

**Nourishing Roots and Inspiring Wings:
Building a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Southern Appalachia**

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(ABSTRACT)

This qualitative study focused on the need for culturally responsive teaching within the southern Appalachian cultural setting. The specific components of this approach to teaching were based on research findings, theoretical claims from proponents of culturally responsive teaching (e.g. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay), and experiences and personal narratives of educators working with students in southern Appalachia.

The purpose of this study was to identify aspects of culturally responsive teaching within the Southern Appalachian context by observing instruction and curriculum that sustained the cultural competence of southern Appalachian students and empowered them. As the researcher, I also studied my own efforts as a teacher educator with southern Appalachian roots who was preparing preservice teachers to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to practice culturally responsive teaching.

Through narrative inquiry, the study focused on the experiences of an elementary teacher, an elementary principal, and a preservice teacher. The study was conducted within three settings (Holbrook Elementary, Central Elementary and Appalachia College) over a total period of three years. Data collection methods included interviews, observations, participation in school events, fieldnotes, videotapes, photographs, a participant's journal and other artifacts.

The findings identified practices that promoted culturally responsive teaching for southern Appalachia such as including the Appalachian culture in the curriculum, demonstrating caring, building learning communities, and connecting school to home and community by using the cultural backgrounds of southern Appalachian students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. Four characteristics of culturally responsive educators were presented: culturally responsive teaching takes skill; culturally responsive teaching takes inquiry; culturally responsive teaching is a moral craft; and culturally responsive teaching is a way of life, not just a job.

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FOREWORD

Laurel Richardson (1998) wrote about how past, present and future all work together as we describe who we are and as we locate ourselves within our pursuits. When I first began writing this dissertation, I made a decision that I had to include stories of my life, both past and present, and to some extent, future. After all, I was writing about education in southern Appalachia. All of my life has thus been lived in southern Appalachia, and I have been closely connected to education. Within this foreword, I hope to delineate my purposes for placing my personal narratives throughout this study along with those of my participants—my purposes as a writer and as a researcher.

Past

My past as a student living in southern Appalachia and then as a teacher of southern Appalachian students was revisited as I examined the need for culturally responsive teaching for southern Appalachian students. The personal narratives from this past helped place me in my journey toward culturally responsive practice. These were experiences in my life that called out for the need for culturally responsive teaching.

I drew from my past, experiences that began early in my education that conveyed to me that as an individual from a rural, southern Appalachian coal mining community, I was different, and this difference meant deficient. So, I began, also at an early age, to change myself so that I wouldn't be identified as a rural, southern Appalachian student from a coal mining community. This was a strong and pervasive message that would direct my life, so much so that when I graduated from college and became a teacher within this same, rural, southern Appalachian, coal mining setting, I repeated this message to my students.

Present

The transition from this past to my current role as a teacher educator in southern Appalachia advocating culturally responsive teaching began during my last year as a teacher. During my final semester as a high school English teacher, I broke away from the traditional curriculum and began to allow my students an opportunity to respond to literature with a more personal response—a response drawn from their backgrounds. Once I heard my students call out in their own voices, albeit low, yet still compelling voices, I began to question my traditional teaching practices. This questioning continued through my graduate school course work as I discovered more of myself as a southern Appalachian and as I discovered writers who also questioned the status quo of teaching, especially the standard literacy practices upheld by the dominant curriculum.

I was ultimately convinced that instruction could be heightened when it was built upon the cultural backgrounds of students when I began research at Holbrook Elementary in the classroom of Lucy Vickers. Lucy and other teachers at the school adopted a culturally responsive approach to teaching southern Appalachian students. I then observed Shirley Pritchard as she implemented a culturally responsive approach by encouraging her students to succeed as she demonstrated her own belief in their ability to succeed despite their poverty and their minority status. I responded by transforming my own teaching practices by challenging my preservice teachers to examine their own cultural experiences as southern Appalachians and the possibilities that could be achieved if they practiced culturally responsive teaching. Each of these stories is presented in my study. Each personal narrative marks my own transformation toward culturally responsive practice. Each narrative also connects me to my research as more than just an observer. In this respect, my personal story, with its beginnings as a young student

who learned that success in school meant constructing oneself into a preconceived vision of the “average” student, is at the heart of this study.

Future

Now that I am at the end of this study, it seems relevant to look to the future in regard to the continuing story of my life. I look to my roles as educator and parent. As a teacher educator, I plan to continue examining my practice in ways that will make me more responsive to the needs of my preservice teachers so that they in turn can be more responsive to the needs of their students. I see myself becoming more of a radical teacher, one who sees the injustices and the inadequacies of current educational practice that focuses on drilling and preparing students for an acceptable performance on a standardized test.

I view culturally responsive teaching as a means reversing the educational inequities especially in regard to students from diverse cultural backgrounds and students of poverty. I must constantly challenge my preservice teachers to question what has formed the basis of their own consciousness and sense of who they are. I want them to realize as I have come to realize that oftentimes we lose our individual identities through a process of being educated through traditional pedagogical practices that project bias towards students who may be outside the mainstream.

As a parent, I want to guard my own children, a kindergartner and a third grader, from this bias. I remember hearing Gloria Ladson-Billings speak at a conference where she stated that she had to teach her son about being a young African-American male. She prepared him not only for the inequities of the school setting, but also for the injustices that would be perpetuated on him simply because of his skin color. Although some may fail to see the connection, I believe it my responsibility to prepare my sons for a society that blatantly stereotypes individuals of a southern Appalachian heritage. I want my sons to have a strong sense of who they are in regard to their place of upbringing and their Appalachian culture. Ladson-Billings (2001b) also cautioned White Americans against the choosing of “whiteness” in preference to a specific cultural heritage. She stated that we often think only in terms of a generic “white” culture as opposed to an Irish-American culture or a German-American for example. In this sense, my responsibility as a parent is to inform my sons of their various cultural heritages, especially when those heritages are ignored by the traditional curriculum, which is the case regarding the Appalachian culture. I want for them the same that I want for all students, an opportunity to develop a strong sense of identity without having to distance themselves from or abandon that which they bring with them from their homes, their communities and their cultures.

Metaphors

As I prepare the reader for this study, I also feel a need to explain my use of a variety of metaphors. I titled my dissertation from a motto developed by the teachers at Holbrook Elementary when they began their Appalachian curriculum. They were very proud of their idea of “nourishing roots and inspiring wings” which they thought drew from the Appalachian tradition of farming, the imagery of the strong roots supporting the trees on the mountainsides, and their vision of education as being liberating, allowing young children to soar with learning. Their pride in this motto inspired me, and it seemed to fit naturally my notion of the purposes of culturally responsive teaching deriving from cultural roots and allowing the individual to soar. Roots, wings, nourishment and soaring all seemed to find places in my writing as a way of creating the images I wanted to convey.

When I began writing about my methodology, I envisioned the long-practiced tradition of quilting in Appalachia. I recalled my own grandmother’s work at quilting. Quilting was also

a cultural practice explored by Lucy in her classroom as her students wrote, created and pieced together their story quilts. My own process of piecing together my observations and the narratives I explored at Holbrook Elementary, at Central Elementary and at Appalachia College along with my own personal narratives began to resemble the work of the quilter to the point that I imagined my dissertation as my own quilt patterned by the narratives that came together at this point in my storied life.

I chose then to include all of these images in my writing. For me, and I hope for the reader, these metaphors strengthened my ways of knowing and understanding culturally responsive teaching in southern Appalachia.

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCHER'S STANCE AND RATIONALE

Those who don't live in Appalachia and don't understand it sometimes make the mistake of calling these people "hillbillies." It isn't a good word for them. They probably prefer "Appalachians." Like anyone else, they're sensitive about words.

Cynthia Rylant

Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds

In her book, Cynthia Rylant described a region that is dear to her, having grown up in Appalachia, a southern part of the Appalachian Mountain range where mountains pass through such states as Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. She eloquently, yet simply, told of the people of this area, their pride and their devotion to the mountains and the mountain life. Cynthia Rylant was familiar with the ways of the southern Appalachian, and she knew that there was a sensitivity concerning how this region was viewed by outsiders, and that above everything else this land and its people are survivors.

For me, growing up in southern West Virginia was a unique experience. Possibly because of the mountains surrounding me, I truly felt that I was living in an entirely different world, far removed from anything that rested beyond the hills. Coal mining was the primary industry of the mountains and company houses populated every small town. Often immigrants who had come to the area had settled in their own areas creating even smaller communities of ethnic and cultural heritages. My father's father came from Yugoslavia to McDowell County with the promise of a bright future, somewhat ironic since in order to provide his family, his wife, three sons and a daughter, with a good life, he had to work in the dark caverns of the underground mines. He spoke just enough English to get by, but this wasn't unusual for the many miners from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other eastern European nations. Miller and Sharpless (1998) described my grandfather and his peers with the following account

They were called Slavs by the English-speaking and American-born, these people from the plains and mountains and marches of eastern Europe and the Balkans. They were Poles, Ukrainians, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbians, Croatians, and people of more than a dozen other nationalities, mostly from the empires of Czarist Russia and Austria-Hungary...Most were peasants, simple tillers of the soil, unskilled, unlettered, and unspeakably poor. Most were also Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox and they spoke a babel of incomprehensible languages. To the Americans they seemed a race apart, entirely strange, and wherever they went they encountered suspicion and undisguised discrimination.

My mother's father, on the other hand, the son of a miner, was born in Kentucky. His father had moved to McDowell County in an attempt to avoid the labor battles in Kentucky. He too worked hard to take care of his wife and ten children. Even though coal production boomed during their years of working in the mines, it was still a harsh life because these miners depended almost completely on the coal company which owned their homes and forced them to pay high prices for food, clothing and other necessities at the company store. Many miners worked their entire life and died still indebted to the company (Shifflet, 1991).

By the end of World War II, the coal industry was on the decline. Many miners lost their jobs and families were forced to relocate to larger, manufacturing cities. My mother's father lost his job, but was able to find work as a custodian at the local junior high school. However, all but one of my mother's brothers and sisters and their families moved away from the area to Maryland, Georgia and Florida. My father's father was old enough to retire and was able to do so since all of his children were grown and his wife had died several years before. It was about this time that my parents met and married. My father's two older brothers had quit school and had found work in a small mine, but my grandfather didn't want his youngest son in the mines. So after graduating and serving in the Army, my father returned home, and he and my mother ran a small restaurant in the little town of War. My parents fared better than many of their friends' families, while the pervading poverty of the area still sent many away from the mountains to find work. It wasn't long before the restaurant closed and my parents, now with two small children faced a dilemma. Neither wanted to move away and leave their parents and friends, so they developed a plan.

My father was hired as a school bus driver and my mother, along with several other women, all first generation college students, enrolled in the teacher education program at Appalachia College, a small college more than a two hour commute, one way. At this time, teachers were desperately needed in McDowell County, and a would-be teacher could teach on permit while pursuing a degree. Thus my mother was teaching, taking classes and raising a family with the full support of my father. Their plan was that once my mother had her degree, my father would go to college, get a degree and eventually go to law school. My mother graduated with her degree in elementary education, but my father didn't go to college. By this time he had another job working as an investigator in the prosecuting attorney's office. Still, having two working parents was a rarity in War, and it separated me from the traditional family routines of many of my classmates' households, many of which had neither parent employed (Seitz, 1995; Witt, 1979).

I consider myself to have been very fortunate to have had parents who valued an education and who set forth high expectations for their children. My mother continued to model the value of formal education when she pursued her Master's degree by spending summers at West Virginia University. It never occurred to me that going to college would not be an option for my sister and me, and I never really understood until recently that for many of my friends, college was probably never a consideration. However, I did learn at a very early age that doing well in school was not the only prerequisite for success. I also discovered that I needed to speak and write in a language that was foreign to many of us. This was revealed to me through the unfortunate experiences of Paul Prater.

Paul was a classmate who lived in one of the many "hollers" in our mountain community. Paul's family was very poor, one of the many in Appalachia that lived below the poverty level (Precourt, 1983; Shifflett, 1991). Neither of Paul's parents had "finished school," yet his father was a true jack-of-all-trades. Paul would talk about hunting, fishing, and seeking, rooting and selling ginseng, otherwise known as "saingin". Paul's speech reflected the character of the mountain life with his words, sayings and patterns of speech that reflected a non-mainstream dialect. Once in fourth grade, Paul became the subject of ridicule and humiliation when, responding to our teacher's query concerning his pencil, he replied, "I ain't got nary." The teacher casually and sarcastically replied, "You ain't got nary English either." The whole class burst with laughter and Paul and his "English" became the brunt of many jokes. This scene is as vivid to me now as it was then because of what I observed. Success, at least school success, was

dependent upon learning how to speak and interpret the teacher's version of "English." Upon reflection on this incident, I now see how I began to distance myself from my roots. This was the beginning of a journey that would eventually take me to a deeper understanding of the power and politics of language and literacy and the preference awarded those whose socioeconomic status, whose race, whose ethnicity and whose culture are of the socially constructed "mainstream." For many years I was the outsider in my own land, and it would take the continuing of my education, both formal and informal, to bring me back and allow me to soar.

Understanding the Culture of Appalachia

This journey towards this dissertation began many years ago. My research springs from my own experiences as a student, a teacher, and now, a teacher educator who has struggled with the dichotomy between home and school culture. It began with my own educational experiences as a student in the small mining community of War, West Virginia.

Haberman and Post (1998) note the importance of teachers having cultural self-knowledge and self-acceptance. They define self-knowledge as "a thorough understanding of one's own cultural roots and group affiliation," and self-acceptance as "a high level of self esteem derived from knowing one's own roots" (p. 98). Ayers (1983) has stated, "...teachers, whatever else they teach, teach themselves. Of all the knowledge teachers draw on, self knowledge is most important" (p. 129).

For many years I lacked both this self-knowledge and self-acceptance. I lived in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Like all of the small communities in McDowell County, War, West Virginia was a coal camp, where for a while, according to the slogan of a local coal company, "coal was king." For the families living in this region of Appalachia, coal was our world. We were a community united by the ties of family and friends; just I imagined every other town in the coalfields to be. For me at this time there was no recognition of the distinct culture of which I was a part. I was aware of the geographical isolation of the land, being surrounded by mountains. I knew that the coal mining industry was fundamental to the lives of my townspeople since most of my friends' fathers and even some of my relatives worked in the coalmines. I also was aware of the day-to-day living in the coalfields, the hard, often dangerous work. But to imagine the Appalachian lifestyle as a distinct culture was not comprehensible to me.

When a distinction was to develop for me, it was shaped by outsiders and the media, which stereotype the Appalachian as a "hillbilly." To the outside world it seemed we were all ignorant and poverty-stricken and from families characterized by inbreeding and laziness, all the time running around barefoot. It took only a few times while visiting relatives in other states--being told that I talked "funny" or like a "hick" or being laughed at when I said I was from West Virginia--to understand that if I wanted to be accepted, I would have to lose my own voice and speak with the dialect of the mainstream culture. My teachers, who criticized my fellow classmates' speech, even when their own speech patterns were of the same kind, often reinforced my efforts.

In our classes, we often forsook our traditions and customs in favor of more dominant practices. If we ever celebrated our Appalachian heritage, it was through the perceptions of that outside world. During homecoming week at our high school when one day was designated as "Hillbilly Day," we all dressed in our bibbed overalls, straw hats and blackened out our front teeth and played the "hillbilly." I can never recall a story being read to us that had an Appalachian setting or characters. All of our role models were from television shows like *The*

Beverly Hillbillies or *The Real McCoys*. Even in my West Virginia History course we followed the traditional curriculum approach by learning all fifty-five counties and their county seats; the geographical features of the land and our state government. But living in the heart of the coalfields, we never studied the heritage of the coal miner, the struggles between the unions and owners, barely even the famous story of the Hatfields and McCoys. I was oblivious to my own cultural history. In such an environment it was difficult to attain that self-knowledge and self-acceptance so vital to all people

So I continued to distance myself. I did this first by continuing my education after high school by following in my mother's footsteps, enrolling at Appalachia College, a small college in southern West Virginia. I selected a career in education as my major primarily because it was one of the few career choices I had been exposed to other than mining. Ironically, I then became an English teacher who, influenced by the notion of cultural assimilation as the key to cultural power (Delpit, 1995), returned to my own roots to teach my students what they needed in order to be "successful." That is, I subscribed to the mission of education that Michael Apple demystified in *Ideology and Curriculum*. Apple (1990) theorized that schools promoted the social reproductive and cultural capital aspects of language by acting as powerful agents in economic and cultural reproduction, with the White, professional upper middle class as the dominant culture. I believed that my job was to enculturate my students into that dominant culture by instructing them to cast off their informal, unsophisticated and country language and speak with the voice of the dominant culture. My motives were well intended, albeit misguided. I had failed to heed the advice of Delpit (1988) when she stated that teachers must "understand the need for both approaches, the need to help students establish their own voices, but to coach those voices to produce notes that will be heard clearly in the larger society" (p. 296).

