark Benson
Doris Martin
Andrew Stremmel
Melanie Uttech

February, 27 2001
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: teacher characteristics, touch, advocacy, transitions

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people who have supported me throughout the dissertation process and in other words acknowledge my context of care. Special thanks to my committee chair Dr. Victoria Fu, for guiding me through the entire dissertation process. I also appreciate the time and input of all my committee members including Dr. Susan Hutchinson who continued to support me even after she transferred to another university. Dr. Doris Martin first helped me think about this topic in scholarly fashion years ago in my first graduate class and supported me long distance throughout the experience. Dr. Melanie Uttech helped me expand my ideas of all the possibilities qualitative research holds and opened the door to my future work as a methodologist. My department chair at Eastern Mennonite University, Dr. Donovan Steiner's, support and flexibility was the reason I was able to take my first doctoral course and envision the possibility of a second one. Dr. Steiner's acknowledgment is also symbolic of the larger church of Mennonites he represents and the generations of a belief in care that my dissertation rests on.

I have a deep appreciation for my peers--classmates, colleagues--who have supported me in ways that may possibly only be understood by those in the throes of graduate school: Dina Walker and Natalie Carrick who befriended me when I had just arrived and knew no one; Lisa Artale who helped me pass my statistics qualifier and reminds me about the other people we need to care for in human development, our seniors; Bonnie Graham a quiet source of deep, abiding care and support; Soyeon Park my co-researcher in school, life, and multicultural friendship.

My family is the network of care that is there for me at all times--transcribing, critiquing, editing, and praising. They are all caring teachers and people who work with young children. My father, Omar Eby, who has spent countless hours helping me begin to develop the art of writing. My mother, Anna Kathryn Eby, the caring public school teacher who symbolizes all my hopes for children and teachers in the classroom. My older sister, Katrina Yoder, who challenged me by refusing to accept a business card of mine until it said. Dr. Lahman and my beautiful little brother, Lawrence Eby, who in his squirmy, inquisitive little boy way needed and did not receive a public school teacher who would care deeply with flexibility and individualization to his needs. Most importantly in my day-to-day life, moment-by-moment my husband Brent Lahman has lived the experience of supporting a spouse through the dissertation. When I have felt most alone and unsure it has been his creativity, care, and enduring faith that has pointed the way again and when I have felt most sure then we have celebrated.

Of course the most obvious and profound acknowledgment go to Sidney, Kay, and the sixteen children in their class without whom this entire process would not have been possible. It is my hope that the image of caring in the classroom we have represented will be an image that will effect readers deeply in life changing ways.

Maria K. E. Lahman

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of the study was to conduct a qualitative inquiry into the teacher-child caring relationship in order to portray a picture of caring possibilities by describing interactions in one public school classroom. Participant observation, interviews, a dialogic journal and artifact analysis was conducted with a public school preschool class. Through qualitative inquiry, thematic analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered, along with my reflections, review of the literature, and based on my experiences as a teacher for 10 years, I have gained a deeper understanding of the caring teacher-child relationship. It is my desire that as I relate this understanding it may inform other teachers about the caring aspect of teaching. The following question helped guide the study. How is the teacher-child caring relationship manifested through actions, words, thoughts, and feelings?

In keeping with the philosophy, caring engenders care, it is thought that the caring teacher will help children become caring members of their classroom. It can be assumed that when a teacher makes moral decisions in the context of teaching and learning, regarding the child, she creates a culture of care in the classroom in which the child may learn how to be a caring member (Garrison, 1997). The teacher's daily moral decisions, made in the classroom, are "hands on" lessons in caring for children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Noddings, 1984, 1992). As children engage in caring interactions with their teacher they may in turn learn to care for their fellow classmates and their teachers. "The teacher and student interaction can be reciprocally transformative" (Garrison, 1997, p. 45) renewing the caring teacher's sense of hope and feeling of success in the possibility of creating a community in her classroom (Noddings, 1984).

The study of Sidney's classroom was an inquiry into the process of how, what, why and when Sidney made teaching decisions within the context of her caring relationship with the children in her classroom. Through examining a particular instance (Sidney's classroom), the whole (all classrooms), are illuminated. This study will present Sidney's caring through an examination of her classroom environment, "atmosphere," relationships, teacher practice, advocacy, professional development, and teachers and children saying good-bye at the end of the year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PROLOGUE

In an Aesop fable the wind and the sun had a disagreement over which was stronger, wind or warmth. The wind suggested they settle the argument by seeing who could get a man, walking on earth below, to take off his coat. As hard as the wind blew it could not get the man to remove his coat; in fact, the opposite occurred. The man buttoned up his coat higher and turned up his collar as he hunched low into the wind. The wind gave up in disgust, but claimed that the sun would surely not be able to succeed either.

The sun's response was a simple beam. As the sun beamed the man's posture relaxed. He began to smile as he walked along slowly unbuttoning his coat. When the man took off his coat and slung it over his shoulder the mighty wind blew off in an incredulous huff unsure of what had happened that day (Lehn, 1983).

An apparent moral of this story, the power of warmth to effect people and their actions, may also be interpreted, for this paper, as caring. Push the Aesop fable a little further and think of the sun as the teacher in the classroom. It is of vital importance to develop deep relationships that warm children into taking off their coats, relaxing, and joining into the caring classroom community. This is illustrated in the following anecdotes.

A little girl, Maria, went to kindergarten and met an amazing teacher, Mrs. Sapington. Her teacher had a real woodworking center with tools and nails. Girls were given equal time in the wood center and Maria created huge wooden structures such as a sandbox for her little brother and a miniature airport for her father's birthday present. Maria spent a painstaking amount of time painting the wooden creations in an array of vivid colors. Mothers of other children groaned when they had carpool duty on the day that Maria took her wooden creations home. Only the largest station wagon could fit Maria's wooden airport in the trunk.

Maria also wanted to use the housekeeping drama center broom and mop set for real cleaning. Mrs. Sapington allowed Maria to mop the floor of the housekeeping center with a small bucket of soapy water and the child-sized mop not just once, but many times over the course of the year during Maria's dramatic house play. In the woodworking and housekeeping interactions one can see how Mrs. Sapington put Maria's needs first and demonstrated flexibility, individualization, and creative caring through her teaching interactions.

A little girl, Sidney, had a similar relationship with a wonderful teacher in the first grade. Ms. Winder had a horse farm and would invite all the children in Sidney's class to ride horses on the weekend. Sidney fondly remembers that after a horse ride the children would be served warm mugs of terrible hot chocolate made with natural carob. Ms. Winder was "into" health foods and nutrition.

As a college student in education Sidney wrote a letter to Ms. Winder describing how Ms. Winder had affected Sidney's life and had allowed Sidney to personally experience the influence a caring teacher could have on children. Ms. Winder replied to Sidney's letter saying she was still teaching first grade after twenty years, but she was worn out and tired and hoped the field of education would treat Sidney better than it had treated her.

Sidney and I, Maria, examined closely, reflected on, and wrote the story of Sidney's caring classroom in the belief that the Ms. Winders, Mrs. Sapingtons, Sidneys, and Marias of education should be supported in their desire to be caring teachers. It is our hope that when Sidney and I reach the end of our teaching careers we can answer Ms. Winder by saying, "Education did treat me well."

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION: A COZY COUCH

My goal is to create a kind of haven for the children in this classroom.
~Sidney~

A cozy, comfy couch--Sidney's class is like the cozy, comfy couch that is nestled in the corner of the entryway to her room. Plump, dark blue pillows, with tassels that invite children to twirl them, complement the lightly patterned, cream couch. While always referred to in Sidney's classroom as a couch this piece of furniture is technically a love seat. The love seat, a small couch, that is generally designed with two cushions or room for two, conjures up images of a couple courting and in love. This image has interesting application for Sidney's class in the area of "teacherly love" (Goldstein, 1997, p.7) or "maternal thinking…as a paradigm of practice…for a caring profession such as teaching" (Garrison, 1997, p.55). The love of a teacher and child, like the love of a couple, brings to mind connection and relationship, but with teacherly love there is always room for one more child to squeeze in and share the story, see a classmate getting a band-aide, or relax on a teacher's lap.

In the children's picture book, *On Mother's Lap* , Herbert Scott's (1972) words weave with poignant pictures of an Indigenous Alaskan mother and child to tell the story of Michael happily sharing his mother's lap with his puppy, dolly, toy boat, and reindeer blanket. However, Michael becomes upset when his baby sister needs to join him. '"There isn't room', said Michael. His mother gave him a squeeze. 'You know it is a funny thing,' she whispered, 'but there is always room on Mother's lap.'" The story ends with a picture of Michael and his sister contentedly sharing their mother's lap as she quietly rocks. This is the visual image that comes to me when I reflect on the symbolism of Sidney's couch. What follows in this paper is the story of the "couch": my study of a

teacher, her preschool children, and their caring relationship. The following question helped guide the study. How is the teacher-child caring relationship manifested through action, words, thoughts, and feelings?

The first day I came to work in Sidney's classroom as a researcher inquiring into teacher-child caring relationships in the classroom, a teacher, and as an all around assistant, I had that familiar sense of unease I get whenever I enter an entirely new situation. I have a natural affection, born from intimate understanding, for the type of children that are referred to as "slow to warm up." These children, like me, when comfortable, bear no resemblance to the stilted, conservative version that they present during first encounters.

Sidney was working busily in her classroom as I awkwardly hailed her, clutching my bag while looking around the room in nervous interest. "Good morning," she sang out. "It is so good to have you! I am running late this morning because, Jeff (her fiancé) helped me haul a new couch to school! Isn't it great?" As I admired the couch and tried to get my bearings Sidney related to me that her sister had recently bought new furniture and Sidney and Jeff had hauled the old couch from over three hours away to add a homey element to the classroom. Sidney was obviously excited about the prospects of the couch's addition to the classroom.

Thinking back, I remembered going to great lengths to add similar pieces to the different classrooms I had over my career. The first teaching job I received right after college was as a kindergarten teacher at a small, rural, public school. There I was confronted with, as Sidney also was in her school, a typically dull classroom with features similar to institutions across America--bland coloring, intense lighting, and hard, dull floors. Sidney and I took these institutional features as a challenge. For my first classroom I bought a red and magenta hammock with my own money and convinced my husband, Brent, to come to the school and drill holes in the cinder block wall in order to hang the hammock. Brent was reluctant to drill holes in the wall without permission. My mother, who has a lifelong career teaching in public elementary schools, always said it is easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission. By this she meant many innovative ideas are first rejected that later may be perceived as wonderful. I then sewed pillows

from colorful fabrics and piled these under the hammock so children could read and relax in a novel yet safe environment.

More recently, when I was the director and a teacher at a laboratory preschool, I located an old, claw foot bathtub in a warehouse down the road from the school. I called the owner of the warehouse and asked if I could buy the bathtub. He said it was from one of the Mennonite Churches in the area and had sentimental value so he didn't want to sell it. I could understand his feelings since the bathtub had such an unusual history. I thought about the situation for a while and then called him up and asked if I could borrow the tub until he decided what he wanted to do with it. Brent was again enlisted, this time due to the weight and cumbersome size of the tub, to relocate the borrowed bathtub. We settled this beautiful piece into the reading area and filled it full of soft pillows, books, and children. The borrowed tub has been a key feature of this classroom for the past six years.

As I listened to Sidney talk about the new couch I felt her pleasure and remembered mine in finding a way to add soft pieces to the classroom in an effort to make a warm, safe haven for children. When the first child I formally met, Stephen, came into the room, he immediately perched on the couch and beamed as Sidney greeted him. "Do you see anything new in the room, Stephen?" "Yeah," he said, grinning, and pointed at the couch he was on.

As more children entered the room I felt myself relaxing into the typical morning tempo of elementary schools all over: children-teacher greetings, putting book bags away, going to breakfast, using the bathroom, sharing a story. As these activities occurred Sidney cheerfully introduced me to everyone who came into the room--children, parents, the assistant teacher, other teachers. To the children Sidney said, "This is Maria, a friend of mine, who is going to be coming to play and work with us at school. Does that sound good?" To the parents, she started introducing me as a Ph.D. student. Later, I asked her to say I was a university student who was coming to work in the room with her. Sidney was showing me respect, but I have found the doctoral student status and whatever connotations it may carry a potential barrier in research. Anyone who wanted to know more about my role I told more and all parents were given explanations of the study in a letter from Sidney (Appendix A), a letter from me (Appendix B), a permission

form they could sign (Appendix C), and a calendar of the study (Appendix D). However, as much as possible, I wanted to be introduced simply as Maria, a volunteer in the classroom.

Sidney invited me to settle into the room in any manner I wanted to. I decided to try to get to know the children first, and while playing with them also learn more about the day's schedule and how the teachers interacted with the children. Kay, the assistant teacher, had warmly greeted me when we first met. Sidney had shared with me that when she told Kay she was going to allow me to do research in her classroom, Kay had said, "You would have to be a fool not to want to be a part of that study." Kay's upbeat attitude was again demonstrated in her friendly greeting and interested questions about the study.

I sat on the floor as Stephen, with furrowed brow, cowlicked deep-red hair, and a freckled face, peered intently at me, diagnosing ailments--such as a cricket being in my ear--and worked dedicatedly for me, his patient. From this vantage point I observed Kay working with a small group of children at a rectangle table, who were enthusiastically engaged in preparing a birthday cake for Joey. Sidney had set up the table prior to the children's arrival with eggs, a cake mix, a bowl, a cake pan, and cooking tools. The eggs had been slightly cracked by Jeff that morning when he moved the couch around in the truck. "Oh, well," Sidney had breezily commented, "they will have to do." Kay's presence was obviously felt as she chatted with Joey about his birthday and helped the children arbitrate which child could do what during the cooking project. The children were relaxed and content in the knowledge that they were a complete part of a community ritual: tearing, opening, pouring, spilling, cracking, and stirring. After the batter was poured in the cake pan by many eager hands, Joey helped Kay take the cake to the kitchen where the school cooks would bake it. Later, the children would decorate the cake and share it during snack time.

I could also see Sidney from where I sat with "Dr. Stephen" who had been joined by what felt like a team of surgeons who were busy poking and prodding me and applying more band-aides than I wanted to think about taking off. As each child, parent, or teacher entered the room or went by the large, open doorway, Sidney greeted them in her own personal way. When speaking to the children, Sidney invariably stooped to their

level, squatted, or sat in a child-sized chair. The greetings and conversations seemed intimate and helped re-establish the child's connection to Sidney and the classroom. She often pointed out things in the room that the child could do that day. "Samantha, if you want you can help Joey make his birthday cake! Jackson, whose birthday do you think it is? Can you guess? We have something new in the room. What do you think it is, Jeremy? You can get some books and read on the couch if you want. It is our new reading couch!"

Throughout the day, children tested out the couch. Some read several books while curled against an arm of the couch and a small group nestled together and poured over a favorite find the hidden picture book. A close teacher friend of Sidney's from the upper grades popped in on her break during Sidney's children's rest time and sat on the couch while she chatted with the teachers and shared a snack of soda and chips. Sidney cuddled on the couch with Caiman, who is often so sleepy when he gets up from rest that he isn't ready to eat a snack, her arm around him, his head resting against her chest.

Later, I sat on the couch trying to gather my impressions, experiences, and questions from the day. It came to me that I was feeling relaxed, included, and "warmed up." In one day Sidney and her classroom of children had made me feel welcome as a researcher, teacher, and friend. Always thinking of possibilities for my research, I wondered if Sidney's comfortable couch could perhaps be a metaphor for her classroom. It seemed fortuitous that it had shown up on the same day I had arrived to study caring. That such a symbol of caring for children entered the class when I did seemed to signal I had found the right place to research teacher-child caring relationships in the classroom. These vague and hopeful thoughts, at the time, were to be confirmed over and over throughout my relationship with Sidney and her children. Upon close and repeated reflection I found Sidney's classroom may be described as a comfortable couch--a caring community--upon which all the participants in a flexible, individualized manner are welcomed, invited, cajoled, and encouraged to come to play, sleep, learn, cry, rest, and express love, anger, sorrow, pain, frustration, or joy.

Dissertation Overview

My time spent with Sidney and her children and my inquiry into Sidney's actions, words, thoughts and feelings regarding caring teacher-child relationships is chronicled in the following chapters. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the study and my personal frame of reference are described. In Chapter 3 the why, what, how, and who of the study are presented. In other words, methodology, the big question, and how did I attempt to explore it? As I explain the methodology in more detail it will be demonstrated how the study of Sidney and her class allowed me to explore my personal experiences as a teacher. This exploration occurred as I reflected on the data and deconstructed and interpreted Sidney's and my own personal beliefs and practices in an attempt to understand our view of the role of caring in the classroom. Chapter 4 introduces the reader to the context of the study by describing in detail the school and classroom settings and Sidney's intent behind the choices she made in developing the physical and emotional aspects of the classroom environment. Relationships, a basic aspect of caring in the classroom, are the focus of Chapter 5. Teacher relationships with children, families, and other teachers, as the foundation of Sidney's class, are described and reflected on in this chapter. The teaching practices that occur in the classroom setting and the possible intent and consequences of the teacher's philosophical and practical daily choices are examined in Chapter 6. Advocacy for children and "best practice" along with Sidney and Kay's professional development, as a means of promoting caring teaching, are explored in Chapter 7. In Chapter 8, Sidney, Kay, and I, in keeping with the age-old rhythm of school, say good-bye to the children, the school year, and each other. Before plunging into the illusion of a restful summer we reflect on what the new school year will bring. The way the teachers handle saying good-bye and transitioning the children to a new classroom is explored as a way caring teaching is expressed. Finally, in Chapter 9, I summarize the study findings and make some final reflections on the importance of caring in our classrooms.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PERSONAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

Integral Study Theories

In the field of qualitative research there has been an increasing practice of researchers revealing their stance or the "stake" they hold in the research (Creswell, 1994; Hertz, 1997). It is important to share with the readers my teaching and research stance so the reader may have an understanding of the perspective from which I write. "Self disclosure" allows the reader a view into my life and of my interpretation of the study. Also, by reflecting on my personal beliefs and experiences I may more clearly understand how they influence me as I gather, analyze, and interpret data. "Since researchers are acknowledged as active participants in the research process, it is essential to understand the researcher's location of self" (Hertz, 1997, p. viii). An emphasis on the personal "enables the author to be reflexive and analytical of their own practice" (Gluck & Patai, 1991, p. 4).

Qualitative research has been defined as "the researcher's constructions of other people's constructions of what they are up to" (Geertz, 1973, p. 9). Therefore along with representing the participants constructions, the researcher must also clearly represent her own constructions. Understandably this practice in itself is limited due to writing constraints, what the researcher chooses to reveal or not to reveal, and how well researchers are really aware of their biases as related to the study. Attempting to place myself openly in relation to the research study I have discussed my theoretical and personal stance extensively with colleagues and experts who have helped me to understand this relationship more clearly. The following sections give a brief overview of social constructivism and feminism and how these paradigms relate to my belief system and the study. Along with these formal conceptions I also present my personal

story as a frame of reference. I have also integrated my thoughts about Sidney and happenings in her classroom as they unfold naturally in the sequence of the chapters. As a writer I felt it was natural to integrate the study results and my reflections in telling a story that connects Sidney's story and my story. This way of representing the data seemed more "real" to me, more palpable, more like a life-like portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) call this way of writing "a quest for unity" in representing the data as a whole (p. 274).

My recollections and reflections may assist the reader in the following ways. I used the reflections as "resources" in creating and representing the data (Olesen, 1994, p. 165). My thoughts also provide part of the study results by revealing what my constructions are about caring in the classroom. They also increase the study's rigor by allowing an "audit trail" to be clearly seen (Merriam, 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998; Schwandt, 1997). In a manner similar to Hansel and Gretel's white stones, the reader can clearly follow my thoughts and how they guided the study throughout the dissertation. The white stones are a clear trail through the dense forest of data collection and analysis. The personal reflections also reveal my development in my teaching career as a way of allowing the reader to "know" me more clearly.

Throughout the composition of the paper I consciously kept a goal in mind not to overwhelm Sidney's story with my own thoughts and experiences. I tried to "strike a balance between writing unreflective accounts…and narcissism" (Hertz, 1997, p. ix). I attempted to choose the most telling, significant, and relevant personal stories to weave into Sidney's classroom stories. At times the stories I chose were the first ones that shot into my head as I read my field notes after a day's work of participant observation. At other times stories that I had pushed away and didn't want to deal with would creep upon me while I slept or showered, catching me unawares and demanding I deal with them. It is with some trepidation that I offer these stories. I empathize with Hertz when she asks, "Do we risk appearing foolish when we admit to naivete, ignorance, and/or uncertainty…when we let slip the cloak of authority?" (Hertz, 1997, p. xvi). However, my greatest teachers have been the ones who use "mistakes" as teaching lessons so I will open myself and Sidney up in the hope of disarming the reader and joining together in a learning process.

Social Constructivism

As a social constructivist I believe people construct knowledge in order to make sense of or interpret their experiences. There is not simply a pre-existing reality or truth. Reality or truth occurs in the interactions, interpretations, and symbolic representations that people form through lived experiences. These constructs are deeply embedded in the perspective of the person. Constructions can be described as an attempt to make sense of an experience, limited to the information available to the constructor, and causing dissonance when new information is received. Some constructs, such as religious constructs, may also be extensively shared by a group of people. Constructs may be positive or negative mal-constructions (Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 1985; Schwandt, 1994). The goal of research for a social constructivist is to understand "the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). This definition is at the backbone of this study's methodology. In other words, What do Sidney and myself as interpreter and reflector think about the study?

Social constructivism supports the qualitative research notion that in order to understand Sidney's perspective it was also of utmost importance to be aware of the emergent nature of qualitative research. An emergent study respects the idea that the perspectives of the participant and researchers will guide the study, and help form new questions and avenues of inquiry, but, "this neither eliminates the need for pre-fieldwork preparation nor means the researcher's behavior in the field need be haphazard" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 28). By emergent I also mean that not only did I attempt to understand caring through the process of gathering data, but also throughout the study I was guided to the next research step by what I distilled from the raw data. This flexibility allowed ideas that were not conceived of at the time of the study's inception, yet started to be seen in the emerging data, to inform the study in ways that could not be anticipated. It is important to note here that discussions of Sidney's constructions are interpretations of mine that are influenced by my own mental constructions. Therefore, the research is a reflexive process. Reflexivity means that I do not detail "facts" or "'truths" but actively generate interpretations of my experiences and questions regarding my interpretations (Hertz, 1997). In this way, the study itself was

also socially constructed. In the role of researcher, I perceived the participant's constructions through informed constructions of my own and guided the steps of the research study as I selected different avenues of inquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

As a social constructivist I believe it is important to inquire into Sidney's beliefs and practices as a way of presenting one possibility, one view, or one "truth" regarding caring teaching. I do not desire to find a model that teachers would copy or replicate, but to see how Sidney makes sense of her experiences and constructs the reality that is her perception of her lived experiences with the children she teaches. Teachers and children construct their own understanding of their relationship both individually and in shared understandings through their personal interpretations of their experiences (Crotty, 1998; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). In the same manner Sidney's constructions of what occurred during this study, in relationship with these children, will influence Sidney's future understandings as she works with other children. Also, in a larger context teachers in general may be informed and enlightened regarding their teaching practices as they read about Sidney.

The Context

I want to briefly highlight the importance of context in social constructivism. Social constructivism is inseparable from contextualism. Both concepts are built on the belief that people and experiences must be understood through particular places and times. A contextualist sees a study as embedded in its surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris,1998). One can not see the full story without knowing the context of the story. This view is inextricably meshed with the idea of social constructivism, with both concepts recognizing the importance of the full story. The seeds of my understanding this part of my frame of reference were first planted through my family's experiences in East Africa. My family has a history of being involved with East Africa for over three generations. Our East African story is an important part of me and we cannot be understood without this context. While I did not have a broad perspective of many cultures, I had a deep one of being American, yet Mennonite, and of

my family's East African experiences. This lead me to a beginning understanding that life, perspectives, and reality may be very different for different people.

In this study when I examine the current and past influences on Sidney's teaching I am also valuing the her personal immediate and historical contexts. Also, detailing the web of relationships that exist in Sidney's class, school, and personal life lends understanding to the intricate nature of context. For example, the children's interactions in the school have connections to their home life. An emphasis on the context will be as I analyze the study findings in the paper.

Feminism

Feminism covers a broad theoretical ground and is an umbrella for an array of views, which may be in conflict with each other at times. For the purpose of this study and in keeping with my personal perspective as a woman and a teacher, feminism will be defined as a transformative theory that seeks to make hidden voices heard. By this I mean that feminism seeks to cause change by dismantling oppressive infrastructures and building new frameworks that support the unempowered (Olesen, 1994). Also, feminism is not exclusively a female outlook, but seeks to empower any marginalized person or groups of people (Gordon, 1996).

Looking at the study through a feminist lens within a constructivist paradigm, highlights a goal of obvious importance in this study, which is allowing the teacher's "voice to be heard" (Gilligan, 1982; Olesen,1994). This is of extreme importance in feminist theory since teachers constitute a marginalized group in our society in many ways. Teaching is a feminized profession that bears the stigma of such professions (Gordon, 1996). Ayers (1995) relates telling people at his wife's professional lawyer parties that he is a teacher and dealing with the way their smiles froze and brows wrinkled at the thought of a man in such a low-level profession. While teachers are ubiquitous in America their voices are not sought after and are not heard. They are low paid, given lip service respect, and often feel isolated in their classrooms. While there are some notable exceptions (Ayers, 1989; Goldstein, 1997; King, 1998; Paley, 1999) in the little research that does exist on teacher's caring relationships with children, the teacher's

voice is rarely heard**.** Usually an expert is speaking for her about topics such as caring curriculum reform. In the tradition of Gilligan (1982), I want to hear the teacher's "different voice". I want to hear Sidney's voice and to share it with others.

Caring can be a controversial topic in feminist theory. Experts in the field support the need for caring teachers while pointing out the constraints imposed on teachers by larger systems and the dismissal and disdain that is often linked to the very people and the professions society expects to model caring. Ayers (1989), in a rich, descriptive study of six "good" preschool teachers comments that while caring is often an issue dismissed or denigrated, all six of the teachers discussed their career "in terms of caring at the moment, of compassion and connection" (p. 134). These opposing tensions, a need for caring yet a lack of respect for caring, are reflected in the debate regarding caring in feminism.

Some feminists are concerned that the resurgence of interest in caring, as it is related to women, may be a step backwards to more restrictive roles women have fought to free themselves from (Goldstein, 1994; Gordon, 1996; Manning, 1992). The concern is that portrayals of women as carers "trap women in an oppressive, stereotyped, and tradition-bound set of roles and behaviors" and perpetrate "inequality and subjugation" (Goldstein, 1997, p. 15). I have a great appreciation for this concern that must seem natural to the women who fought so hard to have empowered choices in the lives of women. However, I agree with Goldstein's thoughts on caring and feminism. She believes that by forcing women to reject caring, feminists may now be constraining fellow women in a new type of oppression. "Giving up the ethic of care, allowing patriarchal power to take caring from us, would itself be a form of oppression" (Goldstein, 1997, p. 15).

Whether women have an inherently natural caring disposition is not a subject of my study. I feel such a generalization is dishonorable to my father, who has always been a main carer of me in partnership with my mother, and to my husband with whom I have formed a partnership similar to my parents' relationship. However, we know from history that a woman's role has generally been one of being consigned to the position of primary caregiver. This is certainly still true today in the field of education. The rich history of experience women have in "caring" for children in the field of education seems to

mandate that the wisdom caring teachers have should be investigated, shared, celebrated, and not seen as subjugation (Goldstein, 1994; Gordon, 1996; Manning, 1992). I am proud to stand on the shoulders of the women who have fought to attain the freedom for me to choose whether or not I wish to embrace a profession involving the role of a caring, nurturer, and teacher.

I am also proud as a female and a Mennonite of my heritage. However, when I was growing up the church's stance on female roles was in direct conflict with what I felt to be true. Fortunately, my parents supported my sense of self in positive ways. As a female I believe I am powerful and equal to all other human beings. It was with joy that I found theories, thoughts, and beliefs that reflected my own values. The lens of feminism as socially constructed by me is a primary perspective through which I view the study. This perspective emphasizes the need to reveal the teacher's thoughts, feelings, words, and actions, since she is the unheard expert in the field. My feminist perspective may be seen in all areas of the study. It is the reason I choose the research topic and the research question that asks what the teacher as "expert" believes and why I involve the teacher in data collection, analysis, and seek out their comments on the written product.

Personal Experiences with Caring

Along with the overarching theories that guide this study, my personal story has formed my frame of reference. Social constructivists and feminists also place value on understanding the researcher's story or research stance. My stance becomes a vital piece of this study since it is through my story or lived experience that I make sense of the study data and interpret the data. Constructs are deeply embedded in the perspective of each person, and through examining my personal constructs the reader and I can be more clearly aware of my influences and biases. Everything I reflect on as I write my personal research stance are constructs I hold that influence me.

I feel as though I have been immersed in early childhood education all my life. As the daughter of teachers, I was a young volunteer at schools and privy to private, professional conversations about hopes, joys, and the sense of helplessness school culture can engender in teachers. I used to spend a part of each of my school vacations helping my mother in her first grade classroom. At that time she was in a rigid school system that

did not allow the children to have recess beyond their daily half-hour of formal physical education. My mother professionally negotiated this obstacle through "creative insubordination" (Ayers, 1993, p. 129) and taught me that caring may mean taking risks. She chose a tree far away from the school and developed a year-long integrated curriculum around the tree. The curriculum included art, science, language arts, and math. Most importantly, the children had to run daily to and from the tree in order to "study" it at close range. When she was confronted by her building principal about this unorthodox behavior, my mother shared with him a detailed curriculum--a curriculum I would call caring.

Recently, at my father's retirement tea from a career as an English professor, I was again impressed by the power of caring. As I looked around the room I saw over forty of his former undergraduate students from various states across the country and from overseas who had come to honor him. Some of the relationships were only a semester old and others spanned over thirty years. Each student brought a literary offering they had composed in honor of my father's retirement and presented it to him as a gift. I want to tap into the care that the students felt in their relationship to my father that brought them back, even decades later, to honor him.

The stories of my parents illustrate the context of care I was nested in while growing up. Then as an adult the most basic reason behind my interest in caring in the classroom is that I am a teacher myself. For the past ten years, I have been an early childhood teacher in both public and private school settings, all the while continuing my formal education in the field of early childhood education and child development. When I first taught children, I applied the classroom management skills I had been trained to use. These are teacher behaviors common in the field of education that include control through adult proximity and separating children from each other or the situation when other control techniques do not work.

A guest speaker came to the classroom the first year I taught during group time when two of the most difficult children to work with were not paying attention and disrupting the group. I tried to help by sitting down on the carpet between the children. As I sat with them I laid a hand on both of their backs and they immediately snuggled in under my arms, and across my lap as they contentedly listened for the rest of group time.

As I rubbed the boys' backs I learned the most powerful lesson of my career. What could have been divisive had become cohesive through the power of care. True care that attends to the child's individual need is more effective than any prescribed classroom management or prefabricated teaching technique could ever be.

Since that time I have become deeply concerned by restrictions placed on teachers' ability to care for children. *Caring* has become interpreted as primarily *care taking* which is conducted with an antiseptic, plastic glove mentality. While there is little research available, intuitively we know children need deep care from the heart which is shown through loving interactions and contact such as hugging and playfulness (Brody, 1993; Jernberg, 1979; Noddings, 1984; Tobin, 1997).

In summary my personal understanding and my theoretical frame of reference is important for several reasons. First, through reading my frame of reference readers may be aware of biases I have that may affect my research and influence my interpretations in positive or negative manners. Second, the more I can be aware of myself, my perspective, and my bias, the more clearly I can understand and interpret my role in the study as researcher and participant. The following chapter will detail the methods I used to investigate my wonderings about caring teacher-child relationships.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Background of Significance

Caring is an elusive concept that is used in many manners of speech and contexts from sweet platitudes to intense declarations of love. How then can this soft, ephemeral word be brought into relationship with academia and turned into a concept worthy of rigorous, rich discourse? Johnny Cash (1988) sings about the nebulous yet powerful nature of words like love and caring in his song,
A Thing Called Love. "You can't see it with your eye, hold it in your hand, but like the wind that covers our land…."

The lyrics evoke a sense of helplessness in the face of love gone *wrong* and the possibility of positive transformation, "take your world and turn it all around" when love is *right*. When applying Cash's words about love to a closely related word, caring, I am struck by the irony that such a powerful concept, that is experienced by even the "strongest man," still defies being pinned down, defined and analyzed. I ask myself, "How can I possibly study caring?" But the answer to me seems clear. "How can I not study a concept as important as caring?"

I carefully thought through the pitfalls that may occur when working with a loosely defined concept that has not been closely studied. I determined that the most effective way for me to examine caring teacher-child relationships would be to inquire into the teacher's thoughts about caring and compare this data with observations in their classroom. What I did not know at the time was how the experience of talking with the teachers about such an emotional concept and observing and participating in their classroom would send me on a daily personal, reflective journey into my own past experiences and struggles with caring in the classroom. In the following section I will

highlight bridges I found in the professional literature that helped guide the study and attempt to define the construct caring while simultaneously respecting the word's ambiguity by leaving room in the definition for the reader's thoughts and interpretations.

I have discussed the abstract nature of the word caring and yet, one message that caring declares in all it's uses is a belief by the protagonists in a relationship between the players. "Caring emerges from an encounter between individuals that results in a mutually satisfying outcome. The psychological experience of altruism by the caregiver and of perceived support by the recipient characterizes a caring exchange. An ethic of care develops with time as these caring exchanges become habitual and reciprocated in the context of a personal relationship" (Baker, Bridger, Terry & Winsor, 1997, p. 590). It is this caring relationship, the "connection or encounter between two human beings--a carer and a recipient of care" (Noddings, 1992, p.15) --a teacher and child, that was examined and presented in this paper.

Philosopher Martin Heidegger sees care as "the very Being of human life…we are immersed in care; it is the ultimate reality of life" (Noddings, 1992, p. 15). Bruner (1983) terms the caring relationship as the development of "intersubjectivity," a reciprocity, harmony, or mutual attention that develops between the caregiver and child. Shared thinking, engagement in joint activity, meaning making, and an attempt made by the teacher and child to "achieve mutual understanding of a problem and collaborate to arrive at a solution" (Stremmel, 1999, p. 80) are hallmarks of intersubjectivity or interpersonal understanding.

Rogoff (1990) goes on to expand on this idea in her book, *Apprenticeship in Thinking*. She sees the relationship as one where the "benevolent caregiver" needs to understand not only when to support the child, but also when to allow the child to stretch on her own and maybe even fail at times. The benevolent caregiver that has developed true intersubjectivity with the child knows when failure, within the context of a caring, supporting environment may be helpful to the child. The benevolent caregiver actively supports the child through guided participation as the teacher scaffolds the child's learning and gives the child the appropriate support or care to feel enough confidence to try problem solving, telling her story, and reflecting on the meaning of her representations of knowledge.

Bronfenbrenner claims that "in order to develop, a child needs the enduring irrational involvement of one or more adults in care and joint activity with the child." When asked what he meant by irrational Bronfenbrenner replied, "Somebody has got to be crazy about that kid!" (Noddings, 1984, p. 61). One of these irrational adults should be the child's teacher. For years Bronfenbrenner (1979) has been advocating for a curriculum of caring in schools. "The purpose of such a curriculum would not be to learn *about* caring, but to engage *in* t" (p.53).

Fu and Stremmel (1999) highlight the nurturing aspects of the teacher-child relationship in their chapter *Pedagogy of Caring and Thoughtfulness*. They describe the term pedegological relationship as being one of mutuality, intersubjectivity, collaboration, thoughtfulness, and caring between the primary players of parent and child or teacher and child. This comparison brings attention to the belief that teachers should care for children in a manner similar to parents. The care from teachers would not supercede or undermine parental care in any manner. Instead the teacher would nurture and support the child in a manner that allows the child to move back into the care of their parent at the end of the school day experience with ease.

The caring teacher-child relationship is what relationally oriented teachers have deemed as one that has the ability to make them smile or cry even years after the child has moved on into other classrooms and out of the teacher's daily life. When asked why they teach, most teachers, including the teachers in this study, will say, "'It's the kids!' and will go on to describe the effects their students have had on them as people" (Pianta, 1999, p. 3). This relationship spawns informal discussions in the teachers' lounge, at the lunch table, during the car pool ride home, and in formal meetings such as team meetings, child study, and parent-teacher conferences. This relationship is at the essence of what the concept of school should provide the child and society at large.

The teacher-child relationship has been continuously debated throughout the history of education (Hyson, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). I have connected the study closely with the experts in the field that believe children must feel socially safe, secure, and wanted in the classroom in order to move on to deeper levels of learning. Furthermore, the teacher-child relationship is at the base of all pivotal transitions in school. For example, picture the three-year-old being left in the preschool classroom for

the first time, the kindergarten teacher greeting her class of children after their first ride to school on a bus, and the sixth-grade teacher giving prospective middle-schoolers a tour of their new school. These classic interactions all bring to mind relationship. More than wondering at the teacher's ability to support the child academically these scenarios elicit thoughts of social transitions, endings, and new beginnings. We look at these interactions and wonder, "How will the teacher respond to the child's needs?" "What will the teacher do when the three-year-old cries for her mother, the kindergartner can't find his bus, and the middle-schooler gets lost in the wave of students in the hall?" We hope for a teacher's hand held out in the name of caring and relationship. Only then can the teacher and child move effectively into learning and academics (Axline, 1969; Hyson, 1994).

In keeping with the philosophy, caring engenders care, it is thought that the caring teacher will help children become caring members of their classroom, thus increasing the teacher's effectiveness in helping the children become a community of learners. It can be assumed that when a teacher makes caring, moral decisions in the context of teaching and learning regarding the child, she creates a culture of care in the classroom in which the child may learn how to be a caring member (Garrison, 1998). The teacher's daily moral decisions made in the classroom are "hands on" lessons in caring for children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Noddings, 1984, 1992). As children engage in caring interactions with their teacher they may in turn learn to care for their fellow classmates and their teachers. Caring spreads in rings like the effect of a pebble skipped on water, spreading, lapping, and growing (Carducci & Carducci, 1984). First the child may learn to care for a teacher, then a classmate, and eventually caring may be generalized to other situations. "The teacher and student interaction can be reciprocally transformative" (Garrison, 1998, p. 45), renewing the caring teacher's sense of hope and feeling of success in the possibility of creating a culture of care in her classroom (Nodding, 1984).

Most people probably see a teacher's affective characteristics such as warmth, smiling, support, and affection as desirable. Axline (1969) agrees, saying that "A feeling of friendliness and warmth on the part of the teacher will establish rapport between her and a child that will seem to individualize instruction even though there are forty pupils in the class" (p. 140). The research literature bears out Axline's assertion. In a review of classroom climate research, Angell (1991) reports that teacher respect for student ideas

and teacher interest in students were positively associated with students' respect for others, tolerance, and political trust. Other findings regarding teacher characteristics include that at-risk children who shared warm relations with their teacher, and were thus able to communicate more openly, then tended not to be retained (held back a year) in school. Positive teacher relations with both at-risk and non-risk populations improved outcomes of these samples. At risk was defined as children referred to special education programs and for grade retention (Pianta & Steinberg, 1992). Warm teachers who smile frequently elicited more smiling from two-year-olds than do warm teachers who smile less (Zanolli, 1990). Children who relate to teachers in a positive context may also perceive that they have more control over their lives. Perceived control is in turn a strong predictor of student achievement in school (Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Connell, 1998). In summary, it seems caring engenders care.

The deep irony is that while society implicitly gives parents the right to care for their children many members of society must be convinced that teachers have a caring role beyond imparting academic knowledge (Mazur & Pekor, 1985; Tobin, 1997). Unless this parent-like relationship role, that Pianta (1999) terms "parent surrogate", is formed between the child and teacher the child may not have as secure a base to move into rich, academic learning (Axline, 1969; Hyson, 1994; Sinclaire, 1994).

While caring seems at times more at home in the realm of ethicists and philosophers, the caring relationship between teachers and children as an educational construct is increasingly being found in professional literature. In addition to Nel Noddings' (1992) seminal work, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, and her following works, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*, a review on schools as caring communities in *School Psychology Review* (Baker et al., 1997), and a special caring issue of *The Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education* (Vol. 25, 1993) are several examples that indicate the development of the construct of caring in mainstream educational thought and action.

The construct of caring, in this light, sheds sweet, weak sentiments. This definition of caring is hardy (Noddings, 1984). Caring will endure. For the purpose of this study caring was defined as an engrossment, a mutually satisfying encounter to both

participants that conveys love, dignity, respect, and worth as these encounters deepen into a personal relationship.