I believed it was my mission to show my students a "better life." I taught English to high school students whose language was rich with a home literacy I had fought for years to lose or conceal. I immediately began instructing them in Standard English as presented in grammar texts and emphasized a standard dialect. I even found myself acting as my teachers had, criticizing and ridiculing my student's ways of knowing and speaking. I was a staunch supporter of the dominant canon as official knowledge and the official language. Although in my mind, I believed that by teaching my students the dominant grammar of society, I was opening doors for them, I now realize that I was woefully inadequate in conveying this message. I saw my role as preparing my students for a life beyond the mountains of West Virginia, when in reality the majority of them would never leave their homes, and if they did, they would likely lack respect and appreciation for their primary discourses (Gee, 1989; Purcell-Gates, 2002). Although I had an in-depth knowledge of my subject matter, I had little knowledge of my students. What makes this hard to conceive is that my students and I shared a similar background and culture. I truly believe that I was a good teacher. I enjoyed my students. In many ways, I respected them, and I believed that many of them respected me. In retrospect, my disappointment is that I had never understood the power of culture in the classroom and the need to develop an awareness and appreciation of students' own cultures, backgrounds and experiences. My practice promoted the discourse of the dominant culture (Gee, 1989). While doing so, I conveyed to my students the idea that they were deficient simply because their primary discourse was not that of the standard English discourse. My own awakening to the lived sociocultural realities of my life and my students' lives and to the need to bridge home and school experiences was to follow.

My first steps toward cultural self-knowledge and acceptance came in the form of children's literature. After five years of teaching high school, I pursued my master's degree in

library science, taking several courses in children's and young adult literature. In these courses I discovered multicultural literature. According to Temple, Martinez, Yokoto and Naylor (1998) multicultural literature is most often defined as literature that reflects ethnic and regional groups whose cultures have been less represented in the traditional canon than the mainstream European cultures. The culture I became most interested in was my own Appalachian culture. For me, it was the opening of a door and the revelation of the meaning of the power of story. Genishi and Dyson (1994) eloquently stated, "Stories help us construct our 'selves,' who used to be one way and are now another; stories help to make sense of, evaluate and integrate the tension inherent in experience, the past with the present, the fictional with the professional, the canonical with the different or unexpected" (p.242). The works of award-winning children's writer Cynthia Rylant have helped me reconstruct myself through a deeper appreciation of my life story. Recognizing my life in another author's works and seeing it in print helped to validate my own experiences. Additionally, knowing that Cynthia Rylant's works focusing on Appalachian culture were so well received both by critics and audiences helped me to take pride in my Appalachian heritage. Her first book, *When I Was Young in the Mountains* (1982) was the story of my own time spent wading in creek beds, spending time with my grandparents and creating adventures in the woods on the mountainsides. My personal favorite, *The Relatives Came* (1985) has allowed me to form one of the most powerful bonds to a piece of literature that I have ever read. Much of the reason lies in the fact that I lived this story of relatives visiting relatives for summer vacations. When I first read this simple tale of family togetherness, I was transported back to my experiences of traveling with my mother, my sister and my grandparents, packing picnic lunches to eat on the way and eventually arriving and staying for weeks with my relatives. I had lived this story. However, I would have never seen it as a story worthy of sharing or repeating until I had read it as a children's book. Now, whenever I introduce myself to a classroom of children, I tell my family story of visiting relatives, of growing up in Southern West Virginia and then I read Cynthia Rylant's story. Paley (1994) said, "There is no more important event, to each child, than the uncovering of someone's unique story" (p. 149). For me, as an adult, the realization that events in my own simple life could be transformed into a beautiful, yet simple, story was an awakening and an unshackling of my own sensitivities about my Appalachian heritage.

After completing my library science degree, I returned again to my roots to teach at the same college where I had graduated from years before. After serving as instructor in the school library media program for several years, I became more involved with the teacher education program within the area of literacy. Soon I would return to school to pursue a doctorate, unsure if I was prepared to do so. Again I allowed doubts about my abilities founded in a lack of cultural self-knowledge and self-acceptance make me believe I would not be able to meet the challenge.

My graduate studies introduced me to new perspectives on literacy and literacy learning. My own personal growth came as my foundations of literacy were disturbed and challenged. My understandings and constructs of a sociocultural perspective of literacy and critical literacies, of multicultural literacy, and of culturally responsive instruction have developed as I read the works of Friere, Shor, Apple, Macedo, Giroux, Heath, Delpit, Ladson-Billings, Miller, Banks, Sleeter and Purcell-Gates, all of whom will be cited in this dissertation. Victoria Purcell-Gates' *Other People's Words* (1995) had an especially profound effect upon my understanding not only of the notion of a literacy of power but also of the Appalachian culture viewed as an "invisible minority" and of the cultural perplexities of literacy.

A Teacher Educator Perspective

Teacher educators across the nation face the increasingly challenging task of preparing preservice teachers to work with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Most preservice teachers are from middleclass, White backgrounds and have had limited experiences with cultures other than their own. (Banks & Banks, 2001; Ladson Billings, 1995) The majority of the research on the educational experiences of minorities in the United States is situated within urban settings or within states that have large minority populations (Grant & Secado, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001). Still, Ladson-Billings (2000) contended that few teacher education programs prepare teachers who can expressly meet the needs of African American students and that there is little in the literature of educational research about this lack of preparation. She also stated, "...African American culture is delegitimized in the classroom. Rather than seeing African Americans as possessing a distinctive culture...schools and teachers treat the language, prior knowledge and values of African Americans as aberrant and often presume that the teacher's job is to rid African American students of any vestige of their own culture"(p. 206).

A review of the literature would suggest that even less is included about the education of students and the preparation of teachers within the southern Appalachian culture (Bennett, 1999). To an even greater extent both educational systems and teacher education programs have failed to acknowledge the southern Appalachian culture as a legitimate minority population and a culture with distinctive language, knowledge and values (Purcell-Gates, 1995).

Weller (1965) was an early critic of the education of southern Appalachian students and teachers. He charged that education was unwanted by the southern Appalachian because it presented information that the mountaineer neither understood nor agreed with. Additionally, Weller contended that "mountain-bred and mountain-taught teachers find it too easy to perpetuate the ingrown and experienceless training characteristic of mountain schools" and that what was needed were "teachers trained and reared in other cultures, with other experiences and often broader training." (p. 112). Unfortunately the ideas of Weller still exist. Similar to the African Americans' educational dilemmas, the struggles faced by southern Appalachian students for quality education and for the preparation of teachers who recognize their needs are great. In fact the tendency has been that the role of the teacher in southern Appalachia is to ignore the strengths of the culture while promoting the dominant standard culture through a standardized curriculum. DeYoung and Lawrence (1995) suggested that the educator who has been schooled in generic approaches to education often has goals for school that are opposed to those of rural parents. Teachers generally view it as their responsibility to prepare students to participate in the larger society and economy, with academics as the main focus. They tend to look down on rural youth who do not aspire to leave the community. Rural parents on the other hand expect the schools to provide their children with basic skills, but they often would like to keep their children close at home. This quandary often occurs even when teachers and students have a similar cultural background (Hass & Nachtigal, 1998).

Defining the Culture of Appalachia

As a teacher educator in southern West Virginia within the heart of southern Appalachia, I am disturbed by the assumption that Appalachian children need to abandon their roots in order to achieve a success measured by mainstream standards. I am concerned that for many, the southern Appalachian culture is demeaned as substandard and therefore is not legitimate. For this reason I have set out to understand the Appalachian culture. The task has not been an easy

one, for like other American cultural minority groups, Appalachians resist classification (Billings, Norman and Ledford, 1999). The Appalachian culture is dynamic and constantly in the process of redefining its identity (Batteau, 1990). Nieto (2002) defined culture as “the ever changing values, traditions, social and political relationships and worldview created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors which can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion” (p. 53). In *Rural Community in the Appalachian South*, Beaver (1986) described the characteristics of the unique quality of life associated with southern Appalachians. Appalachians share a fond identification with place, have close ties with people and share a history of experiences and values tied to their region of origin.

Appalachians are very tied to their land. It becomes a source of pride and a means of self-identification. It is this land and its rural nature that is responsible for much of the negativism toward the Appalachians. Backman (1990) believed a rural-urban dichotomy attributes inferiority to rural places. He noted that the slurs, such as hicks, rednecks, bumpkins, and hillbillies, are known universally. He asked pointedly however, “Where does a comparable list exist that contains negative stereotypical terms for urban people?” (p. 4). Allen Batteau (1990) claimed that the stereotypical image of Appalachia is “a creation of urban imagination” invented to serve the economic opportunism, political creativity and passing fancy of urban elites. Most Americans therefore know Appalachians only through stereotyped images of moonshine, poverty and illiteracy.

It is this typical perception that continues to be promoted and accepted often at the expense of the Appalachian. No such form of bias and stereotyping towards a people other than Appalachians could be so widely promoted and accepted without a backlash of protests. Case in point is a recent column appearing in the Charleston, South Carolina, *Post and Courier* written by Bryce Donovan (2003, February 27). During a trip to Ohio, while traveling through West Virginia, Mr. Donovan’s car broke down in the southern part of the state. Recalling his night spent in a motel, he writes,

Lying on my bed, reality hit home. I was going to die in West Virginia. And in my last days the state was going to teach me some painful lessons: 1) Never take electricity and dentistry for granted...3) It’s bad karma to make fun of a place when you have to visit it a second time...The stereotype that most West Virginians are moonshine-swilling, gap-toothed, banjo-playing, barefoot, inbred hillbillies in tattered clothes is simply not true. They all are.

Such indignities are carried out routinely and often overlooked as mere fun and good humor, only the humor is often not seen by the Appalachian. Be that as it may, the fight is not against urban contemporaries and their ridicule of the Appalachian. It is not a contest of the superiority of any one group over the other. Rather, the struggle is for the Appalachians as an ethnic group to recognize and respect their own rich cultural heritage.

Bennett (1999) defined an ethnic group as a "community of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or itself, primarily on the basis of racial and/or cultural characteristics, such as religion, language, and tradition" (p. 48). One example she offers of an ethnic group in the United States is "the geographically isolated mountain people of Appalachia, who have maintained many traditions related to their Scottish Irish roots" (p. 50). Bennett referred to Appalachians in several contexts. In the context of

cultural discontinuity, she introduced the reader to the case for multicultural schools by presenting six stories about students who had difficulties with "Eurocentric education." The third story was about Jimmy Miller, a young child from Appalachia who represents the thousands of Appalachian children who have moved from Appalachia because a parent found employment elsewhere. Bennett described Jimmy's first day in his new school in a large Midwest City.

He and his mother were called hillbillies by some of the children; his mother, confused and fearful, was unable to complete all the required forms. The teacher told him the first day that he had better learn to "talk right" and punished him thereafter when he spoke in his dialect, the only language he had known until that time. The school tested his IQ and placed him in the low-ability classes. Jimmy was unfamiliar with many of the items on the test...The common, everyday middle-class world was strange and frightening to him.

This story illustrated the mistreatment that a student often feels when his home culture and the school culture diverge.

This can be the case even when the teacher and the students share the same cultural background. Teachers are often influenced by outside forces (i.e., textbooks, curricula, instructional goals and objects, standardized tests) to prepare students to communicate in a society and in an educational system that is designed to socialize students to adopt mainstream values, preeminently the mastery of the dominant standard language (Macedo, 1994). Such practice, more often than not, only reinforces the abilities of students who come to the classroom with the discourse of the dominant culture, while at the same time marginalizing those students whose "primary discourse" is not of the dominant culture (Bartoli, 1995; Gee, 1989).

My second concern is that whereas most other 'minority cultures' are recognized, teacher education programs across the nation do attempt to prepare teachers to teach these students, albeit not always effectively (Goodwin, 1997; Grant, 1993; Jordan & Rice, 1995). The need for such instruction is recognized. Very little has been done to prepare teachers who will teach rural, southern Appalachian children primarily because education in southern Appalachia is viewed so negatively, or because the Appalachian culture is demeaned.

Mielkle (1978), in his introduction to *Teaching Mountain Children*, identified four reasons why the educational experiences of southern Appalachians have been minimized. These include geographic isolation, poverty and low socioeconomic status of the people, and negative perception presented by the media. Mielkle's fourth reason is most telling.

Many educators have overlooked regional culture in favor of a kind of 'national cultural amalgam' best described as middle class white suburban values. The prevailing educational philosophy seems to have been: studyhard, learn to speak correctly and you will transcend soup beans, brogans, overalls, the tobacco market, country music and externally emotional religion (p. xiii).

He thus challenged educators in Appalachia to develop relevant activities to further the understanding of the student's appreciation and understanding of their own Appalachian culture.

This then seems to be the crux of the problem, especially for teacher educators within the southern Appalachian region. We have bought into the opinion that we must prepare teachers

who have themselves thrown off their own cultural identity and that their job will then be to teach their students to do the same. Even those of us who uphold multiculturalism can often be reticent in promoting its tenets. Miller (1975) recognized this trend when he reminded us that "education in Appalachia could set itself no better goal than helping Appalachian children define who they are...to see their lives and experiences mirrored in art, verified, corroborated, legitimized" (p. 455). He further stated that teachers who could best accomplish this goal are "appreciative of the strengths of mountain culture and mountain traits" (p. 470), and are able to build on these strengths.

The Need for a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Over the past years, several researchers have focused on teachers who are especially successful with students of color and students in poverty (Bennett, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2001a). Based on her research, Ladson-Billings (1995) used the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe teaching that rests on three primary propositions. Students must experience academic success. Students must develop and maintain their cultural competence. Students must develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo. Smith (1998) stated that culturally responsible teacher education "prepares teachers to be respectfully sensitive to cultures of their students, to learn about and know the cultures of their students, and to use understandings about how culture influences learning in their day-to-day planning for teaching students" (p. 20). I am convinced that culturally informed teaching is nurtured through study both of research and of best practice. Gay (2000) advised that teachers must become more culturally responsive by working to expand their knowledge of ethnically and culturally diverse heritages and social practices.

I am also convinced that there is a need for a study of a culturally relevant pedagogy for teachers of students in southern Appalachia. The themes that have directed this study relate to the propositions established by Ladson-Billings: 1) How can teachers in Appalachia encourage academic excellence?; 2) How can teachers in a southern Appalachian context help their students develop and maintain their cultural competence?; 3) In what ways can teachers of southern Appalachian students help their students develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo?

The purpose of this inquiry is to identify aspects of culturally responsive teaching within the context of southern Appalachia. That is, to observe instruction and curriculum that enhances the learning of southern Appalachian students and their particular cultural and experiential background. A parallel purpose is to identify critical issues in preparing teachers to teach within that same context. To achieve these purposes, I have examined the practices and perceptions of experienced educators who expressed respect for the Appalachian culture. I wanted to know how such practices and perspectives promoted academic achievement, sustained cultural competence and empowered students to critical action similar to Ladson-Billings' (1994) research on culturally responsive teaching for African-American students. To further my understanding of what could be learned to help southern Appalachian teachers in their attempts to be culturally responsive, I have studied my own efforts as a teacher educator who espouses the principles associated with culturally responsive instruction, which acknowledges that a culturally sensitive educator recognizes that cultural conventions inform our practice. These principles furthermore assert that, a pedagogy that ignores the whole child and his or her cultural identity and heritage gives unfair advantage to students from the mainstream, while alienating those who are not of the mainstream.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the context for my study of culturally responsive teaching in southern Appalachia. I have approached this study first by examining my own cultural lens. I am a southern Appalachian. I have been educated in southern Appalachian schools, taught primarily by southern Appalachian teachers. Through a process of becoming critically and culturally self-aware, I have recognized my own attempts to distance myself from my cultural roots by constructing my place within the discourse of the dominant culture. This ultimately led to my own practice as a beginning teacher to belittle and often to ignore the sociocultural contexts and frames of reference of my students in southern Appalachia. My perspective changed as I acquired an academic knowledge base, engaged in personal and professional reflection and sought to expand the dialectic of cultural diversity in education (Gay, 2000).

One rationale for this study is based upon a review of the literature which indicates a dearth of research into the need for culturally responsive practice and for the professional preparation of teachers for culturally responsive teaching in rural Appalachia. Along with this need for research, I have presented a justification for recognizing the southern Appalachian culture as a distinct cultural group.

It is incumbent upon teachers of southern Appalachian students to create learning environments that promote academic and individual success. These teachers must also guide their students in reflecting upon their own cultural identities by enhancing their students own self-esteem, and assist their students in becoming active participants in a dynamic democratic society who participate in social change. This study has sought to examine the perspectives and practices of experienced educators and of at least one preservice teacher as they have engaged in culturally responsive teaching and have fashioned a culturally responsive pedagogy for southern Appalachia.

CHAPTER TWO

SEARCH AND INQUIRY: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Outside, our houses never look clean or painted. Coal was burned in the furnaces to heat the houses and it the stoves to cook the food. The stove fire sent smoke and soot up the chimneys. The smoke had a disagreeable smell, and something in it made the paint peel off the houses. Tiny specks of soot floated out and covered everything.

*Judith Hendershot
In Coal Country*

Living in McDowell County, one of the things you quickly get used to is coal dirt. Just about everything-- cars, houses, clothing hanging on lines to dry, even the walls and furniture inside the houses—is covered by a thin layer of black dust. The first snowfall of winter may originally have been white, but by the end of the day, it was grey. Because of this you have a tendency vividly to recall anything that was bright, white and clean. Such was the case with my first visit to a library.

We didn't have an elementary school library, nor did we have a public library in our town. I am not even sure I knew what a library was when the bookmobile came to town. The public library in our county seat purchased a new bookmobile during the spring of my third grade school year. On the first Monday in April, my class walked across the bridge that led to our town, and then down the street to the front of the drugstore where, because there was not enough room on the school property, the open doors of the bookmobile awaited us. Only ten of us could enter at a time, and I quickly made my way to the front of the line. Once inside, I was amazed. I might have well been inside the Library of Congress because I had never seen so many books in one place. And to top it all, it was clean and bright. The floor was covered in a tan carpet which still had a new smell. The books on the shelves were all new and covered in shiny plastic. I pulled books off the shelves and looked through them, smelling their freshness. I searched for just the right book until I finally found just the right one, *Caps for Sale*. I don't know what most appealed to me, the peddler with his many colored hats, the monkeys in the tree, or the fact that this was the first time I had had the opportunity to choose my own book to hold and to read. Thus began my lifelong encounter with books and with libraries. I soon discovered that libraries were a doorway to information and learning based solely on my own direction and inclination. Libraries became my bright and shining respite, always bringing back to my mind my first visit to the bookmobile. This love of inquiry directed my life's course as I pursued a library science degree and eventually guided me through my research for this study.

An Inquiry into Culturally Responsive Practice

Based on the findings of the 2000 Census, the population of the United States continues to become increasingly diverse. These findings support earlier predictions of increased minority populations in the United States. In fact for the past several years, research has shown the effects of such demographics in the realm of both public schools and teacher education programs. Recently, Hodgkinson (2000) reported that in the next 20 years, approximately 65% of the population's growth will occur in groups that are currently racial minorities. Sapon-Shevin

(2000) reported that minority students will comprise 46% of the U. S. school-age population by 2020.

In regards to diversity, which includes racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic and religious diversity, Darling-Hammond, Wise and Klein (1995) described the continuing pressure on teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers for the diversity of students they will teach.

This new mission for education requires substantially more knowledge and radically different skills for teachers...If all children are to be effectively taught, teachers must be prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences children bring with them to school--the wide range of language, cultures, exceptionalities, learning styles, talents and intelligences that in turn requires and equally rich and varied repertoire of teaching strategies. In addition, teaching for universal learning demands a highly developed ability to discover what children know and can do, as well as how they think and how they learn, and to match learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children. (p. 2)

The concept of a culturally responsive pedagogy encourages the teacher to build upon what children know and do, and goes beyond to empower students "intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Ladson-billings, 1994, p.18). The metaphor of a bridge (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Zeichner, 1996) is often used to understand how culturally responsive teaching uses the child's culture as access to successful academic achievement. Culturally responsive teaching places the child's culture along side the mainstream culture supported by the dominant standard curriculum (Macedo, 1994) by encouraging a deeper study, knowledge and celebration of one's own culture. It also attempts to connect the culture of the school to that of the child's home.

For Gay (2000), culturally responsive teaching uses the cultural characteristics of diverse students as tools for teaching and learning. Students are able to use their ways of knowing, their experiences and their backgrounds as they learn and create new meanings in their studies. In order to do this Villegas and Lucas (2002) developed six characteristics that define the culturally responsive teacher:

- 1) Is socially conscious, that is, recognizes that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one's location in the social order;
- 2) Has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to overcome;
- 3) Sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students;
- 4) Understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners' knowledge construction;
- 5) Knows about the lives of his or her students;
- 6) Uses his or her knowledge about students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar (p xiv).

In my introduction, I referred to Ladson-Billings' pedagogy of culturally responsive teaching. In *The Dreamkeepers*, Ladson-Billings (1994) studied the work of exemplary teachers of African-American students practicing what she terms as culturally relevant teaching. These teachers were exemplary because

They see their teaching as an art rather than as a technical skill. They believe that all of their students can succeed rather than that failure is inevitable for some. They see themselves as a part of the community and they see teaching as giving back to the community. They also help students make connections between their local, national, racial, cultural and global identities... Their relationships with students are fluid and equitable and extend beyond the classroom. They demonstrate a connectedness with all of their students and encourage that same connectedness between the students. They encourage a community of learners; they encourage their students to learn collaboratively. Finally, such teachers are identified by their notions of knowledge: They believe that knowledge is continuously re-created, recycled, and shared by teachers and students alike. They view the content of the curriculum critically and are passionate about it. Rather than expecting students to demonstrate prior knowledge and skills they help students develop that knowledge by building bridges and scaffolding for learning (p. 25).

This passage illustrates the depth involved and the commitment required to engage in culturally responsive practice. It views teaching as means of transforming students' lives through a passion for teaching that goes beyond the standard philosophy of teaching (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). As a teacher educator, I have read such philosophy statements from my preservice teachers. Many will write that they have chosen teaching as a career because of their love of children and of their desire to make a difference in a child's life. While I do not doubt the sincerity of their statements, I am concerned that they are only taking a superficial look at their role as teacher. I have no desire to take this idealism away, but my direction has been to expose them to a philosophy that will empower their students. Culturally responsive teaching may be one vehicle to achieve student empowerment.

Ladson-Billings (1995) posited culturally relevant pedagogy within three teaching practices. Teachers first see that all students experience academic success. I interpret this as meaning that students need the basics of an education. Ladson-Billings more eloquently stated it that "students must develop their academic skills. The ways those skills are developed may vary, but all students need literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy" (p. 160). For me, this means that teachers have strong content knowledge as well as knowledge of various teaching strategies that will enable students to succeed.

As a teacher, I have felt comfortable with my ability to help students succeed. Through careful presentation of my subject and scaffolding strategies, I have observed my students experience academic success within my classroom. During my earliest teaching within the public school I even recognized that role of my teaching directed toward preparing students for the world beyond the classroom. Where I failed and where I fear many of the preservice teachers

I educate fail is within the second realm of culturally relevant teaching, that of developing and maintaining students' cultural competence.

Delpit (1995) understood this failure to go beyond teaching for academic success when she spoke of the need for teachers who have an understanding of the needs of students, and who accept students' home cultures as well as introduce them to the dominant culture of America. In an essay describing education in Appalachia, Miller (1975) found that what was taught to Appalachian students was a world totally removed from their existence, much as my own experiences of schooling that focused on the values, customs traditions and beliefs of a society that was far removed from the coal fields of West Virginia

Teaching for cultural competence can be a means of explaining the dominant culture through a study of the students' cultural backgrounds and ways of knowing. Ladson-Billings implied that teaching for cultural competence assured that students achieve, while they at the same time develop a positive sense of their own identities. In an article in *Rethinking Schools*, Ladson-Billings (2001b) stated,

Helping students become culturally competent is not an easy task. First it requires that teachers themselves be aware of their own culture and its role in their lives. . . Teachers who are prepared to help students become culturally competent are themselves culturally competent. . . They know enough about students' cultural and individual life circumstances to be able to communicate well with them. They understand the need to study the students because they believe there is something there worth learning. They know that students who have the academic and cultural wherewithal to succeed in school without losing their identities are better prepared to be of service to others; in a democracy this commitment to the public good is paramount (p. 3)

Cultural competence also validates home practices by utilizing these to make learning more appropriate and effective for students. In this sense, school programs and instructional practices draw from and integrate community and family language and culture, and help families and communities to support the students' academic success by teaching to and through the strengths existing within the students.

Jim Wayne Miller, an Appalachian educator and writer, had a special concern for the appreciation of Appalachians and Appalachian life. His concern was that the educational experiences of Appalachians have been based on outside control which is not always salient to them. The realities of the school system in Appalachia are such that it is often an anathema to their culture. This is not only true in Appalachia but throughout the school systems in America where many marginalized students are expected to conform to the values, customs, traditions and beliefs of the standard curriculum (Au, 1993; Delpit, 1995, Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1984). The teacher in Appalachia usually explains things that are far removed from the lives of the pupils in Appalachia. According to Miller (1975), "It is difficult for people anywhere to embrace enthusiastically twelve years of formal schooling based on values they don't fully share, reflecting a world they do not live in, a world difficult to connect to their own experiences." (p. 449). The result of such instruction all too often labels Appalachian students as different, which as Miller said, "is to be diminished" (p. 457).

In a themed issue on rural education in America, *Phi Delta Kappan* described a "renaissance" in rural America brought about through a concentration on the strengths of family,

community and culture (DeYoung & Lawrence, 1995; Hass & Lambert, 1995; Herzog & Pittman, 1995). In one article, Theobald and Nachtigal (1995) concluded, "the work of the rural school is no longer to emulate the urban and suburban school, but to attend to its own place" (p. 135). Schools in Appalachia are strengthened through their connection to the people and the cultural practices of people in their communities. Students' study of the traditional curriculum can be enhanced by a connection to local culture. As I reflect upon my own teaching, I think of the time my eleventh grade literature class studied ballads and the poetic devices used in the lyrics. I knew a student in my class was a part of his family's bluegrass band so I invited him to bring his guitar and sing country ballads for the class. He and his family came to school and performed many traditional Appalachian folksongs. They also played a variety of "bluegrass" music. All of us ended that study with a greater appreciation of meter and rhyme and the interpretation of poetry, as well as an appreciation of the heritage of Appalachian musical sounds.

In addition to developing academic skills while retaining cultural competence, culturally responsive teachers help students develop a critical nature to challenge the status quo. Again, Ladson-Billings (1995) found that exemplary teachers help their students "develop a broader socio-political consciousness that allows them to critique the social norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Culturally responsive teaching that challenges the status quo Culturally responsive teaching is empowering in that it enables students to be better human beings and more successful learners. To achieve this for their students, teachers must model positive self-efficacy beliefs, celebrate individual and collective accomplishments, respect the cultures and experiences of various groups, and then use these as resources for teaching and learning (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching as empowering, transformative and emancipatory guides students in understanding the interconnections among individual, local and national identities, and the acceptance of knowledge as something to be continuously shared, critiqued, revised and renewed. It promotes social justice, equity and equality.

In his introduction to *Education and Justice: A View from the Back of the Bus*, Gordon (1999) stated, "The failure to achieve universally effective education in our society is known to be a correlate of our failure to achieve social justice. By almost any measure, there continue to be serious differences between the level and quality of educational achievement for children coming from rich or from poor families and from ethnic-majority or from ethnic-minority group families" (p. xii). In *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, Ruby Payne (1998) stated that poverty is more than a condition of not having enough money, but also a realm of particular rules, emotions and knowledges that override all other ways of building relationships and making a life. For southern Appalachian students, poverty has often relegated them to riding on the back of the bus within an educational system that fails to recognize the nature and potential of children in poverty. For many in Appalachia this may mean teaching students to help them work out a better existence for themselves, by questioning the political factors that have allowed outsiders to control the work and economy of a land that has been stripped of many of its natural resources, leaving many families living in impoverished conditions.

Culturally Responsive Teaching for Southern Appalachia

Bennett's (1999) review of the literature found that culturally responsive teaching sprung primarily from studies of teachers working with African American students. Yet, Bennett goes

on to say that culturally responsive teaching "is appropriate for all students, including those who are ill-served by the school because of their ethnicity or low-income background" (p. 367).

Historically, southern Appalachians have been ill served by their schools because of their rural nature. As Theobald and Howley (1998) asserted, "Rural communities have been denigrated, denuded and depopulated, and the educational system, of which rural schools are an integral part, has too often served as the handmaiden to such purposes" (p. 154). Rural schools with their sparse population bases often exist in geographic and cultural isolation, limited economic development and restricted educational opportunities (McCombs and Bansberg, 1997). Additionally poverty within southern Appalachia has put large numbers of students at risk of school failure. Hodgkinson (1994) described southern Appalachians as the "invisible" rural poor, the majority of which are White and whose families are part of our nation's rural persistent poverty counties (U. S. Department of Education, 1997).

The remedy to this may lie in a redesign of the educational practices upheld by many of the school systems in southern Appalachia. Apple (1990) theorized that schools help produce the knowledge that maintains the current dominant economic, political and cultural arrangements. That is, educational institutions act as powerful agents in economic and cultural reproduction, with the White, professional, upper-middle class as the dominant culture. From this population within our society comes the dominant standard language, which thus becomes a necessary commodity, or form of "cultural capital," for upward mobility or even entrance into the dominant culture. The continuation of such practice through curriculums that do not address the needs of students nor support their home cultures and home literacies can only continue to keep southern Appalachian students marginalized and "invisible." The message these students often receive is that their cultural heritage and their ways of knowing are not valuable. Futrell and Witty (1997) defended the importance of the role teachers and teaching play in helping marginalized students find success:

For millions of racial and language minority children, children who live in resource-poor urban and rural areas, and children who come from cultures considered non-mainstream, [their] future depends on the conditions of the schools they attend. It depends on the quality of the ethos in the schools, on whether these schools are culturally responsive to the students they serve. Most important, these children's future depends on the quality of teaching that occurs in their classroom (p. 212).

Sleeter and Grant (1999) observed that certain strategies might be counterproductive with culturally diverse students who have cognitively disengaged themselves from the standard curriculum. They wrote, "Critics become concerned when teachers are searching desperately for instructional techniques that will help them fit square pegs into round holes. If a body of information is not being accepted well or is not making sense to a class of Appalachian students, for example, perhaps the solution lies not in hitting upon the right teaching strategy but in examining possible biases or lack of relevance in the information itself" (p. 71).

Duncan (1999) stated, "a good education is the key that unlocks and expands the cultural tool kits of the have-nots, and thus gives them potential to bring about lasting social change in their persistently poor communities" (p. 208). But what is a good education? It would seem that a good education is derived from good teaching. In *Possible Lives*, Mike Rose (1995) traveled across America in search of good teaching. One conclusion that he drew from his observations

of many classrooms was that good teaching involves knowing students' lives. He stated the following

The teachers we observed operate with knowledge of individual student's lives, of local history and economy, and of social-cultural traditions and practices. They gain this knowledge in any number of ways: living in the communities in which they work; getting involved in local institutions and projects; drawing on personal and cultural histories that resemble the histories of the children they teach; educating themselves about the communities and cultures of the students before them; connecting with parents and involving parents in schooling; seeing students as resources and learning from them (p. 419).

For proponents of culturally responsive teaching, good teaching necessitates building on students' prior knowledges, skills and languages, and then providing the appropriate scaffolding so students can move more easily from what they know to what they need to know. Good teaching also demands that teachers have a thorough knowledge of their students. Knowing students means that the teacher is sensitive to their students' cultures and understands how their cultural heritages shape their day to day learning. Culturally responsive teaching begins with knowing students and what they bring with them from their families, their homes and their experiences.

A Family Literacy Perspective

Much of what can be accomplished through culturally responsive teaching requires a broader understanding of family literacy practices. Historically, family literacy programs have operated under the notion of deficiency, assuming that parents and caretakers lack the essential skills to promote school success in their children (Auerbach, 1989). The consensus of this deficit model has been that home factors, especially homes of low income, ethnic and or culturally diverse families, mitigate family literacy practices. In her highly acclaimed study, Heath (1983) found that the problem was not one of a deficit, but one of a difference in the ways families use and demonstrate their literacies. That is, families use literacy for a wide variety of purposes. In their study of urban African-American families, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) revealed that members of these families engaged in many uses of language and the written word daily. Additionally, although these parents were not, in a number of instances, school educated, they included their children in literacy learning through a wide variety of purposes involving print, social situations and social interaction. Studies continue to reveal that even though homes may not be filled with the typical materials recognized to support emergent literacy, families create opportunities for their children to learn through contact with print embedded within daily living routines such as planning what television programs to watch (Purcell-Gates, 1996).

To move from this deficit approach necessitates that work with families should acknowledge that there are varieties of cultural resources for learning. These can be discovered through communication with the home families who are knowledgeable of the important aspects of their culture (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). To learn of these aspects means to discover the many different backgrounds that each student brings to the classroom. Teachers should also understand the day to day lives of their students and how that living allows them to use language in multiple contexts. Such understanding prompted Bartoli (1995) to write

Family literacy defined in this way encourages us to design programs that celebrate the language and culture of the home, programs that validate child and family narratives, programs that respect the unique contributions that all families make to the literacy development of their children, programs that respectfully ask parents to be colleagues in both design and implementation...projects wherein families write and share their own stories...are examples of more respectful family literacy programs (p. 113).

Auerbach (1989) identified several aspects of family literacy practice that would focus on family strengths and in which community concerns and cultural practices would inform curriculum design. Two particularly salient types of literacies practices by families include socio-historical and autobiographical reading and writing (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; McCaleb, 1994). Socio-historical practices might include reading to explore one's personal identity, and writing, reading and rereading cherished documents that record the family's life history. Autobiographical reading and writing attempts to study the self by recording and sharing the individual's story or personal narrative. Giroux (1987) stated, "teachers are not merely dealing with students who have individual interests, they are dealing primarily with individuals whose stories, memories, narratives and readings of the world are inextricably related to wider social and cultural formations and categories" (p. 177). McCaleb (1994) referred to this sharing of stories, narratives and memories as "participatory research" which allows families opportunities to engage in school dialogues where they can form deeper understandings, act upon and change aspects of their lives.