Along with investigating teachers' personal understandings of caring in the classroom there is a need to investigate and better understand how teachers go through the process of making caring decisions in the classroom. In the process, how do teachers create relationships with children that foster the development of a culture of care in the classroom and how are these relationships exhibited? The study of Sidney's classroom was an inquiry into the process of how, what, why, and when Sidney made teaching decisions within the context of her caring relationship with the children in her classroom. Through examining a particular instance (Sidney's classroom), the whole (all classrooms), are illuminated (Hertz, 1997; Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis,1998). Inquiring deeply into one teacher's practice provides the opportunity for all teachers to see themselves as they reflect on the choices Sidney has made in her classroom. The reflexive nature of the happenings in Sidney's classroom and the light shed upon my own personal teaching practice and beliefs speak to the power of the particularistic study on the whole (The background of significance or literature review continues in an integrated manner throughout the paper. See Appendix E for a Literature Review that stands on its own).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the teacher-child caring relationship. I have portrayed a vivid picture of caring possibilities by describing richly and deeply the interactions in one public school classroom. Through qualitative inquiry, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered, along with my reflections, review of the literature, and based on my experiences as a teacher for ten years, I have gained a deeper understanding of the caring, teacher-child relationship. It is my desire that as I relate this understanding it may inform other teachers about the caring aspect of teaching. The following question helped guide the study: How is the teacher-child caring relationship manifested through action, words, thoughts, and feelings?

The Characters

Sidney

This particular teacher was chosen partially on the "hunch" my committee chair and I shared that Sidney was a caring teacher. Dr. Fu and I knew Sidney somewhat and felt there was a good chance that her practice would match her training and apparent understanding of children. Sidney's willingness to be part of the study and her ease and comfort in accommodating me as a visitor during an initial classroom observation also contributed to the decision. Sidney's desire to participate was key to the study. The methods of data collection that were employed required Sidney to be comfortable with the thought of interacting with me in a manner similar to that with which she interacts with Kay, her assistant teacher. Sidney remained relaxed during the initial visit and seemed likely to be comfortable and to "be herself" throughout the research study. The fact that Sidney taught young children also contributed to my desire to conduct the study in her classroom. My primary teaching experience had been teaching young children and I wanted to conduct my first extensive study with an age I was familiar with.

I knew Sidney prior to the study, from a time when we had briefly taught at the same school. I respected Sidney and knew that she was a friendly woman who was working on her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction, but did not know her well and had not had the opportunity to teach with her or spend time in her classroom at all. Sidney went into a Master's program straight out of college, after receiving a Bachelor's degree in Family and Child Development with a teaching certificate in Early Childhood Education from the same university. After receiving her master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction Sidney applied with several local counties and was offered the position of preschool teacher at Riverwood Valley School (RVS).

Sidney had initially not seen herself as a preschool teacher. She thought she would want to teach primary school. The year before my research with Sidney, the school where I worked had a last minute need for a preschool teacher and offered Sidney the position. This year of teaching a preschool class of combined three-year-old and four-year-olds was pivotal in Sidney's new awareness of her abilities to work with very young children. This experience was the reason Sidney immediately said yes to becoming RVS' new preschool teacher.

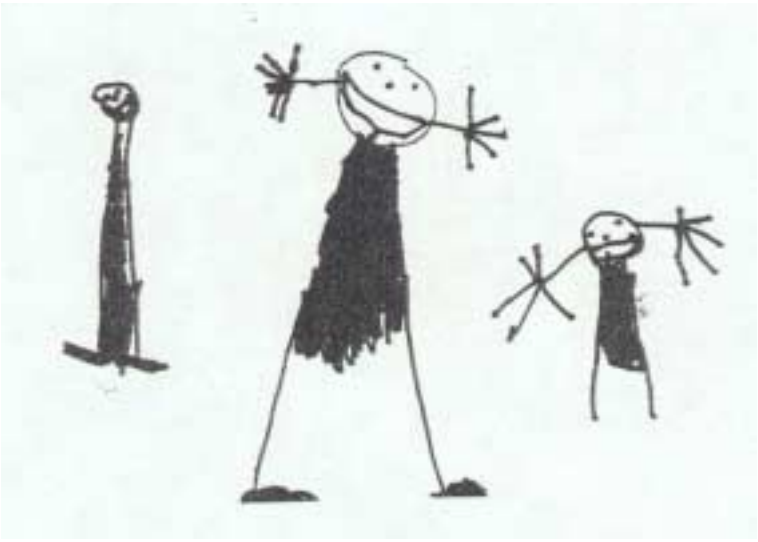
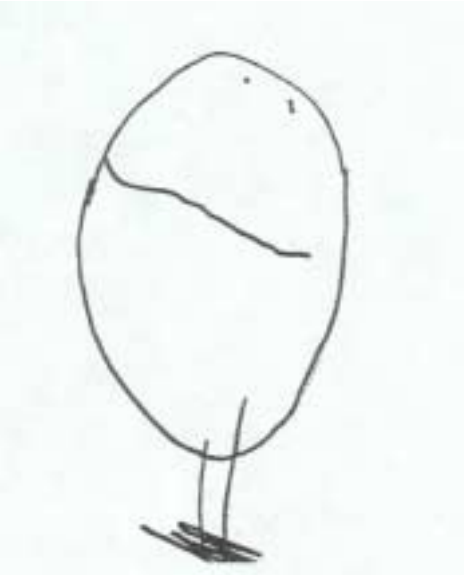


Figure 1: "Ms. Sidney Talking" by Callie

Figure 2 "Ms. Sidney in Pink Shoes" by Michelle



Sidney is a tall woman, made taller by the chunky heels she invariably wears, who moves with easy confidence around her classroom. She moves with so much energy and life that on the rare occasion when Sidney is tired or irritable the sense of less energy in the room is almost palpable. Natural blonde hair bobs smoothly around Sidney's face as she leans low over a child to hear her words. Blue eyes send messages of care and interest to the children when she stoops, squats, or sits in order to bring herself closer to them. Sidney tends to always be fashionably dressed. This may include Capri pants, stacked heels, overalls, red toenails, or pastel t-shirts and cardigans paired with black skirts or pants. Sidney moves through the classroom as easily in her high wedged heels as I have seen her move in running shoes. In brief, Sidney stands out visually among teachers who may dress, as I do, in "teacher" jumpers.

Kay

While Sidney is the lead teacher in the classroom I studied and the main participant of the research study, her relationship with the assistant teacher, Kay, is an important, inseparable part of Sidney's teaching. I had never met Kay until I visited Sidney's class for a pre-study observation. My impression was of a warm, outgoing women who had an easy, effective manner with the children. As I got to know Kay over the course of the study I found these first impressions to be true.

Kay had two years of college in the area of Human Services. Her past three years as an assistant teacher in the preschool at RVS had been so positive that she had decided to go back to school part time and found herself supported by her colleagues and especially Sidney in her choice. As the study progressed, I discovered that Kay was in the midst of deciding whether or not to quit and go to school full time the next year. Many of our conversations were about her desire to get a teaching license, yet her need to be a mom and contribute to finances in her home.

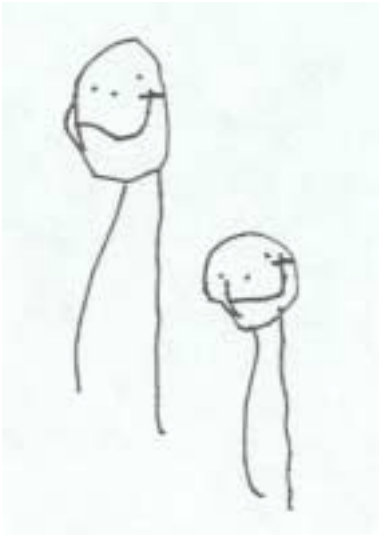


Figure 3 "Ms. Kay Playing Doctor" by Stephen

Kay, at age thirty-five, has the look of a twenty-year-old. She has dark eyes that light up when she greets children and friends in the school, thick short wavy brown hair and bold brown eyebrows and lashes. Kay, like Sidney, greets all people regardless of rank and position with a sunny wave and a greeting of, “Hey, how are you!” She is obviously comfortable in the classroom and may be seen holding several children on her lap as she sits on the floor or on a low preschool chair. Kay and I chat at times about our effort or lack of effort at trying to exercise and watching our weight. Kay says her additional weight came with the birth of her daughter three years ago.

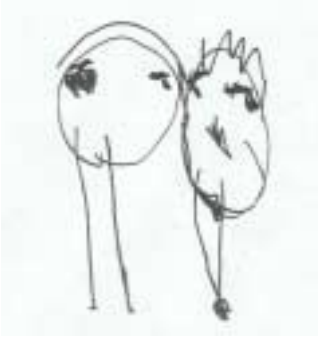


Figure 4 "Ms. Kay Rubbing Backs" by Jeremy

The Children

There were sixteen children in the class, ten girls and six boys. Most of the children were Caucasian. Three of the children had Caucasian mothers and African-American fathers. All of the children were defined as "at-risk" by the school district, which is a requirement for enrollment in the preschool program. To determine if the children were "at-risk," the Virginia Preschool Initiative has experts evaluate the family stress, health or development concerns, and limited understanding of English along with determining families income and educational levels. The teachers reported that over half of the children had one parent who had been in jail, and during the time of the study, four children had a parent in jail. Most of the children came from homes with divorced parents who, according to the teachers, did not seem to be handling the divorce in a functional manner. Many of the parents were on some form of welfare, unemployed, had not finished high school, or were substance abusers. Five children had family members who were involved as perpetrators in founded cases of abuse or sexual abuse. The females in several of the children's families had endured generations of abuse of. Only one child was not on the free breakfast and lunch plan, although her family would have qualified.

When the teachers visited the homes they noted that many of the children had multiple people living in their home in a transient type manner and some of the homes had dirt floors and few amenities. In most cases, the teachers were treated with respect and as welcome visitors. In a few cases, the teachers did not see the home until late in the year since the family seemed cautious about having a professional guest. Sidney expressed her understanding of the families' feelings, which were she felt were due to their past experiences with social workers and the police after having their home reported to authorities by child related professionals.

It is difficult for me to describe the class in the fore mentioned terms since I came to know the children as much more then the limiting description of demographics, that when added up, placed the children "at risk". Sidney and I would describe the children more accurately as "at promise" **(**Swadener & Lubeck, 1995**),** a rich promise seen clearly when one pauses to look beyond grubby faces and into bright eyes, a promise that radiates out from the children's will to survive even the harshest circumstances. This

promise could be seen as the children interacted with Sidney, Kay, and each other in their classroom.

Keeping my concern in mind, the demographics serve the purpose of showing readers that caring can take place in classrooms that are often considered difficult challenges. If this is so, think what could be offered to all our children. Teachers must,

> start with a vision of ourselves as the parents of a large heterogeneous family and ask, What do I want for all of them? For each of them? Then we can commit ourselves to enacting this vision for all of our children (Nodddings, 1992; p. 180).

In brief, Sidney's class of preschoolers is upbeat, hopeful, inquisitive, and eager to come to school. The children swarm around visitors, greeting people with sticky little hands, and drawing them into their play. They are quick to cooperate with each other and to engage in difficult dialogues or discussions about what is right or wrong in their classroom. When I commented to a fellow teacher on how wonderful Sidney's class of children were she quickly turned to me and said, "Oh, but it is due to Sidney's hard work!"

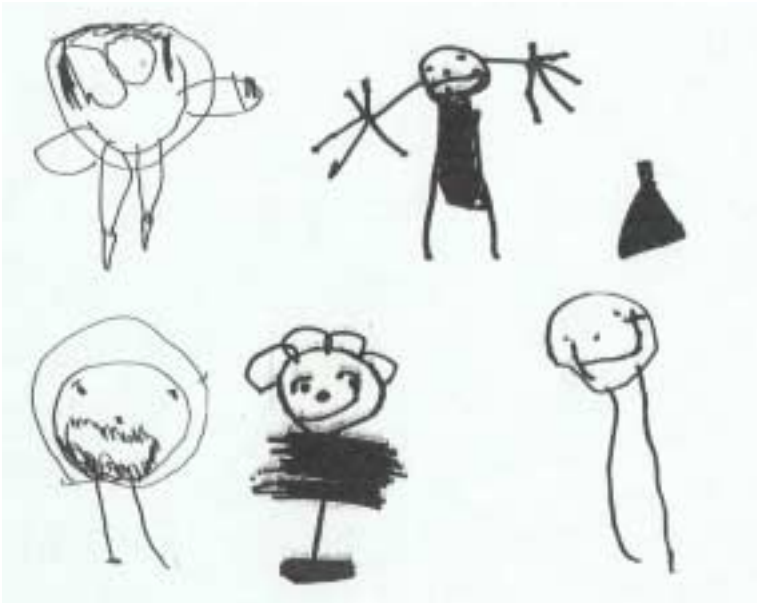


Figure 5: Some of the Children (from left to right, top to bottom Alyssa, Callie, Jackson, Jeremy, Joey, Stephen)

Maria

For the purpose of the study I was also seen as a participant. A qualitative researcher is seen as an inseparable part of the research process (Merriam, 1998). Since I placed myself squarely in the classroom setting as a participant observer, I also carefully examined the way my role added to, changed, enhanced, altered or supported the existing classroom relationships.

The study was a hallmark for me in many ways. I was finishing my tenth year of teaching young children. I had taught kindergarten in public school, taught preschool and kindergarten in laboratory schools, and directed a laboratory school. While part of the study was conducted I was also a lead teacher of four-year-old children in a laboratory school class. The teaching role acted as both a conflict with and a support of my researcher role. Frequently, I could be found bolting from my job as lead teacher, driving down the road--probably too quickly--eating my lunch in the car, headed towards RVS, ready to take on a new role as participant observer. The role juggling and constant immersion with children had been concerns of mine before the study started. I worried that I would become "burned out," confused, or frustrated. I was surprised, however, that I had only one day when I didn't want to go to RVS, but after I arrived and settled into rubbing children's backs I soon relaxed and felt better. My usual feeling was one of being pulled to the school by my desire to be in the research setting and to hear what had happened while I had been absent. It was an exhilarating experience that left me exhausted yet satisfied when my laboratory school and RVS school year came to a close.

I am a short, overweight woman with thick, curly, long, dark brown hair that I hurriedly brush each morning and pull back from my head in a barrette clipped at my nape. Receiving head lice as an initiation present, from one of my students the first week I ever taught school has caused me to keep my hair well pulled back during my whole teaching career. While I have an extensive barrette collection I never seem to have the time to spend in the morning to think about what I am wearing. As soon as I wake up I can almost physically feel work calling me and usually am out the door in half an hour. Consequently when I am complimented on a barrette I frequently can’t remember which one I am wearing. My husband, Brent, worrying about my grooming habits, strongly

suggests I briefly look at myself in the full-length mirror each morning. This sound advice has warded off embarrassment on several occasions

My presence is generally one of comfort and stability in the classroom. Children seek me out to cuddle and confide in, and shoot from my arms to rough house and play with the younger student teachers in my classroom. Parents and colleagues laugh and say, "Nothing makes Maria angry with the children. She always seems to know what to say. Does she ever get angry?" It is hard for them to believe that I have a quick temper and tongue, but have made it my mission that children will feel safe, secure, respected, and cherished in my classroom.

I showed my descriptions of the teachers to Sidney and Kay and told them that the hardest one to write was about myself. Part of my Mennonite upbringing included saying nothing in public that would make one look "proud" of one's self. Sidney commented that she thought I had forgotten to mention my sense of humor. As I looked at the descriptions I realized I had said nothing about any of the teachers' sense of humor. This is a main quality the three of us have in common. Laughter could be heard among the teachers everyday, and sometimes, during the children's rest time, as we reflected on the day our laughter became so loud we had to literally clap our hands over our mouths so we didn't wake up the children. I told Sidney that I hope our humor will be seen throughout our story together. My sense of humor is generally slightly askew, looking from a different view, and sometimes risqué. Kay and Sidney are both open, sunny people who seem to laugh through life. Sidney has a sense of devilishness that will bubble up from time to time and seems incongruous with her innocent blue eyes and open face.

Others

The following people were not direct participants in the study. Through Sidney's relationship with them, however, they become figures that are mentioned throughout the story of Sidney and her class. Valerie, the children's fieldworker, was in the room several times a week. The children seemed to love her and would call out in greeting at her arrival and departure. Midge, the supervisor for the preschool, came by the class almost weekly. Sidney was the lead preschool teacher for the county, so consequently she does a variety of organizational work with Midge, such as ordering books and writing grants. Mr. Clayton, the building principal, was seen a figure of respect mixed with awe, by the

children in the classroom. Tina, a close friend and colleague of Sidney's in the school, came by several times a week and plopped down on the couch for a snack and a chat while the children slept. I also had the privilege of meeting almost every child's parent when they brought their child to school, volunteered in the classroom, or came to after-school functions. Finally, Sidney's and Kay's own families are supporting characters to their teaching careers. The families--parent, child, niece, sister--come in and out of the school visiting in a comfortable, helpful way bringing gifts, snacks, and experiences to the children that enhance the classroom and add another "homey" dimension.

The Setting

Riverwood Valley School

Riverwood Valley School (RVS), VA, was chosen partly due to the principal, Mr. Clayton's, the public school systems', and the teachers' willingness to be in the study (see Appendix F for the sample permission form the teachers signed, Appendix G for the School Districts study permission, and Appendix H for my university's permission) and in part due to geographical convenience. Riverwood Valley School, a primary school with grades preschool through second is a large school with over four hundred children and thirty-three teachers**.** It is located in a small, rural, southern Virginian city. RVS was built in the 1970's and has the layout of an "open school." Open schools were part of major school reform at that time (Rintoul & Thorne, 1975; Stephens, 1974)**.** As with other open schools across the country RVS 's kindergarten and preschool wing no longer show any obvious signs of the open school philosophy being in existence. All of the rooms in the kindergarten wing now have partitions from the floor to the ceiling or teachers use furniture to block off the classroom perimeters. There are no longer any large group meeting place for several of the classes to use at once. All that remains is the frustration of not having walls and doors, of being able to hear other teachers and children all day through partitions and the need to have similar schedules due to the sharing of lights, bathrooms, and other features.

Fortunately for Sidney, the kindergarten teacher to the left of her classroom, Mrs. Mason, who was also Sydney's mentor, was a soft spoken, kind woman who could not be heard when she was teaching next door. However, on the other side of Sidney a teacher,

Mrs. Little, could be heard off and on during the day using punitive threats and a negative assertive discipline system to control her class. The comment that made Sidney and Kay the most angry was when Mrs. Little could be heard telling her class that they were acting so badly they should be back in preschool. When this was heard the preschool teachers' eyes flashed and Sidney and Kay would look up from what they were doing and roll their eyes angrily at each other.

Virginia Preschool Initiative

Sidney's preschool is part of the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Sidney described her preschool class as a program for "at risk" children, which is a term she doesn't care for. I went on-line to the state department site and read more about Virginia's intent for the preschool program:

> The Virginia Preschool Initiative was created to benefit children at-risk for educational failure and not enrolled in a preschool program. The program may be provided in schools, Head Start centers, or private child care facilities. All programs will include: quality preschool education, health services, social services, parent participation, transportation, and will operate during school hours (Virginia Preschool, 2000).

A colorful brochure provided by the state and customized for the local county was given to prospective parents of Sidney's classroom and provided more information for me. On the cover, four children, drawn in a cartoon fashion, of varying skin tones, two boys and two girls, hold hands, smiling out at the reader. An overview of the program states that snacks and bus transportation are provided, class size is limited to sixteen, and each site has a professional team which consists of a teacher certified in early childhood education, an instructional assistant, and a family service worker. From my work in Sidney's classroom, I know that the service worker is actually responsible for two schools. To be eligible for the program, children must be four by September thirtieth of the year they begin school; selection factors include "family income, educational level of parents, family stress, health and developmental concerns, limited understanding of English, and others." Goals of the program are to assist in readiness for kindergarten and

to support parents and children in becoming familiar with the school environment and expectations.

One whole section of the brochure is devoted to parent involvement and depicts a drawing of an African-American mother and child holding hands and smiling. This section states,

> The Virginia Preschool Initiative Program recognizes the key role parents play in their child's development and education. Parents are expected to be active partners. Parents are also encouraged to visit the class, volunteer, go on field trips, attend conference and parent meetings, and be open to home visits by the family service worker (Virginia Preschool Initiative, Brochure, 2000).

Choice of Setting

I first visited Sidney's classroom for reasons unrelated to the study. At the time of the visit I was working with Dr. Fu, my committee chair, on choosing a classroom for my research study. I initially had decided to try to be in a public school, kindergarten room since I wanted to be with an age that I considered my specialty area. I also wanted to conduct my study in a public school setting since I thought teachers sometimes feel that private care does not have the restrictions on caring that public schools may have. However, Dr. Fu and I had agreed that more than the age of the children, the teacher's desire to be in the study was of importance since I wished to spend in the teacher's classroom it was important that she wanted me there.

As I observed Sidney, I began to wonder if her classroom would be a possibility. I had not considered preschool as a study setting simply because I knew there were not many preschools in the local public schools. I began to get excited as I thought about working in a preschool class of "at risk" children. The children reminded me so much of the first children I had taught in a public school kindergarten. I also felt that preschool was another specialty area of mine and that I would have a rich body of experiences to bring to the study.

Time Spent in the Setting

I began the participant observation part of the study in mid February and concluded it at the end of May. Some activities such as interviews, reflections, and dialogues regarding the writing up of the data continued until the next winter. For the first three months, I was in the room part time. I was able to be there four afternoons a week and one day all day. During the month of May I went to the school all day, everyday. By all day I mean, if Sidney was in the school I was in the school. I also began to arrive at school at 7:00 in the morning so I could reflect and make notes on the school as it "woke up". I also made a great effort to spend my vacation, such as spring break, in Sidney's classroom. During the time of the study that I was at RVS part time, I shifted my schedule as much as possible so that I could be at the school on different days. This allowed me to attend all the specialties with the children, such as library time, and to obtain a fuller picture of the preschoolers and teachers school week overall.

Study Methodology

A Case for My Study

When I proposed this study, I was not initially sure that it was a case study. Therefore, I described the study as a basic qualitative inquiry. At the time I sought to "understand a phenomenon, a process…the perspective, and the worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). While this still is the primary goal of this study there came a point when I decided that the study was a "case," that the choices I had made, guided by the data and the primary participants, had caused the study to evolve from a basic design to a case design. I wrote in my journal:

> When I was trying to decide what type of research design I was performing for my dissertation we finally said it was a basic qualitative inquiry. I think now though that it really has become a case study. It is bound by the limitations of the one classroom. It is particular in the sense that it looks closely at one public school preschool teacher's experience with a special needs population. The case sheds light on a variety of wholes. It can be linked to all of Virginia's public preschools, public school in general, preschools in general (Journal, Spring 2000).

Merriam (1998) defines a case study as different from other types of qualitative research in that "they are intensive descriptions and analysis of single unit or bounded system" (p. 19). A case is the study of an intrinsically bound phenomenon that uses intensive holistic description of a single unit of study (Stake, 2000). Concurring with Merriam's definition, Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) add, "the case study method is essential if social science is to grapple with major social issues" (p. 28). Wolcott (1992) is not surprised when study's evolve into a case, as I was. In fact he says that a case study should not be seen as a method or strategy but as an end product of field oriented research (p. 36). Case study researchers are exhorted to take advantage of the rich detail and stories that case data collection provide and write the case in a story fashion (Naumes & Naumes, 1999; Richardson, 1994). Thus, the title of this dissertation: *A Teacher Story*.

Seven Blind Mice: A Methodological Tail

In a classic Indian fable, *The Blind Men and the Elephant* (Saxe, 1963), one blind man after the other ventures into the jungle hoping to discover and report back to the group what new presence the men have sensed. One day after another a new man returns to the group reporting the "presence" is first a pillar, snake, cliff, spear, fan, and finally a rope. On the seventh day, the men are left unsatisfied, arguing, and perplexed. The listener/reader realizes the fable's lesson: if the men had pooled their independent observations, which showed only a small part of the story, the collective information would have revealed the whole story… a leg, trunk, side, tusk, ear, and tail of an elephant.

Amy, a slight child who rarely speaks, is awkwardly dragging a large, glossy, black book, a version of Saxe's tale, over to me. Amy hesitantly joins me on the floor under the loft beside a large rush basket of books. She stands and waits, not seeming to even look at me. I wait also, pushing down the impulse to speak for her and state her apparent intent. Sidney has been gently encouraging Amy to talk in order to make her needs known. Amy has been part of Sidney's classroom for almost six months and has known me for two months, but still blends quietly into the background if she feels "put on the spot". She can, however, be more frequently seen laughing with friends on the

playground, joining into games and addressing Sidney with a whispered request such as "Can I go to the bathroom?"

Amy, used to waiting, out waits me. "Do you want something, Amy?" I softly ask, bending to peer at her face. Amy nods, ducking her head so jagged, slick bangs slide over her eyes seeming to shield her from my direct comment and eye contact. Again we wait. The classroom moves quickly, shifting behind Amy like a backdrop to a play. Will she step up and speak in soliloquy with me or slip away as she has in the past, overcome with stage fright? I can feel myself giving in. I am going to state Amy's obvious desire for her. I try one more gentle probe. "What do you want?" Suddenly it slips out, a seemingly small event in a busy classroom, but a truly momentous one in my relationship with Amy and her relationship with teachers. "Will you read this to me?" she whispers, shrugging her shoulders and shifting the book she clutches. As Amy settled down in my lap I have a deepened sense of connection with her. I feel Amy's trust and acceptance of me as a classroom member.

I read to Amy Ed Young's *Seven Blind Mice* (1992), a visually stunning version of *Seven Blind Men*. Young depicts each mouse in a solid blaze of color moving on a black background. These striking illustrations seemed to appeal to Amy as we read about Red mouse venturing out on Monday to feel what seems to be a pillar. Remembering that Amy had been working hard with Sidney on color identification, I stop to ask her what the color of the next mouse is. "Blue!" This becomes our small game throughout the book until on the final page Amy and I view with pleasure all of the colorful mice clambering across what *now* is obviously an elephant's back. The story ends with a "Mouse Moral": "Knowing in part may make a fine tale, but wisdom comes from seeing the whole" (p. 35).

Later, rereading my notes from that day, "Amy just talked to me for the first time" (Field Notes, March 23, 2000), I reflected on how *The Seven Mice* story is an excellent metaphor for triangulation and confirmability in my study. Each mouse separately had only small pieces of information about the elephant. When the mice worked together they discovered the whole," true" picture. In the study, the observations, interviews, journaling, and artifacts helped me to uncover the whole picture to find elephants where before I saw only disguised hints of their existence.

I thought also of the Amys in the study. What am I missing in the study because it is blending into the background, and how can I continue to challenge myself to look closely with an open mind and reflect thoughtfully on the data and experiences I have acquired? How can I represent Sidney and the children, as evident as an elephant moving into our classroom? The following sections detail the methods I employed to study Sidney and her class of children in a manner evocative of the blind mice and elephant metaphor I have described.

Participant Observation

One of the primary inquiry methods that I chose to use for the study, to examine the "elephant", was participant observation. Participant observation is what Wolcott lightheartedly terms "being there," but on a more serious note he draws a clear distinction between simply taking up space at a research site and actively "being there" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 95). Participant observation involves the researcher observing the teacher's classroom and balancing observations with participation in classroom events. Balance between participation and observation is the key to gathering a large amount of information yet interacting in appropriate, natural ways (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

I chose participant observation as my primary data collection method for several reasons. Participant observation allowed me to enter into and become a part of the setting. It allowed me to feel confident that I was attempting to see and experience the whole "elephant" and not just left holding a spear, rope, or fan. As a teacher of young children, I know that the full context of the classroom's dynamics is difficult to understand if you cannot actually be in the classroom "rubbing up against children" (Graue & Walsh, 1998). Observing without participating would have been difficult, since children naturally want to interact with adults. Also, since I wanted to closely discuss teacher behaviors, I felt my co-teaching helped Sidney and Kay feel more open during discussions and allowed me to see their perspectives more intimately. Lastly, as a teacher and supervisor, I know how difficult it is to be in the room and not help the teachers and children regardless of my best observation intentions. Therefore, I used participant observation as the main data collection method.

Note taking while participating was difficult, and I used a combination of actual notes and “head notes”. Observational notes were taken during periods of observation only. What Graue and Walsh calls “head notes” were mentally noted and written down at the next possible moment. These notes are not considered weaker then observational notes and added a richness of synthesis that the observational notes did not have. For example, when I worked with the teacher's they would often turn to me and say in one statement what hours of observations and an interview might not get at. These head notes are direct and cut to the core of the teacher's feelings since they are busy, have chosen to share a thought, and do not have time to discuss it at that time in a round-about fashion. I took time after every visit to write head notes and journal about the overall experience (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

I was introduced to the data collection technique of participant observation when I read William Ayers' (1989) book, *The Good Preschool Teacher*. Ayers observed teachers during their teaching day from inside the teacher's classroom and worked as an aide or consultant with them. After observing in the classrooms, Ayers wrote up detailed notes and then met with the teacher to go over their impressions of his notes. These meetings helped clarify his writings and on occasions where Ayers and the teacher were in disagreement, he wrote about the disagreement in the final product in a professional manner. For example, he wrote his opinion and then said, however, the teacher felt that ... was the case. Ayer's book gave me a working example of participant observation that I tried to implement in my study.

Juggling Multiple Roles

For the study, a four-fold typology of participant observation helped me understand the varying roles that I held as I gathered data in the classroom. First, there is the role of *complete observer*, then *observer as participant*, then *participant as observer*, and finally *complete participant* (Atkinson & Hammersley; 1994). During the study, I functioned as *complete observer* during times when I would check with Sidney and make sure it suited for me to sit back and observe. These times were almost always during group times, such as story time, lunch, rest, or on the playground. The nature of an early childhood classroom makes it almost impossible for an adult in the room to sit back

during free play times and not pitch in to help. Indeed, even when I was sitting out of the way during group times, I would often be surrounded by children headed to the carpet area from a bathroom break who stopped to ask what I was doing, lean against my lap, or say, "Aren't you coming to group time?"

For the first several weeks of the study, *observer as participant* was the the most accurate description of my role. During this time, I was becoming familiar with the class schedule, learning to know the children, Sidney, and Kay, and becoming accustomed to my role. After I had been in the study setting, longer I became an accepted figure in the classroom and usually held the role of *participant as observer*. As a participant observer I had many different roles.

One of my primary role was to help the teachers with classroom set-up, implementation of lessons, and clean up. The role this is most closely akin to, in the public school classroom, is that of an instructional aide. This meant I had a lot of concerns about not having my role conflict with the role of Kay's. In this area, Sidney's leadership style was of great benefit to me. Sidney believes that the children should not be able to tell that she is the lead teacher. Sidney's goal for Kay was that she be included in all aspects of teaching, such as planning, assessment, discussion about children, etc. When I first arrived at the school, I was surprised when Sidney repeatedly had all of the morning set-up work done before Kay arrived at the school. Sidney arrived at the school at 7:30 and Kay arrived at 8:00. Both women were punctual and would talk from 8:00 to 8:30 when the first children would begin to arrive.

When I asked Sidney to describe Kay's role in the classroom she told me that she deliberately used that half an hour to talk with Kay about the children, the children's families, and their plans for the day. This was Sidney's first year teaching at RVS and she felt this "talk time" allowed her both to quickly get to know Kay well and to work effectively together. Sidney is supported by Noddings, (1996) who says that in order for teachers to establish caring relationships with children there needs to be opportunities for "far more professional conversations. Time should be provided for teachers who are working with a particular group of students to talk to one another about these students--their growth, problems, needs and aspirations" (p. 169). Sidney's inclusion of Kay and

Kay's naturally warm personality meant that I rarely felt out of place as I cleaned paint spills, set out rest cots, and prepared snack alongside Kay and Sidney.

A second primary role of mine was that of playmate with the children. This role was modeled closely after the teachers. Both Sidney and Kay spend a part of each day playing with the children both in a dramatic sense and in a playful sense. For example, Sidney can be seen several times a week at a "beauty salon" with several children curling, spritzing, and styling her hair with items from a salon prop box that is always available in the class. Kay may be seen playing dog or cat with some of the children who enjoy acting like animals. Kay may be the owner putting out milk in a bowl for a child who is pretending to be a small-lost kitten.

After I had been in the classroom several months, I also took on the role of lead teacher. At first I had a small group time with children who rode the second bus. While Sidney and Kay got the first bus children settled into the right bus lines, I would read a story, teach a song, or play a small game with the remaining children. Finally, I began to plan several group times each week and several activities for the free choice portion of the day.

There were several times when it was appropriate for me to solely *observe.* Even when I chose to sit back and observe I still was responsible for helping to monitor the children's safety and behavior. I did not hold the role of *complete participant* at all since I was involved in the study during the entire experience.

Consultant, Colleague, Friend

Graue and Walsh (1998) caution the participant observer that no matter what your hopes are or how you introduce yourself to the participants of the study there will be a variety of ways the participants interpret the role of the researcher. In one study, Graue introduced herself in the same manner to each teacher she was working with and was treated anywhere from an observer to a consultant to an outsider. She suggests that while this may be initially frustrating, the variety of roles lend themselves to a full and rich picture.

I found that initially Sidney and especially Kay treated me as a welcome consultant. This meant that they were reluctant to ask me to do specific jobs in the

classroom so I initiated much of the work I engaged in. Sidney also repeatedly thanked me for my help each day and both teachers asked my opinions on many situations.

After I had been in the classroom longer, this relationship changed to one that was more colleague, friend, and consultant, in that order. I had known Sidney prior to the study, but had not had an opportunity to teach with her or to know her well. As Sidney's wedding approached I was invited to many of the functions and started to see her and Kay more often socially and developed a friendship with them beyond a collegial relationship.

Unstructured Interviews or Conversations With a Purpose

Another data collection method involved conversations with the two teachers. I use the term conversations since I had no interview guide and tried to keep the dialogue similar to what might occur in a natural professional conversation, including sharing my own experiences at times. My goal for the "conversation" interviews, paraphrasing Seidman (1998, p. 2), was to understand the experiences of the teachers and the meanings they made of their experiences.

Unstructured interviews fit the proposed qualitative study and the guiding contextual, social constructivist, and feminist theories well. The use of conversational interviews acknowledges “that individual respondents define the world in unique ways” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). This type of dialogue has been described as “conversations with a purpose,” and implies an exchange between two equals (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124). Conversational interviews should be utilized when the researcher has an idea of the questions they want to cover and wishes to see how the respondent will unfold these issues in a natural, emergent sense.

Caring in the classroom is a topic that has not been researched extensively. The conversations provided room for the respondent’s worldview to emerge about areas of the construct that have yet to be conceived (Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Three scheduled, tape-recorded conversations of an ninety minutes or longer allowed me to collect teacher histories and follow-up on more sensitive questions.

Dialogic Conversations as Interviews

Dialogic interviews were also used as a data collection method that supported the use of participant observation. Dialogic interviews are the actual, naturally occurring conversations between the researcher and participant that occur as they work together. These casual interactions or dialogic interviews are not to be ignored or trivialized. They may be serendipitous moments that point the way for some future decision regarding data analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Dialogic interviews took place while I was "hanging around" RVS and the participants (Merriam, 1998). I may have asked the teacher a question of clarification, she may have offered added information to me in an aside, or we may have discussed the daily routine in a manner that is significant to the study.

From my experience as an early childhood teacher I know that time is a luxury during the day. It is not uncommon for teachers to feel they don't even have time to use the bathroom. Therefore, time to talk is also at a premium. As a researcher I needed to understand the importance of the dialogic interview and be aware of the nuggets of information that were often revealed in conversation by the copier, in the cafeteria, during playground supervision, while teachers were working hard and on the run (Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

Such conversations allowed me, as the researcher, to follow up on something I had seen, heard, or thought about. These conversations took place in two primary ways. One was on the move, dashing down the hall, setting up the classroom, or helping children. Other conversations had a more leisurely pace as we rubbed children's backs and whispered, or sat on the couch and talked as the classroom slumbered around us. Opportunities for leisurely conversations also occurred when the children had recess each day. Teachers could chat while scanning the playground, counting heads, and eyeing the playground perimeter.

Findings from conversations were reflexively shared as I tried to be aware of the self and other as the teaches and I interacted (Hertz, 1997). I dialogued with the teachers about the their perspective and reviewed data with them to gain their added input after interviews had taken place.

Dialogue Journal

Another way of collecting data included a dialogue journal, using an e-mail format that Sidney chose. Sidney and I used the journal to reflect with each other in a written format regarding teaching incidents that had occurred in the classroom. Journaling is considered a powerful qualitative method for gathering data. As a qualitative method the journal may be a place for capturing small thoughts that would be lost or deemed insignificant in a larger format. A journal is also where new questions can be discovered and asked. The journal may provide time for reflection and renewal and help inform the participants and the study. (Clandinin & Connelley, 1994; Goldstein, 1997; Routman in Goldstein, 1997).

The "dialogue" journal is a common teaching technique in elementary education that is a record of writings between the classroom teacher and her students (Routman in Goldstein, 1997). Teachers and children may write back and forth regarding an issue, a book they are reading, or personal thoughts. The concept of a dialogue journal has also been applied to qualitative research in early childhood settings between the teacher and the researcher. The teacher and the researcher write back and forth to each other in a reflexive manner (Goldstein, 1997).

In this study the dialogue journal focused on interactions between the teacher and the children and other thoughts of the teacher which were relevant to the study. Keeping the journal was one of the more difficult aspects of the study due to the busy lives we lead. However, it is significant that some key ideas I was pursuing were confirmed in the e-mail dialogue. Not only did the journal provide another source for triangulation, but it also allowed Sidney to share her perspective in a different way, through the written word.

Artifacts

Artifacts in the study were used to support and further illuminate primary evidence from participant observation. Artifacts were seen in two main ways. One type were records the teachers made, such as documentation panels, displays, notes to parents and children's portfolios. A second type of artifact was serendipitous gifts from the children to the teachers and me such as scribbled notes, flowers, or a piece of art. A final type of artifact included ones I deliberately solicited such as a drawing the children made

of their teacher and them interacting together. Artifacts provide an important source of data regarding the material culture of a study (Hodder, 2000).

Data Collection and Analysis

Three main phases of data collection and analysis occurred over the course of the study. The first was an initial analysis that took place during the data collection. The second was a content analysis after the study was over, and the final analysis was thematic. I will describe the significant contribution all three processes had to the study findings, representation, and my personal understandings of analysis.

Throughout the research study data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. During data collection there is a continuos cycle where I read, reread, reflected, and interpreted the data which prompted new questions which in turn sensitized me as to what to look for in the next stages of data collection. I read my participant observation notes were read at the end of each day and made notes and personal journal entries regarding reflections, questions I wanted to ask, and further avenues of inquiry I might investigate. Interviews were audio taped and immediately transcribed. The teacher was asked to review her part of the interviews for clarification. Participant observation notes, transcripts of interviews, artifact analysis, the dialogic journal, and my personal journal were thoroughly read, reread, and read again. Initial categories of data were formed and reformed as connections emerged between different data sources. Thus, data collection and initial analyses were cyclical (see Figure 6).

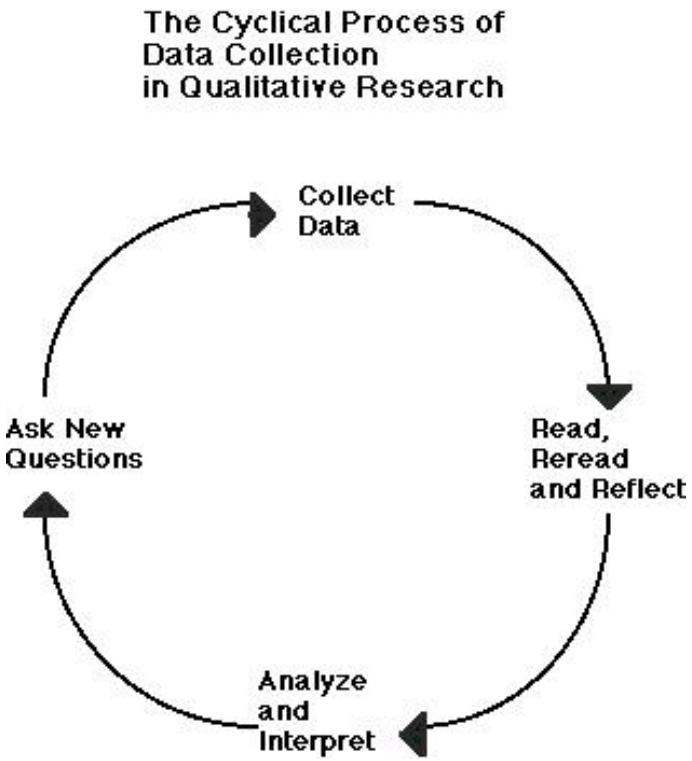


Figure 6: The Cyclical Process of Data Collection

In addition to the ongoing analyses, I conducted a content analysis after the study was complete. Content analysis is a form of qualitative analysis that is connected historically to quantitative analysis. In content analysis one codes data and then places it into similar categories or themes. The purpose is to communicate meaning by relaying how often a certain thought or idea occurred (Merriam, 1998; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Schwandt, 1997). This analysis was extensive and difficult. I content analyzed participant observation notes, journal entries, interviews, and artifacts such as children's portfolios, displays and photos. The analysis was effective in helping me to see clearly how much data existed to support themes and what sources the data had emerged from for triangulation. However, after reviewing the analysis with my committee chair, we

decided that content analysis did not lend itself to the whole, rich picture I wanted to portray of the study results.