Neuman and Roskos (1994) suggested that culturally responsive instruction "acknowledges and appreciates children's home cultures and attempts to build upon the uses of language and literacy with which children are already familiar," (p. 211) and by promoting collaboration between home and school through literate activities. It is a common misconception that students from low-income, minority, and or culturally and linguistically diverse homes lack the literacy skills to succeed in school because they have not engaged in literacy activities in the home. Auerbach's (1995) review of family literacy practices offers evidence that "refutes the notion that poor, minority and immigrant families do not value or support literacy development" (p. 15). Auerbach continued by saying that "those families most marginalized frequently see literacy and schooling as the key to mobility, to changing their status and preventing their children from suffering as they have" (p. 15). Gee (1990) and Voss (1996) found that individuals learn some of their most valuable literacies at home and within their communities. All too often, these literacies are unrecognized, unacknowledged and uncelebrated in schools (Auerbach, 1989; Heath & Mangiola, 1991). Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1998) study of family literacy practices in low-income urban areas, Au and Jordan's (1981) studies of native Hawaiian family literacy practices, Heath's (1993) study of literacy learning among African-American children and their families, and Delgado-Gaitan's (1994) study of Latino families have shown that neither socioeconomic status nor diverse home cultures can necessarily be considered predictors of literacy attainment or school success simply because the children in these studies showed strong personal literacies that facilitated their academic success. In other words, a home literacy practice that is far removed from school literacy practices is not a deficit unless it is viewed as such.

Teachers need to be aware of the importance of family literacy practices within the context of their students' multicultural backgrounds in order to enrich their teaching and the

curriculum with materials and activities that appeal to their students' backgrounds. Much of this requires knowledge of the types of literacy activities that take place in the students' home and communities (Baker, Allen, Shockley, Pellegrini, Galda & Stahl, 1996). When teachers make this effort, they are able to develop meaningful teaching activities that can help students achieve academic success. Instruction, and especially literacy instruction, that builds upon the cultural knowledge, ways of making meaning and ways of expression that children bring with them to the classroom will encourage children to feel that their culture is important and valued in the school.

Short, Harste and Burke (1996) make an impassioned plea for valuing the home literacies of students.

The goal of school is not so much to get children to outgrow their commonsense ways-of-knowing as it is to legitimize and make real connections with these literacies. Throughout life these experiences are our anchor and our touchstone. When life gets difficult, the connections most of us seek are to our homes and the forms of making sense we learned there. The agenda ahead for educators is to learn to successfully negotiate family and school literacy rather than to assume that the function of schooling is to estrange one from one's roots (p. 54).

Critical Literacy/ Emancipatory Literacy

Culturally responsive teaching aspires to be emancipatory. Emancipatory literacy proponents (Apple, 1995; Mitchell & Weiler, 1991; Torres, 1998) have understood that language and literacy are politically controlled and are useful tools in attaining cultural capital and in maintaining the status quo. Critical literacy helps the learner understand the relationships of power and control, and the hidden messages present in texts and classroom interactions that sanction the dominant culture while marginalizing the experiences and histories of students from subordinate groups. Critical literacy educators advocate challenging the inequalities and injustices of the status quo by encouraging learners to ask questions like, "Why are things the way they are?" and "How might they be changed?" (Shannon, 1991). Culturally responsive teaching as a critical literacy practice guides students in understanding that there is no single, total or permanent version of truth. It does not solely prescribe to mainstream ways of knowing. In this sense, critical literacy leads to the attainment of emancipatory literacy and empowerment.

Freire (Freire and Macedo, 1987) defined emancipatory literacy as the use of literacy practices to teach the learner how to participate in and change power structures. His view was that in order to acquire self-empowerment the individual had to recognize and reclaim his/her voice. As Freire and Macedo (1987) stated, "To be literate is not to be free. It is to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one's voice, history and future" (p. 11). Empowerment can be described as academic competence, self-efficacy and initiative. Shor (1992) characterized empowering education as:

a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change. It is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in school and society. It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other... The goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, to develop strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality and change... The learning process is negotiated, requiring leadership by the teacher, and mutual teacher-student authority. In addition,... the

empowering class does not teach students to seek self-centered gain while ignoring public welfare. (pp 15-16).

In order to accomplish Shor's goal, culturally responsive educators make authentic knowledge about multiple cultural groups accessible to students. Gay (2000) stated, that the validation, information and pride generated by culturally responsive curriculum is "both psychologically and intellectually liberating" (p.35).

Traditionally school curriculums have been based on the dominant "mainstream" culture and have promoted the reproductive theory by dividing students along class and/or cultural lines. This practice has been conveyed through an emphasis on the mechanics, vocabulary and grammar of Standard English, the language of native, educated speakers. In this practice, students whose language expression conforms to the mainstream norms succeed, and those whose language is divergent fail (Bartoli, 1995). For students in southern Appalachia this most often manifests itself through their particular language usage and vocabulary, often referred to as the Appalachian dialect. Sleeter and Grant (1999) described dialect as "an important dimension of communication. Several different dialects are spoken within the United States: in addition to Standard English, dialects in current use include Appalachian, Hawaiian, Creole, Tex-Mex and Black English" (p. 49). Because of their dialect, southern Appalachian children are often perceived by the mainstream culture to be backward, uncivilized, poor and ignorant. Sleeter and Grant cautioned educators to beware of this deficiency orientation toward the Appalachian dialect and patterns of speech stating that "considerable research has established dialects as linguistically sound, governed by their own rules of phonemics, syntax, morphology, and word meaning" (p. 49).

An emancipatory literacy approach can provide marginalized students with increased opportunities for talking, reading and writing about significant events within their own lives, in their own languages. It also maintains that students need to reposition themselves as speakers, readers and writers of the dominant language (Delpit, 1988). Freire recognized that students need the skills gained through the study of the dominant curriculum, while at the same time he asserted that "the literacy program that is needed is one that will affirm and allow oppressed people to re-create their own history, culture and language..." (Freire and Macedo, 1987; p. 145).

Place-Based Education

More than twenty five years ago students in Rabun Gap, a rural community within the Appalachian Mountains of Georgia, recorded oral histories from elders within their community. These oral histories which focused on traditional cultural practices were published, first in a magazine and then in a book that became a bestseller. This classroom project connecting community and the classroom became the nationally recognized Foxfire Approach to Learning (Starnes, 1999). With its emphasis on a place-based curriculum, the Foxfire approach has often been cited as the groundbreaker in place-based education, whose proponents acknowledged its role in achieving cultural sustainability (Theobald, 1997). David Orr (1992) observed in his essay "Place and Pedagogy," that integrating place into education has critical importance, requiring students to combine "intellect with experience." Such pedagogy of place connects the intellectual work of students with community, nurturing their academic skills, whether social, historical, political or scientific, in a rich cultural and environmental context.

Place-based education has traditionally been a rural initiative and continues to be discussed in regard to national standards and standards based reform (Gibb & Howley, 2000). Paul Theobald (1997) maintained that elementary and secondary classrooms where place-based education was implemented, inspired educational reform, especially in regard to the power and self-actualization that emerged from having a sense of one's own community. He championed using the immediate locale as "the lens for disciplinary engagement in all schools across the country" (p. 137).

The Rural School and Community Trust (2000) issued a policy statement advocating that educators be responsive to local needs, stating "...strong local communities are the best habitat for excellence in education. From our perspective, every community is a richly detailed place able to provide a laboratory for learning, children are young citizens whose work in school should serve to improve their community, and education is the responsibility of the whole community, not only of professional educators" (p. 1).

Three particular kinds of learning supported this position statement: content standards, context standards and learning standards. A full description of the context standard supports a culturally responsive curriculum.

Every school should be well rooted in a locale, and that locale should provide the context within which students learn. Context standards should provide for a pedagogy of place using the community and the native environment as curriculum and a filter for content standards. Context standards should provide for transmitting knowledge about the particular place the school inhabits, and about the importance of all places as habitats for community and learning. They should aim at preparing students to accept responsibility for becoming good citizens wherever they choose to live; they should address the skill requirements for living well in a sustainable community; and they should free children to choose to leave or to stay in their native place. They should take advantage of native ways of knowing and learning, provide for the opportunity to learn from knowledgeable and wise people in the community, including those not certified to teach, and equip children to live in their own cultural environment as well as others (p. 3).

For proponents, place-based pedagogy serves as an appropriate and important source within the school's curriculum. An important goal is to effectively build on students' intimate knowledge and prior experiences, while taking advantage of their sustained interest in topics that are personally meaningful and relevant to their lives. Experiences built on local issues are by definition more meaningful to students than those that are remote from their lives while at the same time they strengthen connections to the local community. Theobald and Nachtigal (1995) proposed that rural school improvement is dependent on a philosophy of one's own place as the chief curricular focus.

Multicultural Education

Over the past twenty years much research and scholarly discussion have addressed multicultural education since the field emerged. The research has appeared in various forms (e.g. historical and philosophical inquiries, ethnographies and case studies) (Banks, 1995). A goal of multicultural education has been to help all students come to know, accept and value the social and cultural practices which are part of our pluralistic, democratic society (Mehan,

Okamoto, Lintz & Wills, 1995). According to Banks, (1994), multicultural education “should help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to participate in a democratic and free society...[and] promotes skills to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in other cultures and groups” (p. 81). For Sleeter (1992b), multicultural education encompasses “any set of processes by which schools work with, rather than against, oppressed groups” (p. 141).

Multicultural education is intended to decrease race, ethnicity, class and gender divisions by helping all students become active citizens in a democratic society and participate in social change (Valdez, 1999). As a curriculum, multicultural education includes diverse worldviews, recognizes social injustices and empowers all students to achieve academically.

Banks' (1994) description of the goal of multicultural education further illuminates this position when he stated, “First...multicultural education should help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to participate in a democratic and free society. Secondly, multicultural education promotes the freedom, abilities and skills to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in other cultures and groups” (p. 81). Recently, advocates of multicultural education have advanced a more critical approach which engages students to challenge inequality and to promote cultural diversity (Banks, 2001; Bennett, 1999; Grant and Sleeter, 1999). This view of multicultural education supports the proposition of culturally responsive teaching for challenging the status quo and for promoting social justice and social change.

Within multicultural education, the organization and practices of a school recognize and accommodate all students and families. Language differences are respected and parents are included in school planning and events. Multicultural education aims to eliminate prejudice, racism and all forms of oppression. It addresses issues of white privilege, challenges the status quo, and requires students and teachers to identify their own biases.

With this in mind, Giroux and Simon (1989) argued that schools should be sites of struggle and that the pedagogy that underlies such struggle should include the construction of a political vision. This political vision maintains that schools should be places where individuals can transcend those dominant cultural values, especially when the individual's background is not entrenched in these views of White, upper class, Euro-American superiority. Students of color and low socioeconomic status must struggle to overcome the negative attitudes often inflicted upon them in the school setting (Delpit, 1988; Willis, 1995). Educators often struggle when they attempt to teach the skills needed to be able to function within dominant culture while at the same time supporting a culturally responsive curriculum. This struggle is brought to light through the words of Sleeter (1991) "...educators face the dilemma of wanting students to develop power to construct their own understandings of themselves and the world, on the one hand, and wanting them to know certain information and view the world in a certain way, on the other (p. 19)."

Embedded within multicultural education is a struggle for empowerment, which can best be resolved through social activism and full participation of students in a curriculum that invites them to be agents for change (Shor 1992; Sleeter, 1996). For Sleeter (1996), multicultural education is a "form of resistance to dominant modes of school and particularly to white supremacy (p. 2)." To be effective, this aspect of multicultural education must have the full support of those teachers who are members of the dominant culture, or who at least are perceived to be such by their students. For Jesse Goodman such activism is inherent within educational reform. In *Elementary Schooling for Critical Democracy*, Goodman (1992) stated,

...the image of critical democracy has been developed to give form to the nature of society we wish to help establish; that is, our desire to address practices of elementary education that will prepare children for a society in which citizens are intellectually aware of the world around them, are capable of taking an active role in promoting democracy in all spheres of social life, are encouraged to develop their unique individuality, and can exhibit a vital concern not only for their own well-being but also the well being of all people...(p. 25).

Posited within this discussion of multicultural education, empowerment and social activism, the unifying theme is the need for schools to find ways to be inclusive of all students' backgrounds. Bullard (1992) wrote

Multicultural education is not a substitute for individual attention. But multicultural education, by some definition is essential. We must help our students find a place in our pluralistic world. In doing so, we must avoid stereotyping, resegregation, indoctrination and assigning blame. We must confront the problems of prejudice and inequality in our classrooms as well as in our society. And, we must remember that as individuals we are not merely expressions of culture, we are also capable of transcending our cultures. In that way, we are all alike (p. 7).

This leads back to the idea that culturally responsive teaching has the potential to be liberating.

According to Ruiz (1991), "empowerment comes when schools are inclusionary, when their pedagogy encourages critical, independent thinking and when they aim to find and build on a child's strengths rather than identifying their weaknesses" (p. 221). To do so means to celebrate and value the many experiences, the many ways of knowing, and the many cultural practices that each child brings to the classroom. Recognizing strengths allows students to validate their own uniqueness within their cultures while at the same time providing them opportunity to appreciate both mainstream and other unique cultures. Purcell-Gates (1995) stressed the need of having teachers "who know, accept and celebrate the culture from which their children come" (p. 93). Research has shown that learning in schools is enhanced when the curriculum is designed so that it builds on the community and cultural practices of students and their families (Auerbach, 1989; Ferdman, 1990). To be effective, multicultural education emphasizes local community resources and cultural practices. Home cultures are viewed as strengths to build upon and as valuable resources for learning which can only be discovered when schools communicate with families who are most knowledgeable of the important aspects of their children's cultures (Delgado-Gaitain, 1991; Gadsen, 1995). By providing such recognition and by incorporating such cultural knowledge into the curriculum we begin to challenge traditional forms of oppression and provide platforms for discussions on diversity, equality and social justice.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is an important aspect of multicultural education reform. In its broadest sense, multicultural education encompasses "any set of processes by which schools work with, rather than against, oppressed groups" (Sleeter, 1992, p. 141). A multicultural curriculum seeks to include all cultures, races, genders and socioeconomic levels

by painting a more complete picture of our social history. In this respect, the Appalachian culture is a valuable part of any curriculum, but even more so as a part of the Appalachian school's curriculum. Appalachian traditions are a part of the cultural diversity of the United States. As Sleeter and Grant (1999) observed, "Appalachia has a rich culture which the dominant society stereotypes as 'hillbilly'; studying that culture reveals the existence of great strength and creativity in mountain people" (p. 133). When Appalachian students examine their own cultures, it is a means by which they come to understand the meaning of culture. They can thus understand other cultures by better understanding their own.

Multicultural Teacher Education

As important as it is for students to have a better understanding of their own culture, it is equally important that preservice teachers have the same. One of the central themes in teacher education for diversity is the development of an awareness of one's own cultural identity and cultural frames of reference, and coming to appreciate one's own cultural heritage as distinctive and worthwhile (Zeichner, 1996). Willis (1995) writes, "Preservice teachers also need intensive education in understanding the dynamic role that culture plays in language and literacy development and in defining school literacy" (p. 35). She attempted to accomplish this by having her students heavily immersed in reading multicultural literature and having them write an autobiographical essay which helps them approach their own cultural assumptions. Numerous authors have addressed the importance of culturally responsive teaching, and the ways in which teachers' greater understanding of students' backgrounds might enhance student learning (Delpit, 19; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001a). Grant (1997) contended that teacher education programs include not just traditional mainstream knowledge, but the experiences of previously excluded groups. He calls upon teacher educators to focus their attention on issues related to the structure of knowledge and its relationship and connection with issues of race, class, gender, power and privilege. Ladson-Billings (2001a) questioned the preparation of teachers for culturally responsive teaching in her statement, "it is relatively simple to use middle-class white culture as a basis for learning because the curriculum, interaction styles, speech codes, and school norms are congruent with students' home culture. But when students' home and community cultures deviate from the school norms, what do teachers do?" (p. 99).

Zeichner, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli and Villegas (1998) review of the literature formed a set of principles for multicultural teacher education. This set of principles goes beyond a focus on individual courses to a broader perspective within the institutional context. Fourteen program design principles are structured into three categories: institutional and programmatic principles, personnel principles, and curriculum and instruction principles. Key design principles within curriculum and instruction include:

- The program is based on the assumption that all students in elementary school and secondary schools bring knowledge, skills, and experiences which must be used as resources in teaching and learning, and that high expectations for learning are held for all students.
- The program teaches prospective teachers how to learn about students, families and communities, and how to use knowledge of culturally diverse students' backgrounds in planning, delivering and evaluating instruction.

- The program helps prospective teachers develop the commitment to be change agents who work to promote greater equity and social justice in schooling and society.

The majority of rural teachers are from the areas where they now teach, or where they plan to teach. It would stand to reason that the preservice rural teacher would teach students with similar backgrounds. Yet, their teacher preparation may not be grounded in the principles previously addressed. Theobald and Howley (1998) stated,

...teacher educators building a program that resonates with their rural locale and the experiences of their graduates who become rural teachers could consult powerful ideas to inform their program building--ideas that we believe ought to animate all teacher preparation, but must, in practice, honor the local genius that shapes character and communities. Such programs confront unique challenges and opportunities with three themes at their centers: Sustainability, Social Justice and Democracy (p. 152)

Traditionally, teacher educators have taught a curriculum and pedagogy thought appropriate for children regardless of their social-cultural context. Only recently have we come to the realization that children from diverse and low socioeconomic backgrounds do not resemble the children and settings described in many education courses and texts (Haberman, 1995). Within those that are inclusive of diverse populations, the southern Appalachian is still often unrecognized. In order to prepare students to become successful teachers in the southern Appalachian setting, we need to bridge a pedagogical gap and a cultural gap. A study of schooling in such a setting is an opportunity to illuminate the pedagogical necessity of attending to the social-cultural context of the learner, otherwise known as culturally responsive teaching.