I then went back to the raw data, setting the content analysis themes aside, and re-analyzed the data using a more general thematic analysis. This time I looked for emergent themes that portrayed the "souls" of the teachers and children. In doing so I sought to "elevate their portrayals from the sphere of individual scenarios to the realm of more universal human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 238).

I examined the data in a more holistic manner, looking for stories, vignettes and anecdotes (Rossman and Rallis,1998). I also examined the context in which the stories occurred and made connections between the stories I found with the content analysis I had conducted earlier. Interestingly, I found that by using both a narrow lens for content analysis and a broader lens for thematic analysis emerging themes were strengthened in confirmability. Not only did I have a powerful story to support findings, but I also had pages of smaller data with supporting data from content analysis findings.

Study Confirmability

A case study may bring up an issue for people who are unfamiliar with qualitative research or do not share the same philosophy as a qualitative researcher. This issue is what Merriam (1995) calls a question of "What can you tell from an N of 1" (p. 51)? I would answer, "This is an excellent question." If the qualitative researcher can't answer this they do not fully understand their methodological stance. In my research study I examined the phenomena, caring and the caring situation, in order to more fully understand caring from the perspective of the participants. The study findings then are "generalizable" to the extent that people reading the study feel it may be to their situation. In other words, the confirmability of the study is seen "in how well the study does what it is designed to do" (p. 52).

Reliability and validity are important terms in quantitative research that do not translate easily to qualitative research and may cause unnecessary confusion. In qualitative research validity and reliability are sometimes referred to as confirmability or trustworthiness in order to keep confusion of terms to a minimum (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). The term confirmability refers to both the possibility of the findings of a study being confirmed by another and to the link between the data and the researcher's interpretations. In the following section will detail the ways this study will be confirmable.

In qualitative study triangulation, "seeing the whole elephant," is a primary way the researcher establishes confirmability of the study. Triangulation, or the use of several methods, sources, or investigators to confirm emerging data, is a notable strength of this study (Merriam, 1998). The study is triangulated in four significant ways (Janesick, 1994). The first is data triangulation. Data was gathered through observations, participation, dialogue journals, conversations, dialogic interviews, and artifact analysis. The second area of triangulation was participant triangulation. The teacher, the assistant teacher, and myself all interacted in the classroom setting and offered different experiences and perspectives to the study. The third area of triangulation was that of investigator triangulation. In this study the teacher participated as an investigator, and my committee chair's assistance was also sought during data interpretation. Finally, theory was triangulated in this study. As previously stated, social constructivism, feminism, and the study context are perspectives that frame and help interpret the data (Janesick, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998).

I also conducted member checks which involve taking the data back to the source, to elicit their opinion on the analysis throughout the study (Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rollis, 1998; Schwandt, 1997; Wolcott, 1995). The dialogue journal constitutes one major form of a member check. In the journal, Sidney and I wrote back and forth reflexively as both participants and researchers. After data had been initially categorized, as well as later in the study, the teacher and assistant teacher were also asked for their reactions regarding the emerging categories.

Long-term observation at the research site was another way I helped increase confirmability of the study. The long-term observations helped to increase the repeated observation of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). This allowed me to tell if an observation was a more commonly occurring event or different and novel. As the study progressed I also felt that the teachers and became more comfortable and acted more natural.

Peer examination, the asking of colleagues to critique data findings as they emerge, also strengthens the confirmability of the study. Peer examinations occurred as my committee chair, committee members and fellow doctoral students gave me feedback on possible findings. The teacher and assistant teacher's feedback may also be seen as a peer examination since we are all early childhood educators.

Confirmability may also be established through participatory modes of research. This means having participants involved in all stages of the research (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the participants were involved in all stages, except for the conceptualization of the study. I am the only participant that is involved in the initial conceptualization. However, participatory modes of research may be deceptive. It is important to understand that while I attempted to involve the participants as much as possible, as researcher I still technically have full control. For example, I sifted through the data and brought the stories I wanted to discuss to the teachers. Also, the observational data represents my writing style and way of presenting the data the teachers read and commented on. As a feminist I believe strongly in sharing the research process. It can be an empowering experience for all parties involved. Yet I agree with Gluck and Patai (1991) in the importance of acknowledging the potential for a shift from *empowerment* to *appropriation* when the researcher takes the story and leaves the field.

Finally, clarifying the researcher's bias at the beginning of the research process will increase the study's confirmability. I have done this extensively in both the choosing of my theoretical framework and my statement of personal frame of reference previously detailed (Hertz, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998).

Composing the Story

The writer's object is--or should be--to hold the reader's attention….
I want the reader to turn the page and keep on turning to the end.
~Barbara Tuchman in Richardson (1994)~

After the participant observation part of the study was over I began to compose the findings of the study in a holistic, narrative, manner, trying to emphasize Sidney's story. After I wrote a rough draft, both Sidney and Kay met with me so that I could gain

their perspective on my interpretations of the data. The teachers added input, strengthened the data, and pointed out weaknesses, as well as areas that needed clarification. However, at times Sidney, Kay, and I had different views regarding data interpretation. At these times, I added the teacher's comments along with the professional literature and my thoughts. This gave multiple perspectives regarding the research (Ayers, 1989).

Sidney and I met several times over pasta in quiet settings, where we could wrangle over words, meanings, and interpretations with limited interruptions. At times we were so deep in the data, the waitress had to discreetly cough to get our attention. Sidney frequently bought my dinner. I couldn't decide if she felt sorry for the poor graduate student that I am or was thankful for my help in the classroom. From the perspective of a researcher, I was never able to convince her that I was the grateful one for the manner in which she gave me access to her professional life. The Linguini Alfredo was excellent, the discussions stimulating, and her company even better.

Throughout the data analysis process and the writing of the results, I had a formal meeting with my committee chair every two weeks. Along with these discussions about the study, we also e-mailed and talked on the phone at times when I had questions or she had inspiration. At the outset of the meetings, Dr. Fu would offer me a bottled water or soda from her small office fridge and at times I would bring along her favorite kind of cookies that I bake, cranberry-white-chocolate-oatmeal. After the preliminaries were over we would wrestle with the questions that weighed on my shoulders and discuss Dr. Fu's insight Dr. Fu on my latest draft. These meetings with my committee chair were opportunities for me to reflect, rethink, and eventually confirm the findings I was seeing in the data.

Quotes from interviews and observations were adhered to for the main part of the words and meanings. I edited the dialogue, taking out distracting "ums", and "ahhs" where they were not helpful. In some cases dialogue was not quoted verbatim, but was reconstructed soon after the observation process keeping as closely as possible to the original wording (Graue and Walsh, 1998). Now that the why and how have been addressed, characters introduced, and scene set, I want to move into the heart of the study. What happened? What it may mean?

Chapter 4

ENVIRONMENT

As a teacher I cannot undo the damage that has been committed to a child,
but, I can create an atmosphere in the classroom where the child
can live his or her childhood more fully, which may result in an eagerness to learn.
~ Caroline Sinclaire ~

I recently took the time to slip away from the computer and make the familiar commute to Sidney's classroom, through a small town, past ubiquitous business strips of fast food restaurants, department stores, and gas stations to the old heart of the neighboring city, where the parking meters still take a penny. Riverwood Valley School, a modern building, sits in juxtaposition, on the edge of an old downtown court square a block from an abandoned feed mill. When I make this drive, or at times early in the morning, I think of Sidney pounding along the same road in her deep green SUV, a McDonald's coke in hand to help her shake the sleep from her body, humming and singing to the strains of country singer Faith Hill. Sidney, like myself, is a morning person when it comes to work, and may be seen at the school during the hours when only the school janitors and cooks are stirring.

Today I was lured away from my writing by the news that Sidney had been given a larger classroom. One of my first impressions of Sidney's room last year had been its small size and lack of windows. It is certainly not the smallest classroom I have seen, and I have taught in a room of similar size. However, Sidney's preschool class was in stark contrast to the large kindergarten rooms that swept out across the vast pod located beside it. Sidney did not dwell on the size of the room saying,

> *When I first saw my classroom the size didn't affect me. It was just the dinginess that was gross. I also think it was because it was in summer time. The walls and rug were hideous; there was nothing bright and clean. But I was still rather*

excited because I thought of all the things that I wanted to do. I got a bright rug, painted a bookshelf white, bought baskets for books, and bought five or six different kinds of plants. I found out I couldn't paint the walls, reposition the loft, and couldn't hang anything without a work order. So, I just went in and cleaned everything and bought [with her money] over a hundred little tubs to organize everything in the classroom and made labels for each tub. All the teachers joked with me thinking it wouldn't last --they thought the kids would destroy the room within the week -- but it worked.

"American teachers have always contended with funding limitations, and thus have been forced to make compromises with regard to indoor space. The unfortunate result as seen in many daycare centers and schools for young children has been a set of discouraging physical conditions, especially the lack of natural light and uncluttered space" (Gandini, 1998, p. 163).

As I had many times the year before, I walked in to RVS under the weight of a large box of materials I had gleaned, with Sidney in mind, while going through the process of shutting my classroom down for the last time and cleaning house over the summer. This box was representative of the kind of offerings I had brought Sidney in the past: a box of sidewalk chalk, upholstery squares, leftover copy paper, old Christmas cards. After signing into the office and clipping on a navy blue tag proclaiming me a visitor I, moved with familiarity to the preschool/kindergarten wing of RVS. As I went through the swinging double doors I immediately moved past Mrs. Little's class towards Sidney's room. Drawing up short, I remembered that Sidney's class was now located in Mrs. Little's former room.

At first the size of the new room was so impressive I felt as though I couldn't recognize anything of the room I had spent so much time in during the past year. Setting the box down while quickly scanning the furniture and equipment I began to see old friends--the loft, a plastic trunk of clothes, the water table--with some new editions such as a child's bookshelf and water shirts for the media table. And there, right in the front of the room, turned towards the doorway in welcome, was the couch. Yes, this was Sidney's room, only magnified.

I congratulated Sidney on her new space. What a difference it made. Sidney commented that she was easily able to decide how to lay the room out as compared to last year's room, which due to its small size, was difficult and had to be changed from time to time since no one layout seemed satisfying. Sidney said that while her class last year seemed to get along fine in the small space, the larger room allowed her to ignore things such as children who needed to move quickly in the classroom or didn't have a great sense of body space or control yet (see Appendix F for Sidney' s room layout during the study).

As I compared Sidney's old and new rooms and re-read the data I had collected from the study, it seemed apparent to me that the size of the room didn't matter nearly as much as the teacher's attitude and the influence that her attitude has on the children. Classroom environment may be defined in two primary ways. The first is the actual physical space of the classroom, "the circumstance, objects, and conditions one is surrounded by" (Websters, 1987; p. 416). The fact that Sidney's old room is now a storage room for the school highlights the likelihood that at first glance one might say her classroom circumstances were poor. Sidney, however, chose to look at her classroom as an exciting challenge and worked hard preparing it for the children's first day.
The second way classroom environment may be defined, and in my thinking the most important, is by the sense of life one feels in the classroom. This is what Sinclaire (1994, p. 64) refers to as atmosphere, "to some extent a cocoon, a place of safety… to a greater extent the place where the teacher expands the private and personal home." van Manen (1991, p. 33) refers to this same phenomenon of atmosphere as "the way the teacher is present to the children, and the way the children are present to the teacher."

The classroom also forms a bridge between the home and the larger community. There is a definite distinction between the abstract concept *home* and one's actual, physical *house* in the caring literature. A *house* is the physical dwelling place of a person and may or may not feel like a *home*. A *home* is where the ideals a *house* symbolizes, such as safety, security, predictability, relationship, caring, and connectedness, are felt. “We teachers should try to make our classrooms like home. Home not just in the sense of the comfort of a second-hand couch and chair, plants and private corners, but more” (Sinclaire, 1994, xvii). Sinclaire (1994), as part of a

discussion of the distinctions between a house and home, details painful episodes from her childhood house that no teacher would want to emulate in their classroom. For many of the children we will meet in Sidney's class, a sense of home in the classroom may be the only chance they have to experience what Sinclaire (1994) describes as a "protected neighborhood, trusted relationships" (p. 19), and a culture of care before they are in the larger world trying to form a home for themselves. The caring classroom gives the child who has no stable sense of home an opportunity to see that the role mother (teacher), adult, caregiver, relationship, provider… may have definitions other then those the children have lived, experienced, and bear witness of. The hurting child may be able to tap into the culture of care that caring teachers establish in the classroom and come to be a productive member of the classroom and larger society (Carducci & Carducci, 1984; Garrison, 1997; Noddings, 1984; Sinclaire, 1994; van Manen, 1986).

Physical Environment

There is an assumption in the field of early childhood education that the layout of a teacher's classroom reflects her teaching philosophy (Frank, 1999). This assumption seems to be true in Sidney's classroom, where a caring physical environment was in evidence according to criteria set by the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC). As a validator for NAEYC, which means I help accredit early childhood education facilities according to NAEYC's guidelines and have been extensively trained in examining the layout of a classroom for NAEYC. NAEYC's (1998) accreditation standards regarding the actual physical space mandate that facilities provide usable space in and outdoors that is arranged with children working and playing individually, in small and large groups in mind. Spaces should accommodate a variety of activities, materials, and equipment for children's use. Private spaces for children's belongings and for children to work alone or with a friend should also be provided. The physical space needs soft elements such as pillows, rugs, and sound absorbing materials on floors to cut down on noise. In a section of the book, *Caring Spaces, Learning Places* entitled *Living, Loving, Being,* Greenman (1988) supports the idea of soft elements saying, "Caring for children means many soft spaces to hold and snuggle" (p. 123).

Along with NAEYC's effort to set standards for physical layout of the classroom, the Reggio Emilia Approach provides an inspirational example that the American educator may recast and reframe within the personal context of their own classroom. Lella Gandini (1998), in the book chapter, *Education and Caring Spaces,* writes about Reggio Emilia Philosophy in a manner that supports NAEYC's guidelines, saying the classroom should reflect the culture, personalities and beliefs of all that work and live there. Materials contributed by families and children should add to the physical environment while helping families to feel they have contributed to the classroom in a meaningful way (see Appendix G for an overview of Reggio Emilia philosophy and its connections to the study).

I have previously described the addition of a comfy couch to the classroom. Components of Sidney's classroom environment that may be seen in other high quality early childhood classrooms included furniture sized to welcome children and adults, a private bathroom with a child sized toilet and sink and a colorful rug designating the group area. Also a variety of plants, including several sweet potato vines the children had grown as part of a science experiment, trailed around the room, adding to the welcoming environment.

The entryway to Sidney's room was an open inviting space between two partitions that function as the only barriers in this open wing between the preschool and a kindergarten room on either side. Sidney narrowed the opening somewhat by angling cubbies across the doorway. This helped the children understand where they were expected to stay throughout the day. The layout left the doorway wide and inviting yet gave the classroom boundaries; a sense of definition so children weren't wandering out of the room.

After I entered the doorway of the classroom, my eyes were always drawn to the roomy loft that covered the entire left, rear corner of the room. The loft was constructed of lightly stained maple and had plexi-glass walls so that children and teachers could easily see each other. The plexi-glass gave the loft a light, open look. The loft also had wide carpeted steps that offered children the illusion of complete privacy. These steps were a getaway space where Harmony and Alyssa could often be found giggling, looking through their book-bags, and at teen rock-n-roll magazines. Harmony always

seemed to have some type of "make-up" she had brought to school tucked away in the pocket of her book-bag. The week Harmony kept painting her lips bright blue, first with lipstick and then with a marker; several of the make-up sessions took place with friends on the loft steps.

The loft had two child-sized tables, several small chairs, and was the writing area for the room. Children worked in the loft daily, and I often saw eight or more children happily engaged there. The space beneath the loft steps could also be utilized. Sidney had originally used this space as a hideout for the children, but found it to hard to monitor and became concerned about the rough play that occurred under the steps at times. While Sidney honors the children's needs to have getaway space such as the loft steps, cubbies, and under tables, she also keeps safety and supervision as a first priority. As part of respecting the children's privacy I often saw Sidney secretly monitor the children without interrupting or giving the children that classic invasive feeling that the teacher sees everything or has eyes in the back of her head. When Sidney decided she didn't want the children to go under the steps anymore she stored a large tub of dress-up clothes for the children to use under the steps behind a fabric curtain. The plastic tub served as a natural reminder to the children that Sidney had changed the rule. The loft was also used at rest time as a special space where each child turn resting in.

Other standard elements of the room included a computer center, where two children would cooperate and share the computer. There was also a large media table that was used daily by as many children as could fit around it (which depending on the children's dynamics that day could be up to eight), a small block center with unit and hollow blocks, a manipulative shelf, a prop box shelf, and a book cabinet.

Children's Photos

There were also aspects of Sidney's room that are not always seen in classrooms. Sidney, influenced by the Reggio Emilia Approach, attempted to use the children's personal image in a manner that conveyed the children's presence in the room, that it was their class, and that they were reciprocal participants with her in the classroom. Large photos of the children adorned their cubby baskets and marked this space as private for them. Children's portfolios had large photos of each child on the front cover

and were kept at a low level in the classroom so that the children had access to their portfolio at all times. The portfolios (Jervis, 1999) were a holistic assessment tool that documented the children's experience, were shared with the parents as part of the parent-teacher conference, and "report card" experience. These treasures housed examples of the children's work and photos of their classroom experiences. Children could be seen pulling out their portfolio to share it with a classmate or to show a new adult who was visiting in the classroom. Sidney encouraged this by praising the children's portfolios and asking them if they had shown it to specific classmates yet**.** Children also had a small photo album of extra pictures of themselves that had their name written in large print on the front. These sat in a small basket so children could access the photos at any time. Sidney's choice of portfolio assessment is indicative of her understanding and respect for the children. Portfolio assessment keeps the teacher's "eyes on the child", assesses, and represents the child in a holistic manner. The portfolio assessment is integrated into the day in a natural manner that does not intrude on the child and create unnatural test situations (Jervis, 1999).

Sidney also used photos on captivating documentation panels in place of bulletin boards and store bought educational displays. Sidney was exposed to the power of documentation through her experiences with the Reggio Emilia Approach. These panels document the children's experiences at school, inform parents and visitors of what is happening in the classroom, support children in revisiting their experiences and celebrate the children and classroom community. The panels also advocate Sidney's views on early childhood education. Sidney's documentation panels in keeping with Reggio Emilia Philosophy (Rinaldi, 1998) celebrate the children's work through the use of photos, samples of their work, and words. Some examples of panels that added life to the classroom are children's depictions of their sweet potato vines growth, the importance of parents being involved in the classroom and the open house, and the process of 3-D plaster art**.**

Aesthetic Displays

I painted all my life like Raphael so that one day I could paint again like a child.

~Picasso~

Sidney desired her room to have a simple, uncluttered look that was inviting to children. Therefore she tended to use the documentation panels in lieu of more traditional displays that include a piece of art from each child. However, group art projects--one piece of art all interested children contributed to--may be seen throughout the room. A striking group piece was displayed above the watertable throughout the research study. Sidney had put out a large piece of cardboard with a variety of collage materials such as spools, felt, Velcro, cotton, beads, tinfoil, colored pasta, buttons, pom-poms, and plastic lids for the children to construct with. Sidney intentionally plans these projects so the children feel they are contributing to the class environment, learn to work together as a community, and have the experience of working in a large art medium rather then simply on the standard 11-by-8 piece of paper.

Sidney's Desk

A final feature of the classroom, Sidney's desk, is alos symbolic of her teaching philosophy. It is a small white particle board and black metal desk that is a quarter of the size of a standard teacher's desk and sits unobtrusively to the side of the class entryway. Sidney originally did not want a desk at all, but broke down and bought it in order to help organize class paperwork such as attendance and lunch count papers. The desk is used predominately as storage for the teachers' purses, bags, and several manila work files. During the entire study, when children were in the room I cannot remember or find one time in the data that I observed Sidney or Kay sit at the desk. While excellent teachers may use desks, with Sidney and Kay the small desk was a deliberate choice that is indicative of their desire to be available, interacting, and down on the floor relating to the children.

Emotional Environment

As I have described, Sidney took a small, challenging environment and changed it into a pleasant, inviting room for children, but if I stop the discussion of environment here I have not shown the full picture. In the past I directed a preschool that had just opened in a brand new facility. It had huge open windows set low at a child's level, large rooms, modern appliances, and really was quite striking to look at. Parents and

visitors reactions were impressive, but I always told them to stay and watch the class for awhile. New rooms are a great bonus, but one needs to see what actually happens in the room. Similarly, a great preschool program I worked with was in an old, dank basement with little to recommend it at first sight. The difference between the actual physical make-up of the classroom environment and the aura--the life that one feels in the classroom--is the sense of atmosphere I referred to earlier (Sinclaire, 1994).

Describing, exploring, and mapping Sidney's classroom environment has set the physical context of the study. The "atmosphere" is harder to pin down. Atmosphere is a fluid topic, with different shades, nuances, and subtleties. NAEYC has a strong statement regarding the more abstract environment or atmosphere, the sense children have of being at "home" in the classroom. "Staff are available and responsive to children; encourage them [children] to share experiences, ideas, and feelings; and listen to them [children] with attention and respect," reads a criteria of NAEYC's (1998, p. 15). This criteria, as with other NAEYC criteria, is to be demonstrated in an individualized, flexible manner, depending on the child's needs. Other criteria address the need for sound in the environment to be marked by predominately spontaneous laughter, children's voices, conversations, and interactions. Children should be supported by adults in a manner that allows them to be comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and activities in the classroom. Gandini (1998), writing about the Reggio Emilia Approach, also states that most of all, schools need to be "child-and-family friendly institutions where all feel welcome and have a sense of belonging" (p. 164).

I have already described how the atmosphere of the classroom effected my transition into the class on my first day of the study. The remainder of the paper will explore how the caring atmosphere of Sidney's classroom is established through relationships, curriculum, teacher practice, and the teacher beliefs.

Chapter 5

RELATIONSHIPS

Home [school] is the place where, when you have to go there,
they have to take you in.
~ Robert Frost ~

The foundation of Sidney's classroom is built on valuing relationships between teachers and children, children and children, teachers and parents, and teachers and teachers. In the early 1900's, John Dewey (1909) had a vision for school reform. He saw students developing life skills through their caring interactions and relationships with adults. Dewey believed that all school subjects and interactions between the teacher and child should be taught with moral aspects and caring elements of the subject emphasized. Morality could not be adequately taught in an isolated civics class. Sidney encompasses Dewey's beliefs, seeing caring relationships as transformative--imbued with possibilities for bringing about change, connection, learning, and hope. This can be seen in her thoughts about her teaching goals with the children:

> *My goal is to try and give the children the most power in the classroom. I still believe that there are certain things I have to be in control of. I'm constantly debating between my beliefs and the pressure of the public school environment. For example, some of the teachers don't like the fact that the children call me Ms. Sidney [at Sidney's school teachers are referred to by their last name]. Part of being a teacher is being a friend to the kids and using my first name makes me seem more approachable. At the same time I do have power in the classroom, so the children need to look at me as their teacher.*

John Dewey's conception of a caring morality being taught, experienced, and lived in the schools, became lost as the focus in scientific educational research became

narrow and increasingly analytical in an attempt to discover exactly what educators could prescribe in the classroom in order to turn out the productive citizen. Since this shift in thought, the relationship between the teacher and child as a natural teaching method has been largely overlooked by American school reforms. Instead schools, the media, and larger society have tended to concentrate on the laxness of students and teachers, instilling accountability through standards, restructuring school methods, curriculum, and classroom management, all in an effort to increase academic outcomes (Baker et al., 1997). However, it is my belief that, regardless of "overwhelming trends," there are places where Dewey's conception of caring is being enacted daily. In Sidney's classroom, we will see this conception in what Malaguzzi (1993, p. 9) described as "an education based on relationships" saying, “A system of relationships has in and of itself a virtually autonomous capacity to educate" (p. 11). Teacher-child, teacher-family, and teacher-teacher relationships will be portrayed in this chapter as the foundation of the caring classroom.

Relationships with Children, Tigers, Genies…

Ruby

Ruby is consistently one of the most difficult children to relate to in Sidney's classroom. She is the very essence of the type of child the "at-risk" preschool program exists to serve. Her name, at first glance, seems a cruel joke, perhaps given to her by a parent who hoped for better than they were able to provide, or perhaps meaning nothing to anyone other than an observant researcher delving for meaning and metaphor. Instead of a brilliant, glimmering gem on display, Ruby is hidden behind long, unkempt bangs that smell of stale smoke and urine. Even on her cleanest days, an acrid scent wafts around Ruby, reminiscent of her latest bed-wetting. On this subject I wrote:

> I had a response to the children that really shocked me. I have taught in the “roughest” schools in my county and have been used to loving, touching, and caring for children who were dirty, unkempt and seemed physically neglected. I received head lice as an induction to teaching my first week of school. However, I have now been working in private schools for so long that I am not used to this

> type of child anymore. I felt myself wanting to pull back several times from dirty embraces. I was embarrassed by this "uncaring" response (Journal, Feb. 21, 2000).

Another day I mouthed to Sidney during rest time that someone had wet their pants. Sidney came over to where I was seated, rubbing children's backs, furtively sniffed and said, "No, that's Ruby." Sidney's composed response indicated to me her complete acceptance of the children no matter how displeasing they may seem at times.

From Ruby's embraces, though, one does not need to stifle the impulse to recoil. Ruby offers nothing to an adult in the way of hugs or touch. During the entire time I spent in Sidney's classroom, Ruby and I never had anything that could resemble a true conversation, and Ruby rarely even allowed eye contact. When my eyes would wander to Ruby's face she would quickly avert her eyes, twisting her head sharply to the right and looking blankly off into nothingness. If this passive behavior didn't work Ruby would remove herself from whatever seemed to be the problem--being asked a question during group time, the start of a class turn taking game, anything that might put her in the spotlight for a minute--slipping silently away to be found sitting at a table, behind a loft pole or on the couch.

Ruby's anger and defiance could plainly be seen in two roles she invariably played during activity time. One was that of a person placing lengthy calls on the class play phone. Ruby would clutch the phone and pace around the room speaking in guttural, heavily southern accented English. Moments of listening on the phone, while prosaically nodding her head, were punctuated by lengthy rampages roughly whispered or at times yelled into the receiver. When I listened as closely as I could I would discern bits of words here and there. One time Kay heard her say, "Sometimes I want a new Mommy. I don't like getting hit with a coat hanger." Themes that were repeated included calls to police, threats to "call the police on someone," and plaintive calls to her mother asking not to be hit with the coat hanger for wetting the bed (these conversations were related to both school and Child Protective Service authorities). If Sidney or Kay would attempt to interact with Ruby at these times she would stalk away rolling her eyes and might be heard saying into the phone, "I'm gonna call the police on you, Ms. Sidney!"

The second role Ruby played was that of a fierce tiger. Ruby would drop her long, lanky body to the floor, crawl restlessly around the room, baring her teeth at anyone she encountered, her stringy blonde hair covering her face and falling down around her shoulders, swiping a mighty "paw." This persona was in direct contrast to Ruby's usual presence as a little girl who seemed to hope she was invisible. Ruby the tiger was so menacing that I wouldn't have been surprised if the teachers had tried to redirect her play. Instead, they encouraged Ruby's play saying, "Ruby's a tiger today. Watch out everyone. Here comes a tiger." The teachers would even get down on the floor to growl and wrestle with the tiger. It seemed as though Sidney and Kay valued Ruby's need to act out in different forms. Indeed on the tiger days the teachers expressed pleasure over Ruby's interactions as opposed to days where they were deeply concerned about Ruby sitting still and gazing at nothing.

Reading through my notes at the end of the study I found that while I had recorded Sidney's actions and naturally occurring conversations about Ruby I had never directly asked her why she supported Ruby's aggressive play. My hunch regarding Sidney reasoning was supported by her comments in the e-mail dialogue journal (Jan. 10, 2001).

> *We [Kay and Sidney] encouraged Ruby's tiger play because we were excited to get <u>ANY</u> interactions from her. This was one of the few ways we could have a conversation with her. Although words weren't used, her gestures and emotions were very clear. I saw it as an attempt on her part to build a relationship with me. There was no way I was going to discourage it.*

One day Texas joined the fray and growled, gnashing his teeth so convincingly at Ruby that I quickly moved towards them to ward off what I thought might become a real "wild kingdom" battle. Texas must have been equally convincing to Ruby. She immediately scooted back into a human's sitting position, froze, and cast her eyes back over her shoulder. Texas, unsure of this response, growled awhile and receiving no more tiger-like interactions, loped off across the classroom. Through that observation I clearly saw why the teachers supported Ruby in her tiger play. While seeming dangerous and on the edge, Ruby cowered inside of the tiger, emotionally hurting, unable to interact in an outgoing, physical manner with her classmates.

Texas

Texas is another child Sidney had to work hard to relate with, for very different reasons, however, than Ruby. Unlike Ruby, Texas' emotions are nearly always on display. He enters the room, an eager whirlwind, ready to go. He eagerly embraces teachers, jumps on laps, smiles, and laughs. Texas also cried (howled might be more accurate) when upset for long periods of time, becomes deeply angry in one moment and then is happy again in the next. Sidney's priority with Texas was to support him in finding the words he needed to express his emotions and desires. Sidney would tag along behind Texas when he was having a hard day and help him explain to his peers what he was trying to say.

Sidney told me on several occasions that Texas had "a special place in her heart" (Field Notes, March 1, 2000). The same day, in a reflection about her comment, I wrote:

> I see that Texas is a little one that pierces your heart. He is so enthusiastic about life and wears his emotions on his sleeve. He can sob one minute wrenchingly over not being the line leader and then enthusiastically run and hug you the next minute. In many ways he reminds me of a little boy, Ben, that I taught. Texas has a sense of vulnerability around him. He reminds me of a little, downy duck that is still slightly damp and wobbly. He has a slim neck, a bony little back, and blond hair tufted on top of his head. He is so eager for everything, but at times seems not to know what he is getting into.

By modeling words over fists and crying with Texas, Sidney had supported his progress in communicating with others by the time the study started. Texas still had some times of frustration, which typically were more difficult when he was tired. For example, one-week Texas was ecstatic to have had the opportunity to be the child who slept in the loft during rest time that week. However, we should have realized that Texas would have a hard time relinquishing this space the next week. When Texas realized the special spot was no longer his he cried himself to sleep several days in a row with huge sobs that the teachers' best efforts could not allay. Suddenly, the fourth day, Texas just seemed to have forgotten about the spot and lay cheerfully on his rest mat.

This was always the difficulty with Texas; it was hard to decide where his emotional needs intersected with his severe speech delay, difficult family life, and total lack of understanding school life. In the late spring, it was common for Texas to still wander on to the wrong bus happily trotting along behind anyone in front of him. While this may have been frustrating to teachers, Texas' warm nature and enthusiasm for everything and anything made it easy for Sidney and Kay to keep thinking of new ways to help support his schooling success.

Texas gave the initial impression of a child with little "school" knowledge. However, Kay and Sidney were perceptive and observed their children closely to determine what types of "knowledge" they may have. The knowledge bases that some children have, even though they are unrelated to school, may be rich sources for understanding the child and connecting their understandings to the larger school culture (Moll, 1992). Some of the things they noticed that Texas did included making fishing poles out of toys and going up in to the loft to play fishing over the edge. This was an elaborate game that called for classmates to try to catch Texas' fishing line. Also, one day Kay, Sidney, and Texas laughingly came over to me and Texas acted out for me what he had been showing the teachers. He had taken the red play teapot from the housekeeping area and rubbed it vigorously on its side. Suddenly he threw his head and body up and back in mock shock and made a slight exploding sound. I realized from his gestures, what I couldn't understand from his words, I was watching a genie emerge from a magic lamp. Texas' play with the teapot made it one of the most coveted toys in the classroom.

Children's Sexuality

Ruby also masturbated vigorously. Sidney's way of handling Ruby's sexual needs seems to parallel her understanding for Ruby's need to play aggressively. The first year I taught I had a child similar to her in my classroom. These children bend their bodies into gymnastic distortions to achieve the desired effect. Their behavior is hard to overlook and can seem disgusting to adults (Gil, 1991). The first time one is around a child like this, adults may be instinctively repulsed and try to forbid the behavior. I remember asking my mom, a veteran teacher, with shock, if the child in my classroom

was exhibiting "normal" behavior. Along with the usual warnings of masturbation being a possible indicator for child abuse, mom told me that she had also had this experience with some children.

Neither Sidney nor I had ever received any formal training in this area of child development. I wondered why in all my years of experience and training masturbation has never been a topic formally addressed in my education. Delving into the child sexuality literature I discovered that this is a common experience (Grace & Tobin, 1997 ; King, 1997; Leavitt & Power, 1997 ; Phelan, 1997; Silin, 1997; Tobin, 1997). I have always had to seek out advice and consult with older teachers on possible avenues of action and support for children exhibiting these behaviors. In fact, it was not until I had an assistantship at Virginia Tech's Laboratory School that I saw in an educational class for preservice teachers, this issue addressed for the first time. Several of the children in my classroom had been engaging in mild sexual play that was really disturbing to the practicum students. My dissertation chair, Dr. Fu invited me to the practicum class and we conducted an informal question and answer session regarding the children's sexual behavior. I was impressed by the questions we were able to dialogue about and felt that this group of students would be better prepared then Sidney and I had been to support children in the area of sexuality.

Tobin (1997) also questions this lack of dialogue, saying that the field of early childhood education and society at large denies the child's sexual being. "Working in the world of early childhood education…we know that any event suggestive of sexuality is problematic and even potentially dangerous" (p. 1). Ruby's behavior took place in the dusk of rest time so Sidney did not have to worry about other adults "seeing" Ruby and how they might respond to Ruby's actions. Sidney made a strong impression on me by not treating Ruby differently or stigmatizing her due to her behavior. When Sidney and Kay commented about Ruby's masturbation to me it was in a supportive manner instead of making fun of her or being disgusted with the behavior. This response implied to me that Sidney was aware of the children in her class as complete beings with sexual needs. Also, Sidney knew that Ruby had little privacy at home and a great need to relieve stress, so she created privacy for Ruby during rest time.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to assess children's sexual behavior since

there has been little research in the field that has studied children's typically developing sexual behavior. Finkelhor developed a chart of "sexualized" children's behavior and Sgori, Bunk, and Wabrek have developed a chart of normative sexual behavior from their combined experiences with troubled and "normal" children in clinical settings (in Gil, 1991). From my experience with children Gil seems on target with her summary of the field and her experiences with what she terms "sexualized" and "disinhibited masturbators."

However, she makes the comment that children who have not been sexualized will stop masturbating when someone enters the room. From my experience, this is a large assumption, especially for young children who are still learning social rules. "I do not doubt that some girls who have been the victims of sexual abuse become sexually aggressive. But this…should not suggest the converse: that little girls who are sexually assertive or curious have necessarily been abused" (Tobin, 1997, p. 133). While we can not always know what children have experienced sexually, it seems that the type of children I have worked with who are masturbators may not fit the overview Gil is giving. The children I taught, like Ruby, came from small homes where they did not have a room of their own. These children did not necessarily see privacy as being in a room on their own. They usually did not have any of the standard social graces that is desired in a school society. In a preschool-kindergarten classroom, as opposed to a clinic, there may be times of the day such as rest time that seem "private" to a child. While Sidney and I always report the children's behavior that we are concerned about to the school guidance counselor, demonstrating professional concern and caring, Ruby and my past students' actions seemed to me to be a self-soothing behavior that was on the more extreme end of children's behavior.

Touching Relationships

In what other profession do you get hugs each day for being there?

~ Patricia Willis ~

Over the course of the study I began to see times when the ferocious tiger also allowed Ruby to engage her teachers in nurturing encounters that involved touch, affection, and holding. At times if Sidney was busy reading a story or helping children with an activity, Ruby the tiger would pace nearby, tail twitching, trying to attract

Sidney's attention. If Sidney was too busy to do more than comment, "I see a tiger in the room," the tiger might stalk off to find new prey or might move closer, crouching at Sidney's feet, eventually leaning its flanks against Sidney's legs and resting. The tiger persona slowly allowed Ruby to move closer to adults until it was common to see her initiating sitting in Sidney's lap or playfully hanging onto Sidney's legs and giggling as Sidney tried to get up from a chair to move. Sidney commented on Ruby and the use of touch in her teaching saying,

> *The role of touch in my teaching is both spontaneous and intentional. For the most part it is spontaneous. I am a very touchy person, and that is how I react to adults and children alike. There are certain children I might touch more, because I think they like it. For example, Ruby usually interacts through touching, whether she is a tiger, or she is taking me to jail, or if she is playing the game where she clings to my leg to hide from me. I try to rub her back or her arm when I talk to her. I guess I try to "read" her and react to her. Luckily, I don't mind being touched. There are several preschool teachers I know who have developed a special hand signal with their class so that they don't have to spend so much time hugging their kids. Can you believe that? I think it is sick. I strongly believe that this interaction helps build the classroom climate and it allows the children to interact with me in so many additional ways. The children I teach know they may crawl on me, hug me, and climb all over me. I think that being open to touch and providing touch adds so much depth to my relationship with the kids. It adds security and trust.*

Sidney feels much of the touch in her classroom is spontaneous, but, since it is important to her as a basic element for establishing relationships she has also established routines in the day where touch for all children is evident. In the morning and afternoon children hug Sidney in greeting and departure. When the class line walks down the hall a child holds a teacher's hand. If Sidney or Kay is seated on the ground during group times a child sits on their lap and during rest time all of the children's backs are rubbed until all the children are asleep that seem tired. Sidney wrote articulately about back rubs in the dialogue journal:

Giving back rubs is a good way for Kay and me to spend one-on-one time with each child. I like that we ask them first if we can rub their back, because they feel in control, and we are not doing something to them that they might find uncomfortable. The kids seem to really look forward to it, and usually ask for their backs to be rubbed. It is nice to know that the children are falling asleep while they are being comforted by their teachers. It is also a time for me to relax, unwind, and joke with the other teachers in the classroom. I feel such a renewed sense of energy because I am spending quality time with the children, but I am not expending all of my energy. It is the only time of the day that I don't have to run on all eight cylinders. It also gives me a chance to reflect on the day, and decide about how things went, changes I might want to make, and scheduling for the next day.

No Touch Climate

Sidney's attitude regarding the importance of touch in establishing relationships with children is noteworthy in the current school climate of "no touch" (Tobin, 1997). Sidney reported to me that while there has never been any official statement in her county regarding children and teacher's touching there is innuendo and rumor regarding what is appropriate and what isn't. The closest Sidney ever came to hearing a professional statement on the role of touch in teaching was at a county-wide inservice for new teachers. The speaker was discussing the appropriate steps to take when restraining a violent child. In a brief side bar he stated that even though people generally pat small children on the bottom it is no longer acceptable in schools. I asked Sidney what she thought of his comment and she stated strongly that she thought it was ridiculous, but wouldn't be patting any more bottoms.

Sidney's story is symptomatic of the climate seen throughout the field of teaching. While touch is known to be vital to children's development (Anderson, 1987; Bowlby, 1958; Brody,1993; Delisle, 1994; Field, 1995; Hall, 1984; Johnson, 1997; Jones & Brown, 1996), teachers are becoming increasingly concerned about touching the children with whom they relate (King, 1997; Martin & Luth, 2000; Mazur & Pekor, 1985; Porat, 1986; Tobin, 1997). Teachers may work in buildings with implied or even mandated

restrictions on how touch may and may not be conducted between children and teachers (Johnson, 1997; Tobin, 1997). Even teachers who are not in these settings report that they are becoming increasingly wary of touching children. For example, some teachers have a personal "no touching" policy while others are in a setting where such a policy is mandated. Teachers are concerned about being sued for accused sexual misconduct or punitive discipline (Mazur & Pekor, 1985). Examples of direct or implied school policies include no sitting on male teachers' laps, sitting sideways--on female teachers' laps, males not helping with toileting at all, no hugging, and females helping children with toileting only when there is an adult witness (Johnson, 1997).

Benefits of Touch

The current no touch trend is counter to what is good for children. Skin is the largest organ of the body. It has the need to feel touch. Touch enhances people's well being and research has shown powerful effects when children are or are not touched. Infants who are not touched will fail to thrive physically and emotionally (Bowlby, 1958). In contrast, infants who receive daily massage are more healthy overall, are more active, gain more weight, and have better motor activity (Field, 1995). Children who know their society's touch "rules" will function more easily socially. These rules are learned by being touched appropriately (Hall, 1984). If a child does not receive the touch she needs she will even resort to negative acts to elicit touch (Brody, 1993). Recollections of positive touch from childhood still affect adults' self-esteem (Jones & Brown, 1996). Positive early childhood touch memories and current engagement in positive touch has been linked to adult social competencies (Jones & Brown, 1996).