CHAPTER THREE

PIECING THE QUILT: METHODOLOGY

Grandma held Tanya close and patted her head. It's gonna take quite a while to make this quilt, not a couple of days or a week—not even a month. A good quilt, a masterpiece...” Grandma’s eyes shone at the thought. “Why I need more material. More gold and blue, some red and green. And I’ll need the time to do it right. It’ll take me a year at least...A quilt won’t forget. It can tell your life story”

*Valerie Flourney
The Patchwork Quilt*

Quilt making has a long tradition in southern Appalachia. I remember my grandmother saving scraps of material from the clothes that she had made for herself, her children and her grandchildren, and eventually transforming those useless scraps into a quilt that would be used for years, providing great physical and emotional warmth and comfort. At the time of her death, my grandmother had only a few quilts left and for those of us who were fortunate enough to have one, these works of art have been a personal tribute to her memory. As Grandma says in Flourney's *The Patchwork Quilt*, a quilt can tell your life story. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state, "The qualitative researcher...as a maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials are at hand." (p. 4).

The metaphor of quilt making elucidates the steps and layers involved in qualitative research. Similar to the scraps of material described in the above passage from *The Patchwork Quilt*, skill, patience, material and time all come together to make a good study. Merriam (1998) listed the essential characteristics of qualitative research as: 1) the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, 2) the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, 3) the use of field work, 4) an inductive orientation to analysis, and 5) findings that are richly descriptive (p.11). For each of these characteristics I have imagined the work of the quilter who has envisioned a final work, a specific pattern, but who is constrained to seek the pieces of material, crafting them patch by patch, and then who must stitch together each patch or block until the pattern is formed or is visible. To view the work individually would not provide the same affect as to view the final quilt. For Tedlock (2000) an ethnographic study “is not simply the production of new information or research data, but rather the way in which such information or data are transformed into a written or visual form (p.455).”

The Goal - The Pattern

The primary intent of this qualitative study has been to identify a culturally responsive pedagogy for students living in southern Appalachia, through a study of southern Appalachian educators engaging in practice that celebrates and acknowledges their students' family and cultural backgrounds. My intent has been to establish a portrayal of practice that could be used to inform the preparation of teachers in this geographic region. To do so, I have pieced together material from three studies. The thread that connects them is the context of the southern Appalachian setting as well as the personal histories of each individual as a southern Appalachian.

This qualitative study is an ethnographic study of two educators, one a second grade teacher, the other a principal of an elementary school. In addition to these educators, the study also explores my own context as a teacher educator in southern Appalachia as well as that of preservice teachers enrolled in a content area literacy course I teach. Each informant in the study, because of their varied experiences within southern Appalachian educational settings, added a new layer to the design and to the product of the study, first by providing the context of rural, southern Appalachia and then by providing the stories of schooling within this region. Each informant ultimately led to a culturally responsive pedagogy for teaching in southern Appalachia taken from observations and participation in different classroom settings.

In *Possible Lives: The Promise of Education*, Mike Rose (1995) called for a different approach when we question the effectiveness of schools.

We need a different kind of critique, one that does not minimize the inadequacies of curriculum and instruction...but that simultaneously opens discursive space for inspired teaching, for courage, for achievement against odds, for successful struggle, for insight and connection that occur continually in public school classrooms around the country (p. 4).

I have taken this call as a primary purpose of research. In order to elicit meaning and understanding, I have attempted to enter into a new critique of the Appalachian classroom, first to have a better understanding of the needs of students within this context. My second goal was to draw from that context an understanding of what is needed for these students to achieve success both within their daily lives and within the greater sociopolitical community of the world. Both of these goals could be achieved by observing teachers whose practice allowed their students to do so even within a system that failed to acknowledge their culture, their ways of knowing and their day to day experiences. My interest in this research was first centered on the fact that much of the research on education in Appalachia has used a deficit model approach without considering the strengths with which the Appalachian culture can support student learning.

I chose the theoretical framework of culturally responsive instruction to direct me through this study. As my review of the literature informed me of the characteristics of culturally responsive instruction, and as I discovered how such practice enhanced the learning and the success of students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, I began to question what teaching practices would embrace culturally responsive instruction for southern Appalachian students. Relevant to my own role of a teacher educator in southern Appalachia, I became involved in a desire for a deeper understanding of a culturally responsive practice. For me, it would become a way to inform my students and transform their teaching as they entered these same classrooms where I once was a student and where I once taught and where daily, hundreds of students' unique contributions go unrecognized and unappreciated. Thus my first research question centered on discovering a culturally responsive pedagogy within a literacy framework which would develop and maintain the cultural competence of southern Appalachian students. Once I had developed an understanding of such practice, I then sought to discover how a culturally responsive pedagogy could promote social justice, equity and equality while helping southern Appalachian students develop a critical consciousness to challenge the injustices and prejudices that often are inflicted upon them simply because of their geographic location. Throughout this I was involved in a critical examination of my own practice and the impact I

was having on my own preservice teachers. The entire process became a method of transforming my teaching and my work as a teacher educator. Ultimately, it has offered me a space to initiate a dialogue about ways to promote culturally responsive curriculum in school and university classrooms.

The Researcher as Quilter

In describing the characteristics of qualitative design, Janesick (2000) has likened the researcher to a choreographer. Janesick compared the questions of the choreographer, “What do I want to say in this dance?” to that of the qualitative researcher asking, “What do I want to know in this study?” My vision of the qualitative researcher as a quilter emerges from my memories of my grandmother working on her individual pieces of material, making the many squares of the quilt. I would ask, “What will the quilt look like? Where is the pattern?” and she would answer that it was in her head, and that I would have to wait until the end to see it for myself.” In this sense, the quilter is totally involved in the project. And for my grandmother, the pattern was as much a part of her as it was anything else. Janesick continues to state that the choreographer cannot be separated from the dance and that “qualitative design incorporates room for description of the role of the researcher...” (p.386). For this reason I have found it necessary throughout this study to identify my connection to Appalachia. I have heard that many quilters will say that they can identify the maker of a quilt by the stitches. I would hope that my identity shines throughout this study. As the person who has crafted this study, I have found it essential that I examine my own beliefs and biases regarding the teaching of Appalachian students. As the research instrument my own skills have been tested, skills of observing and interpreting what I see and hear. Taking that then and doing what Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated as the role of the researcher to “emphasize, describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images and create, for the reader or listener, the sense of having been there.” (p.149)

The Settings and the Informants

The setting of my research was, of course, southern Appalachia. As I stated earlier with this chapter, the impetus for this study was drawn from my work with educators practicing in southern Appalachian schools. In each of the settings I describe, I was an observer and an informant with the original goal of studying transformative practice within the context of a southern Appalachian setting.

Holbrook

The first setting was Holbrook Elementary, a K-7 school located in a small coal mining community in the heart of Appalachia. Holbrook Elementary is located not more than fifty miles from the college where I now teach. It is also less than fifty miles from my hometown. The road to Holbrook Elementary is a familiar one because it is so tied to my roots. I grew up in a similar coal mining community. Had I not know I was in a different town, I would have believed I was revisiting my youth and my own elementary school.

This study was a part of a larger study that began as an effort to understand teacher learning during a graduate degree program in literacy education (Lalik & Boljonis, 1994). For two years following the conclusion of the graduate program, we (my doctoral advisor, a doctoral student colleague and I) examined the classroom and school wide curriculum at the K-7 school where the majority of the teachers who completed the graduate program taught (Lalik, Dellinger

& Druggish, 1996). What follows is a brief summary excerpted from Lalik, Dellinger & Druggish (2003) of what was learned during these phases of the research.

At Holbrook Elementary School, teachers were cultural insiders who, with only one exception, had been born and raised in the area. As Appalachians, they had developed many of the linguistic and social practices familiar to the children. For example, some teachers collected, recorded, and shared family stories both inside and outside their classrooms. Many of the teachers grew small gardens and preserved their produce in a variety of ways including canning, pickling and freezing. Others played musical instruments such as guitar and autoharp.

In early interviews, teachers reported that they had gained a heightened appreciation for the importance of Appalachian culture during their participation in the graduate degree program when their professors encouraged them to study Appalachian culture and learn about efforts to record and support its development. They also explained that children at their school often were ashamed of the values and practices common in the region, and that they, as teachers, could help their students develop greater appreciation for these traditions. They reasoned that as students were given opportunities to study their Appalachian roots through school activities, they would develop greater self confidence as people and as learners, and in doing so, would become more successful as learners of mainstream curricula. In the slogan they adopted for their school, Nurturing Roots and Inspiring Wings, the teachers summed up their beliefs about how a transformed curriculum might work.

As a culminating project for the degree program, a group of five teachers, whom we call curriculum initiators, had planned a variety of curriculum changes to reflect their beliefs. When the graduate program ended, with support from the school principal, the curriculum initiators invited the rest of the faculty, teachers who had not participated in the degree program, to work together to develop further the curriculum they had begun.

For two years these faculty members met monthly to generate ideas and plans. On the basis of such plans, teachers began using a variety of local interests and practices as part of classroom and school activities. They developed two storytelling clubs, within which children collected, recorded, and represented family stories through dramatization, song, and other artistic forms. Many of these stories became the foundation for classroom lessons designed to achieve more conventional school goals, such as accomplishment of the state imposed learning standards. Each teacher in the building chose some aspect of Appalachian culture as a two year instructional theme. Themes included celebrations, cooking and remedies, tools and toys, and plant life. Teachers incorporated the themes into interdisciplinary activities interspersed across the year to help children learn about Appalachian culture. Several teachers developed extensive inquiry units around community topics such as plants, foods and genealogy, providing their students with sustained opportunities for community study. In the spring of each year for two years, teachers planned and conducted an Appalachian Days Celebration for parents and community members. At each celebration, they displayed many of the classroom artifacts the children had developed as part of their class work, and featured the talents of a number of local artisans, thus bringing the school and the community together in positive engagement.

Holbrook was located within a predominantly White county, 97.6%, (U. S. Census 2000), where a majority of families were of a lower socioeconomic status based upon urban conceptions of socioeconomic status (Purcell-Gates, 1995). The median household income was \$22,213, with 26.4 % of families with children under 18 years of age below the poverty level. Because of a decline in the coal industry a number of families in the community had lost their

primary source of income. Many of the families at the school faced the difficult decision of having to relocate, leaving behind their families, their homes and their land.

The school building was similar to the one I attended as a young boy, and in fact was beginning to show the wear and tear of a building used by several generations. During my two years observing and participating in the school, I came to know two teachers, Daniel Reed and Lucy Vickers, and the principal, Ada Collins, very well. Daniel and Lucy had lived in communities near the school all their lives. In fact, Lucy had attended Holbrook Elementary as a young girl. Ada's roots were in eastern North Carolina, but she had taught and served as principal in the area since graduating and marrying. Much of my time was spent in Lucy's classroom, and I soon found that she was very involved in the school's Appalachian curriculum initiative. During this time, Lucy initiated change through her responsiveness to her students' backgrounds. Lucy was very reflective (Schon, 1983) and displayed pride in her craft (Lortie, 1975) as she shared stories of her students and their various achievements. The more I worked with Lucy and shared in her stories, the more I understood what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992) meant when they stated, "... what is missing from the knowledge base for teaching... are the voices of teachers themselves, the questions teachers ask, the ways teachers use writing and intentional talk in their work lives and the interpretive frames teachers use to understand and improve their classroom practices" (p. 2). I knew that Lucy's work in her school's Appalachian curriculum would help me piece together a part of the culturally responsive curriculum I envisioned.

Central Elementary

Central Elementary was a K-5 school located in the heart of Appalachia. Because of its large number of low socioeconomic status students, it was identified as a school-wide Title I school. Title I is a federal grant program designed to give educational assistance to students living in areas of high poverty. The Title I program originated in 1965 when Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and was reauthorized in 1994 with the passage of the Improving America's Schools Act. Title I funds are allocated to each state, and the states in turn allocate funds to the local school systems based on poverty data gathered from different sources. Many school systems rank themselves by the percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunches under the National School Lunch Act. Schools with the highest percentages of free or reduced lunches receive Title I programs. A school must have a percentage greater than or equal to the overall percentage for the entire school system to be eligible for a Title I program. Ninety five percent of Central Elementary's students qualified for the free lunch program which was the highest percentage in the county and the second highest in the state. With such a high percentage, Central qualified to operate a school wide program. The goal of a school wide program is to assist students by improving the instructional program of the entire school.

In addition to a large percentage of children living at the poverty level, Central Elementary was distinguished by another feature; sixty three percent of the school's student population was African-American. This was unique because Central was located within a southern Appalachian county and state that had a fewer than a ten percent nonwhite population. Central was located in the largest city within the county, although it was certainly not urban by any standard. The school's students were primarily from low-income, often unemployed households. Within the local school system, Central had a reputation of being a difficult school, filled with racial strife, suffering from low student achievement and having minimal parent

involvement. The school had a high turn around of principals and teachers. Frequently it was written about in the local paper in ways that evoked images of the school as a trouble zone of drugs and gang activity, much of this because of the proximity of the school to a low-income, African American housing project. Also the school was in terrible disrepair

As a part of school consolidations in the county, Shirley Pritchard was assigned the position of principal at Central. My work at Central began as a study of Shirley's leadership in transforming a school. When Shirley became principal she was aware of some very obvious obstacles that would impede her progress at improving the school. To begin, the facility itself was badly deteriorating and terribly roach infested. Perhaps harder to overcome was the school's lack of parent involvement and the accompanying racial strife. More subtle issues of democracy, diversity and the need to challenge positions of power surfaced as Shirley became more involved with the school and the community.

My first connection to Shirley Pritchard began when she served as the principal of Willowton Elementary where my wife was a fourth grade teacher. Willowton was a K-8 school located in a very rural area of this southern Appalachian county. The majority of students were from low-income families, many of whom received federal and state assistance. Typically these students came from homes located in isolated mountain hollows. It was not uncommon that the parents of these students did not complete school and that many of them cannot read or write. The families were rich though in the culture of the area, but few possessed the characteristics of the dominant standard culture. Here at Willowton, I observed how Shirley interacted with the students and families within the community. I talked with her about the many home visits she made as principal. When my wife had a student with a medical problem that needed immediate attention, I learned that Shirley contacted agencies and served as an advocate for this child. Eventually Shirley made arrangements for the child to receive treatment at a university hospital, several hours driving distance from the school. The student's parents had never driven more than thirty miles from their home and were anxious about making the trip. Shirley volunteered to drive the family and assist them throughout the entire process.

Central Elementary was a direct contrast to Willowton. Central is located in the largest city of the same county, certainly not urban by any standard, but vastly different from the extremely rural setting of Willowton. Immediately though, Shirley began demonstrating the same care and concern for her students at Central as she did at Willowton. During her tenure at Central, Shirley has made tremendous strides at making Central Elementary a more culturally responsive school through her belief in social justice, student empowerment and multicultural education. Shirley's years at Central have been dedicated to the struggle for change and reform within the school. This successful struggle prompted me to inquire of her experiences and her ways of knowing.

While interviewing Shirley, I began to believe that she had accepted the position of principal at Central Elementary with the goal of restructuring the school similarly to the ideas of Jesse Goodman. Goodman (1992) stated that the practice of the elementary educator should "prepare children for a society in which citizens are intellectually aware of the world around them, are capable of taking an active role in promoting democracy...are encouraged to develop their unique individuality, and can exhibit a vital concern not only for their own well being but also the well being of all people..." (p. 25). Through Shirley, I would add the pieces of social justice, equity and equality to the mosaic of the culturally responsive pedagogy for students of Appalachia.

Appalachia College

Appalachia College is a small liberal arts institution with a strong history in teacher education. Nestled in the Appalachian Mountains in a small town of less than 1000 residents, the college was chartered as a Normal School in 1872, designed to prepare teachers for the communities of this southern Appalachian state. In keeping with those beginnings, today Appalachia College services the people of the state with approximately ninety percent of the enrollment from this area.

The teacher education program at Appalachia College enrolls the largest number of majors within the institution, graduating an average of 110 teacher candidates annually over the past five years. Reflective of the states' low percentage of minority populations, over the past several years an average of 2.74 percent of teacher candidates has been non-White. The typical teacher candidate is a native of West Virginia, living within one of the eight counties within the southern part of the State. Because of its location, many of the teachers that I had as a student in the public schools were graduates of Appalachia College. Many of the teachers I have worked with who are providing their classrooms for field experiences needed by our teacher candidates are also graduates. This has led me to the conclusion that a majority of the teachers teaching in this region received their education at Appalachia College.

My first experience with Appalachia College began in the mid 1960's when my sister and I would spend the summers there while my mother, the first in her family to attend college, completed her education degree. As a young boy from an even smaller town in southern Appalachia, the college setting seemed like a metropolis. Never before had I been in such large buildings. The experiences of eating in a cafeteria, wandering around the immense stacks of books in the library, peeking into the labs of the science building, and, perhaps the most memorable, learning how to swim in the indoor pool of the gym--all of these events have become significant memories and stories of my early years.

This connection I had to Appalachia College continued when in 1975 I enrolled as a student majoring in education. In some ways, little had changed with the exception that a new dormitory had been built and the old gymnasium with the indoor pool had been razed. Then, just like my mother and my sister before me, I graduated and returned to my home to teach for five years, finishing my last two years teaching at the high school from which I graduated. I then left home to obtain my master's degree from a university outside of my home state, only to return when I was offered a teaching position at Appalachia within the library science department. I have continued to work within the education department; however, now my role includes teaching a content literacy course and serving as Coordinator of Clinical Experiences.

As a teacher educator in southern Appalachia, I have considered the critiques of rural schools and rural education (DeYoung & Lawrence, 1995; Miller, 1975; Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). In the light of these critiques, I have since examined the call for preparing teachers for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). For several years I searched for a way of transforming my own teaching to include a culturally responsive approach with a focus on preparing teachers who will be teaching in southern Appalachia. If it is true that teacher education tends to follow a universal, metropolitan model, supporting an educational system that engages in cultural reproduction (Apple, 1996), then I wanted to examine my own teaching and transform so that I would encourage my students to embrace learning that is based on the cultural backgrounds and resources of their students.

To begin this transformation of my own practice for preparing teacher candidates for culturally responsive teaching I chose the content area literacy course that I was currently teaching. I selected this course because I could design it in a way that would address issues of content literacy, but would also give my students and me an opportunity to reflect on how we could connect curriculum and design learning for their students based upon experiences and values already extant in Appalachian culture. In other words, I would teach the objectives of the content literacy course as set forth in the course matrix, but I would also allow time in class to explore my students' knowledges, dispositions and understandings of their own cultural backgrounds, their cultural diversity and culturally responsive teaching. Additionally, the course was a requirement for all secondary education majors, and this gave me an opportunity to reach a broad spectrum of students. For fifteen weeks on alternating class meetings, in addition to topics related to content literacy within the secondary curriculum, my class and I journeyed along a path of writings, discussions and reflections. My primary goal was to begin a conversation with my students that would help us gain knowledge of our cultural selves, particularly as southern Appalachians, while at the same time explore cultural diversity, and then use that knowledge to create a classroom which builds and expands on each student's background.

The informants in this area of my research were the students in the content area literacy course I teach at Appalachia College. The students in this course, seven males and seven females, were all secondary education majors nearing the end of their programs. The majority of those enrolled would student teach the next semester. All were from the southern Appalachian region; all were also White. The students also represented a variety of majors: five were social studies majors, one math, five physical education/health, one English, one science and one art.

Although I would observe, interact and be informed by each student in the class, because of the way I structured the course (the use of dialogue journals as a primary means of communication), I focused on one student (my dialogue journal partner) and his participation in the class activities. Jamie was in his final semester of coursework prior to his student teaching. Jamie had come to the college from a small town in southern Appalachia where he was educated from kindergarten through high school. His plan was to return to his home county and teach art at the secondary level.

I was also just as much an informant as were the students in my class. I examined my own practices of endeavoring to implement and model a culturally responsive approach to teaching. I had a concomitant purpose to instill within these teacher education majors a sense of the characteristics of culturally-informed teaching, specifically within the southern Appalachian community.

Ultimately, all informants were inhabitants of rural Appalachia. Appalachians identify strongly with their place of residence. Relationships and connections to people are given primacy and are forged because of this tie to place. Throughout this study, I was constantly aware of how this shared sense of place gave me greater entrance into these school settings and into each informant's shared personal narrative. We all had similar backgrounds, having lived in this region all of our lives.

The other force connecting us was our role as educators. In this sense we all shared by contributing our voices. As a result, each informant shared by contributing the varied fabrics to the ethnographic quilt. It has been important to me to hear the voices of teachers because their voices have often been disregarded within discussions of teaching, learning and classroom practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). The notion that research on teaching and school reform is best performed by academics assumes power and control. It is an unfounded belief. As bell

hooks (1989) so eloquently stated, “It is a false dichotomy which suggests that academics and/or intellectuals can only speak to one another, that we cannot hope to speak with the masses. What is true is that we make choices, that we choose voices to hear and voices to silence” (p. 78). For me choosing to hear each informant’s voice was based upon a respect for their work and a desire to approach this study in a sensitive and nonthreatening manner (Merriam, 1998).

The Use of Fieldwork – The Material

The quilter often uses remnants from material that has been used in a piece of clothing or scraps that were too good to be thrown away. Often the quilt design comes from material that holds special significance--such as a favorite dress or a baby’s blanket. If the quilter has a particular design or color scheme in mind, she may save material over periods of time or even search through new material looking for just the right print or color. In this respect, I have followed the quilter’s practice in gathering the data for this study.

Qualitative research is a form of what Erickson (1986) called “interpretative research.” Such research relies upon data obtained from the processes of interviewing, observing and examining a variety of material salient to both informants and the research settings (Merriam, 1998; Wolcott, 1994). Ayers (1989) described qualitative research as being “intuitive, idiosyncratic and improvisational (p. 11)”. This is not a criticism so much as it is an acceptance of the special qualities that distinguish it as a personal inquiry for understanding and social reality (Lather, 1986). Goodman (1992) stated, “One way to gain insight into the social reality of a given school is through the stories that people tell (p. 44)” Stories and narratives have been used as forms of research that might better approximate classroom reality (Carter, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi (1992) referred to this narrative method as “autobiographical praxeology” which is interpreted as “the study of teacher’s knowledge, the process of how it has been and is being elaborated, [and] how it is expressed through inquiry (p. 61).” This process requires a collaborative effort between informants and the researcher. That is, interviews are to be structured around actions in the classroom, reflections on actions, reflections on past experiences as well as thoughts on what is to come. Measor and Sikes (1992) addressed the importance of the interview as the primary means of data collection. In their words, the interview is truly “a series of interviews in which the subject and the interviewer interact to probe and reflect on the subject’s statements” (p. 215).

Narrative has become a way to study how teachers understand and know their actions. Narratives help expose the knowing situated within the action of practice (Carter & Doyle, 1996). Narratives provide a methodology in which researchers use informant stories as data (Alvermann, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Elbaz, 1991). According to Elbaz (1991),

...the story is not that which links teacher thought and action, for thought and action are not seen as separate domains to begin with. Rather, the story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researcher, and within which the work of teachers is seen as making sense (p. 3).

In this study, I have adopted narrative inquiry as my research methodology. In the works of Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990, 2000), narrative is referred to as a wide range of stories and storytelling techniques. They view narrative as both method (narrative inquiry) and phenomenon (inquiry into narrative). Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied and it names the patterns of inquiry for study. Through narrative inquiry, individual lives

can be understood as stories. The focus of narrative research is on the individual and how that life might be understood through a recounting and reconstructing of the life story.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated, "Our excitement and interest in narrative...has its origins in our interest in experience...People live stories and, in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them and create new ones...(xxvi). They further asserted that the study of narrative as a mode of inquiry stems from the belief that social sciences are founded on the study of experience and therefore experience is the basis for all social science inquiry. They propose narrative and storytelling as an alternative mode of inquiry which places the researcher as centrally involved in the study of experience.

Throughout their work Clandinin and Connelly explained that those who undertake narrative inquiry must attend to a "three dimensional inquiry space," the temporal, the spatial and the personal/social. In this respect, the temporal refers to my time with each informant and the continuity of time, past, present and future. Each individual's story is encountered as it is being lived, yet the story draws from the past while at the same time it shapes the future in the form of the beginnings of new stories. The spatial lies in the place, the context, the field or 'experience of experience.' The personal/social is in the interaction that ensues. "As researchers, we come to each new inquiry field living our stories. Our informants also enter the inquiry field in the midst of living their lives (Clandinin and Connelly, p. 62). Together we partake in the authoring of new stories. In this regard, I have attempted to achieve Dillion's charge when discussing qualitative research, "In reading about the design of a study, I want to know if the researcher has spent an extended time in the field, has had personal contact with the informants in the study, and has not attempted to manipulate the phenomena under investigation" (Alverman, O'Brien & Dillion, 1966, p. 116).

Practices

At this time, a discussion of some of my practices is needed. With each informant I spent time coming to know them through an exchange of stories, both teaching and personal. With Lucy, I visited her classroom over a two year period (1996-1997). My time with Shirley began in August of 1998 and extended through June 1999. My content area literacy class lasted for one semester, (Fall, 1999). My time together at the initial stage of each study began through conversations and observations. Over time, I came to know them through their own descriptions of their practice. An examination of both practice and narrative is important. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote, "For us, life...is filled with narrative fragments, enacted upon in storied moments of time and space and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (p. 17). I interpret this as the difference between our rhetoric and our practice. As teachers, we all possess beliefs about learning and teaching, the assumptions that guide our practice. Yet, when we review teaching through collected and shared stories, their incidents do not always confirm the assumptions we held (Newman, 1987). I wanted to examine these differences, not to critique the informants, but to better understand them and to discover what could be known (Carter, 1993).

During each of my visits to the schools, I carried a legal pad on which I would write notes about my observations and conversations. I would often use these notes to guide interviews I conducted with the informants. For example, during an observation in Lucy's class as they began their quilt project, I wrote notes as Lucy began telling her students about the class project. When Lucy showed the quilt her mother had made and had given to her when she was a young girl, she spoke of the memories tied to this quilt. I knew that I wanted to discuss this

incident during a follow-up interview to get a fuller picture of these events in her life. At the end of each day, I would review my notes and create a brief story out of my observations. This later proved to help me as I began writing the research text, for Wolcott (1990) stated, "Writing is a form of thinking" (p. 21).

The taped interviews I conducted at both Holbrook and Central were all informal, with no list or questions prepared. I would formulate a topic that I wanted to discuss, typically generated by previous observations, but then I would let the responses direct my next questions. Eisner (1998) advises that interviews should not be "formal, questionnaire oriented encounters" (p. 183). Fontana and Frey (2000) refer to this unstructured interview as the "open-ended ethnographic (in-depth) interview" (p. 652). My attempt was to make the interview as natural as possible, as though two friends were talking. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) speak of "shared narratives" and insist on "equality and trust" to get to an authentic self-narrative. I also wanted to become as close to their storied lives as possible. To do so, I would often propose that we revisit stories. Alvermann (2000) stated, "...present interest in subjectivity and the turn toward self-critical reflexivity mark a departure from earlier times when it was simply assumed that researchers would strive to maintain a distance between the knower (narrator) and the known (narrated)" (p. 124). As Gubrium and Holstein (1998) have noted, the interview has become a means of contemporary storytelling whereby persons divulge life accounts in response to the interviewer's inquiries.

A typical interview with either Shirley or Lucy would begin at the end of the school day following a time of observation. The interviews normally lasted around 60 minutes, although the interviews with Shirley would often last longer. Following each interview, I would then review the tapes in preparation for the next interview. Merriam (1998) discussed this method as the "interview log" from which data could later be used for analysis. Since I did not transcribe tapes immediately, I used this data to identify themes for future interviews. For example, during an interview when Shirley was describing her experiences with racial tensions at the school, she talked about her fears. After the interview, as I listened to the tape, I noted this and was planning to explore this at our next meeting. Frequently though, I discovered that when I had identified themes I wanted to revisit, so did the informant. Before the next interview began, Shirley stated that she wanted to clarify her feelings of fear and anxiety regarding this situation, which was where I had intended to begin.

My practices and procedures differed in my work with my students in my content literacy course. For fourteen weeks, we met weekly and as a part of the two hours we spent together, we explored our cultural selves through weekly dialogue journal entries ranging in content from autobiographical material, to exploration of the southern Appalachian culture, to multicultural education, to philosophies of teaching, to reflections of practice. The dialogue journal's primary purpose was to open lines of communication through a two-way written conversation between writer and reader. In the journal, students wrote free from assessment in that written statements, questions, or observations were not graded by me, the instructor. (Bode, 1989). These journals would be a primary source of information.

Field Texts-Holbrook

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) used the term field texts (e.g. teacher stories, autobiographical writing, journal writing, field notes, conversational interviews, family stories...) to refer to what is usually called data. These field texts are created by the informants and researchers and represent aspects of field experience. In explaining the methodology of the

narrative inquirer, Clandinin and Connelly stated, “The narrative inquirer may note stories but more often records actions, doings and happenings, all of which are narrative expressions. This is the stuff of narrative inquiry for the researcher is in for the long haul and concerned with intimacy”(p. 79).

Over a period of two years I visited Holbrook Elementary observing, interviewing and sharing stories with Daniel, Lucy and Ada. During the last year, I focused my attention on Lucy and her classroom. My data included field notes, observation notes, and taped and transcribed interviews with the teachers, students and parents. I also collected various teacher, student and classroom artifacts: individual student’s stories and artwork; a class story album; videotapes of student/family activities such as the tacking of the story quilt; and photographs of classroom projects.

In addition to visiting the classrooms, I attended after-school gatherings related to the school’s Appalachian curriculum project. I attended two community story swaps, one held in a local church and the second held at the school. During these story swaps, faculty, students, family and community members would gather for a potluck meal. Afterwards student members of the “Storytelling Club” would perform by telling stories, dramatizing stories and singing. Then family and community members would join in the storytelling activities. Mountain Theater, a troupe of Appalachian performers who assisted the school in forming the “Storytelling Club,” also performed.

Over this two year period, I would plan extended, full day visits. Two of my favorite times were Lucy’s classroom’s ‘quilting day’ and the school’s Appalachian Heritage Celebration Day. During quilting day, Lucy invited a local ladies’ quilting bee group to the school, where, in the school’s cafeteria, quilts of all designs were on display for students to study. The ladies also set up a quilting frame on the stage area. Throughout the day, students from Lucy’s class would bring their story quilt squares along with family members to the class’s frame quilt, where together, they would tack their story squares to the quilt. At the other end of the cafeteria, a local church’s women’s group had set up stations where the students could make homemade fried apple pies. At the end of the day, students wrote journal entries about these experiences.

The Appalachian Heritage Celebration Day was a full day culminating the school’s yearlong Appalachian curriculum. Each class had a display in the school’s gymnasium which was overflowing with Appalachian music, dancing, storytelling and food. Family and community members were present to help the school celebrate. Throughout, my presence was more of a informant than that of an observer. I had an intense interest in what was going on at Holbrook Elementary. My goal was to immerse myself in the situation, gathering all the data possible. Rarely does the quilter find that too much material has been gathered, for the more varied the material, the more vibrant the design.

Field Texts-Central Elementary

I followed much the same protocol of gathering data at Central Elementary. Again, over a period of a year, I visited the school primarily to observe and to interview Shirley. I often varied the times of my visits, always checking to see if the time would be convenient. Over the year, I spent several full days shadowing Shirley. These days would usually begin around 6:45 AM and last until 3:30 PM, although some would extend well up into the evening. On these days, I took notes of the various events, which I would later transcribe. On one occasion, I traveled with Shirley as she attempted to make a home visit. Though the parents were not at home, we talked with neighbors who helped us understand the family’s situation.

On my visits to the school, I often had the opportunity to talk with teachers, family members and other employees of the school. Most of these were informal conversations, although I did tape one interview with a former teacher who had a long history of working at Central Elementary.

In an attempt to vary my observations, I also attended several after school functions. I attended the first PTO meeting of the school year, as well as one later in the spring. Along with my wife and two sons, I attended Central's Spring Festival, an outdoor event held on the school's playground. Twice during the year, the school had a community dinner where the school provided the meal and invited parents, family and community members. At the invitation of Shirley, I was able to attend one of these dinners. For each of these events, I wrote down notes in a notebook while there, or completed the notes once I returned to my home

I transcribed my field notes in the form of a story. I found it was easier for me to put my notes together when I created a narrative of my own experiences and observations. Also I kept all field notes in chronological order, and for my first draft of the research text, I put together my entire experiences at Holbrook and Central as a story told in chronological order. Later I would revisit these narratives and look for common themes, which I eventually used as my guide for the final research text.

Field Texts - Appalachia College

During the time of journal sharing, Jamie, my student who was my dialogue journal partner, and I would read each other's entries. Following this, the entire class would discuss what they discovered about themselves and about their partner. After each class meeting, I would reflect on our sharing and what I believed was learned as a part of the process. My primary data then were Jamie's journal entries and my written reflections upon the class meeting. For this purpose, I was able to follow the natural order in which I presented topics to the class for inclusion in the dialogue journals, since my intent was to extend our discussions and build upon our learnings and discoveries.

Throughout all of the times I spent at Holbrook Elementary, Central Elementary and in my classroom, I had strong personal contact with the informants. In essence, I have followed the directive of Wolcott (1990) in describing his position in gathering data: "I have always put myself squarely into the settings or situations being describe to whatever extent seemed warranted for the purpose at hand" (p. 131). I truly believe that I came to know each informant as each came to know me. Together, we all shared a period of time, with a mutually-shared purpose, that of working together to have a better understanding of teaching students of southern Appalachia. In this sense, we all contributed the material needed for a variegated quilt.

Analyzing the Data – Stitching the Pieces

Quilting involves working with multiple layers. It is an age old craft of decoratively stitching together two layers of fabric, with a filler sandwiched between them. The stitching is what pulls all fabrics together and allows the design to emerge. The stitches complement the design. According to Elsa Brown (1975), author of several books on quilting, "The stitching should never be something that is imposed on the top as a strictly utilitarian device. It should merge with the design of the top by providing texture and a character that will unify the whole piece" (p. 18). Such is the role of qualitative data analysis. Data collection and analysis becomes a simultaneous activity in qualitative research, while all along the patterns and designs emerge and direct the researcher until the final product is at hand. Data analysis is an ongoing

process in the research. The analysis is what holds the research together under the scrutiny of the reader. Quilters will develop their own styles or patterns to follow for the best way to stitch the quilt. However, Coffey and Atkinson observed, "...there are no formulae or recipes for the 'best' way to analyze the stories we elicit and collect. Indeed one of the strengths of thinking about our data as narrative is that this opens up the possibilities for a variety of analytic strategies" (p. 80).