Touch Therapy

In an effort to support Sidney's belief in appropriate touch I introduced several Theraplay games to her and the children. Theraplay is a type of play/touch therapy that includes a series of noncompetitive, interactive, community building games that classroom teachers can easily use (Martin, 2000). The most popular of these in Sidney's classroom was *Duck, Duck, Hug*. The class formed a tight circle, seated on the carpet and I demonstrated the game to them. I walked around slowly touching each child's head

intoning duck as my hand touched smooth blonde hair, rough red hair, textured black hair and matted brown hair--one child after the other--suddenly in the familiar rhythm of duck, duck, goose I called out HUG! The child on who's head my hand is lying, Jackson and I ran around the circle in opposite ways, met on the other side and hugged as the rest of the class looked on cheering. The hug I demonstrated was gentle and nurturing. I emphasized to the children that we want to be gentle to our friends and stated the Theraplay rule, "No hurts!" Jackson, with his ever engaging smile, eagerly circled the group repeating duck, duck, duck...HUG! Now he and Stephen moved around the circle meeting in joyful embrace and the game went on. Even Ruby with a mild show of reluctance circled the group to receive her hug. I introduced other games with similar goals of community, connection, touch, and cooperation such as non-competitive musical chairs, where children share a chair, that were eagerly adopted by Sidney.

The powerful history of therapeutic touch that exists in the field of Play Therapy under which therapies such as Developmental Play Therapy (Brody, 1993) and Theraplay (Jernberg, 1979) exist, is one example of the power of touch. Brody, the developer of Developmental Play Therapy (1993, p. x) states, “touch is essential for life.” Brody believes many of the behaviors of children including getting sick, early sex, or aggressive contact are all efforts on the children’s part to fulfill their touch needs. Theraplay has also been developed for special education teachers and classroom teachers (Jernberg, 1979; Rubin & Tregay, 1989). While it is important to remember classroom teachers are not therapists, the central foundation of touch therapies may apply; that is, the importance that warm, affectionate, nonverbal communication has in developing deep relationships. Incorporating touch into teacher-child relationships has the potential to open up new possibilities for children in a variety of ways.

While “no touch” may be the current trend, the literature indicates the need for strong intimate bonds between young children and their caregivers (Montagu, 1986; Rubin & Tregay, 1989). This is especially important for infancy through kindergarten caregivers, who must still help children in naturally intimate ways. Sidney helped Ruby and Amanda change their clothes due to wetting accidents several times a week. Both girls have been known to wet their pants several times a day. If the rest of early childhood education gives up on touch the focus on teachers of our youngest children,

such as Sidney, may intensify unmercifully since they will be the only teachers left who "must" touch children (Johnson, 1997; Mazur & Pekor, 1985).

Playful Relationships

The most important thing about playfulness is it makes life worth living.
~ B. Sutton-Smith ~

Touch is not the only powerful component of Sidney and Ruby's tiger drama. A sense of playfulness and humor can be seen in their interactions that connected Ruby to Sidney in a manner that more standard overtures did not.

Humor in Relationships

As Sidney led the children into the class she accidentally knocked a child's scooter off her desk and onto the floor. To the children's delight, she stopped, dramatically looked around inquiring, "Who did that?" Another day the whole class streamed in the door from outside laughing. Sidney described the funny event to me. Jeremy had looked suspiciously at the group and complained, much to Caiman's glee, "Ms. Sidney, someone pooped in their pants." The expression on Caiman's pleased face as he confessed to "farting" was so humorous that the teachers and children all had an irreverent community moment laughing as a whole group.

Early in the study, before I had a feel for Sidney's sense of silliness, I fell prey to her slapstick humor. On my way to school that morning I had noticed it was a particularly beautiful day outside. After lunch Sidney made a melodramatic announcement that since it was pouring rain we wouldn't be going outside. I was distracted with some paper work and hadn't seen her face. "Are you serious!" I called out as my head snapped up to look at her. The whole class laughed at my facial expression and Sidney said, "Raise your hand if you believed Ms. Sidney." Sheepishly laughing, yet feeling apart of the classroom community, I had to raise my hand.

Teachers as Play Partners

When Sidney and Kay enter into the children's play they always take secondary roles allowing the children's ideas to primarily direct the play and the teacher's comments

to extend the play. For example, in the dog play the children frequently engage in, the teachers would say, "Can I get you a bowl of water? Do you have an owner?" These questions leave room for the child to have choices in the play and extending the play through respectful questions. In this way the teacher is participant and not director. The teachers also introduced the possibility of the child participating in care taking play with a "dog" Prior authors have emphasized the role of teachers as play participants (Kieffe & Casbergue, 2000; Rogoff, 1990; Van Hoorn, Monighan Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978).

Sidney also seemed to enter play situations when she saw there might be problems ensuing from the children's interactions. In these situations she simply redirected the play at first without commenting directly on the children's behavior (Reynolds & Jones, 1997). This could be seen when the teachers entered the bus play. Since almost all the children pulled out their backpacks and chairs and began to rearrange the room there was potential for chaos and problems. Instead of standing to the side and directing this play Sidney and Kay became active participants riding on the bus. That way they were right there to redirect the children when problems arose such as who would be the bus driver.

Play is seen as the essence of children's lives with strong connections to cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (Rogers & Sawyers, 1988). Playfulness and humor were a dominant piece of Sidney's relationship with all the children. Research has shown that teacher's entering into children's play may lend support to the children's amount and quality of play by extending the play theme (Feeney,1992). Also children's understandings of humor may have connections to creativity and their ability to socialize that will carry over to adulthood (McGhee & Chapman, 1980; Rogers & Sawyers, 1988). Sidney makes play a priority in the classroom thus supporting the children's social development and allowing playful situations to arise in which the teachers can naturally extend skills and emphasize values. It is through these playful situations that children "practice negotiating their varied world views…mastering skills and dispositions they will need throughout their lives" (Jones & Reynolds, 1995, p. 45).

I was furiously trying to write notes when Caiman's squealing distracted me. I glanced back to the classroom through the doorway and saw him spinning around the

room, hands clutched around Sidney's neck as she turned first one way and then the other. "Where is Caiman?" I heard her call. "Where is Caiman?" Caiman, giggled wildly and hung on for the ride. His friends ran up calling, "He's behind you." Sidney listening to them quickly looked behind her, but there was no Caiman. The children caught on to the hilarious nature of this game and called out, "He's on your back. He's on your back" and everyone tumbled down into a laughing heap.

I was reminded of my first year of teaching when I picked a child up on the playground and was told not to pick up children because the children wouldn't know where the limits were. It was felt the same child might approach me to be picked up during the middle of a lesson. Sidney's behavior was far more playful then mine was yet I never saw Caiman approach her at an inappropriate time with an overture for play or rough housing. Sidney's class understood the culture of care in their classroom--when it was appropriate to be playful, when it was time to comfort, reflect, or cooperate. The words "there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven" (Ecclesiastes, 4:2) a time to be quiet and a time to play, flashed in my mind--I was amazed and touched when, attracted by squeals and giggles, I looked up one day and saw Ruby flying around the room, small hands joyfully encircling Sidney's neck!

Rituals and Relationship

Along with playfulness, humor, and touch there are a variety of other ways Sidney develops connections with the children and promotes the development of healthy relationships with them. Many of the connections can be seen in individual rituals that take place between Sidney and the children. Good teachers develop routines and habits for the classroom that make school life "habitable, predictable, comfortable, and reliable" (van Manen, 1991, p. 120). In the morning, before school, Harmony's older cousin, Sabrina's older sister and Caiman's older brother all generally visits the classroom for awhile. They may chat with the teachers, quickly create a piece of art, or watch the younger children use the computer. On one occasion Sabrina's mother came in and told Sidney in a hurt tone that Sabrina's older sister's teacher had told her not to let Sabrina's sister stop by the preschool. The teacher thought it was a disruptive practice that "babied" Sabrina. Sidney clearly stated that siblings were welcome visitors, that she hadn't made

those comments to the teacher, and the visits were before school started. Sabrina's mom immediately relaxed and said that she had thought that might be the case and made some negative comments about the other teacher's unwelcoming attitude.

Some other caring rituals in the classroom happen at the end of the day. Almost daily Kristine leans out the bus window and catches a kiss that Sidney throws to her. Seeing Kristine's pleased face, beaming out the bus window as she puts Sidney's "kiss" on her check was always a great image for me to end the day on. At the end of the day Sidney often walks Stephen and his older brother to the bus holding hands. She unobtrusively packs extra snacks in Ruby's backpack since she and Kay think Ruby's meals are sporadic at home. Sidney told me that every day the kindergarten teachers and she wait till the buses pull out from the school to go inside so they can wave good-bye to all of the children. After observing for weeks I would say it is more accurate that half of the kindergarten teachers wait outside; they often are absorbed in conversation and miss the buses leaving. Sidney and Kay are the only ones who consistently wave good-bye.

Discipline and Relationship

A common contention for a new teacher is between the desire to be a friend of the children they teach and the necessity to manage the class and to discipline children (Weinstein, 1998). Discipline is a word that has become associated with mainly punitive measures that demean children or reward children extrinsically. The true meaning of discipline is to teach (Websters,1987). Seen in this light Sidney's method of managing the classroom is true discipline. Sidney does not expect the children to have an innate sense of school culture. She takes into account their prior experience and individualizes each child's adjustment to school and her expectations accordingly. Sidney tries to be consistent within this flexibility and makes sure the children understand what they did that she is concerned about and involves the child in coming up with ways to improve their behavior. Her ultimate goal is self-discipline where the child would be able to make productive choices when they are not around influential adults. Choice, empowerment, understanding, consequences, care, concern and connection are bywords of Sidney's discipline.

One day Samantha was talking to Sidney and told her that she didn't get mad at her friends because she was a "nice" girl. Sidney told Samantha that it was okay to get angry, but "we just have to think about what we say" (Field Notes, March 10, 2000). Sidney's commitment to this type of discipline is hard, constant work. It means there are times she goes home exhausted, wondering when she is going to see results. A commitment to caring discipline is a commitment to long term results and not short term "good" behavior that is governed by fear or desire for reward (van Manen, 1991). Sidney, with an ironic chuckle, said that on days when she has worked hard on discipline all day she wonders if the children are laughing at her wondering why she doesn't yell and hit.

The Evolution of Sidney's Discipline Philosophy

Family Background

When I asked Sidney to talk about her discipline philosophy she reminisced about the possibility of her upbringing effecting her.

> *I think my personality and my family helped me believe that I could really teach. Some people can't have experiences with [groups of] children because of their personalities. It's hard for them to be natural with children. Certain people are terrified of children. It's not a natural thing for them. There are some people, for example, friends of mine in engineering, when I talk to them they say: I don't know how you can do it. Children scare me to death. To me that makes no sense at all. But of course, engineering frightens me to death.*
>
> *My family's been so supportive about my teaching. My dad always says that I should be making more money but, it's what I love doing. Teaching is in our family. My mom did it; my sister did it. My parents had a rather advanced philosophy of working with kids--more advanced than their times, anyway. Whenever I was in trouble, I was never grounded. Instead, I was asked to go reflect on my behavior until I was ready to behave appropriately. Which I think is a really good philosophy. I don't have time out in my classroom. Sometimes there are incidents where I say: you need to leave this situation because you're*

not handling it very well. I give the child the attention they want by reading a book to them in a quiet area. It is similar to what my parents were trying to do.

We can clearly see here Sidney's history, what Bronfenbrenner termed the chronosystem, life course and sociohistorical conditions, and how it still effects her today. The entire evolution of Sidney's discipline philosophy demonstrates clearly some of the different contexts that have influenced Sidney's life as a teacher (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

My mom yelled a lot when I was growing up. Part of it was that she was suffering from clinical depression. Yet in public, no one would have known. Despite the yelling she always had a caring nature. We discuss the irony about this: my mom, my sister, and I--three people have written us suicide notes. Our caring nature must attract people who need help. I am not a yeller, but I do get frustrated very easily and that's what I've really had to work very hard on. It's a real struggle for me to remain calm all day long. There are a lot of times when I just want to say: "What is going on with her?" I will say something to Kay on the side, where no one can hear it. For me, it's a sense of accomplishment every day to know that I spoke as appropriately as I should. It doesn't come naturally to me all the time. It is a constant priority.

Sidney feels a strong conflict of loyalty in sharing negative aspects of her childhood. Her mother is one of Sidney's best friends, someone she can confide in about her teaching worries, yet at the same time their arguments as a teenager influenced Sidney to try not to yell at the children. My mother and I parallel Sidney and her mom in this aspect. Although in our case I am in the argument yelling right back. For people who understand yellers, live with yellers, love yellers and even those who don't, the story Sidney shares does not discredit her love and respect for her mother. Instead it adds richness and depth to Sidney's choices in the classroom and struggle to provide a calm sanctuary for children from chaotic homes.

Preservice Training

Sidney also spoke of her undergraduate training and practicum experiences and reflected on them as possibilities for where her discipline philosophy initially developed. In one placement she had a particularly difficult child, who attempted to draw the

teachers into conflicts throughout the day. Sidney's cooperating teacher's way of dealing with this was through assertive discipline,

> *She used behavior modification….three strikes, you're out! She was very strict, and did a lot of yelling. To me, it wasn't a second grade classroom. She was expecting the children to act much older. I really liked her as a friend, but I didn't feel like she was a friend to any of her students. It seemed to me the only time the children were able to relate to her as a friend was when she was reading aloud. When she was reading books she could be really funny.*

Regarding the difficult student Sidney tried to decide what was the reason for his behavior. She was willing to individualize her teaching for his needs and did not hold resentment towards him for their initial difficult interactions. Seeing the child as an individual in relationship to the teacher and their classmates and not as just one of a group is a key to successful relationally oriented teaching (Malaguzzi, 1993).

> *He was awful. Yet, it was a really good learning experience. Being consistent with him was so important. We actually became kind of friends. I really think that is what he needed. It took me a while to figure out what he really was trying to get. I knew he was trying to get my attention, but I wasn't sure why. He whined and interrupted me every five seconds when I was talking. When I taught a lesson, I would spend the first two or three minutes in front of the class and then we would break into groups. But whenever I was in front of the group teaching, it was a constant struggle. It got so bad I couldn't ignore him. Children were very distracted by him. However, by the end of the semester I became friends with him, and his mom. In fact, we had a lot of contact. She helped him to try to keep on track, to remember things. That was a nice experience of working with a parent.*

Teaching in Public School

Sidney's first year of teaching took place in a small laboratory school with only fifty children in attendance in the whole school at any time. Along with low numbers Sidney had two to four university students helping in her classroom at all times. Sidney

was aware there would need to be a change in certain aspects of her teaching as she began to work in a huge school that is part of the national public school system. Sidney struggled over the onus that is demanded by public school. "One of the most fundamental conflicts in the pedagogical world consists of the tension between freedom and control" (van Manen, 1991).

> *I think I use more power in the classroom than I did in the lab school. Part of that is because I'm in a public school and there are certain things that I feel I need to do as a teacher that I didn't have to do at the lab school, like, walking in a line. Before teaching in a public school I decided I would never make my children walk in a line. There is no other place in society that makes you walk in a line. However, my kids were getting on the wrong buses because they didn't know how to stay in line, so I conformed and my children now walk down the hall in a straight line. I also felt pressure about the noise level of my children inside and outside of the classroom. To me a noisy classroom is a productive classroom and when I hear kids talking in the hallway I see friendships blossoming and social skills emerging. These opinions are contrary to public school opinions. Even though I felt this way I still wanted to earn the respect of my principal and other teachers. This meant that I had to compromise a little. I wanted my co-workers to believe I was doing a great job with my kids. I received some good comments but at the same time--was that what I really want?*

As Sidney explained she felt strongly about not having the children walk in line. The first day she taught in public school she and the children were walking down the hall in what she felt was a natural, effective clump. The principal, Mr. Clayton, trying to be helpful to a new teacher came over to the class and explained that they were going to have to walk in a line better and listen to the teacher. Sidney and the children were all startled and stared at Mr. Clayton. As soon as she had herded the children back to class, Sidney apologized to them, telling the children she knew she hadn't asked them to walk in a line. After that intimidating experience Sidney trained her class to walk in a line and has been doing so ever since.

Sidney's willingness to share this "embarrassing" anecdote allowed me to explore the tension between the type of caring teacher Sidney wanted to be and the type of

teacher she felt she had to be within public school parameters. As Sidney explained, one of the main reasons she gave up on not walking in line is that when she turned her children over to other teachers for bus duty the children were invariably wandering off and getting in the wrong line. Sidney's school is huge and lines seemed to be necessary.

> *In the public school system there are certain things I have to be in control of that ordinarily I wouldn't like to be. I constantly worry that being in the public school is changing my teaching style. I felt very comfortable in the lab school. The lab school was very supportive of whatever I did. Public school is not; it's really very different. I am lucky to have an aide [Kay] who is flexible and also has a philosophy that is similar to mine.*

Leavitt and Bauman Power (1997) write compellingly about the issue Sidney was struggling with, pointing out that while people "everywhere must socialize or civilize" children in the expectation of the society school systems tend to "*over* civilize" children so that "the expectations, restraints, manipulation, and isolation of children's bodies is excessive and objectifying" (p. 44). With the goal in mind of giving children freedom and natural ways of moving, yet the reality of a large public school system, fire drill lines, and bus lines, Sidney taught her children to walk in line. However, she is not taking all of the larger school rules as something that she must do. For example, when Caiman became hot outside he wanted to take off his T-shirt. After discussing the schools rule and society's convention that shirts stay on in formal meeting places such as school Kay and Caiman reached a compromise. On very hot days Caiman was allowed to be outside with one arm out of his shirt. He proudly walked around the playground pointing out this new way of cooling down. Also, the preschoolers still take their shoes off in the sandbox. Watching the children's pleasure as they wriggle bare toes at school, something I have never seen in all my years of teaching, seems argument enough for Sidney's feelings about giving the children as much power and freedom as possible within the natural structure of "school."

In my field notes I wrote about the pressure teachers may feel from implied expectations of others in the school.

> During the all school assembly today I noted that Sidney's expectations for her children really stand out against the whole school. As the classes filed in, prior

> to the assembly starting, her children were waving cheerfully to older children and she said nothing to them. I was sitting beside two kindergarten teachers who kept calling their children down for any type of body movement. One kindergarten child got up on his knees and turned around looking at the older children walking in. He seemed to be searching for someone and after spotting him waved. The teacher beside me jumped up quickly and made him move to sit beside her. I had forgotten the unbelievable pressure that all the teachers watching puts on a teacher. A weak teacher quickly gives in. Even a strong teacher alters herself somewhat. These two teachers constantly "got on" children for talking, however off and on throughout the entire assembly they talked to each other in a normal level of voice. I could feel myself getting very angry. Suddenly I reminded myself that I was the researcher and not the co-teacher and that really helped. I could actually see that these teachers would be considered of standard effectiveness and not horrible. However, if I were a parent I would not want them to teach my child (Field Notes, March 3, 2000).

When I was first hired to be a public school teacher my personnel director told me the bromide, "Don't smile until Christmas." I recall struggling with this philosophy as Sidney did. Expectations of peers and colleagues in the school where one works can be a strong source of pressure. To deal with this pressure I developed a culture of "Maria's classroom with the door shut" and a separate culture for "how the children should behave in the larger school". For instance, boys could not wear a hat in the school, but girls could. A boy entering the school with a hat would immediately be yelled at and reprimanded. I felt this rule was sexist and didn't see why children couldn't keep their hat on at least untill they got to their classroom coat closet. In my kindergarten class it seemed a particularly strange rule since I had a dress-up corner full of hats. Therefore, the rule became, no hats on outside of the classroom.

Sidney had an understanding of the need to individualize discipline for the children within the limits that she sets in the classroom and the limits that are necessary at times within a larger school system. Kohl (1976, p. 82) says, "Within them [clear limits] is a wide range of freedom that can develop. If anything, these rules protect the freedom of the individuals within the context of a group rather then restrict it." Sidney

and her children explored this range of freedoms with a creativity that allowed all of the children to feel they are part of an ordered, caring community.

Caring for Families

Sidney's belief in relationship did not end with the children. For Sidney, the sense of an inviting, welcoming, atmosphere extended beyond making the children and teachers comfortable; she wanted the child's entire family to feel part of the school community. "In creating a family like atmosphere, it is also significant to acknowledge parents as people who know the most about their children and are the primary people in their children's lives" (Whitehead & Ginsberg, 1999, p. 9). Sidney shared her efforts to make the child and their family feel valued and at home:

> *I have been told that many of the Virginia Preschool Initiative parents had poor experiences in school, so I've tried to make it a fun and welcoming place for their children to come. At family events we have a lot of parents that will stand outside the classroom door and will not come in. But, the important fact is that they are there. So we just have to move the party outside a bit. I feel like that's something we've accomplished so far.*
>
> *I had a parent come in yesterday who's never been in the classroom. I wrote a note home a couple of days ago saying I was concerned about her child. Harmony has been hitting her friends. I didn't know if something had happened at home--this was very uncharacteristic. It had been going on for two weeks. She'd been saying extremely mean things to her friends, like: you're stupid, you're ugly--really hurtful things. The mother didn't write back but just came in one day and said: "So, I hear Harmony is being Harmony!" We had a ten minute conversation and I got so many insights into this child.*

The children without their family context did not provide Sidney with a full relationship or understanding of the child. The Virginia Preschool Initiative supported Sidney in this belief by providing the preschool teachers with paid days to conduct home visits with a family service worker who works in the homes with the children's families. Sidney used the home visits as time to establish initial connections with the families that

she can tap into during the year. She took pictures of the children and any parents or relatives who were at the first home visit and had them on display by the time school started. A huge bulletin board at the entryway to the classroom was covered with photos of the children and their families which is a captivating technique used in caring classrooms to honor the child's family (Whitehead & Ginsberg, 1999). This bulletin board is a source of much interest and pride for the children. They would frequently point out members of their family to any other visitors and me. Sidney reflects on the use of the family photos saying:

> *I wanted the children and families to walk in on the first day and feel welcome. I put pictures of the children and families all over the room to give the children a sense of comfort and ownership. It was amazing to watch the children's faces when they walked in and saw pictures of themselves.*

Not all families were comfortable having a teacher as a guest in their homes. When Sidney sensed this she invited the family to meet her at a local fast food place where the children could play while she talked with the parents. Sidney had several families that took this option. Sidney feels these families were probably uncomfortable with the type of home they had. Sidney herself had heard several excellent speakers talk about the importance of respecting families and the possibilities of experiencing poor living situations in the homes she visited. She went into the home visits steeling herself for the worst. Some of the homes were in extremely bad condition. Sidney said, "I'd look in and think: I do not want to sit down on that couch. But you have to do it. You just have to be very polite, and know that's the best that family can do right now." When I asked Sidney, at the start of the study, to describe her teaching philosophy, relationships with the children and their families was one of the themes she spoke of at length.

> *I've really tried to develop relationships and friendships with the kids and their families. Bringing these families in was so important for me. I have pictures of families in their little portfolios and little scrapbooks. The correspondence with parents has been the number one priority going into this.*

Sidney applies her early childhood philosophy to relating with the parents as well. Each parent has an individual set of needs that they bring to the classroom and Sidney is

flexible for the individual parent's needs accordingly while keeping in mind the needs of the group as a whole.

A Family/School Story

Kate, a bright-eyed, sweet-tempered girl could usually be seen moving busily around the room. Perhaps she would be in the housekeeping center cooking at the wooden stove, banging vibrant red pots and pans together as she made dinner for a friend. Maybe she would be attending group time, eagerly waving her hand to answer one of Sidney's questions about a story or song. Certainly she could be seen running up to friends who had been absent saying in welcoming tones in perfect teacher mimic, "Callie! We missed you yesterday!" The Kate who came up to meet me, tilted her head to the side and grinned a transforming smile that split her face in two and changed her from any little blonde to an engaging gamine, was not recognizable in the child who was dropped off at school one morning by her mom, Dorothy, and mom's boyfriend, Don.

"Kate, good morning!" I heard Kay and Sidney sing out and looked up in time to see Kate round the corner of the door in her mother, Dorothy's, arms. Don stood with his hands in his pockets and quietly nodded and smiled at the teachers as he watched Kate and Dorothy. "Put your back-pack away, Kate, and hang up your lunch choice sign," Kay said. Kate put her thumb in her mouth and grunted prettily at her mother while thrusting her backpack at her with her other hand. Dorothy put the backpack away and carried Kate over to the lunch choice chart, set her down, and then looked through the choices, commenting to Kate about which types of food Kate enjoys. When Kate let out a little grunt of consent her mother fixed the food symbol to the chart, indicating Kate's lunch choice for the day.

Kate then flung her hands up to her mother, fingers wide spread, and said, "Mommy" in a baby voice that was made even more indistinguishable by Kate's speech impairment. Dorothy swooped Kate up into her arms and walked around the room to look at different activities that were available for children to do. Kate finally settled into painting, but demanded through a series of grunts, coos, and body gestures that her mother stay close by and watch her work.

Sidney and Kay had gone on with the flow of the morning, greeting children, checking book bags for notes, and settling children into activities. Both teachers had pleasant exchanges with Kate's family but did not give Kate and Dorothy the attention such a high melodrama scene would usually merit. This sent a signal to me that Kate's behavior must be a typical routine. Kate was not having a rough morning and probably interacted with her mother this way on a regular basis. I took my cues from the teachers and was pleasant but did not move into the family's intense emotional interactions.

Kate and her mother's feelings peaked at the time of Dorothy's departure. Dorothy hugged Kate good-bye in a long all-encompassing bear hug and then Kate turned back to her half finished painting and started working. When Dorothy reached the door she called, "Good-bye, Kate, Kate honey,…" until Kate turned and called, "Mommy," and ran to Dorothy seemingly in anguish. This was repeated several times at varying levels, with Don smiling and observing on the sideline, until Dorothy left and Kate, tearless, returned to her painting, which she finished with gusto and an apparent sense of satisfaction.

Upon Dorothy's and Don's leaving the teachers made small grimaces at each other and to me. Later Sidney commented in a private aside to me that it drives her nuts how Kate's mother keeps pushing until Kate shows she is upset at her mother's departure. The participant observation method of research allowed me to note down my wish to discuss this situation more with Sidney, but scheduling did not allow me to pursue my questions at that time. The teachers and I were all literally knee deep in children, teaching; making passing comments from one colleague to the other was the most that was possible. I was left wondering what Sidney's perception was of her role in this situation? She did not interfere with Kate and her mother, expressed no irritation to the family, but made it clear after their departure that it is not a situation she feels good about.

Over the course of the next weeks Kate's mother brought her to school many mornings. I found that I was correct in assuming that the interactions I had observed with Kate were typical. One particularly memorable day occurred when it was Kate's turn to visit a kindergarten class. The kindergarten visits were part of Sidney's detailed plan to help the preschoolers' transition to kindergarten. Dorothy was still at the school when it was Kate's turn to visit kindergarten. Sidney walked Kate and Jeremy down to the

kindergarten class and Dorothy followed them, scooping Kate up in the process and carrying her. As we walked along Sidney explained to Kate's mom the purpose of the visit and what Kate could expect during the visit and then was told by Dorothy that this particular kindergarten teacher had also taught Dorothy when she was a child. Sidney exclaimed enthusiastically over this interesting information.

When we arrived at the kindergarten class the children were seated on the carpet for group time and the kindergarten teacher stood up and said, "Welcome, preschoolers! These children will be in kindergarten next year," and turning to the kindergartners said "And you will be in first grade." Sidney got Jeremy settled and turned to see that Dorothy had now carried Kate to the front of the group area and was engaged in a long good-bye. I thought perhaps Sidney's smile became a little brittle, but she and the kindergarten teacher used that time to tell the children that Dorothy had also been taught by this teacher. The children sat quietly, staring, and then Sidney swiftly left and went back to the classroom calling out good-bye to Kate's mom as she went down the hall. I saw Kate's mom leave several minutes later.

When I asked Sidney how she felt about Kate's morning transition with her mother she said,

> *The babying incidents are very frustrating to me because they are generated by the mom. Kate is perfectly happy riding the bus and walking to class by herself. Every time she does it, she walks into the classroom beaming, saying, "I did it all by myself." However, when mom drops her off, she is whiny, clingy, and seems somewhat unhappy to me. After a few minutes of spending time with her mom in the classroom Kate is ready to be at school with her friends by herself. Unfortunately, her mom doesn't recognize this and her good-bye can last for thirty-minutes. Kate's mom is the one having the transition problems, not Kate. It frustrates me when I see a child learning to be helpless. I know many adults who are like this, and it scares me to think what Kate will be like in fifteen years. I am completely in favor of a supportive parent, but in my opinion sometimes she goes overboard. I also want to add that I do recognize the fact that I am not a parent and I am probably being somewhat inconsiderate. I am sure it is terribly hard to send a four-year-old off to school everyday.*

I asked Sidney how she makes the choice when to let the parent see how she is feeling about a frustrating situation and when not to. What is appropriate? Sidney feels strongly that we do not have the right to show anger to parents. She works hard to delay her emotional response to a time that she thinks is appropriate, such as talking about the incident with Kay after school. Sidney is excited that Dorothy comes to school with Kate, so to keep the family comfortable and involved she saves confrontations for bigger issues then what is "irritating" to her. At the same time she encourages Kate to be independent at school and makes sure the family knows this is a goal of hers for Kate. She said:

> *The reason I feel like I can't let her [Kate's mother] know that I am angry is because I strongly feel I have to retain a certain level of professionalism. In a business sense, she is my client, and I have to respect her for that.*

Sidney has moved from the conception that teachers are for the child solely. She recognizes that the only way to be fully for the child is to be for the child's family also (Whitehead & Ginsberg, 1999).

Sidney's relationship with Kate and Dorothy reminded me of my first experience with a parent who had needs similar to Kate's mom. The first mother I experienced this situation with would cling to and stroke her daughter Stephanie in such a way that while the mom was saying good-bye she sent a message that seemed to say to her child, "Please need me. Ask me to stay." Stephanie would responded with deep heart-rending sobs and tears. Until I taught Stephanie I had naively told parents that I believed their child would soon stop crying after they left. Stephanie cried all day long for two weeks. I was worn out, exhausted, and amazed at the end of the day. Thankfully, it was part of my philosophy to remind myself, if I was exhausted, who I really needed to feel sorry for was the one who had cried all day. I challenged myself to be open to Stephanie's needs. I took Stephanie in completely, slowly, and gently untill a secure, dimpled child would peep out at more regular intervals. However, I had no room for Stephanie's mom. She aggravated me, she escalated the situation, days when she volunteered were stressful, she told me Stephanie still slept in the parent's bed, she asked me to carry Stephanie's lunch tray for her during lunch time, on and on. I turned all my irritation with the situation

towards the mom and simply tried to ignore her and limit her visits to the school. While I was at all times pleasant, I was not inviting.

When I tried to complain and gain sympathy from mentors of mine they heard only the story of the mother. "Think how she must be feeling," they said. "Her first child, a shy little girl, the kindergarten day is so long…." I went away still irritated but now aware I was only seeing the child's story which disconnected from the mother is not the whole story. After that experience I developed a philosophy in keeping with Sidney's that I have striven to implement. The school where I taught Stephanie had a rule that parents could not come to the room to pick up their child. I had that rule changed for my class, because I told the secretary I wanted to see the parents as much as possible. This did mean that at times parents arrived at crucial moments of the day or stayed longer then I wanted. However, as Sidney knows these experiences are off set by "rubbing up against" the children's family lives on a daily basis. Sidney and I are left still wrestling with this issue. As a teacher, in situations such as these, how does one thoughtfully and genuinely find ways to connect with families and support them? How does one negotiate parent-child interactions that may seem inappropriate at school or not conducive to establishing classroom community?

While Sidney expressed frustration with Kate's "helpless" behavior, that occurred when separating from her mom, Sidney did not take her irritation out by clamping down on Kate in an effort to encourage her to "grow up" or learn how to behave "correctly" at school. Sidney remained flexible and in tune to Kate's needs. If Kate seemed to genuinely need to be held, comforted, or given extra support Sidney was there for her. During rest time one afternoon the sounds of muffled thunder and heavy rain could be heard. Sidney, hearing a different noise, suddenly stopped what she was doing and went over to where Kate lay on her rest mat in the darkened farthest corner of the room. Kate was awake, as always. She is the one child who seems never to sleep. Sidney looked at her closely and realized Kate was huddled under her blanket crying. Sidney asked Kate several quiet questions and then the two of them walked out of the classroom and down the hall. I followed at a distance to see what they were doing and watched as Sidney pointed out of a window and explained to Kate that the noise was a storm, we were safe inside…and tried to establish a sense of security for Kate in our windowless room.

When Kate and Sidney returned to the room they worked on moving Kate's cot and blanket to a semi-light space right at the feet of where the teachers were seated. Kate snuggled under her blanket and lay quietly for the remainder of rest time.

As I looked at the study data over and over and reflected on these scenarios, I began to see that while Dorothy's ongoing presence in the class seemed at first to simply be an irritant that there were more subtle ways her presence helped establish community in the classroom. Every morning Dorothy and Don also greeted another little blond girl who came into the class invariably grumpy. Sabrina often glared at anyone who engaged her in the early morning, but she allowed Don to tousle her hair and tease with her. Dorothy, who knew Sabrina, was even allowed to sit on the couch and hold Sabrina on her lap even when Sabrina seemed to feel angry. When Dorothy and Don left both Sabrina and Kate would inevitable return happily to their work.

One day in late spring, Dorothy came in and proudly told Sidney that she was engaged to Don. Don again was standing at the doorway with his quiet smile, looking on. Dorothy was well aware of Sidney's own imminent marriage and had teased her off and on to help Dorothy think of ways to encourage Don to propose. Due to Sidney's inclusion of parents in the classroom when this important moment came for Kate and her family Sidney did not hear about it weeks later from a child or in a note, but was a part of Kate's family first hand, ready with congratulations and support.

Teacher-Teacher Relationships

A final system of relationships that form the backbone of Sidney's classroom is that of the teachers' relationships with each other and the support their extended families provide. Sidney and Kay have developed a real friendship and rapport. They spend time daily at lunch or during rest time discussing their families. They may compare notes about their husband and fiancé's behavior, discuss Sidney's wedding plans, Kay's thoughts about obtaining a teaching degree, or Kay's three-year-old daughter. The two of them bring food that they know the other one will like to the classroom to share. They also give each other presents at holidays and family occasions.

Along with these interactions, that might be seen as standard between friends and colleagues, Sidney and Kay also provide a strong sense of protection for each other from

the larger school system. At times a teacher's plans run counter to the larger systems or the teacher makes a mistake that they would be embarrassed about. Sidney and Kay immediately side with each other in these occasions and form a front that protects their class and their personal teaching needs from the larger, encroaching system.

This aspect of their relationships brought to mind the time one of my former principals made a rule that the next teacher who was late to bus duty would get a note on her permanent record regarding her mistake. This action seemed a sensible way, to him, to address complaints that were made regarding several teachers' habitual tardiness. What actually happened was other teachers would call the tardy teacher to remind her about bus duty and slip in to take her place if she was late. Sidney and Kay's protective behavior is reminiscent of this story.

As part of Sidney's daily practice, to help herself keep on track with her teaching philosophy and to make informed decisions about the children, she deliberately reflects on her teaching practice. The practice of reflection allows teachers to continue to grow and develop (Schon, 1983). Sidney has built a thirty-minute planning time into every morning where she and Kay discuss the children, the day's plans, and their personal lives before the children arrive at school. In order to provide this time Sidney arrives at school early and has the room set up when Kay arrives at eight.

> *I do a lot of reflecting. I reflect privately and also with Kay. We reflect mostly about our interactions with the children and about discipline strategies. We wonder about: should we have said that? Maybe we shouldn't have said that? We also discuss the problems that are going on at the children's homes. We have to remind ourselves that the children's behaviors are a reaction to their home lives. We brainstorm to learn the best ways to deal with their situations.*

As Sidney and Kay grew to know each other it seemed only natural that their families were also involved in the classroom and supporting the two of them in their teaching. Kay's daughter visited the classroom on several occasions and had a day with Mommy at work. Kay's father works at a grocery store and donated different snack items for all of the children's lunch on field trips. Kay's husband also agreed to paint a mural on the trailer outside of the school that borders the children's playground and housed the preschool administrative office.

Sidney's parents gave each of the children a copy of *Brown, Bear, Brown, Bear* by Bill Martin, Jr. for Christmas, in an effort to get good literature into the children's hands. Sidney's future parent-in-laws sponsored a trip to a department store by donating ten dollars for each child to spend. A family and co-teacher working together provided a sense of relationship and support that was revitalizing and encouraging for Sidney and in turn the children.

Sidney's parents, sister, niece, nephew, fiancé, and future mother and sister-in-law were all regular visitors in the classroom. Sidney's fiancé, Jeff, organized a field trip hosted by his construction company to the construction site of Sidney's new house. On one of the trips Jeff provided cement and bricks so the children could build a small house and practice what they observed brick layers doing to Sidney's house. Afterwards the children had a hotdog roast for lunch at the construction site. More then the amazing field trips Jeff provided an opportunity for the children to relate to a caring male figure and to see Sidney in her larger context.

Again we can see the variety of influences on Sidney's life and there possible effect on her teaching as demonstrated in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecology which illustrates the many systems teachers are involved in that potentially effect their school life. Sidney herself is able to draw from caring connections in her personal life that help support and sustain her. Not only does this allow her to be a better teacher in the classroom as she uses her understanding of caring to connect with the children, but the people in her support system actually come into the school at times and interact directly with the children modeling a variety of caring possibilities for the children.

In the summer, after Sidney's wedding, she showed me a video of photos that her mother and mother-in-law had made for Sidney and Jeff. The last photo pictures Sidney and Jeff standing in the unfinished house with all of Sidney's class standing in the house foundation. The music in the background is one of Sidney's favorite songs:

The smile on your face let's me know that you love me.

The touch of your hand makes me know that you need me.

You say it best, when you say nothing at all (Keith Whitley).

This picture and lyrics caused Sidney to cry as she thought of the symbolism they reflected. Her new marriage was standing on the foundation of commitment Sidney had formed to caring relationships both in her personal and professional life.

I have explored relationships, the foundation of Sidney's caring in the classroom, and closely examined just some of the components that go into their complex make-up. Examples, of individualizing to children and adults, flexibility, knowledge of children's needs, clear, reasonable expectations for children's behavior along with teacher personality traits such as playfulness and humor all testify to the caring in Sidney's classroom. I will now examine how the teacher's practice or "teaching" in the classroom is an extension of her philosophy and a "tool" for supporting caring relationships.

Chapter 6

Teaching Practice in the Caring Classroom

If we value genuine caring encounters…
children will be encouraged to learn from each other
as well as from teachers and books.
~ Nel Noddings ~

Teaching practice in the classroom is one of the primary outward manifestations of the caring teacher. One may talk and theorize about caring in an abstract manner but it is through practice where the teacher, to put it crudely, "puts her money where her mouth is." To put it more sophisticatedly "actions speak louder then words." Caring teaching practice allows the children to have experiences both in caring and in being cared for (Noddings, 1992 p. 24).

When asked what kind of teaching style she uses Sidney replied,

> *I don't know. My philosophy is made up of a lot of different things. I guess I would define myself as a teacher who strives to use a constructivist approach. I worry sometimes that I am not as successful at it as I would like to be. I think being around some strict teachers may have made me pick up bad habits. I also remember learning about a philosophy that reminds me of my teaching style. It is called Caring Management. It is a very relaxed understanding,* laissez faire, *hands off, laid back style of teaching where the goal is to learn about each child individually and teach from there. It's really hard…. I don't know how to better describe my teaching style. I feel like I haven't quite decided yet. So, I'm experimenting with the kids and myself.*

While Sidney is not completely sure of how she wants to describe her beliefs in the classroom she is sure of what those beliefs are.

I really want the kids to be independent. I want the kids to be able to question things. I hear what goes on next door [in some kindergarten classes] and I want to combat what they're going to have to deal with there next year. I want the kids to have a really good self-concept and have high self-esteem. I want them to have a lot of confidence in everything they do. I also have an idealistic goal. My goal is to create a kind of haven for the children in this classroom. I want it to be a classroom where the children want to come every day. I want it to be fun, safe, and a place where they are free to make mistakes.