I have taken what has come to be known as a general inductive approach, evident in much qualitative data analysis (Patton, 1990). The general purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the common themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints often imposed by structured methodologies. My primary approach has been through narrative analysis which allows for "capturing the complexity, specificity and interconnectedness" (Carter, 1993, p. 6) of those stories revealed. This form of analysis eschews reducing data to discrete categories and focuses on the emergence of themes echoed throughout. Data collection and analysis are concurrent. "Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read. Emerging insights, hunches and tentative hypotheses direct the next phase of data collection which in turn leads to refinement or reformulation of one's questions, and so on" (Merriam, 1988, p. 119). Narrative analysis contributes to what McEwan (1995) identified as a better language to talk about teaching and classrooms, and as a various way of interpreting and reporting data. Carter (1993) voiced the importance of such methodology in the following passage:

[Researchers] have been telling stories about teaching and teacher education rather than simply reporting correlation coefficients (statistics) or generating lists of findings. This trend has been upsetting to some who mourn the loss of quantitative precision and, they would argue, scientific rigor. For many of us, however, these stories capture, more than scores or mathematical formulae ever can, the richness and indeterminacy of our understanding of what teaching is and how others can be prepared to engage in this profession (p. 5).

I liken my analysis of the data to stitching the quilt for several other reasons. First, I am a novice. The whole process has been piecemeal. The quilting stitch consists of lines of short, even running stitches. My analysis began with the stories in which I would search for images and patterns and personal philosophies that direct the action of culturally responsive teaching. The content of the stories and lived experiences were interpreted and reconstructed as research text which permitted both my voice and that of my informants to emerge in "a lived text of researcher, teachers and learners" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 386). Together, the informants and I interacted reflexively, telling, retelling and reliving stories. As we discussed our reflections in this collaborative fashion, this joint interpretation of the material allowed a shared researcher-informant construction of meaning (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986). The study of such meaning provides insight into the nature of the experience and allows shifts from the conceptual, theoretically based study of practice to the experiential and personal, giving access to thoughtful meanings generated from actual experience. Accordingly, I became a full informant, fully aware of my task as a narrative inquirer to retell stories resulting "in the construction of knowledge that has consequences for understanding and refining theory and changing practice" (Lyons and LaBoskey, 2002, p. 18)

Often as I read and reread my field texts, I could tell where I was branching off into other thoughts and themes. As I reflected on my own southern Appalachian traits-- i.e. closeness to family and place, language--and those that I interacted with, I began to envision a larger picture. I started new searches for the repetition of words and phrases. For example, it became very evident that Lucy and Shirley, as well as Jamie, credited their families for instilling in them their convictions and beliefs. Lucy and Shirley also were very dedicated in their teaching and spent long hours and a majority of their lives attempting to perfect their teaching. Ultimately, I structured my approach to analyzing the data based on an iterative process of interpreting, grouping, summarizing, finding patterns and discovering relationships as described by Miles & Huberman (1994).

I employed the use of themes as a primary means of organizing the presentation of the data. The title of my study comes from a statement that became the central directive of Holbrook's teachers. They envisioned their school as a place where students could grow through the strength of their roots. That is, they wanted their students to build their knowledge from their homes, their families and their heritages. At the same time, they wanted them to gain new knowledge which could give them wings, not so that they would leave their homes and families, but so that they could aspire to success anywhere, anytime. In my analysis, I questioned, "What practices of all the informants nourished roots? What practices inspired wings?"

I found that the process of interpreting the data was enhanced when I shared and discussed these with the informants in the study. Throughout the time I spent with Lucy, Daniel and Ada at Holbrook, Shirley and Jamie, we would have informal conversations in which I would introduce the themes and ideas I saw emerging. This reflection and feedback they offered often strengthened my interpretations.

My personal writing and reading encouraged my reflection and study of the data. (Wolcott, 1988). I realized that my personal writing led me to discovering more of my own identity as a southern Appalachian while at the same time served as a useful tool in examining the identities of those involved in the study. Much of this personal writing was autobiographical and has been interspersed in this work. I wrote of my experiences growing up in a small, mining community, of my family experiences and of events from my school days. I was sometimes concerned that my close connection to the settings would cause me to deify the Appalachian culture in regard to others. This helped me recognize that my objective was not to place any one culture above the other in regard to a need for culturally responsive instruction. Rather, my connection to Appalachia underpinned my belief in data and in my interpretations, all in all, helping me to further my understanding.

The Writing – My Quilt

Alvermann (2000) initiated a discussion on the practices of narrative inquiry within literacy studies, ending with a look at how it is best represented. She questioned, "whether or not a level of discourse can be found that encourages communication between researchers and practitioners in literacy education" (p. 136). I do not presume to answer that question for fear of reducing it to a simplistic level of debate. However, I cannot help but believe that the presentation of our stories and our experiences can only lead to better understandings and new ways of thinking, which is ultimately the goal of qualitative inquiry. Just as there are multiple patterns and kinds of quilts, there can be multiple ways of representing data.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted the natural progression from the data in field texts to the written interpretation. They stated, "As we move from field texts to research texts, our

field texts are the texts of which we ask questions of meaning and social significance...questions of meaning and social significance ultimately shape field texts into research texts” (p. 130). As one transitions from field texts to research texts, they suggested multiple writings at different times throughout the process. As I have come to the final representation, I have approached my data with questions of meaning relevant to a culturally responsive pedagogy for southern Appalachia. I have sought to provide rich descriptions of the informants in my study as well as the setting of southern Appalachia. I have also presented my findings for the purposes of encouraging communication between researchers and practitioners.

This research has not been a simple task, but has evolved through multiple approaches and multiple writings. I have constructed my research from various views of the stories I have heard. I have studied them within the context of time, space and the interpersonal. In the end, I have lived what O’Brien lived when he wrote, “Like many researchers I used to focus on write up because I viewed it as the object that will be scrutinized by reviewers, editors and other colleagues. What I’ve learned is that if I use writing to shape the representation, the final product will be much improved as an embodiment of my reflection about the data and how I want to represent my method” (Alvermann, O’Brien & Dillon, 1996, p. 119). In the end, I hope that what I have written will be a useful contribution to the literature on culturally responsive teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The southern Appalachian school teacher has been represented in many ways in Appalachian children's books. The most predominant way has been as a teacher who attempts to improve students through grammar instruction. In *John Henry McCoy* (Chafin, 1972), Miss Day is forever trying to promote proper grammar and usage to her students. In a typical classroom exchange, Miss Day states, "Sometimes we hear people use the wrong word for burst. Who can give me the right forms for burst and rise?" When a child conjugates the verb rise as "rise, rose, riz," Miss Day quickly corrects the student (p. 100). When John Henry and Silas are caught fighting, Miss Day asks them to explain. Silas begins, "Me and John Henry..." and is quickly interrupted by Miss Day with, "John Henry and I...it was John and I" (p. 122).

John Henry McCoy and other children's books such as *Fair Annie of Ole Mule Hollow* (Crook, 1978) and *The Rock and the Willow* (Lee, 1963) promote a Standard English and condescend toward Appalachian speech. What is absent from all these books is any understanding of the language these children actually speak. What is absent from many of the current classroom practices in southern Appalachian schools is a recognition that traditional educational practices fail to appreciate the existing strengths and accomplishments of all students. The verbal creativity and storytelling that is often unique among some Appalachian students should be acknowledged as a gift and as a contribution to the study of language. Such use of children's background knowledge, experience, language and culture to scaffold what is learned at school is at the heart of culturally responsive teaching.

In this chapter, I have examined the practices of Lucy Vickers as she began to incorporate the strengths of her students' ties to their southern Appalachian background by rooting her curriculum within the community. I observed and interviewed Lucy as she nurtured her students' academic skills in a rich cultural and environmental context that encompassed various aspects of the standard curriculum, most notably literacy learning. Through an examination of her practice and the stories she shared about her experiences, I have delineated a pedagogy for culturally responsive teaching that promotes cultural competence for the southern Appalachian student.

Lucy Vickers' Roots

Holbrook Elementary School was located within a predominantly White community where the majority of families has lived for several generations, and for years prior, had thrived on the coal economy. Today, that coal economy has all but vanished and the families face economic hardships. Still, like many Appalachians, they have strong ties to their land and to their families and they have chosen to remain and to keep their Appalachian traditions in tact. Such was the case with Lucy Vickers

Lucy was one of the faculty members who eagerly participated in the Appalachian Curriculum Project the year following the conclusion of the graduate program. Lucy had not been a member of this graduate cohort. Still she became involved in helping further the curriculum that had been initiated.

Lucy grew up in a small community no more than two miles from Holbrook Elementary. As a young girl, she attended Holbrook and then after completing her education, she taught her first class here and has taught first grade for the past twenty-two years. Lucy frequently talked

about how her students' lives were similar to hers. Their fathers and grandfathers were miners, and their mothers and grandmothers were responsible for the care of the children and the keeping of the home. Today many of the mothers have found jobs outside the home. For Lucy, teaching at Holbrook was almost predestined.

And when I started to school, I started school a Cedar Grove School which is three room schoolhouse just around the curve from Lee Town [Lucy's home]...the children in the neighborhood where I lived and myself went there for about a year. Actually when I started first grade I started because my birthday was in August and my friends were all in January after the cut-off date, so they didn't get to start when I did and about March that year I just dropped out of first grade...I was an only child so I guess I was spoiled and mom let me and so I failed first grade. I had to take that grade over and the next year they decided that we could come to Holbrook if we provided transportation. So we had our parents that brought us until we got the passenger bus and then we bought tickets and there was a driver named John...We all rode the passenger bus until seventh grade and when I went to eighth grade they finally closed the three room school and all the children got to go to Holbrook. So you know this is just like home to me. It's where I grew up, where I went to school. I just feel at home and for some reason I guess I wound up here teaching and my mom says I wound up teaching first grade just to punish me for being that way when I was little—for giving her such a hard time...

After graduating from high school, Lucy attended a community college for two years and then transferred to a university several hours from her home. After graduating, she married a man from her home town. Shortly after getting her first job teaching at Holbrook, she and her husband enrolled in a master's program that had been brought in to the local community college. Still she credited her elementary education experiences at Holbrook as that which helped her to become a better teacher.

But I think my experiences in school helped me to be a better teacher because I can see how some children get behind. How some children may have a harder time...learning...When I came here in second grade...my school history sounds terrible, but after I was here for half a year...they double promoted me and another friend of mine to third grade. Well I would only have a half year for third grade and during that half year they found out that I need glasses and I was out two weeks for that...I caught the measles and chickenpox and was out two weeks for those which threw me behind...So when I went on to the fourth grade we had very large classes at that time, we're talking thirty to forty...I didn't do that well but I passed...When we got in the fifth grade...I think there were sixty in the classroom...and they took ten of us and put us in the sixth grade room. In essence, I've got very little fifth grade by this time I'm behind two grade levels so when I came on up to sixth I was so far behind I was making "Fs"...mom sat down and explained to her [the teacher] what had happened...And so when the end of the year came she [the teacher] said I really think it would help her [Lucy] to keep her back, to retain her. So I was retained in sixth grade which was the

best thing that ever happened to me because once I took that over I was fine and I caught up to where I needed to be and I went on and I went on to college and I got my Master's Degree now and uh I think like I said, my whole experience really helps me be a better teacher...helps you understand what you can't get in college.

Perhaps it was this experience that had a hand in developing Lucy's personal philosophy for teaching in the elementary school. During an interview she stated:

For education purposes, I feel like classrooms, K-5, self-contained is great providing the teachers work together. It's self-contained, but it's not self-contained...you've got to work together, you've got to be a team—what's good for my room is good for her room...You've got to learn to share...I think an ideal classroom situation is not to have more than fifteen in a classroom...in grades K-5. That's where your foundation is laid for education. After grade 5 or grade 4, you build on what you've learned...but K-5 is the core of your learning as well as what they learn at home in the first five years which...nothing can measure up to it and that falls back to parents and the home...

For Lucy, family, teaching and education have been connected to Holbrook for most of her life. Lucy's family included her husband, also a teacher at Holbrook; two daughters, both of whom had gone to school at Holbrook, had their parents as teachers and were now attending high school; and her mother who now lived with Lucy's family because of declining health and weekly kidney dialysis treatments. Although each had busy lives: one daughter played in her high school's marching band, the other daughter enjoyed art and took classes at the local community college, and Lucy's husband was an accomplished craftsman and farmer, they each have helped Lucy with her classroom projects. Lucy jokingly stated that her family usually will say, "Oh, Mom's got another project going on." They are very used to their mom by now... They're really good, good natured about his. And I help them through projects and they help me through projects." In addition to school related activities, Lucy and her family have been very active in the community and in their local church.

Having lived all of her life in this area, Lucy expressed pride in her roots and was not ashamed of being an Appalachian.

I am very proud of where I'm from. I'm not ashamed to tell people I'm from the Appalachians...we have some people that to say that you're from Holbrook is really a put-down. I mean they fell very bad about it...In fact I had a funny comment the other day from a family member. When they mentioned the law school that is being proposed for our area and some of them said but would you want to say that you went to college at Holbrook. And I said, 'Well, yes.' I said you could be very proud...I think that we can be just as proud of our town as other places are of their towns...I mean now the economy is down, the jobs are very few...a lot of people are moving out...But I'm very proud and I'd like to stay in our county and help it back to what it once was.

Lucy's venture into culturally responsive practice began when she recognized her own culture and background as a southern Appalachian. Her roots in the area gave her certain insider

knowledge of the practices, habits, beliefs and lifestyles of the many students, parents and family members she encountered daily as a school teacher. Lucy was able to connect easily to her students, and, as will be seen when we examine her practice, she was able to plan ways for her school's program and instructional practices to reap from and to integrate into community, family and culture. Her own cultural competence would help her strengthen her students' pride in their Appalachian roots as it bolstered their academic success.

Culture as a Basis for Learning

When teachers use students' background knowledge, experience, language and culture to scaffold what is learned in school, students are more motivated to learn and more successful (Ovando & McLaren, 2000). In the same vein, when a teacher of southern Appalachian students includes curriculum which relates to their students' culture and experience, then the students are more interested in the content and more successful in school. . Before I began my research, the members of the graduate cohort who were Holbrook faculty had already begun participating in the Appalachian Curriculum Project and practicing what Gay (2000) called *cultural scaffolding* which is using the student's own culture and practices to lead them to academic success. Cultural scaffolding is facilitated through culturally responsive caring which is "anchored in respect, honor integrity, resource sharing and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence" (Gay, 2000, p. 52).

When I began my research, I met Lucy, a first grade teacher who had just joined this cultural scaffolding. I entered her classroom as an invited guest, there to observe teachers during their participation in curricular transformation in the form of Holbrook's Appalachian Curriculum project. Throughout the first year of this project, Lucy had invited storytellers for the school's Storytelling Club to come to her first grade classroom to perform for her students. By the end of this initial year of the Appalachian curriculum project which had been primarily directed by the students in the graduate class, Lucy was ready along with a majority of the Holbrook teachers to join the project.

Lucy shared how it began for her. Initially, she was anxious. She recalled a "feeling of being lost." She knew that she wanted to do something with holidays, especially the mountain traditions and customs of Christmas, but was reticent to think that her own interests in holidays could be transformed into a curriculum study. To gain reassurance she sought the advice of the troupe leader from Mountain Theatre, a theatre group providing a school based residency through grant funding awarded to Holbrook. Her words revealed the insecurity she felt.

"I didn't know if I was doing it right, but I searched and found what I wanted to do with them [her students]...just like Ron [Mountain Theatre's leader] said, that it was what you [the teacher] wanted to do...He said you can take it...in whatever avenue you want and I didn't know what he was talking about... I thought, oh my goodness, you know, what am I going to do. Here I am supposed to do something and I don't know what I'm doing and when it started I told them I've always want to do something with Christmas...I love holidays and with little kids it's a focal point"

Early in the fall of this first year, Lucy began researching and gathering stories from as many people as she could in order to share Appalachian Christmas traditions with her students. Lucy recounted, "I really had to research. I had to go to the library. I had to look for things from

the past...I talked to my aunt. I talked to my mother, everybody that I ran into older than me I asked, 'What did you do at Christmas? Tell me about this.'"

It was this first experience sharing with her students the many customs and traditions of an Appalachian Christmas that convinced Lucy that something phenomenal was taking place in her classroom. Daily during December, Lucy and her students would share their stories and their family traditions, and make homemade ornaments and decorations for Holbrook Elementary's community Christmas tree. The intensity of her students' participation in these activities impressed Lucy. One of her fondest memories was the day her class made a giant chain from strips of paper torn from old catalog pages. A parent had shared this memory that she had of decorating her grandmother's Christmas tree. Lucy gathered old Christmas catalogs and cut the pages in strips. Together she and her students made a paste from flour and water to hold the strips together that formed the links of the chain. Lucy described the day they worked on the chain.

The children were thrilled...I had twenty-five children in the room and I'd never seen them quieter, not 'quiet' quiet, but good constructive noise. I gave each child a spoonful [of paste] on a paper plate. I gave them a handful of strips and I showed them how to start... They were standing up around their desks because the chain was coming down to the floor, and they were to make a big piece of chain. Then I connected everybody's chain together... We had a chain that covered the enormous tree that we had... The kids were so proud, and they loved it."