One perspective is gained by listening to a teacher talk about what she believes and how she teaches. Pairing the oral data with data gained from observing experiences in the context fleshes out this picture and gives substance to the words. In Sidney's case while she is willing to engage in scholarly discussions about teaching she is at times still searching for the words to explain what she knows inside and what she seems to almost intuitively feel about young children. Observing in Sidney's classroom allowed me to delve into Sidney's beliefs further as I saw them played out in her daily actions. It immediately struck me that while Sidney still hesitates at times in her description of her teaching style and philosophy when she is in the classroom teaching there is no visible hesitation. Sidney is confident, assured, and moves through the day in the manner of a seasoned teacher.

Lillian Katz's stages of teacher development, (as cited in Caruso and Fawcett, 1999) applied to Sidney, would place her as a beginning teacher in the "Consolidating Stage." In this stage the "teacher consolidates the gains made during the first stage [survivor] and begins to focus on specific tasks and skills" (p. 62). Sidney is beyond the initial survivor stage, where the teacher is trying to get by day to day. In fact, this stage could be seen either as minimal for Sidney or occurring during her preservice teacher years. Sidney has now grown to have a clear sense of who she is in the classroom and is learning to articulate this to parents, supervisors, and co-teachers (see Appendix H for a chart of teacher's development stages as related to Sidney).

Caring Curriculum

Participant observation allowed me to observe that Sidney often underplays her teaching in a joking, self-deprecating way. Sidney has said, numerous times, that she feels she has no organized curriculum in the classroom. "Sometimes I feel I am just throwing everything at them [the children] and waiting to see what sticks," worried Sidney. However, upon closer examination of Sidney's curriculum I would describe it as an individualized, child-centered, flexible, play-based curriculum with a focus on exploration and enrichment. Caring is demonstrated through this curriculum since the child's needs and desires are paramount. The child is "set free to pursue [her] legitimate projects" (Noddings, 1984, p. 177). Take the following story for example:

> Alyssa had been working hard at the edge of the room along the cubbies, dragging one chair after the other to be placed in a row, backs facing the cubbies, fronts facing into the room. When Alyssa finished working she called out in a loud, welcoming voice that the bus was ready and everyone should come get on. Children scrambled to join in Alyssa's play, and both teachers also joined the children on the "bus". Some children reached across the back of the chairs and got out their book bags to use as props for the bus drama. While Alyssa initially wanted friends to join her, when so many came running, added chairs, and changed the layout of her "bus," Alyssa got upset and felt like her classmates were messing up her play idea. Kay sat holding Alyssa on the couch for a few moments and discussed how excited her classmates were about Alyssa's ideas. Pretty soon Alyssa was able to re-enter the play, and altered her plan to accommodate many interested friends. Within minutes Alyssa, hair flying in an aurora of curls straight up from her head, was driving a bus full of her classmates to various destinations. Around the room teacher-planned activities were abandoned as almost the whole class rollicked down the road in an imaginary bus made of chairs (Field Notes, March 17, 2000).

The bus example was repeated over the course of the study several times by Alyssa and once by Michelle. The teachers always joined the children on board and extended the children's play by asking questions, supporting their plans and negotiating disagreements. On one-occasion children walked up and down the aisle of the bus selling

candy. Teachers extended the play asking, "How much does the candy cost?" and "Do you have any Twizzlers?" Other examples of teachers supporting children's play themes include Sidney and Kay riding in cars made of blocks, surfing on a block surfboard, joining children in a box house, walking a child "dog" on a leash and giving the "dog" a bowl of water. Multiple incidents of teachers abandoning their personal plans for children's spontaneous ideas support the child-centered, play-based curriculum I observed.

Group Time: Michelle's Solo

Group time, in school, is usually one of the most teacher-directed times of the day. The teacher must work hard to manage the children's behavior while remaining interesting, relevant, and engaging. At times when I lead groups of young children I had so many decisions and roles to juggle that I am left wondering if I had even been coherent! A caring group time includes plenty of time for the individual child's agenda balanced with respect for the group's needs. Sidney had developed a sense of flexibility and a shared agenda at group time that the children were aware of. She altered her plans as needed to include the children's comments, questions, stories, and ideas. Most of Sidney's group times consisted of a short calendar experience, a story, singing, and movement. Her plans were interspersed with the children's own stories prompted by the book, children's comments about upcoming dates on the calendar and thoughts a child may have that seem totally irrelevant to an adult, but followed some stream of consciousness in the child's mind.

As we were moving into the singing portion of group time one-day, Sidney said, "Let's sing Michelle's favorite song, *Tiny Tim*."

I had a little turtle.
His name was Tiny Tim.
I put him in the bathtub to see if he could swim.
He drank up all the water.
He ate up all the soap
He tried to eat the bathtub
But it wouldn't go down his throat.

Bubble, bubble, bubble,

Bubble, bubble, POP!

After singing the song through once, in a gusty fashion, with her classmates, Michelle began to eagerly wave her hand. Michelle is a particularly demanding child who craves adult attention, wets her pants daily, screams at teachers and classmates when she is angry, and will not budge during times of rage, even if she sees her whole class trailing out the door to the lunchroom. It can be hard to stop plans to see what Michelle, and others like her want, and often it is not what the teacher wants. Sidney however, tries to delay her negative emotional responses that would affect her interactions with the children at other times of the day. She waits until later to bring out her emotion and frustration, when she has time to discuss the children's behavior with Kay or another professional. The effort to regulate her emotions allowed Sidney to turn to Michelle during this group time in a genuinely welcoming manner and Michelle really had something great to say! Beaming, Michelle eagerly told Sidney that she had written a new song. Sidney invited her to sing it to the group and the whole class looked on as Michelle sang,

Bubble, bubble, bubble

Bubble, bubble, bubble

Bubble, bubble, bubble

Bubble, bubble, POP!

These words were sung to the same tune as *Tiny Tim*. Sidney praised Michelle and suggested the whole class sing the new song and then stand up and sing it again while acting out bubble and popping motions with their hands. Michelle, pigtails sticking out from either side of her head, joined into group time with more engagement and enthusiasm on her face than usually seen during group times. Children smiling and laughing sang lustily, clapping hands, as they popped imaginary bubbles, bubbling out of Tiny Tim's bathtub--affirming Michelle through music and rhythm.

Alyssa then wanted to experience the connection and relationship she had seen established between Sidney and Michelle. Alyssa began waving her hand claiming she had written a song too. "Great, go ahead and sing it," Sidney said. Alyssa then sang tentatively to the same tune, seemingly creating as she went along.

Bubble, bubble, bubble
Bubble, bubble, bubble,
Bubble, bubble, and bubble
Bubble, bubble…different song!

Alyssa's effort, seen as bid for connection with the teachers and classmates, was equally praised and no comment of "copying" Michelle was made. Each child's effort to contribute was valued.

Butchering a Chicken: What is Knowledge?

Sidney has personally visited each child's home, and has a sense that some of the children have been deprived of even the most basic "school" experiences, such as working with crayons and paper. This is a subject that is difficult to discuss in an appropriate manner. It is not unusual for the field of education to look at children "at risk" as having learning deficits (Kohl, 1976). Sidney and I both know that the children in her class have areas of knowledge that she and I know nothing about. What usually are lacking are the skills that we know, as teachers will allow the children to succeed in school and in the larger world. I taught kindergarten in a small rural community that had many similarities to the children and families in Sidney's classroom. These children were also often seen as deprived or "at risk." The community where I worked had a large poultry industry that employed many of the families. I will never forget Lew standing up during group time and stating that he had something he wanted to share. Tow hair standing on end with an eager freckled face and piercing blue eyes Lew riveted the entire class with a step-by-step description accompanied by dramatic gestures of how one butchers, cleans, and prepares a live chicken for supper. Lew's story was an excellent example of his ability to use oral skills dramatically, in a sequence, and in front of a group. So is Lew deprived? Isn't he "smart" or does the school system simply not care about what he does know?

On one occasion Sidney shared that many of the children's homes did not have writing and drawing implements in them. She told about a child who "stole" materials from school. Sidney thought it might have been because Harmony had few materials at home.

I patted Harmony on her leg and said, "What's in your pocket?" She was "stealing" almost 20 markers. I'm sure one of the school's kindergarten teacher would have called her mom and maybe made an example out of her for the rest of the class. I guess I was thinking, "If she has no markers at home, of course she's going to take them." She's one of the kids who doesn't talk very much. I said, "Did you bring these markers from home? Or did you put them in your pocket when you were using them in the loft?" She said, "When I was in the loft." So I said, "Well, why don't we go and just put them back so we can keep using them at school." And that was the end of it. She put them back and I made sure that we gave all the children crayons, markers, and scissors for Christmas.

Early in this study, I asked Sidney if she could remember the first planned lesson she did, with children, as an undergraduate practicum student. It is notable that the lessons she described were hands-on, exploratory, and open-ended experiences for the children.

The first thing I did was shaving cream. The children had never done shaving cream before. The second thing I did was make gelatin in ten different colors and put it all in the [water] table. Oh, the children loved it. After playing awhile, the children put water in also and then brought the water up all the way to the top. Oh, it was amazing. It was really cool.

Due in part to the "school skills impoverished" backgrounds of the children, Sidney uses an exploration-based curriculum that provides multiple opportunities for enrichment in the children's lives. The following are just some of the experiences I participated in and documented how Sidney showed caring teaching through these interactions.

Exploring and Representing with Art

Art is a central driving theme for the class. Sidney sees art as an opportunity for children to create, represent the world around them, explore uses of materials, engage in sensory experiences, and work with their peers on meaningful projects. Children created two dimensional art with corn syrup and condensed milk, watercolors, chalk and small chalk boards, glitter and glue, tempera, stickers, bingo markers, markers, stamps, tooth

paste paint, cornmeal paint, tissue paper, pencils, crayons, pudding, rock salt, finger paint, and more. After seeing the children's psychedelic colored syrup/paint art one day, I wrote the following in my journal.

> The corn syrup art is just one of many different activities I have seen Sidney and Kay try. They both read a lot of curriculum books on art, often during rest time, and are not afraid to try something new. They don't always try it ahead of time and seem to feel that if their plan doesn't work, that is part of the experience for the children. The children are as interested in "messed up" projects as they are successful ones. For example, one day the spin art machine was clogged and the children enjoyed seeing Sidney take it apart and try to fix it. I have usually been too reluctant to try an activity unless I know it works ahead of time. After seeing this approach I can't say that I disagree with them (Field Notes, March 3, 2000).

Familiar Materials Afford New Uses

An array of paper and varied surfaces for art were also explored during art projects, including notepads, printer paper, transparency, note cards, construction paper, paper plates, tin foil, magazines for collages, cardboard, and tag board. Different papers, stamps, envelopes, and writing tools were always available in the writing center in the loft. Children had opportunities to dictate stories to teachers. Michelle wrote and illustrated a small book:

Cover- A Story About Bears

Page 1. Roar

Page 2. Bears eat grass and spit it out.

Page 3. Bears like to play with lots of toys.

Page 4. I love you bears.

Page 5. I don’t like you bears.

Page 6. I want to play with you.

Page 7. I do not want to play with you; I just want to watch you.

Page 8. I do want to play with you.

Different ways of painting were experimented with: record-player painting, painting with toy cars, painting with white paint on black paper, feather painting, spin art,

drawing on the table with water color markers, painting with soap wands, and painting with plastic cards in a squeegee manner. During these activities children were encouraged to experiment and try new ways of using familiar materials.

Not only were all the items described above available for art but children were generally free to use the materials in other manners they conceived of. One day shells were out on a table for collage art, Stephen had stuffed his pockets full of them. Sidney negotiated with Stephen to take some home and leave others at school. This was difficult for Stephen but he reluctantly complied. Stephen then put his shell collection in his cubby. Later, Sabrina, Amy, Stephen, and I were standing at the art-drying table looking at some of the children's art and I observed Stephen give Sabrina a shell. I commented to Stephen about how kind that was of him. Sabrina told Stephen thank-you, and I said, "Wow, you guys are being so polite."

Stephen then gave me a shell and I said, "Stephen is being kind to everyone. How wonderful." Then Stephen ran away and came back with a shell for Amy who had been silently observing our interactions.

Amy said, "Thanks!" The four of us sat quietly for awhile looking at our shells and feeling the glow of Stephen's pleasure in having pleased us.

Along with shells the pipe cleaners also become extended into play as the children thought of alternative uses for them. Michelle pretended to be a kitty and Caiman was holding a leash of pipe cleaners that was linked around her. Joey walked around the room holding a pipe cleaner leash and asking all of the children, "Will you be my man?" Stephen walked by where I was observing, with Jeremy as his dog on a pipe cleaner leash. Caiman, Texas, and Jackson all clambered into the loft with pipe cleaners and fashioned fishing lines and poles. The three boys cast their lines over the side of the loft. Other friends as well as Sidney and Kay pulled on their pole in the role of fish. Caiman found a small piece of metal and hooked it on his line as bait. After awhile the fishing game became the opposite of fishing since the children below pulled too hard. Texas now cast and pulled away quickly before the children below could get the line and pull his pole apart. Texas seemed equally satisfied with the reversal of the fishing game.

Cooperative Sculptures

Art was also planned that encouraged a sense of community in the classroom. 3-D cooperative sculptures were created using stale ice cream cones, painted rocks with dyed glue, fabric pieces, pom-poms, shells, beans, pipe cleaners, old puzzle pieces, Sidney's bridal shower wrapping paper, bows, beads, boxes, and wire. Several community projects were displayed in the classroom at all times. The community art was quite captivating both in look and in unusualness. Other teachers stopped to admire them and the librarian asked to have some displayed in the library. Regarding the most unusual sculpture I wrote the following in my field notes:

> There was a new sculpture that the children had made hanging in the class from the ceiling. It was really quite funny. One of the things that Kristine's mom had brought for the class to use was a huge old foam candy cane that one might put in a yard at Christmas time. The candy cane had become dull over the years and was scarcely recognizable. Sidney put it out with glitter paint, silk roses, and Popsicle sticks. The children had painted the foam and stuck the flowers coming straight out of the cane. They were very proud of it. From one perspective the candy cane was excellent. From another it really looked horrible. However, Sidney is the type of teacher who can look at situations from the child's point of view and proudly displayed it. She got a lot of teasing from the other teachers but it was mostly good-natured. When she saw me come in she said, "Look what the children did today," and immediately showed the candy cane to me (Field Notes, April 17, 2000).

About a week after the children made the candy cane sculpture I came into the class at rest time and found Sidney and Kay cracking up with laughter. They told me that Mrs. Mason had teased them about the sculpture, saying all of the artificial roses made it look like a grave marker. Sidney and Kay had slipped over to her room while she was at lunch and hung the candy cane from her classroom ceiling. When Mrs. Mason walked her class back from lunch she never glanced at the ceiling and went right into teaching. In a few moments she came over to say something to Kay and Sidney and they started laughing so hard while she was talking that she said in bewilderment, "What is it? Do I have something on my face?"

"No!" Kay said, "Come over here." And Kay dragged Mrs. Mason back to her room and showed her the candy cane. All the teachers laughed together and this became an ongoing joke.

The cooperative sculpture illustrates a value Sidney has that children participate in activities that are open-ended, encourage communication, problem solving, negotiation, perspective taking, and shared representation. This value is in agreement with child art theory and development principals (Szyba, 1999). Sidney's value is in contrast to the larger school where most "art" is done by one child only, is really a craft, a direction following activity, or a worksheet. However, when teased about the end product of their art, by a teacher they consider a friend, Sidney and Kay are able to respond in the light hearted manner that is characteristic of their interactions with children and adults.

"Messing Around"

Most of the materials Sidney makes available to the children have the potential for making a real mess. Sidney keeps the materials well-organized, involves children in the clean-up whenever possible, and takes care of the mess immediately, thus trying to prove to her janitor, principal, and any other concerned party that the children can learn through "messing around" yet she can still have a neat and organized environment. The school janitor, in particular, usually makes veiled jokes about the messes in the classroom. Sidney responds to her in a teasing manner, but it seems to be slightly irritating to Sidney. The use of glitter in the classroom turned into an interesting example of this tension. After the children had used glitter one day, they wiped it off tables, and vacuumed the carpet with the small dust buster Sidney keeps for the children use. The next morning it looked as though the custodians had not bothered to run the regular vacuum in the room. This irritated the teachers, particularly when the janitor said something about glitter being hard to vacuum up later that day. The teachers wondered if the janitor did not vacuum on purpose. However, this did not keep them from using glitter again. Sidney feels that children have a natural attraction to glitter and it should be used even if it is messy.

Later in the year, Sidney's friend Tina borrowed a spin art wheel we had been using with the children. When I, Maria, gave the wheel to Tina I suggested that she let the children sprinkle some glitter on the paint as it was spinning, and offered her the small bottle of glitter I had been using with our children for the same project. Tina immediately said, "Oh, no!" Apparently in the past she had left instructions for a substitute teacher to use glitter with the class and it had been strewn all over her room. Tina commented that it wasn't really the children's fault, but she still did not use glitter. What a different outlook from Sidney!

Media Table Mess

The media table, a large plastic tub on wheels also called a sand or water table, was another great place to experience a "mess." There was always some substance or activity children could interact with: measuring, washing, stirring, pouring, floating, digging, cooperating, forming, creating with potting soil, shaving cream, water and dye tablets, syringes, baby dolls, cups, bowls, sand, and beans.

Kristine and Sabrina worked with shaving cream at the water table, and were laughing as they worked. As I observed, both tasted a little shaving cream continuing to laugh, but did not make faces of displeasure. I decided to ignore the shaving cream tasting because I thought they would not do it again. Several minutes later Kristine and Sabrina both tasted the shaving cream again so I told Sidney they had tasted the shaving cream several times. Sidney strolled over to where the girls were working and said, "Please don't taste the shaving cream. I am scared it will make you sick," and then she remained with them, discussing how good the cream felt and what a nice time the girls were having.

Later in the day Kristine and Sabrina started bringing small containers of water into the classroom to pour in the water table. They tucked the containers behind their backs in a manner that seemed secretive. Apparently Sidney had told them in the past not to add water until the end of the morning so that all the children had a chance to enjoy the shaving cream before it dissolved. Kay saw them carrying the water, and when she tried to talk to them, the girls acted like they had nothing behind their backs. Sidney asked them again not to water down the shaving cream and explained why. She

then moved over to me and asked me to watch to see if they did it again. Soon the two girls left and came back in the same manner and I motioned to Sidney that from my vantage point I could see they had water in small bottles behind their backs. Sidney again spoke to the girls and was more firm this time, saying she is surprised that they weren't listening to her. The girls didn't bring water into the room again, and at the end of the day they worked hard cleaning out the water table, and polishing it dry with paper towels. Sabrina and Kristine were reward by smiles and exclamations of pleasure from both Kay and Sidney. No reference was made to the girls' previous behavior.

The above is an illustration of Sidney's value of providing experiences for the children, over their need to "obey" her. She persisted in asking them not to taste the shaving cream so that they wouldn't become "sick," but seemed to understand the desire to taste the shaving cream may have been part of their exploration. Sidney also graciously allowed the children to leave the situation behind as they enter into new, laudable behavior. She did not use reminders of past transgressions or humiliation as a way to "make" the girls behave. The "caring teacher is not necessarily permissive", but she recognizes her power in the classroom and uses it appropriately (Noddings, 1984, p. 176).

Sharing Dough

Along with providing the children with art materials to create with, Sidney provided the children lots of experience creating with dough such as pizza dough mix, gak, Java dough, play dough, art clay, and real potters clay. During activity time one morning I helped Stephen, Sabrina, Jackson, Caiman, Texas, and Ruby mix up a batch of pizza dough. These six children worked easily at a small table sharing space and dough. Much of their drama play included making pizzas and showing the pizzas to the teachers who were quite admiring. Sabrina made a plate of small pancakes and, unsolicited, Stephen informed her the pancakes were too small. Sabrina cut them out with a bottle lid, put them on a red plastic housekeeping plate and used a small plastic turner to act out frying the pancakes. Stephen determinedly patted his dough till it was so flat it looked like he had used a rolling pin. Jackson and Caiman admired Stephen's dough and called out for the teachers to look at it. They asked Stephen and me to pat

their dough similarly. Instead, I gave them a couple of ideas regarding how they might pat their own dough. I also encouraged the boys saying, "Wow, you can do it!" and "Look how strong your arms are!" It is true, however, that Stephen was always able to get his dough very flat. I walked to a kindergarten room for a few minutes and could hear the consistent light tattoo of dough being patted on the table. Some children experimented by pushing the dough into their hair and by laying on it with their shirt to make imprints.

Many children became interested in this activity until the dough began to get scarce. When new children came I suggested that everyone give them some dough. Texas always gave new children a piece of dough smaller than a marble. Stephen, Jackson, and Caiman gave out rather large pieces. Sabrina got angry with Stephen because he began to use the turner she had laid down. He didn't seem to know she had been using it. She collapsed on the floor and cried in a manner that seemed rather dramatic to me.

The teachers had told me that she did this fake, dramatic crying all of the time. However, this was the first day I saw this behavior off and on all day. Since I had been at the school so much, and hadn't seen this behavior before, I wondered if Sabrina had done this a lot at the beginning of the year. Had the teachers provided her with other outlets for her frustration, thus the behavior diminished? The teachers had been trying a plan where they ignored Sabrina's crying, but got her what she wanted (if possible) in a respectful manner. Sidney found some more turners and then all of the children including Sabrina seemed satisfied. The dough play provides another example of Sidney's flexible discipline, detailed in the previous chapter, that supports the children in their engagement in social interactions and learning activities.

During this same pizza dough play time, Sabrina suddenly gave Ruby a whole bunch of her dough and Ruby said, "Thank-you." Dough shared and words spoken without a teacher's prompting. Perhaps I observed caring engendering care (Garrison, 1997). Perhaps Sabrina pleased with Sidney's generosity was generous to Ruby.

Dramatic Caring

Drama play is another part of the caring curriculum that Sidney has established in the classroom. I have previously written about how Sidney supported her relationships with the children through interacting with them in a sense of playfulness. Along with the playfulness, Sidney's curriculum actively supported children's dramatic play as both a way for the children to make sense of and represent their world, and for teachers to scaffold children's understandings of the world (Vygotsky, 1978). Her day also had large periods of time in it dedicated to uninterrupted play. This way the children could extend themes over a period of time or change to new themes as they desired. During these play periods the children take the lead in what activities they wished to pursue and what play themes they engaged in. The extended period of time and child's choice of activity are principals Sawyers and Rogers (1988) recommend for teachers who value play.

The American public school classroom typically is a place of bells, loud speakers and interruptions. Sidney tries to protect her class from these interruptions as much as possible. Increasingly the typical American school day has become fragmented. Urie Bronfenbrenner speaks passionately against this fragmentation.

> Something is always being interrupted, somebody is always saying something, somebody is always going in, somebody is always going out, somebody always has a comment. It is just a kind of jungle. There is no process lasting over time. A discussion that plays itself out in a meaningful fashion is [desirable], but what happens is an interruptedness. The bell rings, someone comes in to take a student. It is like the show Sesame Street. Everything is high paced changing every minute bang, bang, bang. When people from other cultures visit us they wonder how anyone can learn when nothing is ever allowed to develop because things are interrupted. One of my dear friends and colleagues in Japan said, "Yes, Urie Sense, we have our problems and you have your problems, but we would rather have our problems" (personal communication, Spring, 1997).

Prop Boxes and Teachers as Players

Sidney has numerous dramatic prop boxes to support overall dramatic play in the classroom. The children can access these throughout free play times of the day: cash

register and play money, a doctor kit, and a beauty salon box. The children enjoy using the salon kit to style Sidney and Kay's hair. Both of the teachers are particular about their personal grooming and take excellent care of their hair. It sends a heart-warming message to see a mass of grubby hands styling their usually immaculate locks into distorted punk hairdos. Boys and girls participate equally and in the process practicing using small barrette clips, handling curling irons, bottles, mirrors, and more. Stephen and Kristine recently styled my hair for over half-an-hour until it was time to get on the bus. Kristine actually figured out how to take my barrette and clip all of my hair into it. I have such a mass of hair that this was an impressive feat that she worked on until she persevered.

Impromptu Play

Kristine's mom frequently brought in novel items for the class to use such as the Styrofoam candy cane and boxes of stale ice-cream cones the children turned into an ice-cream cone castle. During naptime one afternoon she dropped by the class while on her work break, and told Sidney she had a bunch of large cardboard boxes in her pickup truck and wondered if Sidney wanted them. Sidney said, "Absolutely," and headed out to the parking lot to help drag them in. One box was slightly smaller than a refrigerator box and another looked like it might have housed a bookshelf, narrow and tall. Sidney's room is so small that she had to store the boxes in the hallway until the children picked their cots up at the end of rest time. The boxes were partially blocking the hallway so when the guidance counselor came down the hall she couldn’t miss them. She stopped, leaned in the classroom, and gave the teachers a thumbs up sign regarding the boxes. Kay commented that the guidance counselor is great; she used to be a classroom teacher and is thinking about being one again

At the end of rest time children who were awake put their cots away. They then got their snacks off a cart the teachers had wheeled in from the cafeteria. As the children finished up their snacks and threw away their trash, they were allowed to get out what they wanted to play with for the remainder of the day. The boxes were an inevitable lure on this day. First Caiman started to play with the tall narrow box. I was sitting with Caiman and asked him if he wanted me to put the box over him. Caiman immediately

said yes. I covered him up and he stayed in the box for five minutes or so. Sidney and I played with him saying, where is Caiman? Where could he be? Then Callie got under the box with Caiman. I was surprised that these two children could cooperate enough to cram in that box. With two children it was very full. This set off a reaction and children took out the rest of the boxes into the room. Children fit into the boxes and either had a teacher lower the box over them or pulled shut the flaps themselves. Some of the bigger boxes had up to four children in them. Caiman got the idea to get a flashlight and take it into a box.

Caiman was a child who frequently had ideas that teachers have not thought of before. He also was mischievous, moved quickly from activity to activity, and was highly social with his peers. This combination would put him in time-out daily in some classes. Sidney's support of Caiman's creative ideas helps keep him occupied with productive and meaningful experiences. As I was taking notes, Caiman moved close by me, "vacuuming" the floor with a vacuum cleaner constructed from blocks that he periodically created. A long unit block was fitted into a small hollow block. The hollow block was then pushed around the floor "vacuuming the carpet". The above stories are just several examples of the many times I observed impromptu play occur in the classroom and Sidney always tried to find ways to be flexible so the children could pursue their ideas.

"Real Life" Curriculum

Sidney also emphasized activities that have connection to the larger daily life in the world. These activities provided opportunities for children to experience the world and use "real" adult tools rather then play plastic tools. This, in turn, increased the children's sense of self and understanding of the world and how they relate to it. Real life experiences are at the core of caring curriculums that Noddings (1992) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) advocate. "Real life" activities included seed planting, nature walks, overhead projector use, gardening, wood working, flashlight play, old computer key boards, making terrariums, and cooking. Cooking pancakes, pizza, blueberry muffins, waffles, pudding cake, eggs, and more were ongoing ways children explored

the properties of food, "adult" tools, and learned what occurs as different ingredients are combined.

When I saw Sidney had introduced old computer keyboards into the drama area I asked Kay what the children had been using them for. Kay laughed and said along with typing and using them to launch rocket ships Caiman had used the cord as a jump rope. This is exactly the type of thought process Sidney and Kay celebrate. They are always wondering what the children will come up with to expand on and improve the teachers' expectations.

Caring for the Classroom

Another "real life" activity incorporated into the children's experience was helping to take care of their classroom. Different ways the children took care of the room include cleaning out the water table, washing tables, vacuuming the floor with a Dust Buster, watering plants, and from time-to-time the children took their chairs outside and washed them. When it was a chair-washing day, every child that was interested (which was usually all of them) carried a chair outside. The teachers then supplied the children with buckets of soapy water and rags. One group of children worked so long and hard at this activity that they finally ran out of water. Incorporating these chores as a part of the children's school experience helped them to feel invested in their classroom and to practice habits that will benefit them in their adult lives. This type of involvement in learning to care for ones environment is described by several caring curriculum proponents (Bronfenbrener, 1979; Katz, 1998; Noddings, 1984).

Field Trips

Field trips were another source of real world experiences for the children. Some of the field trips the class went on were to a children's indoor gym, a blueberry farm, a free-range egg farm, a pumpkin patch, Sidney's house construction site, a department store, university sporting events, monthly visits to the county's alternative high school to visit their "buddies," Harmony and Sabrina's mother's work place at a fast food restaurant, a local pond, and a nature spot. Just a few of the things children experienced on the field trips included the following: finding a massive, defunct hornet's nest; petting

goats, calves, chickens; playing in a pond; observing pizza being made, and seeing wild geese and ducks.

One field trip I was able to attend exemplified Noddings' and Bronfenbrenner's ideas for caring curriculum. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states children should not learn *about* caring at school but should *engage* in it. Noddings (1984) describes a school where students would have opportunities to take care of the property, animals, and other people. Sidney's class had a visit to see their older buddies at the county's alternative high school attended by teenagers who are no longer allowed in the other public high schools due to behavior problems. This was an opportunity to develop reciprocal possibilities in caring.

When we arrived, I was unsure of what to expect. Sidney called out of the bus door to a large group of teenagers to get on the bus and reacquaint themselves with their "buddy." Then Sidney told everyone in a cheerful manner that they could take their child off the bus and go into the school. My first overriding impression of the high school students, as they slouched onto the bus, was how rough they looked. Along with ball caps pulled low over their brow, heavy jewelry, garish makeup, and tennis shoes many wore t-shirts with statements such as "I am too sexy for you!" and "I may be drunk, but you are ugly." Only one of the girls was dressed in what might be described as more traditional clothes, and even this included extremely short shorts and a nose ring. Her clothes were simply more recognizable name brands. All of the teenagers were Caucasian and probably southern and rural. In many ways my first impression mirrored the first days I experienced in Sidney's class of children where the children's dirtiness and unkempt looks startled my middle class sensibilities. At first glance the children and high school students similarities seemed a alarming, desperate prophecy of the future in store for Sidney's class. However, I have taught for long enough to know that I now needed to observe closely and look for deeper truths that lay beneath the exterior.

I met the guidance counselor, Jodi, who was the main organizer at the school for the buddy trip. As the day went on I gleaned more information. The older students were also considered by the county to be "At Risk," similar to the preschool children. Sidney said a main rule of the school is everything besides academics is voluntary. Example of volunteer activities would include keeping the school grounds and sports. This meant

that the entire group of over twenty students working with the children was all volunteers. After all the students came into the school Jodi sensed that the preschoolers were feeling shy so she yelled out enthusiastically that everyone should take their child outside and play for awhile until the children warmed up.

Sidney and I stayed in and set up the tables for projects where the students would make mini-pizzas and cupcakes together. We also made an area where books could be read and children could color. Sidney left several times to be with Ruby since she was having a difficult transition.

In a short amount of time my initial impression was altered as I saw the teenagers shed habitual slouches, probably masking nerves, and play with the preschoolers. It was wonderful to see how nurturing the older students were of the younger ones. At times their behavior was not the most appropriate; however, it was obviously well intended. Amy's buddy held her practically the whole day and would rock her when she had a tiny hurt. Amy just loved this interaction and acted quite pitifully to the older girl's delight. Ruby was extremely reserved and initially didn't even look at her student. However, the student stuck with Ruby, and eventually they were laughing and playing. Ruby put her in "jail" with a big smile on her face.

Texas' interactions with his high school student were very interesting. Texas was calling him Buddy, probably due to the teachers' references to "buddies." His high school student's name was actually Derrick, but no one could get Texas to say Derrick. However, Derrick was pleasant about his new nickname and ran around everywhere with Texas. Texas was so keyed up and excited he soon ran Derrick ragged. I heard Derrick ask another boy to take over watching Texas for a few minutes because he was so tired. Later I was sitting at a picnic table with Texas' buddy Derrick and a friend of his. One of the young men said "shit" and "fuck" to his friend regarding a fight he was having with a female high school student. I had watched him bicker with her off and on all day. The girl kept trying to tell him what to do with his preschool buddy. It seemed to me that they liked each other, but were getting on each other's nerves. I started to tell him to make sure the children didn't hear him talk that way when he saw me and apologized. I thanked him and then said that I had heard him tell the girl to leave him alone and I thought that it was a good idea to work out their problems after the children left.

Both the young men then said to me that they hadn't realized before this experience how tiring children were. "They are so much work I am going to wait a *long* time to have one." Derrick told me. I affirmed his sentiment and smiled to myself wondering if he was trying to say what he thought I might want to hear, but hoping he meant it. He reminded me so much of some of the boys I went to high school with who were such charmers, and always in trouble; I still think of them with affection.

Sidney's supervisor, Midge, had her office at this school and helped set up the buddy program. Midge came in and chatted with the children and read some stories. She told me how much she would like to have a preschool at this school so that the students' interactions with the preschoolers could be on a more regular basis then once a month. Midge felt there were many possible gains for both the high school student and the preschooler that may occur through relating to each other.

While I was helping groups make pizza and cupcakes, Kay was outside helping the children play with a huge ball that was as tall as a bus and colored in primary stripes like a beach ball. The scene was visually captivating, with the children running around the colorful ball like little ants.

On the bus ride back from school, Sidney told me that some of the older students were only twelve years old. I couldn't believe this since they all looked and behaved as though they had been through a lot in life already. Sidney's new class has continued the tradition of meeting with the high school students once a month. The year after the study the high school students successfully developed a grant that allowed them to take the new preschooler class bowling.

This experience is indicative of what two caring teachers may accomplish when they get the opportunity to network with each other. For the short time I observed Jodi she stood out as a teacher who is passionate about her students. Sidney confirmed this impression. I had to reflect on how Sidney's isolation in her school while not keeping her down did not lend itself to her natural ability to collaborate in a manner that benefited the children.

Flexibility and Field Trips

Another field trip the class took toward the end of the year was to a local pond and forest. Kay had planned this trip because of a successful one she had with the previous preschool class. After we arrived Kay lead a walk halfway around the pond, stopping to look at different flowers, ducks, and geese. The children threw rocks in the pond from time to time as we strolled at a leisurely pace. When we got to a shallow spot of water where the bank gradually sloped to the water the children all got in and swam and waded. Kay waded far out into the water until it brushed at the edge of her shorts. The children were allowed to swim out as far as Kay stood in the water.

The families had been sent several notes asking them to wear old clothes and shorts. However, many of the children arrived in pants and dress shoes. In my experience this is an ongoing problem for preschool teachers who want the children to engage in messy play. Even the most effective communication still has times when parents don't get messages or forget. The problem becomes, should the child do the activity then? In my experience I have know many teachers who have the child stand on the sidelines while the rest of the class wades in puddles, climbs in snow, or digs in mud. Sidney swam about with the children allowing even the children without shorts to get in. Sidney's decision caused a lot of work for her in changing the children into school clothes when they arrived back at the class, but she has the ability to be flexible and the priority to focus on the children's needs and not the work it creates for her.

School Wide Curriculum

Riverwood Valley School periodically has curriculum experiences that involve the whole school. As a teacher in the Virginia Preschool Initiative program, Sidney does not have to participate in these events if she doesn't wish to. When I first heard this, I thought if I were the teacher I would be relieved not to have to participate in school wide activities since these events often do not fit well with the types of curriculum Sidney and I have in our respective classrooms. Sidney felt differently from me and always had her class participate in all the events and was extremely irritated when the larger school would forget to think of how to include the preschool. When the preschool was not included she would go to the teacher in charge and discuss with them ways to include the

preschool. It seemed as though excluding the preschool was not deliberate, but more a matter of people forgetting about them.

When I asked Sidney why she wanted to be included she explained to me that she thought it was important for the children to feel connected to the larger school. At times Sidney did not like what the school had planned, such as the awards ceremony and a long patriotic march, but she felt the trade off was in the children's pleasure in feeling connected to the larger school. To ensure a sense of a larger community of care and a network of relationships throughout the school is one of Sidney's goals for helping the children to have a long-term quality school experience.

RVS spent several weeks emphasizing literacy as a school. This involved several assemblies and a school-wide reading record. When children read a book or had a parent read a book to them, they got to put a small paper shoe on the wall of the school with their name on it. The goal was to make the shoes go in a line around the entire school. Sidney altered this activity to fit her class by also allowing children to put a shoe up for any book a teacher read to them. This helped support children from families where parents might have literacy challenges or not be able to put reading as a priority.

As part of the literacy celebration, the school celebrated Dr. Suess' birthday and did activities involving his books. One assembly called for the children to all wear "Cat in the Hat" hats to the assembly. The ever-present school "worksheet" distorted this great idea. Instead of allowing teachers and children to think of different ways to represent the hat, each child in the school was given a worksheet with an outline of the hat on it. Within the confinement of this parameter, Sidney allowed her class to do whatever they wanted.

Jackson worked hard coloring his hat with red stripes. As he cut, the hat got smaller and smaller until it was about one inch by one inch. Jackson does know how to cut but was enjoying the process and like most young children was not focused on the product. Sidney was unperturbed about this and admired his tiny hat. Jackson also seemed satisfied with his hat. I helped the children tape or staple their hats to a band and put it on their heads. They enjoyed looking at themselves in the mirror, and several of the children wore their hats for a long time that day. Sidney's reaction to Jackson's hat was in contrast to situations I have observed before, where teachers will throw away a

product deeming it "messed up" or chastise a child for wasting paper and not following directions. These actions demean a child and are not part of a caring relationship (Kohl, 1976; Noddings, 1984).

The participant observation experience allowed me to document multiple experiences children engaged in that supported Sidney's belief in having a caring curriculum in the classroom. Not only are wonderful, engaging, individualized enriching, flexible experiences provided for the children, but children's individual needs are supported within the overall curriculum and teachers see children's spontaneous ideas as exciting opportunities for the class to engage in moments of serendipitous learning. The genuine caring in Sidney's curriculum will resound
with teachers who have cherished the moments that children lead us to some new idea or plan that has never occurred to us, the "teacher".

Chapter 7

ADVOCACY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Standing Alone

He meant what he said and
he said what he meant.
An elephant's faithful one-hundred percent.
~ Dr. Suess ~

Hunkered down in the semi-dark room, by the edge of Jeremy's cot, I let my eyes wonder lazily over the room. My hand massaged Jeremy, feeling a T-shirt covering small muscles and bony spine, to the rhythm of his soft, deep breathing. From my perspective at the classroom entryway, I could see Sidney and Kay both absorbed in activities similar to mine. Kay had positioned her back against a pole to the loft. She could see all the children in the room and could pat two backs at a time with a child stretched out on a cot on either side of her. Sidney had her legs crossed and was leaning forward, hair swinging across her eyes, as she concentrated on lulling a child to sleep. Rub, rub, pat, pat. The affect was one giant therapy session that washed over teachers and children alike. The music of Enya played in the background, swelling and easing in hypnotizing accord.

The effect, the class bond, a moment of serenity inside a busy school pulsing with activity was broken jarringly, as a kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Short, hauled a crying boy around the corner of the preschool classroom door. While curtly asking Kay if it was all right for the preschool teachers to watch the boy, Mrs. Short roughly placed the boy's rest cot in full view of the class and put the now loudly sobbing boy on it. Kay nodded her head in shocked acceptance, as Mrs. Short spoke tersely to the boy saying, "You've

been crying and misbehaving all day. I want you to stay in here until you realize that even preschoolers don't act as immature as you do!" In a rush Mrs. Short was off down the hall towards her room.

The incident had happened so fast that we were all left gaping at each other. Preschoolers crowded around the doorway, drawn as moths towards a flame, in the age-old sense of communion young children have, in a classmate's pain or sadness. "What's wrong?" "Who is that boy?" children asked, distressed. I had to literally tell myself, speaking clearly in my head, "Wait, wait. See what Sidney does." I had an overriding impulse to comfort the sobbing boy and our class. Even as angry emotions clashed in my head Sidney was standing up moving swiftly to the kindergartner and calling softly to the children, "Lie down, lie down. It will be all right. He is sad." Sidney stooped low over the cot and patted his back asking, “What is your name?”

"George, and I am in trouble…." his voice tapered off into a thin wail and wet snuffles. Sidney patted his back. "You will go back to your class soon. You're fine. Take a deep breath, take a deep breath," she whispered over and over in a soothing mantra as George began with great effort to slow his sobs.

When there were no teachers from the upper grades looking, I also patted George's back and told him he would soon get to go back to his room. Sidney had done everything that was necessary, but somehow I felt violated by the teacher's act and needed to show George my feelings. Rest time had been set way of course, and Sidney moved over to again rub a child's back that was close to me. Catching my eye she mouthed in the shadowy dark, "Have you ever heard of a teacher doing that before?" Sidney's face was filled with horror. “I am so glad Kay was in here. I don’t know what I would have said to her!” Several other kindergarten classes trooped by the door on the way back from lunch and as they observed George the teachers called questioningly to Kay. Kay replied, "He is Mrs. Short's child." Mrs. Mason teased Kay saying, "Oh, so now it is your problem! If I knew you took children I would have sent mine over."

George left in the same manner he arrived. One minute we were sitting in the quiet of our room. The next minute Mrs. Short rounded the corner, grabbed George and his cot, and with a brusque thanks to Kay and Sidney, Mrs. Short and George hurried

down the hall. We sat in shame at our passive participation, silently listening to Mrs. Short's ongoing litany of George's failings slowly fade down the hall.

Later when we had a chance to talk about this incident in depth Sidney and Kay told me the other kindergarten teachers' comments regarding Mrs. Short's discipline were meant to be support on behalf of Kay and Sidney and criticisms of Mrs. Short. These teachers would never bring their children to Sidney in such a rough, harsh manner and were joking to show Sidney a sense of solidarity over this difficult situation. Sidney commented on the diversity in teaching philosophy at the school. She felt Mrs. Short's behavior was the direct result of mentoring by an older, influential, strict teacher.

As we talked, it was hard for me to say it, but I did briefly tell Sidney that I have seen teachers discipline in that manner and even more extreme. For a period of time I was once headed in that direction myself. From Sidney's description I felt Mrs. Short and I had some things in common at one time. I also had been mentored by a severely strict teacher. It was always laughingly alluded to at team meetings that this teacher would, "Sit on the children" when I was incapable of doing so. What wasn't understood is that I was capable, but unwilling. This was a pivotal time for me in my early teaching career where I experimented with the sanctioned, more punitive styles of discipline that left me depressed, had short term success, and couldn't be defended to myself when I reflected on my actions. At this time I was reading, *What Do You Do With a Child Like This: Inside the Lives of Troubled Children* (Tobin, 1991) a book on creative discipline strategies that encouraged teachers to try an array of methods, and to make up methods for new situations. Not all children can fit into one assertive discipline method. It was as though the light had broken through for me. Since then I have used an individualized, flexible, child-oriented, positive discipline approach that is successful and I am proud of.

That "other Maria" seems so removed from me now. She is an embarrassment, a "skeleton" in my closet. I need to bring her out into the daylight, reflect on her actions and make her part of myself again. It is my belief that through acknowledging my mistakes, exploring how growth was achieved and sharing these stories with others I can atone for my actions and help teach others. I feel such joy knowing that Sidney has escaped this situation, in which some teachers find themselves. Sidney's biggest self-

criticisms are over the way she may be feeling about a child's behavior, not her response, or action.

When I asked Sidney how she hoped to handle the situation if the teacher ever brought a child to the room again she said:

> *I think I would immediately tell the teacher (away from the child) that I would rather have the child somewhere else. I would say that we try hard in preschool to "get ready" for Kindergarten, and that it might make the preschoolers feel ashamed or embarrassed or looked down upon. I don't think I would be able to address the '"embarrassment issue'" with the teacher. It was obvious that she was trying to embarrass the boy. As much as I would like to, I don't think I would be able to do that* (e-mail dialogue journal Jan. 10. 2001).

Advocacy can be scary, especially when you aren't sure if others will support you. "Teachers often stand alone when they advocate. For most teachers there are no courses available on teaching and advocacy (Taylor, 1997). Advocacy is more effective and less exhausting when done in collaboration (Kohl, 1976). However, when she has to "stand alone" Sidney does it.

Advocacy for Teachers

Society and the larger schools' rules may constrain a teacher from doing what she believes is right. Teachers need to receive the support to do what they know is right and caring in the classroom. One morning Sidney pointed out Joey's left ear to me. The opening to his ear cannel was crusted over with a large amount of earwax. Sidney indicted her concern about the condition of Joey's ear, but seemed uncertain of what she should do about it. This scenario would probably seem absurd to people who aren't in the current teaching climate. They might feel, simply clean his ear out!

Sidney's indecision reminded me of the first winter I taught. As the weather became colder and drier several of the children began to come to school with increasingly chapped lips. Children will often compulsively lick chapped lips until an entire circle of chapped skin forms around their mouth. These children were from homes that were some times unable to provide coats or gloves for the children. I decided to get a class jar of Vaseline in order to remedy the children's discomfort. Naively I put this item on a school

purchase order instead of buying it myself. The principal took me aside one day and asked what the Vaseline was for. As I explained I could tell the principal was concerned, so I added that it would not be unsanitary since the children would each be given some Vaseline on a cotton swab. The principal then explained that sanitation was not the concern. Putting Vaseline on the children was considered a medication and the classroom teacher could not put medication on a child.

I also remembered a teacher training a child with obvious early tooth decay how to use a tooth brush and encouraging the child to privately brush her teeth at school each morning. The teacher provided the child with a tooth brush and toothpaste. When the child's parent found out she came to school in an indignant rage since she felt the teacher was taking over parenting duties and implying neglect on the parent's part.

Stories such as the above are the reason teachers are often caught in seemingly common sense situations and left to waffle between doing what feels right for the child and what the bureaucracy mandated or implied rules say a teacher may do for the child. As I thought about Sidney's indecision I remembered that Joey's mother was probably the most volatile parent Sidney had that year.

My first introduction to Joey's mom was hearing her loudly telling Sidney how she had sent the kids to their grandmother's the night before so she could be alone with her husband. She then proceeded to get in a drunken fight with him and fall down the front steps. This whole story was simply a side note to the point she was making which was "I sure am stiff today." Joey's mom had already come in to school for long angry confrontations about Joey, saying someone had squeezed his neck, pushed him, or called him a name. The Joey we saw in our class was an independent child, a leader of play, and Caiman's best friend. This was not the same Joey that went home and interacted with his mother. When Joey's mom rolled into the room his behavior changed dramatically and he would cling to her stomach and whine comments like, "Caiman scares me. I hate lunch, Mom. I am not going to eat anything." She would alternate in answering back "You got to eat lunch, Baby. You can't starve!" or "You had better eat it or you are going to get it!" One can only imagine what her reaction to Sidney cleaning Joey might have been.

Sidney pointed Joey's ear out to Kay who immediately said, "We should tell the nurse." Sidney was visibly relieved and so was I. Of course a nurse could take care of the situation immediately and make sure the fluid wasn't due to an infection. After several hours the nurse stopped by our classroom and asked Joey several questions about his ear and determined he did not have an earache. At no time did she discuss with Joey skills for keeping himself clean and with a brief comment to Sidney about Joey having no earache she left. I was stunned. I wanted to grab Joey and go to the bathroom and simply walk him step by step through cleaning his face. Sidney gestured to Kay and me in disgust and bent down low with Joey and asked him to tell mom that evening that he needed his ear cleaned.

Joey was cleaner after that incident so the teachers' goal was seemingly fulfilled. Yet we were still left feeling powerless and silly over such a small issue. This is an example of where advocacy for teachers is needed. The community is looking for teachers to increasingly fill the needs of children who either come from families who can not fill all their needs or are simply in school for a long day and need the teacher to cover the daily needs that occur**.** Practical guidelines need to be discussed, clearly laid out, and implemented by the school system. In my experience I have seen this is possible in the larger school system through the example that has been set for us by national systems such as Head Start where health care such as brushing teeth is a natural and expected part of the curriculum**.** Also NAEYC requires teachers to provide extra coats, gloves and hats for children that come to school during cold weather without any (NAEYC, 1998). "The wisdom of Head Start's emphasis on health seems all the more striking today when many states are still establishing preschool programs for disadvantaged children that focus on education in a vacuum, as if the mind and body have noting to do with one another" (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992, p. 19).

Along with Joey's ear other difficult examples in Sidney's classroom included the smelly, dirty children who came to school emitting an odor of stale cigarette smoke, old urine, and at times even feces. Sidney worked hard to show children how to clean themselves, demonstrating the proper way to wash their hands, and providing the children with wet wipes to wash their mouth with after snacks and lunch. Sidney even had a bottle of odor removal spray that could be used on a carpet area or rest mat that was

getting a bad odor. This, however, can never get to the overall dirt on some these children.

On one of these occasions Sidney commented to me that she rarely noticed the smell of certain children anymore. She had become so close with her class and opened herself to them so completely that these superficial things were not what she noticed. I believe teachers must challenge themselves to deal with a dirty child the same way they do with clean children. However, another step must be made at the administration level to support the teacher in helping children to keep themselves clean and healthy. This type of program would be similar to "no" drug use programs and family life programs. These programs are intended to look at the child's whole needs and to supply them with the knowledge they will need to be a productive citizen. At the least, it seems society could understand that a senior who graduates from high school that is academically prepared will not get a job if they do not understand basic hygiene and cleanliness standards.

Cleanliness is Next to Godliness?

As I write I think about a Joey I went to elementary and middle school. He was the consummate "Pig Pen" character from "Peanuts" cartoon. I realize I have unintentionally also named the child in Sidney's class with the dirty ear "Joey". Did my teachers try to help Joey? What did they think their responsibility was to him? What memory has stirred unconsciously as I have reflected on the "Joey" of Sidney's class that brought forward the name of Joey my classmate into my mind then onto my paper?

My classmate Joey was obese, with greasy curly hair, skin covered in grime at all times, and dirt under his fingernails. He frequently wore the same clothes for days in a row and always had a smell that announced his presence. Usually Joey tried to interact with his female peers by leering at us, making rude comments, and laughing at our mistakes. I remember two of my last close encounters with him when I was in the sixth grade. In the first one I picture him leaning across the desk to me whispering, "I have fuck written on the wall of my bathroom at home. Your parents do it in bed at night." "No they don't," I answered angrily to his delight. In my childish way I confidently thought my parents could do nothing that was written on Joey's bathroom wall. Already

a young researcher, I wrote the word Joey had whispered on a small piece of paper, and carried it around burning a hole in my pocket all day as I worried about someone discovering Joey's word on my person. When I got home that night I looked the dreadful word up in our family dictionary. As I waded through the definitions of the obscenity I had to eventually acknowledge to myself that Joey was right. My parents probably did something similar to the word. Mom had told me about this special parent encounter, but in veiled reverent wording, certainly nothing I had conceived of being written on a bathroom wall. However, I still knew that our family was clean and Joey was dirty so it was different some how.

The next vivid memory I have of Joey has been a leveling story that stayed with me all my life, coming out at times to remind me that clean and dirty are superficial characteristics only. I was an athletic child that liked to win no matter what. We were playing dodge ball at school, which was one of my favorite games. I was highly competitive, quick, and light on my feet and could be guaranteed to be the last girl in the game and almost the last child. Now as a fat adult I think about Joey and this game. He was obese, slow, and awkward and not someone anyone minded putting out of the game. Participation was mandatory for all children. I suspect these times were rough on him and he hid his feelings by being belligerent and yelling nasty comments as we played. In the midst of play suddenly the unbelievable happened. Joey had thrown the ball at me and I felt it brush my clothes. Even as he was yelling, "Maria's out," I was scooping the ball up and hitting him squarely in the stomach with it. Our teacher told him to stop yelling and go sit on the sideline. Who would a teacher believe Joey or Maria? I continued with the game not acknowledging Joey's claim that the ball had brushed my clothes. I can see him now slumped against the gray green metal radiator, face in a scowl, sweat and maybe a tear tracing bright lines across his dirty skin. My moment of victory was short, but a lifetime of guilt is long.

I would like to tell Joey some day that my injustice to him is something I have carried with me throughout my teaching and personal interactions that has formed my practice in ways that honor him. As I teach I challenge myself to ask, "What if the child from the 'wrong' circumstance is telling the truth?" When I can not clearly tell, I leave "Joey" in the game with "Maria" and watch more closely. I support Joey among his

peers by teaching him to clean himself, showing him how to speak kindly, not allowing him to skulk along the edges of our room, and making sure he becomes a valued member of our classroom community. I work hard to make Joey someone who can compete in "dodge ball" at an equal standing with the Marias of the class.

As we have seen, advocacy, the setting forth of an idea or advancement of principals, may be a tricky issue when one is dealing with colleagues that need to be dealt with daily, volatile parents, or rules one doesn't agree with. Sidney believes strongly in advocacy. She is reflecting on times when she feels she didn't think of the right way to handle the situation and is trying to find new ways to promote her beliefs.

A Small Step

The issue of appropriate activities with young children is a concern for Sidney and a delicate area. Some of her favorite colleagues use worksheets and crafts as most of their curriculum. When it was Sidney's turn to have the display in the main hall of the school she chose the most unconventional pieces of art the children had made, such as a box sculpture, a cup collage the group had named, "Cup City," and a structure made of ice cream cones. Along with this eye-catching display Sidney posted a documentation panel with pictures of the children at work creating and wrote large bold messages about the importance of open ended art projects in children's learning.

Kay told me that when she was taking the display down a month later the art teacher for the school came by and said, "I never thought about doing a display on the importance of art. You guys make me look bad!" That made Kay and Sidney share a wicked chuckle. The specialty teachers are allowed to decide if they will give their services to the preschool programs or not and while the library and guidance teachers worked with the preschoolers, the art teacher did not. It was Sidney's hope that other teachers also took time to look at the display.

> After this event I started to see Sidney as an advocate for children. I know she often feels isolated in her room and jokes about getting a big trailer where she can take her class and just hide out. The reality however is that she is a natural advocate. The art display very clearly laid out developmental reasons open-ended art is important. A hall full of crafts surrounded it. I actually had to laugh

to myself when I saw it and heard the art teacher's comments. She had never thought to explain why art is important? As Sidney would say, Cripes! (Field Notes March 1, 2000).

Almost at the end of the study I had set up a spin art activity which is usually pleasing to children and adults alike. Our class had used the machine for several weeks, experimenting with different shapes, colors and types of paper, tempera paint, water colors markers, and glitter. The children learned to use the machine on their own with little adult supervision. Sidney abandoned her usual display method and covered the entire loft with a spin art celebration! Many teachers who came by the room commented on the children's work and at least two that we know of later did the art project with their class. This seemed like a small, but hopeful occurrence.

Along with the ways Sidney hopes to make a difference in the basic daily requirements of her job, such as the bulletin board display described above, she has quickly and deliberately positioned herself in voluntary leadership positions that she can use to influence the field of early childhood education. She tries hard to find ways to keep from being isolated and to connect to the larger field of education.

Advocacy is a proactive stance that people take about issues they are concerned about. For caring teachers these issues generally involve the children's welfare (Kieff & Casbergue, 2000). It is important that caring teachers also remember to be advocates for themselves. A burnt out teacher is of no use to anyone (Kohl, 1976). Traits of an effective advocate include developing a vision, reaching out to work with people who aren't their colleagues, taking risks, and being tough yet knowing when to compromise. Sidney exhibits many of these traits and in particular as a new teacher it is important that she knows how to be subtle and tactful and if that fails firm.

Team Leader

One of the main ways Sidney has implemented her desire to be an advocate for children is through being highly involved in volunteer work with her school district and supporting her personal growth and understanding of issues through professional development opportunities. During Sidney's first year of teaching for the county, Midge her supervisor, decided she wanted one of the county's seven preschool teachers to be

the team leader. Midge wanted this leader, who receives no compensation, to be someone she could designate task to and who could help with team communication. Sidney immediately volunteered to be the team leader. Kay asked Sidney if she thought the other teachers would think she was too new or young. Sidney said she didn't think that should have anything to do with it. When she e-mailed Midge she did request that she have a co-leader. Midge did not want this since she thought it could get confusing. As it turned out Sidney was the only one who wanted the position.

Along with what Midge wanted Sidney to do, plan team meetings, in services, parties, and help with communication, Sidney also had some leadership plans of her own. She asked Midge if the county would pay for all of the preschool teachers to go to the Virginia Affiliate of NAEYC's state conference. Sidney had presented at the conference the year before and felt that it would be an excellent experience for the team. Sidney's sister lived in the city the conference was held in so Sidney helped subsidize the whole event by asking her sister to house all seven of the teachers for three days. I was also at the conference presenting and enjoyed running into Sidney's colleagues as they attended the conference and I went out with all of the teachers one evening for pizza. Sidney's sister's family joined them and it was an interesting experience as a researcher to observe Sidney's relaxed, comradely interplay with her sister's family and the other teachers. Her presence was similar to the way she relates to the children. She tried to make everyone comfortable and met people where they were at in this experience of attending a conference and being in a large city.

The year after attending the state conference Sidney wrote another grant asking the county for money for all of the teachers to attend NAEYC's national conference. This conference was held in the city that Sidney's parents lived in so again all of the preschool teachers stayed with Sidney's family and saved the county a lot of money. Sidney's father has access to the press box at many sporting events, so along with the high quality professional conference the teachers also had the opportunity to attend a football game for free with a once-in-a-life time view from the press box. I told the teachers and Sidney that I am fully expecting them to be presenting as a team at the next conference and I think they really will!

As part of her team leadership Sidney with Midge spoke to all of the principals in the county about the preschool program. The preschool program has been controversial at some schools and the teachers reported being treated in varying ways at different schools. Some principals fought for a preschool program before they were prevalent and treated the program with respect. At other schools the program seemed like a forced add on. With this being Sidney's first year at RVS she has not been sure what her principal, Mr. Clayton, thinks of the preschool.

To prepare for the meeting Sidney and Midge made a multi-media slide show of the children during the school day with Raffi music playing in the background. Sidney also made a booklet that was given to each principal that explained a center that should be in a preschool classroom and the learning that occurs at the center.

The meeting initially turned out to be the one sour note for me in the study. I really wanted to go. I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for me to see Sidney speak in a professional setting. The topic also fit the study closely. She was advocating for children's right to go to school in a caring environment that respects their needs. When Sidney asked Midge if I could go she said no because she thought some of the principals might wonder why I was there. I was really disappointed and then irritated when it became obvious to Sidney and me that instead of hiring a substitute teacher, Midge was going to count me into the teacher-child ratio. Sidney was really embarrassed by this, but there was nothing we could do. After I got over being irritated I had to reflect that if this was the biggest barrier I had in this study I should feel fortunate. I had heard from colleagues and read of much worse hurdles then this.

When Sidney came back from the principals' meeting she was on a high. The meeting had gone well. Principals had asked good questions that made it apparent they were attending to the presentation. Then Mr. Clayton stood up and shared with all of the administrators what a difference Sidney made to the entire school as a preschool teacher by helping the children get off to a great start. He commended her on how hard she worked and said she was an excellent teacher. Sidney was amazed. This was more then Mr. Clayton usually said to her in a week. This seemed to set the tone for their future relationship and Sidney reported the next fall that Mr. Clayton has taken an active role

with her class and helped her get a larger room and is being a support "buddy" with a child who needs extra attention.

Professional Development

Along with her innovative ideas as a team leader Sidney also took advantage of opportunities for personal development as a teacher. If the county had in-service opportunities or courses that are available she signed up for these and took them with enthusiasm. Some examples include a math course in using manipulatives and a literacy course.

Sidney also wrote and received a grant from Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center for her classroom and another preschool teacher's class. Wolf Trap is a huge art park in Northern Virginia that is known for its outdoor stage and promotion of the arts. In Virginia a teacher can write for a Wolf Trap Grant to have a person in the performing arts spend a week with their class. Sidney choose to have a musician come work with the children on multicultural topics. The artist gave a presentation to the team of teachers, to the parents, and worked with each of the classes in the grant daily. Sidney learned many songs, movement and rhythm activities that she can use with the children from this rich grant experience.

Continuing Education

One effect of research in the site may be to speed up processes that people were already involved in. This occurs as the participants reflect on the questions the researcher is posing and may come to a decision or realization that hadn't occurred prior to the study. The participants may also be effected by interacting at a professional level with the researcher and by participating in scholarly research. This is not something the researcher should try to avoid, but should try to be aware of and analyze.

Looking over the course of the study it seemed to me that before the study began Sidney and Kay were both interested in continuing their education. Kay had started to go back to school part time to get a teacher license. Over the course of the study Kay and I often talked to each other about the possibility of her going back to school fulltime and the pros and cons of this decision. I like to think I was one of many people who

supported her in this decision process. Kay is going to school fulltime now and reports that she is doing better then she ever did the first time she went to college!

Sidney is highly educated, has presented at a state conference, and is a personally motivated woman. As part of the research process we also discussed my working on a doctorate degree. Sidney has decided to explore getting her doctorate degree and will be presenting the research results of this study with me at several state conferences and a national conference. Here again it seems as though the study, interactions with me, and personal reflections may have started something that was already simmering inside of Sidney to come to full boil.

When I began to conceive of a study of caring in the classroom, advocacy was not one of the strands I sought to pursue. Initially I was mostly interested in the teachers' interactions with the children. However, as qualitative researchers do I tried to record everything I was observing (Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). One never knows what avenues of inquiry will turn up. For me most of the avenues seem so obvious in retrospect. Of course, I said to myself, advocacy is the way Sidney fights to ensure that she can keep on teaching the way she believes in and to be allowed to improve on her teaching, receive support, and hopefully influence others to have better practice. I also know that I would not have had such a fine example of advocacy in just any classroom I worked in.

Chapter 8

GOOD BYE

"Oh, bother," said Pooh….
…Christopher Robin was going away.
Somehow or other everybody in the Forest
felt that it *was* happening at last….
Things were going to be Different
~A.A. Milne~

"Oh, Cripes," said Sidney. We had come to the time of year that the caring teacher's mind peeks quickly into and then skitters away from like a sand crab. The time of year in which teachers say good-bye to the children has never been something I can allow myself to think about for long. Really, I can hardly speak or write about saying good-bye without feeling melodramatic. But it is not melodramatic. It is a real, painful parting. I feel that certain children are locked away in my soul only to be brought out later to be hoped and prayed over. Too much introspection on memories of the children I have known would certainly be painful or at least maudlin. These children travel with me long after the sunshine children have left my room, holding their parent's hand, skipping out of the school on the last day, beaming back over their shoulder as they briefly turn, and wave good-bye.

Sidney and I have been discussing the impending end of her school year "I'm not trying to act like I'm some kind of a savior," Sidney mutters. After looking at the ground for awhile Sidney tosses her head and laughs a little brittlely. "But I am worried about what kind of summer they will have, being in day care all the time." It was going to be a long hot summer.

Young children do not seem to truly understand what saying good-bye to the teacher means. The mother of a second grader I had taught recently told me that her

daughter was surprised and dismayed that I was not still teaching at the same school. The concept of teacher outside of the classroom and the classroom relationship is mysterious to young children. Once when I was in town I meet a preschooler from my class and after greeting me he peeked behind me and inquired, "Where is Ms. Rachel?" I explained that his assistant teacher and I often do things by ourselves and live in our separate homes with different families. Another time I realized a little boy I taught thought I slept in the classroom's drama tent each night. A teacher leaving the direct, daily, profession is even more difficult to understand.

My School Year Ends

This year was probably my last year being a lead teacher for young children. I know for sure I will not be teaching next year as I wind up my doctoral work and look for a job as a professor. The parents and the children in my classroom went all out throwing a celebration for me at the end of the year. My co-teacher, colleague, and friend, Jaewon, made certain that the celebration would be memorable. Jaewon and the children had worked in secret to create presents to "make me beautiful." The children chose to use only green materials since they knew green was my favorite color. True to our open-ended philosophy Jaewon allowed the children's ideas to lead the way. At my good-bye celebration the children one-by-one adorned me with a green hat, a green boa made of green cotton balls, green necklaces, bracelets, and earrings.

After the laughter settled down, the children presented me with a quilt they had made. This is one of those moments in a teacher's life that is momentous. If I could have chosen anything I wanted to symbolize my career it would have been this. The children along with several hard working moms made a quilt that had squares featuring a self-portrait that each child had drawn. When the presentation was over I tried to thank the families, to let them know how much the quilt meant to me. As a Mennonite, quilting is a part of my tradition that is becoming lost. Instead of a wedding ring I have a special quilt my husband's great aunt made that is our symbol of fidelity and commitment. The children's good-bye quilt takes its place beside my wedding quilt in my heart.

Later, I sat and let the party atmosphere wash over my senses--aromatic Indian food, cardamon, curry--keyed up children, adult conversation, and laughter. One of the

preschool children's older sister, Emily, came to me and said, "When you talked about saying good-bye I almost cried. The younger children don't understand yet. But I know what it is like to miss my preschool teacher." I looked at this precocious nine-year-old who was smiling hesitantly at me and thanked her for putting into words what young children cannot say. Emily spoke so articulately that her words evoked the memory of my own preschool teacher, Mrs.Sapington, and I felt the nostalgia and warmth of Mrs. Sapington's caring sweep over me. Rare are these quiet, reflective moments in busy school life, I thought, as I ran down the hall to get more paper plates. Yet when these moments come in the form of Emily's words or Mrs. Sapington's memory, they are deep, personal epiphanies to be cherished and taken out to examine and share from time to time.

Sidney Prepares the Children to Transition to Kindergarten

How we help children handle separation
is of the first importance and is truly life shaping.
~ Rita Warren ~

For the first months of the study I worked In Sidney's classroom and my classroom. When my school year ended a month before Sidney's I began to go to Sidney's school fulltime. This meant arriving at 7:30 and not leaving until the end of the day when Sidney did. When I arrived one morning, Sidney told me that during the week she was going to start having the children visit different kindergarten classes. Early childhood research shows that strengthening the transition to kindergarten is a key step to supporting children and their families in school success (Meier, D. & Schafran, A., 1999). The kindergarten visit was just one part of their transition into understanding that school is coming to a close and that they will be in a kindergarten room next year and not in Sidney's. Sidney had worked out a careful schedule with the kindergarten teachers that consisted of taking children two at a time to different classrooms throughout the day. Sidney asked the teachers when it suited them and then scheduled the visits during those times. Sidney had concerns about the children's move to kindergarten for two reasons. She wondered if the children were adequately prepared. Could they keep up? Texas

can't get on the right bus, Ruby and Michelle wet their pants almost daily, and Amy won't talk to people. Sidney also worried about whether all of the teachers would care for the children. Sidney made a deliberate effort to recommend certain types of children into certain classes. RVS is a large school and the children will be spread out over more then six classrooms--a difficult task. Sidney had to essentially sacrifice the children who were moderate, well-behaved, and likeable to classrooms with teachers she does not respect. It was a hard, painful decision. Thoughts of Texas, Ruby, and Amy in kind, warm Mrs. Mason's room had to be Sidney's comfort.

Kay was responsible for supervising the children during their free choice time while Sidney slipped out of the room over and over to take children to their kindergarten visit, settle them in, and then return to pick them up a half an hour later. The teachers were welcoming. Some seemed enthusiastic to the point of fakeness and caused the more timid and reserved children to jump back and stiffen up. Some teachers were warm and casual in such a way that the children could slip easily into the flow of the class. Two of the teachers were so familiar to Sidney's class that it was obvious the children felt it was a privilege and delight to visit their rooms.

On the run to-and-fro, from classroom to classroom, Sidney told me she was pleased with the children's easy transition into the kindergarten classrooms. She laughed after a visit to a blunt, gruff-mannered teacher's room, surprising me by saying, "She's tough, but she is fair and likes the children. I really like her." After we left the classroom of a young teacher, Sidney grimaced and said, "Isn't it amazing how you can tell the young teachers who have never done this before?" The young teacher, similar to Sidney's age, stood awkwardly in the room and didn't indicate to Sidney or the children what to do. Sidney had simply jumped into the void the teacher left and ushered the children in to join group time, calling out cheerily as we left, "Thanks, we'll be back in a half-an-hour." While I agreed, it suddenly occurred to me that Sidney was a young teacher. What was the difference here?

Most teachers know the "young teacher" Sidney was referring to. This teacher doesn't yet have a sense of self in the classroom. They are often still trying on different philosophies, management styles, and curriculums. Sometimes they are at home in the classroom when they are by themselves, but feel awkward and unsure in the presence of

visitors (Caruso and Fawcett, 1999). Veteran teachers may comment, if they are generous, that "She will mature and season with some experience" or possibly "She had better snap to, this is the real world now!" What is it about Sidney and certain other new teachers that this would never be said about them (see Appendix H for a chart of teacher development)?

I asked Sidney, what she thought about her comment regarding the other new teacher. Sidney said she hadn't even thought of herself as the same as this teacher. This seemed to be a revelatory comment on Sidney's personal esteem and sense of self in the classroom. Sidney responded,

> *I'm not so sure what has allowed me to be so confident about my classroom. I feel like I am doing the things I should be. I personally think some of the new teachers at RVS are completely inappropriate. They always have this "woe is me" look on their face. I feel like they don't like their job. I also feel like they aren't in this field for the right reason and they aren't developmentally appropriate. I constantly hear teachers screaming at children, for reasons like talking, getting out of line, and not listening. These are not big issues, yet they are treated like it. In my school there is such a different mentality from Pre-K to K. K is so focused on order and following directions. I am constantly concerned that I am going to fall into that mentality. I have already noticed a difference in my teaching this year as opposed to last year at the laboratory school I taught at. I am more firm, a little less patient and a little more easily frustrated. However, the day is so much longer, I have fewer teachers, and less administrative support. I have to keep this in the back of my mind. I also have to realize that the goals of Virginia Preschool Inititative are different then the goals of the lab school. It is my job to help the children get prepared specifically for being in one of the kindergarten classes next year. This means I have to spend a little more time on things I ordinarily wouldn't like, such as how to walk in a line and raise your hand.*

Later in the day when all the children were back in the classroom and nestled in at group time Sidney asked the children who had visited kindergarten to share about their experience. Their sharing ranged from describing attending calendar time to playing a

board game to cutting out and pasting worksheets together. Sidney laughed when a cut out photocopy of a cow had been proudly given to her by Stephen as an example of his work in the "older" grade.

The kindergarten visits took place over the course of several days, with each child visiting a class two times. Only one of the visits was totally disappointing and not surprisingly it was Mrs. Little's class. When I peeked over the divider I could see Jackson rolling his head around and around on the desk; he sat in boredom while children around him used work sheets. At least Mrs. Little wasn't yelling at someone.

When Ruby went on her first visit she stepped into Mrs. Mason room and then simply froze with her head twisted to the side and hands down by her side. Caiman quickly went into the room and started to play in the housekeeping center. The housekeeping center had some interesting props in it that Sidney's class didn't have, such as a cash register and two grocery carts. On the way inside from the playground, our class cut along the edge of Mrs. Mason's room and the children reached out and fondled the cash register, or if they weren't close to a teacher they may have popped the money drawer open and listened to the bell ring. This is where Caiman immediately headed.

Sidney bent low over Ruby and asked her where she wanted to play. After making several suggestions, which Ruby did not respond to, Sidney moved away and chatted with Mrs. Mason while closely watching Ruby. Suddenly Sidney moved to Ruby and asked if she would like to play with Caiman in housekeeping. Ruby jerked her head in response, shambled in that direction, and within moments was playing among a center busy with children, in the thick of shopping. Sidney had initially suggested quiet, removed areas, for Ruby to be in, yet after watching closely, had seen Ruby shift her eyes towards the housekeeping center. As an outsider to this scene I did not pick up on this subtle indication. Sidney's sense of relationship and intersubjectivity with Ruby allowed Sidney to sense her mute request and to support Ruby in her desire.

I Say Good-Bye to Sidney's Class

I missed the last two weeks of school because I had a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to go on a professional tour/conference of the Reggio Emilia Schools in Italy. This was a difficult decision for my committee chair and me. However, I never felt

unsure about the trips' potential benefit to my understandings as an educator. It was an excellent experience full of possibilities; but I felt torn over missing the last days of school. In one sense it was probably good that the class ended their school year the way it began, without my inquisitive, inquiring presence. As I write this I can almost hear Sidney saying, "But Maria, you aren't any bother at all. You are so much help. I should be thanking you!" However, I missed not having actually been there when the year ended. Several days before I was due to leave, Sidney started telling the children that I would be leaving soon and would not be back and they would probably not see me again. When we got closer to the date Sidney announced at group time, "Guess what tomorrow is? Maria's last day. I am really going to miss her!" The children had a mixed reaction of groans, spontaneous hugs, and some had no facial affect at all.

The next day I had my car full of presents for the preschool teachers, children, and teachers in our wing of the school. I brought in donuts and orange juice for the teachers on our wing and let them know I would be leaving. Before the children arrived, Sidney, Kay, Tina, and I ate donuts and chatted while I gave Sidney and Kay a small good-bye present for the classroom. After using a small bowl, or borrowing Mrs. Little's bucket to fill the water table all semester, I had decided to get a large bucket for Sidney's class and to fill it with items I knew the teachers used: antibacterial lotion, microwave popcorn, Peanut M & M's, sweet tarts, and sticky notes. Sidney and Kay spent time laughing over what I had chosen to put in the bucket and made sure I felt appreciated, telling me over and over how much they would miss me and how they envied my trip to Italy.

Then, as we prepared the classroom for the children's day, they told me that their good-bye surprise for me was going to be a breakfast party for snack time. Sidney knows that breakfast is my favorite meal. She and Kay had brought in all the supplies for a scrambled egg and pancake breakfast. I helped Kay run this center throughout activity time, assisting children crack eggs, beat batter, turn pancakes, and not get burned. What a fun, unique, good-bye party, I thought--no ubiquitous cupcakes or ice cream!

After rest time at the end of the day Sidney scheduled a special group time for me to say good-bye. I led this easily, since I had been leading group time with the children off and on over the past month. I started by telling the children how much I would miss

them, and that I considered each one of them a friend, then I led them in singing the *Friends* song we had learned earlier. Finally, I taught the children a good-bye song:

Good-bye, Sayonara, Adios, So Long
Farewell, see you later!
It's the good-bye, good-bye song!
It's the good-bye, good-bye song!

The children were pleased that they knew the word *adios* from the Spanish words Sidney had taught them during group time, and sang and waved with enthusiasm during the song. Each child was given a personal copy of a children's book in which I had written a small note. When I dismissed group time I asked the children to give me hugs before they left for the bus. As is always the experience in warm early childhood classrooms, I was hugged again and again by certain children. With cautious initiation on my side, along with some careful negotiation, I was able to pat or hug even the most reserved children good-bye.

I had a strange feeling as I went out to my car and prepared to depart for Italy. Normally, when I leave my own class I have a sense of depression and overwhelming worry that is hard to shake for several days. Usually sitting out in the sun and catching up on reading helps me loose this blue sense. As I left this time, I felt energetic, full of hope and strangely satisfied. I had a small stab of sadness since I was unable to say good-bye to Texas, who had been absent due to sickness. What I knew without hesitation was that I was leaving this class in the hands of good teachers, and nothing depended on me. This class would go on functioning the next day without me and under the love and care of Sidney--the comfortable couch they all could rest on for support.

Sidney Says Good-bye

The end of the school year is always full of good-byes, but now we also added to it Kay's decision to quit working at RVS and go back to school fulltime. Kay had wrestled with this decision throughout the school year. She knew she wanted to get her teaching certificate but was unsure whether she should quit and go to school fulltime or take several courses a year and get her certificate more slowly. Now that Kay had finally made her decision, she seemed to be filled with mixed emotions. The pleasure of

thinking of her own class one day was combined with sadness about leaving RVS and her relationship with the preschool, and Sidney in particular.

Sidney confided in me that she wanted to do something special for Kay since Kay was leaving the school. We threw around possible ideas until Sidney decided to make a good-bye book for Kay that she could also copy and give to the children at the end of the year. This made Sidney's project easy because she could tell Kay she was working on a good-bye book for the children. Each child drew a self-portrait for the book. Sidney used some ideas she and I had learned from the Reggio Emilia Approach for this project. She spent one-on-one time with each child, having them look at themselves in a mirror. Then she walked them through their picture, scaffolding them as they drew (Smith, 1998; Vygotsky 1978). Sidney used gentle probes such as, "Look at yourself again. What else do you see?" Sidney did not issue commands such as, "Now draw your ears." The result was an amazing, diverse array of children's portraits.

Sidney also spent time asking the children to tell her something special about Kay and about each one of their classmates. Each book for the child was individually customized for them. The good-bye book included their signature, self-portrait and comments by their friends about them. Sidney planned to give Kay the book at an end-of-the-year dinner planned for the children and their families.

In the mean time Kay was also planing a surprise for Sidney. Sidney's wedding would take place soon after school let out for the summer. The children had met Kay's fiancé, Jeff, on numerous occasions and were excited about her wedding. Kay brought a ceramic bowl and glaze to school on a day when Sidney was at a conference, and the children painted the bowl during activity time. Kay told me she was amazed that none of the children told Sidney about the secret project. She said the children were aware of the secret because they would say things to Kay about the bowl, but none of them told Sidney. Kay then had the bowl fired at a local ceramics shop and sent a note home about the "bridal shower" present to the families.

In a conversation during the summer, Sidney related the evening of the class good-bye dinner to me. Her face became animated and her eyes danced.

> *The party was potluck; we supplied the fried chicken. We asked the parents to provide a side dish or a drink. We had two families not show--Kristine had a t-*

ball game and Ruby's mom didn't have a car. The picnic was so neat! The children and I gave a good-bye book to Kay. And she had a bowl the children had made for me. The children had done it--as a little surprise. It was so sweet. The families were all sitting on blankets and talking to each other, and it wasn't like separate families. They were all intermingling. It was just so nice, the kids running around like crazy on the front lawn. It was so wonderful. In fact, it was the best way to end the year. The families all seemed happy and it occurred to me that our class had really become a community.

Sidney went on to describe to me how she tried to prepare the children and herself for the end of the school year.

You actually helped us to say good bye because we had said that Maria was not coming back, and that helped to explain what saying good-bye meant. Every day we talked about how the summer was going to be and how they'd be back next year, and that there would be another class in our room. For the last two weeks the children helped us clean in the classroom. We cleaned all of the toys for the kids next year. They were really interested in that. They talked a lot about that; how new kids would be coming in next year. We also had a visual line calendar and counted down to the last day.

Sidney explained her belief in ending the school with a regular day and not a party atmosphere.

We tried to make the last day as normal as possible. The kids were more excited that it would be a "no-nap" day than that it was the last day of school. They helped to pack up things, clean things, and organize materials. They all washed out their cubbies and then we went and visited the kindergarten. We talked about how they'd all be in different classes. We talked a lot about what good-bye meant, and what they thought it meant. Actually they were pretty close. We also talked about what they'd be doing over the summer. None of them talked about day care--even if they were going. We also talked a lot about what they'd miss at school. We asked the parents to talk at home about the last day of school, to help their children. Kay and I were both crying the last day. The kids

kept saying: "What's wrong with Ms. Kay?" or "What's wrong with Ms. Sidney?" Some of the little girls cried, but I think they were just reacting to us.

I asked Sidney how she felt about the last day of school. How did she deal with saying good-bye?

I was more worried about what these kids were going to do for the summer. I'm not trying to act like I'm some kind of savior, but all the parents said the children hated the weekends. I was just worried about what kind of summer they'd have, being in daycare a lot of the time. And you know your first class is special. They were such a neat group. I can look back now and not think about the day-to-day problems. I just smile as I remember the class as a whole. We had a fun group!

The teachers' effort to help the children process saying good-bye acknowledged that the children and teachers were involved in a mutual interaction. It was not a one-sided gesture from the teacher to the child; instead, the good-bye rituals became a powerful, reciprocal part of the classroom community and story. In saying good-bye it is important to have prepared the children for changes in advance and to follow routines (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990). Sidney's well developed, thoughtful plan for allowing the children to experience saying good-bye to preschool reflects her understanding of young children's needs. The clean up of the classroom on the last day, scrubbing chairs etc. also mirrors Noddings (1984) ideas for children understanding they are part of a caring school and are also responsible for the environment.

Texas had been sick the last few days of school. His absence made Sidney feel sad. He has always had a special place in her heart. With his impulsive love and anger he worked his way deep into her soul. She will never look at the teapot in the housekeeping center without seeing a little boy's hopes for a magic lamp.

Ruby's departure belied Texas' absence. Ruby's unsurprising absence from the family picnic had been the one dull note for Sidney. Now as the last page of the story of Sidney's relationship with the class turned, as the children were preparing for the bus ride home, Ruby's mom came to the classroom to pick Ruby up. Sidney related her amazement to me, saying Ruby's entire persona took on light and happiness as she grabbed her mom's hand and eagerly propelled her around the room showing her

everything. The gem Sidney had perceived, in Ruby, beneath the exterior of dullness gleamed. Ruby dragged her mom up to Sidney and said, "Ms. Sidney, this is Charlene!" Then she hollered across the room, "Harmony, Harmony, this here is my mom, Charlene!" After the introduction Ruby and Charlene sat smiling on the class couch, as children and teachers hugged good-bye for the last time--a cozy couch--that had room for even the most disparate relationships.

Chapter 9

A MUTUAL GIFT

It is in the sense of the world that the portrait makes for general readers…
that allows the portraitist [researcher] to reciprocate the kindness
of a welcome study with the gift of the final portrait.
~Jessica Hoffman Davis~

In The *Art and Science of Portraiture* (1997) by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis a comparison that goes beyond metaphor is made between qualitative research and the art of portraiture. Here the authors capture the language of qualitative research such as thick description, reflexivity, perspective, and interpretation and through skilled blending of science and art create their own portrait of what qualitative research should be. It is this vision I kept in mind as I struggled to gather, analyze, and compose the data in the manner of a "portraitist." It is my hope that the study has allowed the reader, as it allowed me, a view of Sidney and her class that we feel we might almost reach out and touch.

I have represented only one possible view or to paraphrase Geertz (1973) my interpretations of Sidney's interpretations. As the research study developed there were many possible avenues of inquiry I could have chosen. I deliberately chose to be guided by Sidney and Kay's thoughts about the study. I also sought out my chair Dr. Fu and the writings of those who have studied caring before me as a way of immersing myself in the knowledge of my forerunners. Finally, I looked to my own experiences as a teacher, walking back in my memory to recall those first small hands that pulled me into a classroom and into caring relationships that still resound with poignant, painful joy in my recollections today.

In this chapter I will reflect on how the process of choosing pseudonyms became a much deeper experience for me. I will discuss the possible effects of my presence in the field on the study. How different themes emerged, their overall implications, and areas for future study will be examined and finally we will say good-bye.

Choosing Pseudonyms: A Reflection on Names

A rose is a rose is a rose.

~ Gertrude Stein ~

A Rose by Any Other Name…

Soon after I meet Sidney and Kay I asked them to tell me what they wanted their pseudonym to be when I spoke or wrote of our experience together. Sidney and Kay immediately deferred to me and said they felt I should just choose their names. I told them that I really wanted this to be something they did. Both of the women agreed to think about possible names and discuss it again. As I thought through possible pseudonyms for the school, the children and other secondary participants I realized I had never known how hard it is to choose a name. Shakespeare certainly causes one to think when he says, "A rose by any other word would smell as sweet" (Shakespeare in Beavington,1980, p. 1005). However, on the other hand, the word rose bears deep connotations even as the name Capulet and Montague do for the characters in the Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet* and to the larger world of Shakespeare literature today.

I read an excellent book describing a qualitative research study where the main participant is asked to choose her pseudonym and chooses the name Esperanza, which means hope in Spanish. The author sees the choice of the name as a symbol of Esperanza's life journey. Esperanza has become a phoenix rising out of the ashes of her brutal married life to create a safe place for herself as a single, free woman (Behar, 1993). With this story in mind I asked Sidney and Kay to also pick their names.

The next day when I spoke to Kay and Sidney about the pseudonyms for the study Kay immediately said she had chosen the name Kay. When I asked her if there was any reason, she explained to me that Kay is a piece of, form, or alteration of a family name. This made sense to me because like many people my ATM pin number and computer

passwords are pieces of names that are important to me both in an effort to be able to remember numbers and in a sentimental gesture.

Sidney also immediately replied that she wanted to be called Sidney. When I asked her why, she at first said she simply liked the name and then laughingly added that Sidney would be her "suggestive," coquettish, *femme fatale* name in a different life. When I wondered what Sidney meant by that she said everyone has an alter ego and Sidney represents her alter ego. This is apparently a risqué version of the discussion games where one says what type of animal, tree, or color one would be. I laughed along with Sidney and Kay saying I had never thought of that before.

At first I was privately taken aback and I thought that I certainly would have a hard time writing about the teacher I was hoping to describe in professional terms as "Sidney" and secretly knowing why that was her name. This was a far cry from the reasons I had imagined she might chose a name for. That evening as I reflected over the day's events and wrote my own personal reflections I had to laugh at myself for trying to anticipate possibilities for the teachers' personal name choices. I felt it was a sharp reminder to me that these were humans who I was here to get to know personally and not to try to set standards of other studies onto ours. I did think that in many ways Sidney's reasons for choosing her name are representative of her personality. She is a humor-filled woman who will at times relate to the children and colleagues in a playful, irreverent manner that brings them closer to her through laughter and pleasure. Her teasing with adults can be mildly ribald on occasion, but is belied by her clear blue eyes and soft blonde hair. At first one wonders, "Is that what she meant?"

I kept the name Sidney and learned to associate it with a compelling young teacher and woman. To me Sidney is the name of a teacher who does not follow all the rules, who fights for the rights of her students, and is an advocate for their needs. Sidney is the name of the legendary, stereotypical American beauty; blonde hair, long legs, and blue eyes, who when examined closer, has much more to offer then the unfortunate stereotype would lead one to suppose. While I kept the name I never was certain if I would share its choosing with a professional audience. So now that I have I will say in the words of Shakespeare, "If we shadows have offended, think but this, and all is

mended… Gentles do not reprehend. If you pardon we will mend" (Shakespeare in Beavington, 1980, p. 255).

Sidney, Kay, and I struggled over the year to name the rest of the children and participants and finally opted for simply using names that were not related to the characters in any way, thus insuring their anonymity. This way we held true to the Great Bard's thoughts on names… to paraphrase, a child by any other name is still a child.

Study Effects of Participant Observation

One aspect of the data collection method, participant observation, that was vital to reflect on during the data analysis, is how my presence may have effected the study (Merriam, 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998). Throughout the study, during my reflections I tried to keep in mind how my presence might be effecting the study. First, regarding my relationship to the teachers I felt that I was initially treated as a welcome guest and confidante. I was appreciative of the welcoming attitudes of the teacher, but felt guilty about being treated as a guest. As a guest the teachers never asked me to do anything extra, inconvenient, or remotely resembling dirty work. This meant I had great opportunities for observations, but had a limited role in the classroom. I decided to take the advice I always gave the student teachers I work with and to try to anticipate the teachers' needs. Therefore, for example, if I saw Sidney getting ready to fill the water table I would get the bucket and start doing this work for her. Sidney later shared with me that she has a difficult time delegating work to anyone, even her assistant teacher Kay.

As a confidante I always had things I wanted to share and say, but felt that too much of this role would affect the study more than my presence already had. I therefore made a rule to myself that unless the teachers said, "What do you think, Maria?" I tried not to give my opinion. This was a hard rule to follow. Some examples of the types of things I was asked about included proof reading Sidney's talk to the principals, Kay's decision to go back to school, discipline strategies, and at times curriculum ideas.

As time passed and I became a regular fixture at the school Sidney, Kay, and I also became friends. Sidney and I both enjoy movies and have continued to meet after concluding the study to see the latest movie. Interestingly we tend to treat the study as

though it is on a different plane from our friendship. It has not become interwoven too intensely and has not been a source of contention. I attribute much of this to Sidney's respect for the study and her high level of professionalism.

RVS is a large school so my presence probably wasn't noticed much outside of Sidney's classroom. Only one teacher ever asked me why I was at the school. I was generally attired in jeans and university sweat shirts so Sidney and I assumed most teachers thought I was a university volunteer, which in one role indeed I was.

The children accepted me with the guilelessness of young children everywhere, "What's your name?" and then an invitation to play. When I worked with groups of children without Sidney or Kay present it was a humbling experience to see how firm I had to be in order to gain the children's respect. My practicum students at the university always complained to me that the children seem to offer an innate respect to me as "teacher". The day Harmony ran away from me down the hall and Stephen ignored my request for him to join me at group time, both who are well behaved for Sidney and Kay, I saw my student teachers' perspectives again in a way I hadn't since my own student teaching experience. This led me to believe that the children saw me initially as a visitor and not as "the" teacher. Sidney had introduced me as coming to play with the children at school. After I established myself as someone who backed up my request for their behavior I was quickly able to move back into a more relaxed teacher-friend role with the children. Having the children respect me as a figure of authority was necessary because the children were left alone with me at times.

My presence also obviously offered a better teacher-to-child ratio in the class. This meant teachers were able to take more breaks at times, plan more elaborate activities, and provide one-on-one interactions more easily. Days when I was in the classroom helping the teachers were probably similar to days when the family service worker came in to help.

i-Candy

The introduction of my i-book laptop was an excellent example of my presence altering the field. Since I came to the school on consecutive days, did not have a day to type notes and reflect between observations, was taking classes, and teaching preschool

several mornings a week a laptop really benefited my work. The laptop allowed me to quickly take notes, cut and paste into multiple files, and make grammar and spelling corrections with speed. I was pleased with my new i-book until I took it out in the classroom for the first time. This generation of children is usually accustomed to computers. The children in Sidney's class have a computer in their classroom that they use daily and the computer lab is across the hall with row after row of computers. What I had not anticipated--silly me--was how unusual the i-book looks. Mine was a model in the color blueberry and was kept on top of the cubbies for easy access to stand and type or to grab and settle in at a table and type. I usually typed on the computer when the teacher was in direct instruction sitting behind the children or at Sidney's small desk while I worked. I had not anticipated how much the i-book is really like what the Macintosh ads proclaim, "eye candy."

The first day the children were so drawn to my computer that I turned uncertainly to Sidney and said, "What should I do?" Characteristically Sidney showed great flexibility to the children's interests and said she had to conduct a technology lesson anyway for the county so why didn't I let each child take a turn typing. I explained to each child that they would have one turn typing on the laptop, but then after that I needed it for my work. Children eagerly surrounded their friends as they watched each other type. The following is what Sabrina typed.

nhjnlh;llbb ,, vvvUFRTSS FBDERTYYI687IM'K;LKHKIGFD'
8KJJJHI8BYG6F5GF4F4D3FFFHGTYRRRRGFGGGGHTTTTYYYYCV
GGTTTRRIYRI87RR6911415478446*16459801202********555555
01044466**54584655*655/66*5846-264822322*00033.*.**323.- 220-
zfyddddds
TGRLIG7LTtf22222222222112222PPOPPOOPOPOOOPOPPOOPOPOPOPOPP
OOPOPOPOPPOOPOOPPOFUFYYFJJJJJJJJ21363262633--
244444444444444444 5

Harmony breathed on my neck as she watched Sabrina type and then whispered, "I saw one of them on my TV." Sidney got the camera and photographed the group hovering around the computer. For most of the children the novelty of the i-book wore off after this initial interaction. Jackson and a few others though would come lean on me

and watch me type at times. Actually these same children were the ones that came and watched me write with a paper and pencil also. Jackson said once in admiration as he looked at my graphite notes, "Did you write all of that!?" Perhaps I was an enduring example of literacy to the children.

This obvious example of something I did that unwittingly changed the field highlights the fact that there were certainly numerous other effects due to the study that I was not aware of. What is important as the researcher is to use the changes one brings to the field as opportunities for study analysis. In the computer example I observed how Sidney was flexible and encouraged the children to follow their interests.

How It All Came About

Some themes of the study I had wondered and theorized about as I read literature about caring and composed the study proposal. I felt confident that in the caring teacher's classroom I would find deep relationships between the teacher and children. What I found was an intricate network of relationships between teachers, parents, extended family, school personnel, and children that support the vital nucleus--the teacher-child relationship.

The possibility of the teacher in the study having a playful, joyful nature and the connection her personality created with the children was an area I had not considered prior to the study. What would caring look like in an equally dedicated teacher's class who is not playful? Could a playful teacher be ineffective? What would the differences be?

While I had read extensively about the need to build a sense of home and a culture of care in the classroom in an abstract affective manner I had not seriously considered how the caring teachers' daily choices, even down to room layout and daily schedule, reflect her philosophy. Through simple decisions such as allowing children to wake up from rest at their own pace and eat snack at their own rate Sidney showed her respect and caring for the children. Also, how does Sidney's personal history and daily home experiences influence her choices in the classroom? Do exemplary teachers have a support network in their personal life that they model in their classroom? How will this change or evolve as Sidney gains teaching experience teaching and perhaps has her own

children at home? Can Sidney sustain this level of excellence in her classroom? How will she choose to support herself as she develops?

I knew that I held a bias about the need to touch children as a basic way of demonstrating care. I reminded myself that studying a teacher who demonstrated care with little to minimal touch would be a challenge and a way of opening up my eyes to new possibilities. However, as I watched Sidney engulf her children in warm embraces I was pleased to have the opportunity to portray a healthy possibility in the light of current national concerns about teacher-child touch. Given the literature about the benefits of touch and the current "no touch" climate what are the implications for the teacher-child relationship? How have teachers found alternative ways to show caring? Is touch a personal value of mine or a cultural value? A Korean colleague of mine says in her experience Korean preschool teachers may be very caring, but exhibit little touch. What are the ways the different genders of teachers respond to the issue of touch?

Finally, some intriguing areas of the study were ones where my previous readings and reflections had not led me at all. For these themes I needed to go back to the literature and delve in again. Sidney and Kay's sense of advocacy and investment in professional development emerged as a major area that needed consideration. Just this week I ran into Kay on the university campus as she was getting ready to go into class. With excitement she shared with me that in class she was learning about grantsmanship. She shared she would be writing a grant to start up a new preschool in the area. "That is what this is all about!" Kay stated beaming. What lead Sidney and Kay to an understanding of advocacy and the value in professional development? How can these values be supported and developed in teachers?

As I struggled to bring these diverse areas of inquiry to a close I realized that sharing the end of the school year would be the best choice for ending the paper. Through ending the year with Sidney, Kay, and me the reader experiences the cycle of teaching and the pain and pride a caring teacher has when saying good-bye. As the children run out the door the last time they seem in contrast. They are older, wiser and prepared, yet somehow they seem at their most vulnerable because they are leaving the caring classroom and relationships that they have developed. The teacher, Sidney, is left knowing…hoping that the good that was established in her classroom will be rekindled

one day as the child senses a relationship that has the feel of safety, home, and care that they came to know in relationship with her.

Implications from the Case of Sidney's Classroom

Previously, in this dissertation, I have boldly stated that the meaning making in this study, from a constructivist perspective, comes from what the reader constructs. Sidney's case is an example of the particular shedding light on the whole (Merriam, 1998). Yet now I have come to the point of writing the implications of the study and I see the irony in my statement. I have a clear idea of what I feel the implications of the study are yet I wonder what each reader will find relevant and applicable in the study? Feeling stymied I turned to Webster's (1987) and saw that implications are defined as "natural inferences". To infer in turn is defined as "to derive a conclusion from facts or premise." In the face of these definitions I feel I can only say that the following are the implications of my current reflections on the study.

The overarching metaphor for this study was the image of Sidney's comfortable couch as the teacher-child caring relationship. Through this metaphor and the description of the events in Sidney's classroom we saw what experts in the field have referred to as "teacherly love" (Goldstein, 1997, p.7), "maternal thinking" (Garrison, 1997, p.55), an "ethic of care" (Baker, Bridger, Terry & Winsor, 1997, p. 590), intersubjectivity (Bruner, 1983), "benevolent caregiver" Rogoff (1990), and "enduring irrational involvement" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in an effort to describe and define teacher-child caring relationships. Using the professional literature reviewed and my experience as a teacher I defined caring, for the purpose of this study, as an engrossment; a mutually satisfying encounter to both participants that conveys love, dignity, respect, and worth as these encounters deepen into a personal relationship. Through the qualitative inquiry into Sidney's actions, words, thoughts, and feelings regarding caring teacher-child relationships I would now say that it is not a definition of caring that I have investigated as much as a description of the disposition or characteristics of a caring teacher. To the above characteristics I would now add the importance of teachers having a disposition

that values reflecting on one's teaching actions and future choices; individualizing care and flexibility in the caring relationship.

Implications for Teachers

This research study demonstrated that there is room for the construct of caring to have multiple ways of interpreting and enacting caring teacher-child relationships. However, several themes were seen again and again. The teachers in this study had the intention to care for the children in the most appropriate and effective way. The teachers reflected on their actions and the children's needs as a way to inform their future practice and curriculum choices. The teacher's disposition emphasized continuos learning, reflection and change, and that the role of teacher needs to also be as learner. Sidney also demonstrated valuing caring and education that go hand-in-hand. She worked with the whole child and her family context, did not differentiate academic achievement as the single most priority of hers and enacted caring in an individualized and flexible manner according to each child's needs.

It seems then that teachers will want to reflect on their own practice, in a dynamic manner, that may allow them to understand the teaching relationships they are involved in more clearly and to make informed choices regarding their future decisions in the classroom (van Mannen, 1991). These caring decisions will be best made on an individualized basis that leaves room for different children's needs.

Implications for Administrators and School Systems

In terms of administrators, when hiring teachers, attention should be paid to finding teachers who are *experts* in the classroom. These experts would have an understanding of the whole child and how their relationship to the whole child establishes a secure foundation for future learning. After the expert is hired there should be an effort to develop a sense of trust, between the administrators and the teacher, that she will do what is best for the child, facilitated by opportunities to share and reflect on the teacher's actual practice. Paraphrasing Delpit (195, p. 47) teachers are experts of their own

classrooms. The teacher should be allowed to make decisions, with some autonomy, as an expert would.

Teachers in school systems where their expertise and voice are not respected or heard will want to find ways to make time to collaborate with each other and begin to make changes from within the school. When Sidney did not find teachers with a similar philosophy at her school she worked hard to develop a network of support among preschool teachers in other schools and in her own classroom with the children's parents and her assistant teacher. As she began to know her principal better she saw how he supported her by not enforcing many of the "traditions" of the school within her classroom. In order to support the teacher, as expert, and the development of trust between teachers and administrators, school schedules should be planned with more flexibility and larger blocks of uninterrupted time. This way the teacher may plan long blocks of learning time, invest deeply in children's ideas, and meet regularly with colleagues at the school to plan, discuss, and reflect.

Implications for Preservice Teacher Education

In teacher education it seems preparation for early childhood education teachers should include an emphasis on the teacher's relationship with children and understandings of how to support the development of the whole child. Teaching is not simply an academic, cognitive endeavor. A child is a cognitive, social, physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual being who comes to the teacher-child relationship already nested in a context. A teacher is the adult, outside of the family, who will most likely spend the largest amount of time with the child, therefore the teacher must challenge herself to care for and about all aspects of the child and for the systems the child is involved in. The teacher will want to have the opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for working with the whole child. It is seen in this study that Sidney does not separate the child's needs or the child from the family. She sees her responsibility as teacher to the whole child within their setting.

It then needs to be acknowledged to preservice teachers that this charge seems almost impossible. They will come up against demands within the larger school and society systems that will make them feel they can not care. The task of educating

preservice teachers then becomes bridging the gulf between "utopia" practice and reality. Students should be provided with opportunities to work in "best practice" schools and "reality" schools. Students' understanding will be supported by being exposed to an array of ideas and practice for professionally negotiating these barriers and skills for reflecting on their personal practice so they can generate their own ideas when they are teachers. Sidney provides a model for this as she seeks out opportunities for professional development and advocacy that bring her into contact with "best practice" and allow her to renew her energy and inspire herself for future teaching. Finally, exemplary teachers need to be identified and presented to preservice teachers as speakers, in articles, texts and research so their image may be an inspiration of caring "success" and a portrait of caring possibilities (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997).

Implications for Future Research

Implications of future research are what I see as the "wonderings" (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p. xiv) I am left with. It is these wonderings that entice the researcher into further delving and discovery. Some of the wonderings I am left with are as follows. First, how does the teacher's past and present contexts influence her values and actions regarding caring in the classroom? Sidney's reference to her family as a formative and continual support for her teaching made me curious about how one's family or personal, nonprofessional support system influences the teacher in the classroom. Secondly, how do race and culture of the children and teacher influence the teacher-child caring relationship in the classroom? Finally, what manifestations and philosophies of caring teacher-student relationships would one see across the entire educational realm from infancy through graduate school? I, myself, can look at all phases of this study and see the influence of teachers from kindergarten to graduate school. In summary, how is caring interpreted in actions and words in teaching-learning settings? A nebulous concept, such as caring, does not have one way of being acted upon. Studies in the aforementioned contexts would contribute to a fuller understanding of caring and the role it plays in teacher-child relationships.

Final Thoughts on Implications

Inferring what are the implications of this study, I have already mentioned, are difficult for me. I feel I want to throw up my hands and say, "Well, if it was only that easy…." I can concur with Wolcott (195, p. 140) who says; it is relatively easy work "decrying the worlds' injustices from the safety of a podium to an audience of our peers." Yet Sidney's story has begun to add to my hope that the implications stated above can happen in our classrooms. Already, at two presentations of this study, people have come up to me, unsolicited, and said, "Sidney makes me want to teach again…. She makes me remember that there is caring, effective practice out there!" To me the hope of remembering the Sidneys in the schools, tapping into what we once wanted for children, what we still can do for children today, is the most significant implication of all.

Reflections a Year Later

Later on, when they had all said "Good-bye" and "Thank-you" to Christopher Robin,
Pooh and Piglet walked home thoughtfully together in the golden evening,
and for a long time they were silent.

It has been over a year since I first started to conduct this research. I have reexamined my notes, dissertation drafts, and reflections and mulled over the possible changes in my thoughts and feelings regarding this study. During my musings I have noted the immortality writing lends to the characters. In the same way Winnie-the-Pooh is forever in the Hundred Acre Wood Ruby, Texas and Sidney are always seen playing and learning in their caring classroom. In truth these real characters have moved on. Sidney has a new class. When we meet we talk about the new children she has taken into her life and these children's struggles, triumphs, and joys. Yet in the same way that I have used Pooh as a symbol in my dissertation Ruby and Texas have become symbols for Sidney. Her experiences with these children, and what she learned, what she did "right," and what she would do differently, will be carried with her to each new class she teaches and each new child she interacts with.

Similarly I carry Sidney and her class with me in my thoughts and heart. They have altered, enhanced, and essentially changed the lens through which I view my life experiences. Sidney is an exemplary case of caring possibilities in the classroom for me-

-possibilities that may occur with children who have had hard lives, who may not know how to care in ways that seem "standard" to society. While it is not reality I like to think of Sidney and her class of children immortalized, living, and learning in the "Hundred Acre Woods." My documentation and subsequent writing of Sidney's classroom allows the reader to enter into Sidney and the children's experience in a way that may also effect them so that they may carry Texas, Ruby, and Sidney with them wherever they go.

In the words of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) my writings or "portrait" now become a gift I give to Sidney's classroom as a thank you for "the kindness of a welcome study" (p. 281). In my words I would like to go beyond this well thought out sentiment and say the research study, the qualitative portrait, is a mutual gift between Sidney's class and me. Lines have been blurred and the giver and receiver have become indistinguishable or perhaps one. It is Sidney and my thought that if caring engenders care the reader will become part of the gift exchange giving and receiving.

EPILOGUE

In the fall Ruby's little sister, Jane entered Sidney's class. Though they live in similar circumstances Jane handles her feelings differently. She talks nonstop, more like Ruby on the class phone. Sidney saw Ruby in the hallway on the first day of school and called out to her enthusiastically. Ruby stiffened momentarily then looked Sidney in the eyes, giggled, and ran down the hall. Another school year and class for Sidney, the never-ending story, yet somehow another novel full of possibilities starts again.

REFERENCES

Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Anderson, D. W. (1987). On the importance of touching. Contemporary Education, 58, 201-203.

Angell, A. V. (1991). Democratic climates in elementary classrooms: A review of theory and research. Theory and Research in Social Education, 19 (3), 241-266.

Atkinson, P. , & M. Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.236-247). Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage.

Axline, V. (1969). Play therapy. New York: Ballintine Books.

Ayers, W. (1989). The good preschool teacher. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ayers, W. (1993). To teach: The journey of a teacher. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ayers, W. (1995). Introduction: Joining the ranks. In W. Ayers (Ed.), To become a teacher: Making a difference in children's lives (pp.1-4). New York: Teachers College Press.

Baker, J. A., Bridger, R., Terry, T., & Winsor, A. (1997). Schools as caring communities: A relational approach to school reform. School Psychology Review, 26 (4), 586-602.

Behar, R. (1993). Translated woman. Boston: Beacon Press.

Bevington, D. (1980). The complete works of Shakespeare. London: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Bowlby, J. (1958). The nature of the child's tie to his mother. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 39, 350-373.

Brody, V. (1993). The dialogue of touch: Developmental play therapy. Treasure Island, FL: Developmental Play Training Associates.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon (Ed.-in-chief), R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.) Handbook of child psychology (Vol.1), Theoretical models of human development. New York: Wiley.

Bruner, J. (1983). Child talk: Learning to use language. New York: W. W. Norton.

Carducci, D. J., & Carducci, J. B. (1984). The caring classroom: A guide for teachers troubled by difficult students and classroom disruption. CA: Bull Publishing Company.

Cartwright, S. (1999). What makes good early childhood teachers? Young Children, 54 (4), 4-7.

Caruso, J. J. & Fawcett, M. T. (1999). Supervision in early childhood education: A developmental perspective, 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cash, J. (Musician). (1988). Classic Cash -Hall of fame series. Polygram Records, Inc.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). (1994). Handbook of qualitative research (pp.413-427). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Colin, V. L. (1991). Infant attachment: Literature review. Maryland: Nancy Low and Associates.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process. London: Sage Publications.

Damon, W. (Ed.). (1998). Handbook of child psychology (5th ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Delisle, J. R. (1994). Reach out-but don't touch. Education Week, 21, 33.

Dewey, J. (1966/1909). Dewey's educational writings. London: Heinemann.

Eaker, D. J., & Van Galen, J. A. (1993). Introduction. The Urban Review, 25, 1-4.

Ecclesiastes (1984). In The Holy Bible, New international version. The International Bible Society.

Edwards, C.P., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. E. (Eds.). (1998). The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Feagin, J. R., Orum A. M.,& Sjoberg, G. (1991). Introduction: The nature of the case study. In Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum , & Gideon Sjoberg (Eds.) A case for the case study (pp. 1-26). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Feeney, S. (1992). Play's place in teacher education. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 155-170). Washington D. C.: A National Education Association Publication.

Field, T. M. (Ed.). (1995). Touch in early development. Mahwah,NJ: Erlbaum.

Frank, C. (1999). Ethnographic eyes: A teacher's guide to classroom observations. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fu, V. R. (1999). Constructing a pedagogy of possibilities through arts and aesthetics. Paper presented at the summer conference, An Aesthetic Encounter at Virginia Tech: Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States, Blacksburg, VA.

Fu, V.R., & Stremmel, A. J. (1999). A pedagogy of caring and thoughtfulness: Living and sharing our lives with our and other people's children. In V. R. Fu, & A. J. Stremmel (Eds.), Affirming diversity through democratic conversations (pp.93-104). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Gandini, L. (1998). Educational and caring spaces. In C. P. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. E.Forman (Eds.), The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (161-178). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Garrison, J. (1997). Dewey and eros: Wisdom and desire in the art of teaching. New York: Teachers College Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). The interpretations of cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. American Psychologist, 40, 266-275.

Gil, E. (1991). The healing power of play: Working with abused children. New York: The Guilford Press.

Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice. MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C., Ward, J. W., & Taylor, J. M. with Bardige, B. (Eds.). (1988). Mapping the moral domain. MA: Harvard University Press.

Gluck, S. B. & Patai, D. (1991). Women's words. (Eds.) Routledge: New York.

Goldstein, L. S. (1997). Teaching with love: A feminist approach to early childhood education. New York: Peter Lang.

Gordon, S. (1996). Feminism and caring. In Suzanne Gordon, Patricia Benner, & Nel Noddings (Eds.), Readings in knowledge, practice, ethics, and politics (pp. 256-277) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Grace, D. J., & Tobin, J. (1997). Carnival in the classroom: Elementary students making videos. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 159-187). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Graue, E., & Walsh, D. et. al. (1998). Studying children in context: theories, methods and ethics. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greenberg, M. T. , Speltz, M.L., & DeKlyen, M. (1993). The role of attachment in the early development of disruptive behavior problems. Development & Psychopathology, 5, 191-213.

Greenman, J. (1988). Caring spaces, learning places: Children's environments that work. Redmond, WA: Exchange Press Inc.

Hall, J. (1984). Nonverbal sex differences: Communication accuracy and expressive style. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983). Ethnography principles in practice. London: Routeledge.

Herbert Scott, A. (1972). On mother's lap. New York: Scholastic.

Hertz, R. (1997). Introduction: Reflexivity and voice. In R. Hertz (Ed.). Reflexivity and voice (pp. vii-xvii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hodder, I. (2000). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). Handbook of qualitative research, 2nd, ed. (pp.703-715). California: Sage Publications.

Hoorn, J. V., Nourot, P., Scales, B., & Alward, K. (1993). Play in the center of the curriculum. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company.

Howes, C., Hamilton C. E., & Matheson C. C. (1994). Children's relationships with peers: Differential associations with aspects of the teacher-child relationship. Child Development, 65, 253-263.

Howes, C., Hamilton C. E., & Philipsen L. C. (1998). Stability and continuity of child-caregiver and child-peer relationships. Child Development, 69, 418-426.

Howes, C., Phillips, D. A., & Whitebook M. (1992). Thresholds of quality: Implications for the social development of children in center-based childcare. Child Development, 63, 449-460.

Hyson, M. C. (1994). The emotional development of young children. New York: Teachers College Press.

Janesick, V. J. (1994). The dance of qualitative research: Metaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.209-219). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jernberg, A. (1979). Theraplay. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jervis, K. (1999). Eyes on the child: Three portfolio stories. New York: Teachers College Press.

Johnson, R. (1997). The "no touch" policy. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 101-118). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Jones, E. & Reynolds G. H. (1995). Enabling children's play: The teacher's role. In E. Klugman (Ed.), Play, policy and practice (pp. 37-46). St. Paul, Minnesota: Red Leaf Press.

Jones, S. E., & Brown, B. C. (1996). Touch attitudes and behaviors, recollections of early childhood touch, and social self-confidence. Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 20 (3), 147-163.

Katz, L. (1998). What can we learn from Reggio Emilia? In C. P. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. E. Forman (Eds.), The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (27-45). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Kieffe, J. E., & Casbergue, R. M. (2000). Playful learning and teaching. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

King, J. R. (1997). Keeping it quiet: Gay teachers in the primary grades. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 235-250). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

King, J. R. (1998). Uncommon caring: Learning from men who teach young children. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kohl, H. (1976). On teaching. New York: Schocken Books.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Hoffman Davis, J. (1997). The art and science of portraiture. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Leavitt R. L., & Bauman Power, M. (1997). Civilizing bodies: Children in day care. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 39-75). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Lehn C. (1983). The sun and the wind: An Aseop fable. Kansas: Faith Life Press.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993). For an education based on relationships. Young Children, 49 (1), 9-12.

Martin, D. M., & Luth Jr., F. W. (2000). Where are all the men? The scarcity of males in early childhood classrooms. Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 21 (3), 321-330.

Martin, D. M. (2000). Teacher led Theraplay in early childhood classroom. In E. Munns (Ed.), Theraplay: Innovations in attachment enhancing play therapy (pp. 321-337). Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

Manning, R. C. (1992). Speaking from the heart: A feminist perspective on ethics. Lanham, MA: Littlefield.

Mazur, S., & Pekor, C. (1985). Can teachers touch children any more? Young Children, 40 (4) 10-12.

Merriam, S. B. (1995). What can you tell from an N of 1?: Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning 4, 51-60.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Modgil, S., & Modgil, C. (1986). Lawrence Kohlberg: Consensus and controversy. Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Moll, L. C. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. Theory Into Practice, 31 (1), 132-41.

Montague, A. (1986). Touching: The human significance of the skin. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1990). So many good-byes. [Brochure]. McCracken, J. B.: Author.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998). Guide to accreditation. Washington D. C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Naumes, W., & Naumes M. J. (1999). The art and craft of case writing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Noblit, G. W. (1993). Power and caring. American Educational Research Journal, 30 (1), 23-28.

Noddings, N. (1984). Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkely, CA: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (1988). An ethic of caring and it's implications for instructional arrangements. American Journal of Education, 96 (2), 215-230.

Noddings, N. (1992). The challege to care in schools. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Olesen, V. (1994). Feminisms and models of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.703-715). California: Sage Publications.

Oser, F. K., Dick, A., & Patry, J. L. (Eds.) (1992). Effective and responsible teaching: A new synthesis. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Paley, V. (1999). The kindness of children. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Phelan, A. M. (1997). Classroom management and the erasure of teacher desire. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 76-100). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Piaget, J. (1962). The moral judgment of the child. New York: Collier Books.

Pianta, R.C. (1999). Enhancing relationships between children and teachers. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Pianta, R. C., & Steinberg, M**.** (1992). Relationships between children and kindergarten teachers from the teachers perspective. In R. Pianta (Ed.), Beyond the parents: The role of other adults in children's lives (pp.61-80). San Francisco: Jossey-Boss.

Porat. K. L. (1986). A hug a day. Early Years, Aug./Sept. 68-69.

Prillaman, A. R., Eaker, D. J., & Kendrick, D.M. (Eds.). (1994). The tapestry of caring: Education as nurturance. New Jersey: Ablex.

Reynolds, G., & Jones, E. (1997). Master players: Learning from children's play. Columbia: Teachers College Press.

Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research, 2nd, ed (pp.923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rinaldi, C. (1998). Projected curriculum constructed through documentation--Progettazione: An interview with Lella Gandini. In C. P. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. E.Forman (Eds.), The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (pp. 113-126). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Rintoul, K. A. P., & Thorne K. P. C. (1975). Open plan organization in the primary school. London: Ward Lock Educational.

Rogers, C. S., & Sawyers, J. K. (1988). Play in the lives of children. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Rogers, D. L. (1994). Conceptions of caring in a fourth-grade classroom. In A. R. Prillaman, J. D. Eaker,. & D. M. Kendrick (Eds.), The tapestry of caring: Education as nurturance (pp. 33-47). NJ: Ablex.

Rogoff, B. (1990). Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (1998). Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rubin, P.B., & Tregay, J. (1989). Play with them: Theraplay groups in the classroom. Springfield, IL: Thomas Books.

Ryan G. W. & Bernard H. R. (2000) Data management and anlaysis methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). (2000). Handbook of qualitative research, 2nd ed. (pp.769-802). California: Sage Publications.

Sawyers, J. K., & Rogers, C. S. (1988). Helping young children develop through play: A practical guide for parents, caregivers, and teachers. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Saxe, J. G. (1963). The blind men and the elephant. Boston: Whittlesey House.

Schon, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist, approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.118-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schwandt, T.A. (1997). Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seidman, I. (1998). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences, 2nd, ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Silin, J. G. (1997). The pervert in the classroom. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 214-234). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Sinclaire, C. (1994). Looking for home: A phenomenological study of home in the classroom. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Skinner, E. A., Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., & Connell, J. P. (1998). Individual differences and the development of percieved control. Monographs of the society for research in child development. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, N. et. al (1998). Observation drawing with children: A framework for teachers. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stephens, L. S. (1974). The teacher's guide to open education. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stake, R. (2000) Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). Handbook of qualitative research, 2nd, ed. (pp.435-454). Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage Publications.

Stremmel, A. J. (1999). Developing interpersonal understandings in teaching. In V. R. Fu, & A. J. Stremmel (Eds.), Affirming diversity through democratic conversations (pp.77-91). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Swadner, B. B., & Lubeck S. J. (Eds.) (1995). Children and Families "At Promise." Deconstructing the Discourse of Risk. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Szyba, C. M. (1999). Why do some teachers resist offering appropriate, open-ended art activities for young children? Young Children, 54, (1), 16-20.

Taylor, D. (1997). We do language: That may be the measure of our lives. In D. Taylor, D. Coughlin, & J. Marasco. Teaching and advocacy (pp. 1-11). York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Tobin, L. (1991). What do you do with a child like this? Inside the lives of troubled children. West Michigan: Whole Person Associates.

Tobin, J. (1997). Introduction: The missing discourse of pleasure and desire. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 1-37). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Tobin, J. (1997). Playing doctor in two cultures: The United States and Ireland. In J. Tobin (Ed.), Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education (pp. 119-158). Ann Arbor, MI: Edward Brothers.

Tyack, D., & Cuban L. (1995). Tinkering toward utopia: A Century of public school reform. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Van Hoorn, J., Monighan Nourt, P., Scales, B., & Alward, K. R. (1993). Play at the center of the curriculum. New York: MacMillan.

Van Manen, M. (1991). The tact of teaching. New York: The State University of New York Press.

Virgile, E., & Muenchow, S (1992). Head start. New York: Basic Books.

Virginia Preschool Initiative, Brochure (2000). Virginia, U. S. A.

Virginian Preschool Initiative Website, (2000) Virginia, U. S. A., http://www.roanoke.k12.va.us/rams/preschool.html.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Websters, A. M. (1987). Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary. Springfeld, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Weinstein, C.S. (1998). “I want to be nice, but I have to be mean”: Exploring prospective teachers’ conceptions of caring and order. Teaching and Teacher Education, 14 (2), 153-163.

Whitehead, L. C., & Ginsberg, S. I. (1999). Creating a family like atmosphere in child care settings: All the more difficult in large child care centers. Young Children, 54 (2), 4-10.

Wolcott, H. F. (1995). The art of fieldwork. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.

Young, Ed. (1992). Seven blind mice. New York : Philomel Books.

Zanolli K. , Saudargas, R., & Twardosz, S. (1990). Two-year olds' responses too affectionate and caregiving teacher behavior. Child Study Journal, 20 (1), 35-54.

Zasloff, R. L. (1996). Measuring attachment to companion animals: A dog is not a cat is not a bird. Applied Animal Behavior Science, 47 (1-2), 43-48.

Appendix A

Sidney's Letter to the Children's Parents Explaining the Study

Hello Preschool Parents!

Kay and I wanted to write you and let You know about a volunteer in our Classroom! Maria Lahman is a student at Virginia Tech and also a friend of ours. She is hoping to provide an extra pair of Hands in our classroom for a few months We are so lucky!

Please read her information and sign the last page if you would like her to continue to help us out! Thanks so much!

Sidney and Kay

Appendix B

My Letter to the Children's Parents Explaining the Study

Date

Dear Parents,

I am a doctoral student in Child Development at VA Tech. I would like to conduct my dissertation research in your child's classroom. I have visited your child's classroom on several occasions and have appreciated the warm welcome I have received from your children and their teachers.

The purpose of my study is to explore the nature of the caring relationship between the teacher and your child. While I am in the classroom my plan is to observe and participate as a volunteer for the months of March, April and May. I will be in the classroom at least eight hours a week the first two months. During the month of May I will be in the classroom full time working with the children and teachers. Along with observing teacher-child caring interactions I will be an extra pair of hands to help with your child's schooling. I will also audio-tape some of the conversations the children have in the classroom

All the information gathered relating to the school, teachers, children and their families will be kept strictly confidential. All names in the study will be referred to with a pseudonym or code name. You are also free to withdraw your child, without explanation from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions at anytime without penalty. At the end of the study you will be provided with a summary of the study findings.

I sincerely hope that you will consent to your child's participation in the study. Please sign the enclosed consent form and return it to your child's teacher. Please feel free to call me with any questions you may have regarding the study (phone number).

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Parent Informed Consent for Their Child Form

I give my permission for _____ to be included in the research study examining teacher-child caring relationships in Ms. Sidney's classroom at Riverwood Valley School. The study will be conducted during March, April and May 2000. I understand that at anytime without explanation I have the right to withdraw my child from the study or refuse to answer any questions without penalty and that my child may be audio-taped as part of the study. All audio-tapes will be destroyed after a period of three years.

_____ _____

Signature of parent or guardian Date

I prefer _____ not to be included in the study of teacher-child caring relationships.

_____ _____

Signature of parent or guardian Date

Appendix D

Calendar of the Study

Week One, Month One:

Receive and Complete:

-Informed consent for teachers and children

-After receiving parental consents audio-tape children's consent

-Calendar of study

-Participant observations start in classroom

-Teacher and researcher conversations will start regarding the study

Week Three, Month One:

-I will spend three full days in the classroom

-Participant observation and conversations continue

Month Three:

-I will be in the classroom fulltime as a participant observer

-Dialogue journaling starts between the teacher and me

-Towards the end of the month the teacher and I will start to prepare the children that I will be leaving soon

Month Four:

-Final teacher conversation

-Mailing to principal a letter thanking him for his help with the study and an enclosure with preliminary findings of the study

Appendix E

Background of Significance

In this appendix I will review the literature that informs the study of caring relationships between a teacher and child. First I will outline the development of the construct of care into an educational construct. Then I will review literature in the areas of attachment theory, classroom climate, and caring school reform. Finally, I will review the few studies that have specifically examined teacher and child caring relationships in the classroom.

Caring's Evolution Into an Educational Construct

Moral Theory

Tracing the evolution of caring as an educational construct is important for several reasons. The roots of caring reveal the close ties this construct has to educational theory, moral theories, and feminist theory and practice. Carol Gilligan's evaluation and critique of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of morality was a significant catalyst to scholarly discourse on caring (Baker et al., 1997; Eaker & Van Galen, 1993). Kohlberg's theory was one of the most influential moral theories in education. Kohlberg studied Jean Piaget's (1948) stages of moral development and expanded upon them. Outlined below is a brief overview of Piaget's Stages of Moral Development:

Stage 1

Heteronomous Justice/Pre-conventional

-demands letter of law be obeyed
-wrong is bad since it is punished, if it weren't punished it would not be wrong
-punishment must be strict, take material damage into account and disregard motives
-justice is immanent

Stage 2

Progressive Equalitarianism/Conventional

-child is starting to develop autonomy and a sense of equality over authority

- belief in immanent justice is decreasing
-punishment should repair and teach and not just inflict misery (reciprocity vs. expiatory punishment)
-equality is very important in justice punishment

Stage 3
Equity/Post-Conventional
-takes into account personal circumstances and view points
-justice is freed from rules
-adults can be unjust
-has a great sense of group solidarity

Through the close study of boys' (and several girls') development of game rules Piaget felt he had established three moral stages that people moved through in an ordered sequence with the final stage being the most desirable. The following is an example of one of the moral dilemmas Piaget would ask the boys:

> A child who is not to climb up in a cupboard does so anyway and breaks six glasses accidentally. Another child who is not to climb up in a cupboard does so anyway and breaks one glass on purpose. Which child should get in more trouble and how should each child be punished?

Kohlberg continued to research and revise Piaget's stages until he felt they were proven to be universal (Modgil & Modgil, 1986). Kohlberg's theory is a stage theory that one progresses through sequentially and will not progress backwards in unless under extreme trauma. Kohlberg believed the theory to have been proven universally through studies in America, Canada, Britian, Israel, Taiwan, Yucatan, Honduras, and India. The studies were longitudinal with some lasting up to twenty years. The subjects were by the far part boys. Kohlberg believes that moral judgment is the most influential indicator of moral action and that moral judgment is not taught by the family or society. Most adults according to their answers to Kohlberg's moral dilemmas are in stage 4 (law and order). The following is an outline of Kohlberg's adaptation of Piaget's stages of moral development.

Level 1- Pre-conventional

Stage 1: Heteronomous morality

obedience for it's own sake, egocentric, avoidance of punishment, power of authorities, does not consider others

Stage 2: Individualism, instrumental purpose, and exchange, follow rules if meet someone's interest, concrete individual perspective, right is fair, equal, a deal

Level 2- Conventional

Stage 3: Mutual personal expectations, relationships, being good, living up to others expectations, "Golden Rule", value trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude

Stage 4: Social system and conscience, belief in laws for good of everyone, will only break law if other belief is extremely important, looks at good of society as a whole

Level 3- Post- conventional

Stage 5: Social contract, utility and individual rights, rules are relative to the group, while different society's have different rules some ideals must be held up everywhere (freedom), considers moral and legal views, may have difficulty integrating them

Stage 6: Universal ethical principals, follows self chosen ethical principals, follows these principals over laws, principals include universal equality of people and respect for rights, and dignity of humans

Gilligan's Critique of Moral Theory

Gilligan, Kohlberg's student, began to explore new territory she felt had not been adequately covered by his research. She was drawn to the study of females' moral perspectives by the lack of females in Kohlberg's and Piaget's studies. Indeed Piaget (in Gilligan, 1982) even commented that "the most superficial observation is sufficient to show that in the main the legal sense is far less developed in little girls than in boys" (p. 77). She wondered at claims of universality that did not include research conducted on behalf of all people, and excluded females entirely saying, "Only when life-cycle theorists divide their attention and begin to live with women as they have lived with men will their vision encompass the experiences of both sexes and their theories become correspondingly more fertile" (Gilligan, 1982).

Gilligan began to pose the Kohlbergean moral dilemmas to women and made some provocative observations. The following is an example of one of the dilemmas:

> The Heinz Dilemma
>
> A man named Heinz's wife is dying. He can not afford to buy the medicine he needs for her. The pharmacist will not negotiate the price of the medicine. Heinz needs to decide if he should steal the medicine**.**

The women answered the questions differently from men. The interviewers did not know how to respond to the women's very different answers. Women answered questions in regard to relationship and caring. Since stages honoring law and not relationship were held higher on Kohlberg's scale, women consistently scored lower in moral judgement. Gilligan (1982) began to see that Kohlberg's stages were set up subjectively with logic and rationalization being the valued stages. Gilligan challenged moral stage theories pointing out that interviewers did not know how to respond to female's very different answers and the moral stages are set up by subjective values of logic, rationalization with stages honoring law and relationship breaking as valued higher

Gilligan believes that differences between genders start with basic parenting differences towards males and females. This would mean that family does influence morals. Also, females tend to value relationships more, they tended to seek a variety of alternative solutions not offered by the interviewer (on Kohlberg's scale this meant they

measured lower then males). However, females tend to use a standard of caring, empathy, and relationship success to measure one by. Gilligan did not want to write a new stage theory but in her

writing one may see the following categories. Rather then pre-, conventional, and post- she sees for women

1. Doing for self
2. Doing for others
3. Doing for self and others (balance)

While Kohlberg, Kramer, and Gilligan concluded women scored lower on Kohlberg's scale, a meta analysis by later researchers showed that there seemed to be little empirical difference in the way men and women scored (Damon, 1998). Gilligan critiqued the findings of no sex differences in empathy or moral reasoning by drawing attention to the gender differences empiricist and naturalistic observers have both found in violent crime, aggression among children, and different patterns of social play (Gilligan, Ward, Taylor, & Bardige, 1988). However, at the point in which follow up studies did not find the same conclusions Gilligan had, Gilligan's point had already been made and her idea of a "different voice" had drawn much interest and attention.

Essentially, Gilligan did not disagree with Kohlberg's stages. Her criticism was in the theory's failure to take into account any other view of morality. Gilligan saw morality as having two main orientations. One was a morality of justice, similar to what Kohlberg studied and described. Relevant to the study, a second category was the morality of caring and relationship that Gilligan heard in the voices of the women she studied. While Gilligan did not organize her findings into a stage theory, the following can quickly help one to understand her work. Some people and perhaps most women grow in their understanding of morality by first looking out for themselves, then others and finally, achieving a balance between self and others.

Gilligan's findings influenced the entire field of human research, and not simply because she had challenged Kohlberg's findings. Indeed her work called into question

whether the democratic ideal of civic, rational, just morality can be the only, idealized definition of moral virtue. She deconstructed a framework that accepted research conducted only on men but applied to women and built up a new framework that reflected the experiences of the marginalized masses. Gilligan brought forth the previously unheard voice of women and brought into scholarly discourse the value of relationship, caring, and connectedness.

Caring Theory

While Gilligan was researching the "different voice" she heard, Nel Noddings concomitantly developed her "theory" of caring. Noddings describes the two players in caring relationships as being the "one-caring" and the "cared-for". The "one-caring" is involved in a dynamic of engrossment, receptivity, and engagement with the "cared-for" that deepens with each interaction. The cared-for responds to the one-caring, is willing to receive care, and "glows" and "grows" in the warmth of the relationship (Noddings, 1984, p. 67).

Noddings focused primarily on how this caring relationship should be applied to the modern day classroom. Noddings advocates for an entire reformation of our curriculum and larger school system. She believes such a caring reformation would instill moral education in children through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 1984, 1988,1992).

Gilligan's and Noddings' work from the1980's has continued to be critiqued, studied, and debated to this day. Indeed it is difficult to find a reference to caring relationships in the classroom that is not influenced by these two seminal authors. The evolution of the construct caring now permeates much of the discussion in what was perceived as *care taking* professions, such as education and nursing, and are now perceived as *caring* professions (Noddings, 1992).

The construct of caring has some limitations in terms of application that need to be continually evaluated and studied. Despite Gilligan's continued claim that the different voice does not have to be gender related, caring relationships tend only to be applied to females. This subjects Gilligan to the criticism previously applied Kohlberg. A related problem is in the application of the caring construct to primarily feminized

professions, reinforcing caring as a gender related issue. Masculinized professions, such as the field of law, could also benefit from the construct of caring. It is understandable that female professions, which are undervalued, and feminist theory, which looks closely for the different voice, would embrace this construct; however, it does reinforce the idea of caring being solely in the realm of females.

It is difficult to find literature on caring in the classroom that includes the voice of the teacher. This is similar to what Gilligan faced when she searched for the "different voice." Someone, such as administrators, theorists, and supervisors, is always speaking for the teacher and child; planning caring curriculums, caring interactions, and caring possibilities. However, the voices in the classroom are rarely heard. Is caring occurring in the classroom? What is the nature of care in the classroom? How do school policies and institutional practices enhance or constrain the display of care? Is the perceived restriction of care a moral panic or a reality? (Tobin, 1997). There is a need to go into the classroom and listen to the teacher and child's "different voice."

Attachment

Attachment theory has strong implications for the importance of caring teacher-child relationships (Ainsworth, et. al, 1978; Bowlby, 1958). Securely attached children, defined as children who can successfully use their attachment figure as an effective base to explore the world from, may reap lifelong benefits that insecurely attached children do not always attain. These benefits could include taking appropriate risks, positive self-regulatory skills, and a sense of self worth (Colin, 1991; Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993).

Attachment has traditionally been defined as the extent to which a child senses that they can rely on a parent figure to care for them in an appropriate, sensitive manner. The importance of a secure attachment has been established to such an extent that even lay people refer to this construct in conversation. Attachment has such a large body of literature that a recent review looked at over four hundred articles and chapters on attachment (Colin, 1991). Attachment theory is also being generally applied to adult relations, marriages, sibling relations, and even pet-to-owner relations (Zasloff, 1996).

Attachment theory has been theorized to encompass four main types of attachment. The first is secure attachment which was discussed above. The second is avoident attachment, which is defined as the child being covertly anxious of the attachment figures responsiveness. The child defends itself by seeming to avoid the relationship. The third is ambivalent attachment, or mixed feelings about the attachment figure which may be expressed in anger or anxiety. Finally a disorganized attachment is seen in children who have no organized response to the attachment figure. This may be seen in the child showing mixtures of anger, anxiety, depression, and avoidant behaviors towards the attachment figure. These categories have been used to hypothesis about and research future outcomes for children (Colin, 1991).

Unfortunately, this powerful body of literature includes very little direct study of teacher-to-child relations. Pianta (1999) gives a reasonable argument, for applying attachment theory to teacher and child relations. He describes the child as an open system with the ability to organize emotions around several individuals including other primary adults such as fathers and teachers. While this argument certainly makes sense, little empirical literature or literature of any sort can be found that has directly applied attachment theory or attachment theory's assessments to the teacher-child relationship. Pianta's only reference for his argument is to cite himself.

One series of studies looked at children's successful socialization within the classroom using the attachment categories previously referred to. A particularly relevant finding showed that children in classrooms rated good or very good in care giving on an early childhood rating scale, were more likely to be securely attached to teachers and these securely attached children were more competent in relating to peers (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook, 1992). In toddlers, secure attachments to the teacher were negatively associated with hostile aggression and positively associated with complex peer play, peer acceptance, and gregarious behavior. On the other hand, a preschooler being too dependent on the teacher, or not socializing with anyone other than the teacher, was associated with social withdrawal and hostile aggression (Howes, Hamilton, & Matheson, 1994). Finally, social competence at age four with familiar and unfamiliar peers was related to initial three-year-old child-teacher relationships and four-year-old children-teacher relationships (Howes, et al., 1994).

Pianta's (1999) edited book and Howes' and colleagues research (1992, 1994, 1998) begin to provide a framework to parallel the mother-child relationship with the teacher-child relationship. More research is needed to help establish the extent to which parent-child attachment theory can be applied to teacher-child relationships. Intuitively, there seems to be a connection between parent-child attachment and the child's attachment to her teacher. Yet many questions need to be examined closely.

One definition of attachment states attachment is "characterized by a tendency to seek and maintain closeness to a specific figure, particularly when under stress. Closeness to the attachment figure provides protection and a sense of security. It is a long lasting relationship…not seeking of assistance or comfort from another in the attachment figure's absence" (Colin, 1991, p. 5). According to this definition a teacher may or may not be an attachment figure. Many children certainly do look to their teacher for protection and security. However, the relationship may not be "long lasting" in the same sense that a parent's relationship is. This may particularly be true given the frequent school changes families make and the institutional practice of changing teachers with grade promotion. What may need to happen is that attachment theory as related to teachers will develop a different set of definitions such as secondary attachments have. Questions such as, How long is the child in the teacher's care? What does "long lasting" mean? Should teachers be looked at as a secondary attachment figure? Should children remain in the same teacher's care for several years? These questions need to be asked and studied. This is an obvious area for future study due to the large amount of time many children will spend with caregivers other then their parents. Mother-child attachment literature should be applied to understanding teacher-child relations (Howes et al., 1994; Pianta, 1999).

Caring School Reform

Caring may be seen as an essential part of advocating for certain curriculum and school reform (Baker et al, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Fu & Stremmel, 1999; Noddings, 1984, 1988; Oser, Dick & Patry , 1992). The caring curriculum reforms sound intriguing and full of possibilities. One review in particular did an excellent job of summarizing what these reforms seem to have in common (Baker et al, 1997). All the

caring reforms see a huge problem with the existing school paradigm. This paradigm seems to be an undemocratic entity that has grown old and cumbersome and needs a total revamping. The caring reform sees itself as growing out of the needs of the community while keeping alive a vital academic education. Caring reform tries to address the needs of all the individuals in the school community (parent, children, teachers, and administrators). It does not just try to meet academic goals in any way possible. Caring reform looks at life long goals for children.

Caring school reform literature frequently links caring with the word community. Neither word on its own defines fully what schools trying to make system wide reforms are trying to express. While caring defines the "specific quality of a personal relationship," community conveys an inherent "sense of purpose and goal directness" (Baker et al., 1997). Caring schools have been described as relationally oriented schools which have relationally oriented teachers and staff. These types of schools and teachers transmit an ethic of care through four basic ways. They model caring relationships, engage children in informal and formal dialogue and instruction about caring values, encourage children to practice this ethic, and reinforce caring at all school levels. What relationally oriented schools are not are values-free schools, religious schools, anti-intellectual schools, or usurpers of parental authority. Studies on school system wide attempts to care and the pitfalls and successes have been documented by researchers.

Teachers in relationally oriented schools "purposively nurture caring relationships with students" (Baker et al., 1997, p. 593). Research shows that these teachers express more warmth and supportiveness and listen to students more. These teachers maintain their central classroom authority overall but are more likely to share power with students, facilitate learning, ask more questions, elicit more critical thinking and discussion, and encourage peers to be pro-social and supportive. Outcomes of relationally oriented teaching have been shown to include increased academic engagement and student satisfaction with school. These studies show that no matter how difficult the process of becoming a caring school, the gains the children make in learning, self-esteem, peer-relations, and love of school, make caring schools worth the extra effort (Baker et. al., 1997).

While caring school reform seems to have many exciting and encouraging possibilities there are also areas for concern. The research studies conducted about these reforms are so large and include so many factors that it is difficult to make any valid claims. The schools where reform occurs from the bottom up are often the most successful. Can we bring reform artificially into a school from the top down and expect it to be successful? What will make this reform last and not sweep away with the next wave of reform (Baker et al., 1997)? Finally, what is a teacher already doing that shows children she cares?

Caring Teacher-Child Relationships in the Classroom

A review of the relevant literature shows that caring teacher-child relationships have connections to a variety of different areas of study from medical research, to school reform, to therapies. While this lends much breadth to the study of the caring construct, the literature also reveals that teacher-child caring relationships have not been looked at in-depth. In particular, the child's perspective is, for the most part, missing. Paley's (1999) study of children's kindness to each other is a notable example of what could be done regarding teacher and child caring relations. Future studies should include specific research about the teacher-child caring relationships in order to add to the current body of literature. Framing the research question around interviewing or observing the protagonists involved in the actual caring relationship will also allow the voices of the expert in the field to be heard more clearly.

Appendix F

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Teacher-Child Caring Relationships in the Classroom:
A Qualitative Inquiry
Investigators: Maria K. E. Lahman, Victoria R. Fu, Ph.D.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of the proposed qualitative study is to explore how caring teacher-child relationships are manifested in the classroom and the teacher's and children's understandings about their caring relationship. The study will examine the relationship of a teacher and her students within the classroom context. According to the child development and teaching literature caring for the child's social and emotional needs allows the child to benefit more fully from academic experiences in school. The classroom teacher is in a position to help fulfill the child's social emotional needs as they interact with the child and the child's family. However, caring teacher-child relationship has been largely overlooked in research and related literature. The lack of research of teacher-child caring relationships points out the need for research that explores caring relationships in the classroom so that these relationships may be articulated more clearly in the context of teaching and learning.

II. PROCEDURES

The study participants will be a pre-school teacher in the County Public School System, students in her classroom, an assistant teacher and myself, in the role of researcher and participant.

Week One, Month One: I will personally contact the teacher and assistant teacher, explain the details of the study and ask for the teacher's consent to participate in the study. The teachers will receive a copy of the informed consent form to fill out, sign, and return to me**.** I will then give the teacher's a photocopy of their completed informed consent form. Parents will receive a packet of information containing: A letter from me explaining the nature of the study; a copy of the Parent's Informed Consent form; a letter from the teacher explaining her support of the study and the study's benefits to the class; and a calendar of the study. Parents will be asked to review and complete the Informed Consent form included in the packet. I will give the parents a copy of the Informed Consent form that they filled out. If the parents have any questions they may call me at the number provided in the letter of explanation about the study.

In an effort to help the children understand the nature of the study and to obtain their individual consent the children will participate in a group discussion with their teacher and me. I will explain the study in age appropriate terms and audio-tape the children's consent to participate.

I will start "volunteering" in the classroom as a participant observer for a minimum of eight hours a week. These hours will be varied so I can participate in all parts of the school day. As part of the research process the teacher will participate in

conversations and reflections about her actions, feelings and thoughts regarding caring relationships in her classroom.
Week Three, Month One: I will participate for three full days during this week. This will allow the teachers, children and I to become used to my constant presence in the classroom.
Month Three: During this month I will be in the classroom for the same amount of time as the lead teacher. The teacher and I will start conversations through the dialogue journal regarding the teacher's caring interactions with the children. Towards the end of the month the teacher and I will start to prepare the children for my leaving the class soon since it is near the end of the year.
Month Four: The teacher and I will participate in a final conversation regarding her reflections and understanding about caring teacher-child relationships. The teacher will also be given an opportunity to ask me any questions she might have regarding the study. The parents will receive a letter thanking them for their help with the study and a summary of the study's findings will be sent to them at the completion of the dissertation.

III. RISKS

The study is designed not to cause any discomfort or risk to the participants. The interactions between parent, child, and non-parental caregivers shall occur in a naturalistic setting and shall proceed as they normally would.

IV. BENEFITS TO THIS PROJECT

My role as classroom "volunteer" may benefit the teachers and children as an extra pair of hands in the classroom. Adult participants may reflect on their own personal teaching practice and develop in some new way.

V. EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONIMITY

The names of all children, families, teachers and schools will be kept confidential. Only myself and my committee members will know who the teacher participants of the study are. Any information reported in the final written report will use pseudonyms rather than the names of specific participants. Only the researcher and the committee chair will have access to the actual original data or information. The information will be stored in a locked cabinet under my supervision. All tapes of interviews will be destroyed three years after the study.

VI. COMPENSATION

There is no specific compensation for participation in the study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

Please be aware that you may decide to withdraw your participation in the current study at any time and refuse to answer any question without penalty.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH
This research has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and by the Department of Human Development.

IX. PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES
Upon signing this form below, I agree to the participation in this study.

X. PARTICIPANT'S PERMISSION
I have read and understand my responsibilities according to the informed consent form. All of my questions thus far have been answered. I know that I will receive a copy of this form. I understand that conversations may be audio-taped and that the tapes will be destroyed after three years. I agree to participate in this project and understand that I may decline to answer any questions or to be audio-taped at any time. I am also aware that I may withdraw my participation in the study at any time without penalty.

_____ _____

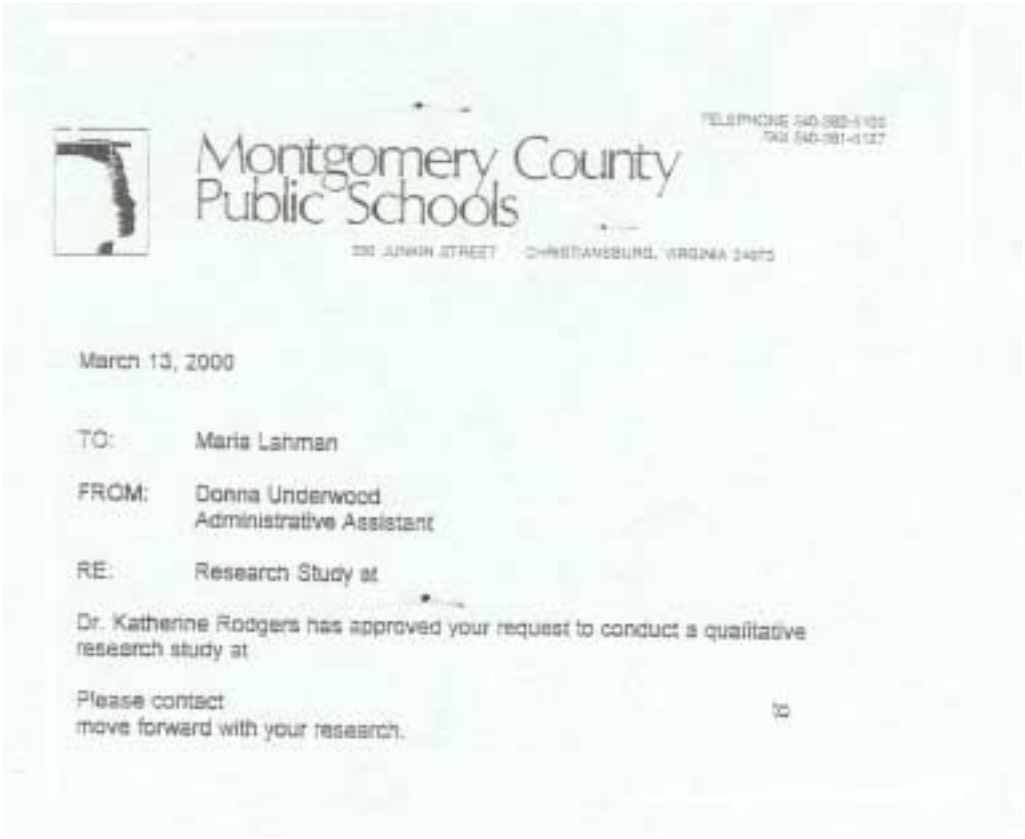
Signature Date

Should I have any questions about the research or the conduct of the research, I may contact the following persons at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University:

Maria Lahman, Investigator	Phone: (540) 961-6194
Victoria Fu, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor	Phone: (540) 231-4796
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. Chair Institutional Review Board Research Division	Phone: (540) 231-5281

Appendix G

School District's Permission to Conduct Study



Montgomery County Public Schools

March 13, 2000

TO: Maria Lahman

FROM: Donna Underwood
Administrative Assistant

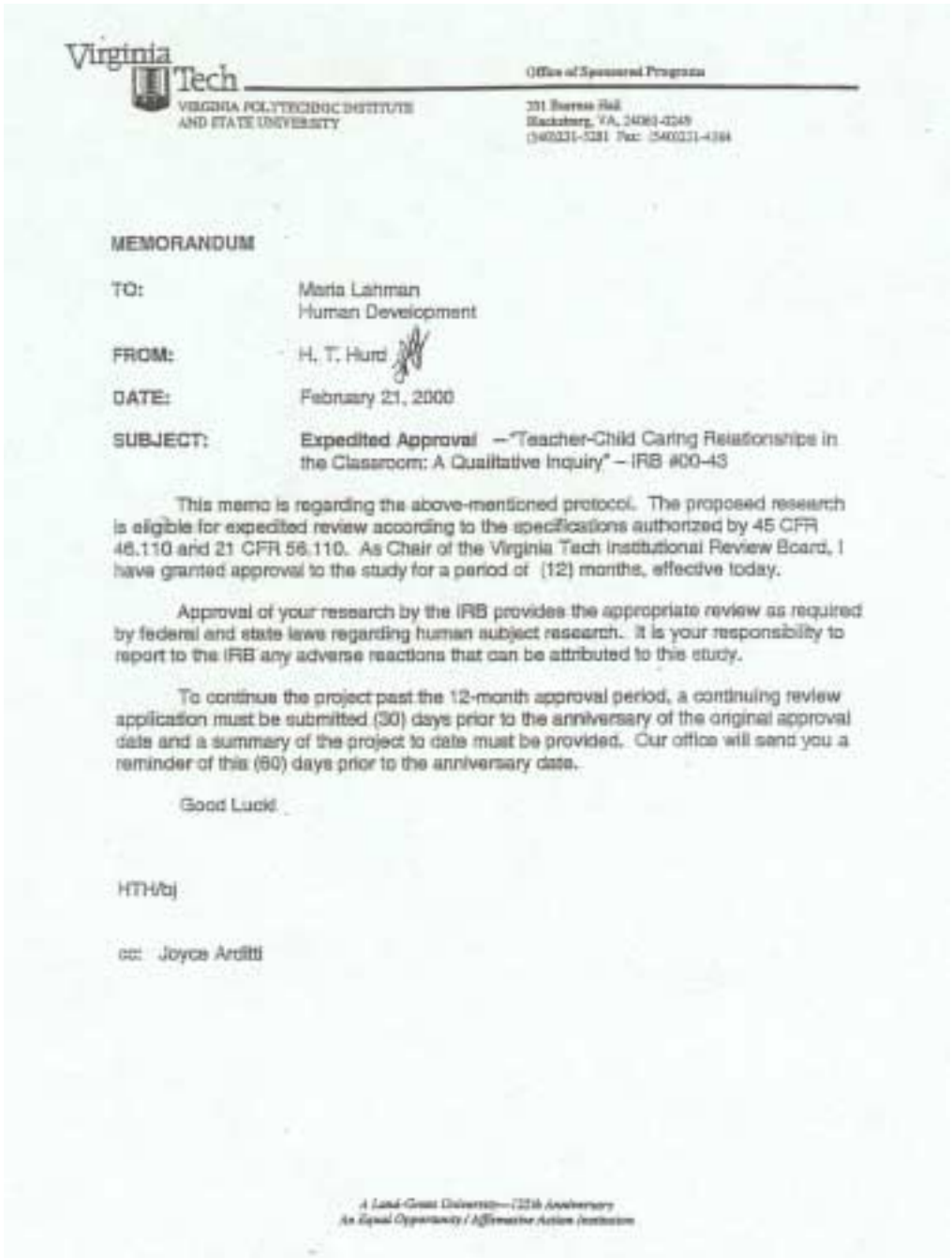
RE: Research Study at

Dr. Katherine Rodgers has approved your request to conduct a qualitative research study at

Please contact to move forward with your research.

Appendix H

University's Permission to Conduct Study



Virginia Tech
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Sponsored Programs
[illegible]

MEMORANDUM

TO: Maria Lahman
Human Development

FROM: H. T. Hurd

DATE: February 21, 2000

SUBJECT: **Expedited Approval** –"Teacher-Child Caring Relationships in the Classroom: A Qualitative Inquiry" – IRB #00-43

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of (12) months, effective today.

Approval of your research by the IRB provides the appropriate review as required by federal and state laws regarding human subject research. It is your responsibility to report to the IRB any adverse reactions that can be attributed to this study.

To continue the project past the 12-month approval period, a continuing review application must be submitted (30) days prior to the anniversary of the original approval date and a summary of the project to date must be provided. Our office will send you a reminder of this (60) days prior to the anniversary date.

Good Luck!

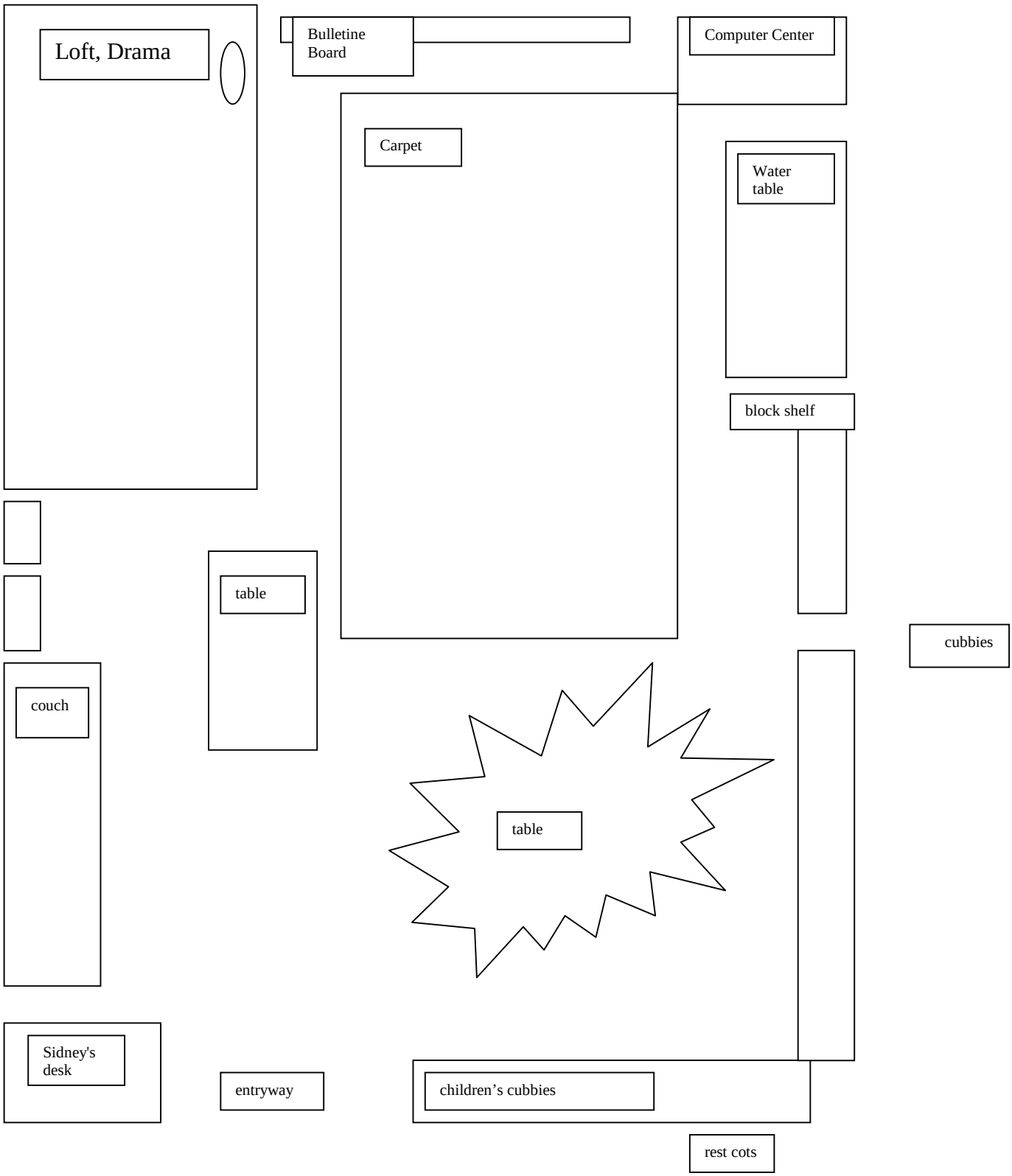
HTH/bj

cc: Joyce Arditti

[illegible]

Appendix I

Classroom Layout



Appendix J

Reggio Emilia

An example of one type of caring relationally oriented schooling that is currently of great international interest in early childhood education is the Reggio Emilia Approach. Reggio Emilia is a small city in Italy that has been successfully educating young children for the past thirty years. Philosophically Reggio is in overall agreement with early childhood theorists such as Dewey, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Gardner. What Reggio has to offer is a stunning example of excellent implementation of relationally oriented schooling (Edwards, Gandini, Forman, 1998).

This model includes an emphasis on amiable dialogue between all collaborators (children, teacher, parents, school system) a true partnership between parents and the school, a commitment to long term relations of three years between children and teachers and an inherent respect for children's views, ways of learning, and being that is termed "The Hundred Languages of Children." The philosophy, organization, functions, and procedures of the school are all designed to bring these collaborators together and promote their relationships. Loris Malaguzzi (1998), the founder of the Reggio Schools, described this pedagogy of relationships as "an education based on interrelationships."

The central collaborators are also perceived differently then they would be in traditional child theory. Children are not seen as egocentric, isolated, or measured mostly by their cognitive success. The image of the child in Reggio is seen as "rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent, and most of all connected to adults and other children" (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 10). Teachers are empowered and seen as researchers in the classroom. This motivates the teacher to be a professional who understands and implements the best practice in the field.

While Reggio Emilia's philosophy is being implemented in some American schools there are several important issues that must be addressed in order to do so successfully. Reggio Emilia must be recast to fit American schools. This will occur differently depending on which of our vast array of schools is implementing this caring reform. When recasting Reggio educators must consider the differences that our society

has from the Reggio Emilia, Italian community. Similarities must also be considered so that excellent practices that American schools have are not thrown away in an effort to jump on another reform bandwagon. At a conference on recasting Reggio Emilia to inform teaching in the United States, Dr. Victoria Fu (1999), brought up this concern and challenged participants to reflect on why some reforms have no lasting impact and how the Reggio Emilia Approach may be implemented differently with thoughtfulness and participation from all the protagonists in the school community.

Appendix K

Teacher Development

Beginning Teacher

Concerned with self

-insecure
-concentrates on "survival"
-has self-doubt
-critical of self

May cope by

-playing role of teacher
-avoiding responsibility
-orienting self to role
-working with a mentor
-using trial and error

Beginning teacher should receive direct on-site support and assistance

Consolidating Teacher

Concerned with self and others

-consolidates gains made in previous stage and moves on into farther development
- more secure
-has "survived' can concentrate on curriculum development and implementation
-may have doubts or be self-critical but uses this as an opportunity for reflection and growth

Views self as

-teacher
-responsible

Consolidating teacher should continue receive direct on-site support and assistance. Also should make yearly goals and receive support and in-service in order to fulfill goals.

Mature Teacher

Concerned with self and others

-has survived first year and 4th to 7th year burnout
-may have survived burnout by receiving mentor support, more education, attending conferences and joining professional organizations
-secure
-concentrates on honing practice
-may try new cur

Views self as

-expert teacher
-mentor to others

Mature teacher will benefit from continued on-site interaction, and recognition.

From L. Katz in Caruso and Fawcett, 1999 revised by Maria Lahman

Appendix L

VITA

Maria K. E. Lahman

306 1/2 Upland Road
Blacksburg VA, 24060

(540) 961-6194
mlahman@vt.edu

EDUCATION

Ph. D. 2001 Child Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, graduation spring

Dissertation: *An Inquiry of Caring in the Classroom: A Teacher Story*

M. S. 1995 Early Childhood Education, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA
B. S. 1990 Liberal Arts, Teaching Certification in Early Childhood Education, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

1990-present Virginia Teacher Licensure

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Qualitative Research Professor in the Department of Applied Statistics and Research Methods in the College of Education at the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO, Fall 2001-present

University Student Teacher Mentor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, 2000-2001

Lead Teacher, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Child Development Laboratory School, Blacksburg, VA, 1998-Spring 2000

University Instructor, Early Childhood Education Program and
Director, Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center, Harrisonburg, VA, 1995-present

Lead Teacher, Young Children's Program Laboratory School, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, 1994 - 1995

Kindergarten Teacher, Ottobine Elementary, Rockingham County Public Schools, VA, 1990 - 1994

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Ethnographic Inquiry, participant observation primary methodology**,** Virginia Public Schools, Spring Semester, 2000

- Examined caring teacher-child relationships
- Co-taught with teacher as part of research plan
- Conducted extensive analysis that included narrative analysis and classroom teacher as a collaborator in analysis

Oral Life History, Schooling and Segregation, Course EDRE 6794, Fall 2000

- Developed an extensive interview guide through archival research and local expert's information
- Conducted African American life history interviews as a class team
- Collaborated on an anthology in progress, Schooling, segregation and society: A collaborative collection of oral histories from the Christainsburg Institute Alumni

Teacher as Researcher, Virginia Tech Child Development Laboratory School, 1998-2000

- Examined revisiting curriculum experiences during year-long study
    - incorporated Reggio Emilia philosophy
    - oraganized team of practicum students around research topic
    - used multiple data collection methods including child made artifacts, observational notes, reflections, photos, and planned children lessons

- Investigated children's representational drawing during a two year study
    - incorporated Reggio Emilia philosophy
    - emphasized child's image of self
    - organized team of practicum students around research topic
    - used multiple data collection methods including child made artifacts,
    - observational notes, reflections, photos, and planned children lessons
- Inquired into children's uses of paper as a medium during year-long study
    - incorporated Reggio Emilia philosophy
    - emphasized child's natural uses of paper
    - participated with co-teacher and team of practicum students
    - used multiple data collection methods including child made artifacts, observational notes, reflections, photos, and planned children lessons

Case Study, Chinese and Korean Parent's Perspectives on Parenting, 1999-present

- Conducted interviews with families and teachers and observations of children at home and school
- Piloted interview guide with two International Asian families
- Analyzed data revealing parent tension between a desire for an American education and a concern that their child become too acculturated to American society

Personal Life Narrative, Teachers: My Mother, Grandmother and Me, 1998-present
- Conducted interviews with mother's siblings
- Conducted interviews with mother
- Researched family archival data
- Conducted participant observation in mother's classroom
- Analyzed and currently writing results reflexively with mother

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Reggio Emilia Teaching Philosophy
- Taught two years at a Reggio Emilia Inspired Laboratory School, 1998-2000
- Attended Reggio Emilia Institute, Reggio Emilia, Italy, Summer 2000
- Presented on Reggio Emilia Philosophy at two state conferences, Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, 1999, 2000
- An Aesthetic Encounter at Virginia Tech: Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States, Blacksburg, VA, 1999
  - member of conference planning committee
  - host during conference
  - participated in conference

Theraplay training, Chicago, 1994

Whole Language training, Rockingham County, VA, 1990-1994
- big books, emergent reading, developmental spelling, writing process

PRESENTATIONS

National

• *Lahman, M. E.* (2001). Teacher-Child Caring Relationships in the Classroom: One Teacher's Story. 22nd Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, Philadelphia, PA, March.

• Park, S. & *Lahman, M. E.* (2001). Methodological Reflections: Issues in Cross Cultural Research. 22nd Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, Philadelphia, PA, March.

• Uttech, M., *Lahman, M. E.* et. al (2001). Schooling, segregation and society: A collaborative collection of oral histories from the Christiansburg Institute Alumni. 22nd Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, Philadelphia, PA, March.

• *Lahman, M. E.* & Park, S. (2000). Understanding Children from Diverse Cultures: Bridging Perspectives of Parents and Teachers. Annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Atlanta, GA, November.

• *Lahman, M. E.*, Graham, B. C. & Walker, D. C. (1999). The teachable moment: Supervision of interns in the classroom. Annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, New Orleans, LA, November.

State

• *Lahman, M. E.* (2000). Image of the child: Reggio Emilia (a teacher researcher study). Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Richmond, VA, March.

• *Lahman, M. E.* (1999). Let's do it again: Revisiting, Reggio Emilia (a teacher researcher study). Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Roanoke, VA, March.

• *Lahman, M. E.,* & Diener, R. (1998). Addressing social and emotional needs in the classroom through games: A strategy for reducing conflicts. Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Crystal City, VA, March.

• *Lahman, M. E.,* & Diener, R. (1995). Teaching with children's books. Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Norfolk, VA, March.

• Martin, D. M., & *Lahman, M. E.* et. al (1994). Foundations of early childhood education. Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Richmond, VA, March.

• Eby, A. K., & *Lahman, M. E.* (1994). Tradebooks across the curriculum. Annual conference of Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, Richmond, VA.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

• Martin, D. M., & *Lahman, M. E.* (Book). Games for healing.
• *Lahman, M. E.* (2001). (Book Chapter). Ms. Jackie: A desegregation story. In M. Uttech (Ed.), Schooling, segregation and society: A collaborative collection of oral histories from the Christiansburg Institute Alumni.
• *Lahman, M. E.*, Park, S., & Fu. V. (Article). Korean and Chinese parenting beliefs.
• *Lahman, M. E.* (Article). Fat teacher.
• *Lahman, M. E.* (Article). Connected for life: My mother, her daughter.
• *Lahman, M. E.,* & Graham, B. C. (Article). The teachable moment: Supervision in the early childhood classroom.

GRANTS

• Bright Idea Grant for Literacy, Rockingham County Public Schools, VA, 1994
• Artist in Residence Grant, Wolf Trap Foundation for Arts, VA, 2000

PROFESSIONAL AFFILATIONS AND POSITIONS

National

- National Association for the Education of Young Children, member, 1990-present
- Validator, National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1995-present
- Member of National Education Association, 1990-1992

State

- Member of the Virginia Association of Early Childhood Education, 1990- present
- Member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children Virginia State Student Affiliate, 1987-1990

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER WORK

- Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center Endowment for Minority Scholarships and Teacher Professional Development Committee, 1999-present
- Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, 1999 - Hospitality
- Weavers Mennonite Church Children's Program, Harrisonburg, VA 1981-1998
    - during these years two or more of the following were participated in yearly: Sunday School Teacher, Bible School Teacher, Bible School Director, Sunday School Cordinator, Nursery, Children's Church Leader, Children's Story Leader, Children's Representative to Church Council
- Head of Weavers Mennonite Church Playground Committee, 1998
- Parkview Mennonite Church Playground Committee, Harrisonburg, VA, 1998
- Co-Chair of Week of the Young Child Committee, Harrisonburg, VA 1997, 1998
- Stand for Children Local Committee Member, Harrisonburg, VA, 1997
- Summer Elementary Education Tutoring 1990-1994