Lucy discovered ways to tie in the state mandated curriculum during their studies of an Appalachian Christmas. Another ornament was made from dried apples. As a science activity the students wrote in their science journals their own observations of the withering apples in regard to their five senses, writing how the apple looked, smelled and felt, and imagining how it might taste and the sound that it would make if someone bit into it. For a math lesson, the students also charted and graphed the weight of the apples as they dried. Lucy had a balance scale and weights shaped like little bears. Each day the students predicted and then recorded how many bears it took to weigh their apples beginning on the day it was peeled and ending two week later when it had withered. On the last day of weighing, most students' apple's weight had decreased by as many as twenty bears. For reading, Lucy began the apple ornament activity by reading her students the story of a little boy who was sent out by his mother to find a little red house with no windows or doors with a star in the middle. As she told the story, Lucy cut the apple in her hand across the middle in half to reveal a star formed by the apple's seeds.

The remainder of the school year included similar celebrations -- a vegetable tasting party to celebrate Ground Hog Day, the making of Valentine cards and boxes and Easter egg coloring using leaves, onion skins and other natural dyes. Near the end of this first year a field trip to a local historical museum to view displays of artifacts of Early American life in the Appalachians delighted Lucy because her students "saw things they remembered that they had done in class...and they were so excited." The culminating activity for this year was the Appalachian Celebration Days. This event was a school and community festival as exhibits of classroom projects were displayed, the storytelling groups performed before an audience of students, faculty, parents, and visitors.

The success of her first year was all that was needed to reaffirm Lucy's belief in the Appalachian studies curriculum. Lucy's actions revealed an understanding that when teachers build on student's prior knowledge and skills and then provide appropriate cultural scaffolding, students can move more easily from what they know to what they need to know. Reflecting on this past year of studying Appalachian traditions and customs associated with holidays caused her to rethink her ideas about student learning. Lucy stated,

When I was in school...I remember a teacher...She let us paint with watercolors...I painted a cardinal...and of all the things that stand out in my mind... that stands out. I have thought, 'What would stand out in your mind and go with you through life about school?' It's not that you made a 100 on a spelling test...It's the fun things, the little things that you do that really mean a lot. That's why I think the Appalachian project has been very important. I think the children will take these things with them."

Expanding the Scaffold

The summer following this first year, Lucy planned what she wanted to do the next school year. She planned to continue her holiday theme, but she wanted to do more. Lucy expressed culturally responsive thought as she recognized that for her instruction to be successful, she needed to spend time developing her understanding of literacy instruction as well as her awareness of her students' backgrounds and experiences. She also recognized a need to include parents, caregivers and family members in their child's learning. Lucy stated, "You know, I wish I had more involvement. At times, I think that if I could just get all my parents together at one time and just really talk to them and tell them how meaningful this project is...we would have more and more response."

Lucy's first step toward expanding her cultural scaffolding was to continue to become aware of the influence of her own culture. Abt-Perkins and Rosen (2000) suggested that self-knowledge can be gained through "inquiry into cultural consciousness" and through a critique of an individual's "own values pertaining to language and dialect other than standard English, [and] what counts as good literature" (p. 254). In an attempt to do so, Lucy and her family sought to discover more about their Appalachian heritage. They began by visiting the Appalachian Museum in Norris, Tennessee and other smaller museums and historic sites within driving distance of their home. Lucy also collected children's books with Appalachian themes. Some of her favorites were *When I Was Young in the Mountains* (Rylant, 1983), *The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree* (Houston, 1988), and *The Rag Coat* (Mills, 1991). By the end of the summer, Lucy had a plan that would aid her in promoting the cultural competence and academic success of her students by providing opportunities for authentic learning, improved student engagement, and home-school connections.

According to Abt-Perkins and Rosen (2000), "Research on culturally relevant and responsible instruction clearly show that knowledge of students' family, community and socioethnic culture—their languages, literacy practices and values—can help teachers address the interests and build on the skills of students" (p. 254). Lucy's year long project suggested an understanding of this research. Each student would complete a story album, by collecting family stories. Her students would talk with parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and other relatives, as well as community members, asking them to write down recollections of past family celebrations of holidays and special events.

Home-School Connection

Lucy formulated a plan to involve as many family members as possible in this story album project. She enlisted family aid on the story albums by appealing to their sense of place and family. She invited the parents to her classroom and told them that "teaching really begins when you get into the home and [parents] help you and work and see the importance of the project." She conveyed to the parents that the albums their children would be creating would be "your stories...valuable to you as well as your child." She encouraged them to not let the album end with the end of the school year, but to continue to add stories to the albums so that "their children would have something to give their own children."

Her description of this event revealed how she fostered a positive relationship with her students' families. She approached them through a respect for the contributions they would make to her classroom as well as through the importance of story in helping these families come to know their own histories. Lucy recalled how she shared her vision of the story album project to her students' families.

I'd like you to sit down with your child and maybe just tell your child about what you did when you were little. What you did at Christmas time, the fun things you did, maybe a favorite toy you received, maybe a sad Christmas that you had. And if it's possible and your child has a grandparent, or a great-grandparent or an older aunt, uncle, even an older neighbor that you could go with your child and visit and you can copy the story down for him or her and bring it back in to us and I think you'll find the album we put together will be as valuable to you as to your child someday. With just a collection of stories from the past, they'll be your stories and stories that they can read too. So we will get a lot of reading from this project.

This story album project allowed students' to make connections with their home cultures and build connections to school culture. For the elementary student, storytelling most naturally allows for that connection (Dyson, 1988).

Storytellers in Action

In January of this second year, I visited Lucy's classroom to observe their work on their story albums. Immediately after stepping into Lucy Vickers's classroom, I became immersed in the activities of these first graders. Lucy was seated at a table surrounded by a small group of children engaged in reading. Other children were sitting at their desks writing in notebooks, while a few more students were gathered by a display of children's books. The room was cluttered with materials, student artwork and papers on display, several bookshelves filled with reading materials, and a worktable where seeds are drying.

Within no time after my arrival in the classroom, three students who had in their hands their albums of holiday stories surrounded me eager to share. Kathy Baldwin, the most excited and talkative of the group began tell me how she was the "oddball" of the group because she was the only one who did a Fourth of July story. She then told me about the project that they were working on and how their stories were placed in the album.

In an earlier conversation, Lucy had described Kathy as an excellent student who loves to write and is eagerly involved in collecting her family stories for the class project. Lucy related, "When she brings her stories in, we stop everything. You've got to stop because she turns those

in and she wants you to share them." This sharing was very important to Kathy because she seemed to feel so connected to her classmates through their stories. She remembered everyone's story and could, in her words, "tell them almost as good as they can."

Kathy was quick to tell me all about the class assignments that involved family stories and the album each student was making. Kathy then told that a class album is available for them to look at and that when she gets done with her work before the others, she often found the album and reread all of the stories.

Collecting the stories was not always easy for Kathy who admitted, "Sometimes we have to beg our parents because they just don't have the time." Kathy's mother had gone back to school to be a nurse and according to Kathy, she "studies all night long." Her father was a coal miner who worked long hours. Still, she found other sources of family stories from her grandparents with whom she spent several weekends a month. Even though her family was busy, Kathy said that they enjoyed writing the stories down as much as she did. In fact, Kathy began to see herself as a family history chronicler. She gleefully described the current story she is working on, a spring story about how she and her "mamaw" planted a flower garden. Kathy bragged, "I remembered it. She didn't tell it to me." Kathy expressed a passion for gathering these stories when she revealed, "We love to write these stories. We love it. We love to tell others."

After Kathy, Cassie Cannon began telling all about her family and how she has been involved in the class project. Cassie's mother and father both came from large families and grew up in the small community of Oak Creek, not far from Holbrook Elementary. Cassie had four sisters, one in the fourth grade, one in the second grade and two younger sisters at home. Cassie's mother believed it important to teach and show her children their family's heritage. At an early age, the girls learned to sew, quilt and do things that their mother grew up doing. The other day, Lucy read a story about a family that makes quilts. At Lucy's request Cassie brought in two quilts that her mother made to show the class. The next day, Cassie brought in a quilt that she was working on for her aunt's newborn baby. Cassie gave a demonstration for her classmates and talked about how her mother had taught her to sew.

Both Cassie's kindergarten teacher and Lucy described Cassie as being very quiet and shy, but a good student who was willing to do anything that was asked of her. They also stated that her parents had been very cooperative and involved in their children's education. Cassie's mother, Lora was very active in providing Cassie with family stories for her story album collection. Lucy acknowledged that Lora had taken much time with Cassie, sharing stories from her past as a young child. The story collecting assignment was rewarding for both mother and daughter. Cassie stated that she "has learned what her mother did when she was little. Lora had discovered a joy for writing and a desire to produce her own collection of family stories.

Finally, Jackson King wanted to share why it was important to collect family stories. He proudly stated, "When you grow up, you can tell them to your children," and that it was necessary to write them down "so we can remember them." Jackson has already learned much about his family and has found it astonishing to discover what his parents did "when they was little." This class project of collecting family stories has given Jackson and his family time to be together and to share. Jackson said that it was easy to get the stories because, "I tell my mom and dad that I have to do a story for school and that night or the next night, we share stories...They like to tell the stories.

While gathering these stories, Jackson had to draw upon the close relationship he has with his parents since only one of his grandparents was still living. Jackson said that he "talks to

his dad about his stories," and that his father has shared many events from his life. When Jackson was asked what he wants to do when he grows up, he said that he wanted to join the Army because his father was in the Army and has told him lots of stories about it.

Jackson's teacher described him as outgoing, popular and independent, a leader with a lot of common sense. Lucy also told that he was an excellent artist. Jackson confirmed this as he helped his friend Charley locate his story in the class album and explained that he had drawn the illustrations for both his and Charlie's stories. Jackson's classmates also bragged that Jackson could draw anything.

Jackson was able to see connections between writing family stories and his other school work because the stories were "helping [him] learn to write." He also believed that he was becoming a better reader because he could read all of the stories written by his classmates and the ones he had written. He encapsulated the benefits of gathering family stories with the statement, "We get to learn, draw pictures, write, and we'll always have them.

Language Sensitivity

As her students brought in their stories, Lucy knew that she wanted to validate as well as celebrate her students' home languages. She made the decision that other than a few misspellings, she would not change the grammar or the structure of their stories. She explained why this was important to her, stating, "I didn't change them [their stories]. I felt it was very important to be told in their parents' or grandparents' own words. I left them just as they had them in their own words. Just the way they talk or told the story...added to it...and if you took that out and tried to put it in your words, it really wasn't the right story. It wasn't their story."

Developing sensitivity to children's language use and acquisition and to their communication patterns helps teachers put into practice the assumption that home literacy practices are an asset, not a deficit to be remedied. McLaughlin (1995) noted, "By validating the students' cultures and using communication patterns familiar to them, teachers provide a much richer and more effective approach to culturally sensitive instruction than by focusing on occasional celebrations of the history and traditions of different ethnic groups." In this sense Lucy was attempting to encourage student engagement in the story albums through an affirmation of their home languages.

Still Lucy felt the need to instruct her students in the Standard English curriculum. She just found a more favorable context for doing so, similar to what Delpit (1995) argued when she stated that teachers should teach children "the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of wonderful communicative endeavors" (p. 45). Instead of teaching isolated lessons in the mechanics of grammar and writing, Lucy began emphasizing story writing as a way of naturally incorporating spelling, punctuation and grammar. Lucy devoted daily times where students wrote on any topic they wanted, although the students usually wrote personal stories. Lucy introduced the students to the writing process and told them that she would be the editor. She recalled her experience with this first grade class.

They learned that I was the editor and they were writers and it makes no difference if [the students] spell this word wrong, Ms Vickers will correct it. They put down what they want to say and I finally broke through to them that that's what they were doing and they would bring it to me and Kathy [a first grade student] made the comment, ' Yeah, Ms. Vickers, you're the editor aren't you.

You'll straighten it out for us'...and we went through the process for writing in language...the draft, the rough draft, the different steps, and I would tell them now, you bring it to the editor and she'll correct it and talk to you and then you'll have to go back and copy it again after I do that and they accepted it...this little group was easier than the little group before...I think...they learned so much. It took a lot of time...as you edit and pull the child aside and help them...but it was just great.

School-Community Relationships (The Classroom Quilt)

In the spring of this second year of the project, the school day was extended by thirty-minutes to make up for days missed because of inclement weather. Ada Collins, the principal, called the faculty together and asked them how they would like to spend this time. The majority of the teachers said that they would like to devote that time to the Appalachian curriculum. Ada then approached the county's director of curriculum to ask him for permission to use the time specifically for their Appalachian studies. With his permission, Ada and the teachers forged ahead. Lucy knew that because she was integrating the state curriculum with her Appalachian curriculum, it would be better for her students to use the entire day, not just the last thirty minutes of the day for work on their projects. She spoke to Ada and was given permission to infuse the entire school day with relevant aspects of her Appalachian curriculum... This was the beginning of her study of the Appalachian tradition of quilt making.

In addition to the story albums, Lucy planned a story quilt to be completed by her students. The story quilt became a true collaborative effort among Lucy's students, their families and the community. Early in the spring, Lucy began the project by reading *The Patchwork Quilt* (Flournoy, 1985) to her students. As she read the story, she kept an old, somewhat ragged quilt on her lap. When she finished the story of a family quilt made from material from the children's clothes, Lucy held up the quilt on her lap, the first quilt that her mother had made. Through her story, Lucy shared the history of this family quilt. Her mother was working on the quilt the day President Kennedy was assassinated. Her story began.

The first quilt that she [my mother] made...a neighbor who was an excellent quilter agreed to show her how so she set up what was a 'cat quilt.' It's an appliqué of a large cat on a square. And she did all the squares herself and sewed together the top herself and so her neighbor Raydale helped her to set it up...and on the day that John F. Kennedy was assassinated they were quilting on the quilt...When she came out from the basement working on it, our neighbor hollered and told her that he had been assassinated...I know my mom says, 'Yeah, I was quilting on that then that day. I remember it you know.' And that was the first quilt that she ever made...I really...we used it a lot...all of her quilts we've really used and its not been until the last few years that I realized how valuable it was and I finally just put it up and quit using it so it wouldn't be damaged because it is pretty well worn now"

Lucy then showed her students the baby formula stains on the quilt were her two daughters had spit up on it. She showed them the ink stain on the quilt where her pen had leaked one night while she was in bed grading papers. She asked them to notice how worn its edges were. Lucy then encouraged her students to bring their own quilts to class if they had a quilt

they wanted to share. They could bring it in and tell their stories about who gave it to them or what was special to them.

Thus began the quilt project with her students. Lucy explained the idea. They [her students] create a quilt from their baby clothes or maybe a favorite shirt. Mom usually sits down and writes down where the shirt came from or the piece of clothing or why they like it or who gave it to them. And they write that on the quilt square that they put their piece of material on. In turn, the parents come in and put the top [of the quilt] together and let the students tack a couple of tacks on the quilt so that they could feel that they actually made the quilt.

Almost immediately after hearing about the project, the students began bringing in material from a favorite article of clothing. With this material, Lucy created a silhouette of the child's face. The students, with the assistance of their families wrote a short story explaining why the material was so special to them. The child then wrote the story on fabric. The parents then sewed the silhouette onto the fabric which held the story. The squares of the students' silhouettes and stories formed the quilt. A grandmother of a student then set up and hemmed the sides of the quilt.

At this time, Lucy invited a ladies' quilting club from the community to demonstrate the making of a quilt for her students and the entire school. The ladies framed the story quilt on the stage of the school cafeteria. Lucy invited her students' families to come to school and, with their child assisting, tack the squares on the quilt. Throughout the afternoon, children, parents, grandparents and the quilting club filled the cafeteria stage, all of whom were stitching, getting under the quilt frame, pushing needles back up and tying yarn into knots. Throughout the cafeteria, the quilting club had set up displays of quilts of a variety of patterns, and a member of the quilting club gave the history of all of the different patterns. The finished quilt was part of Lucy's class display during the school's annual Appalachian Celebration Days festivities.

As Lucy admired the quilt, she reflected on the entire experience. I guess you could say that it was an across the curriculum learning experience. We incorporated reading skills...math skills were involved, and writing. They wrote down their own story...they actually wrote it on the square so you could take penmanship there. You take in creative writing to a certain extent...Of course now this is working hand in had with the parent...There's art that's involved. So really it covers our whole curriculum plus our Appalachian curriculum program that we have...It's just a learning experience. Maybe you would call it a social learning experience for the children...and they learned about something from the past that could be a dying art, you know, if they don't keep it alive and see those things...I don't think I ever looked at the past like I do now.

Unfinished Work, Unplowed Ground

In all aspects of her work with the Appalachian curriculum, Lucy conveyed the need to celebrate, as well as affirm, the Appalachian lifestyle of her students and their families. She had done so by first seeking self- and cultural knowledge. She then explored ways to include her students' backgrounds, experiences, culture and language into her curriculum. Her attempts had an impact on the academic achievement of her students as they improved their literacy skills,

became actively engaged in their own learning, and discovered more about themselves, their family, their community and their background. All of this was situated within a welcoming, activity-filled learning environment, which included family members and the community. While reflecting upon her second year of involvement Lucy stated,

I think our Appalachian project has been very important. I think the children will take these things with them...I'm really excited. Again, in the beginning I worried. I didn't know if I was doing it right. I didn't know what to do but I searched and I found. I found what I wanted to do...just as Ron said, it was what you wanted to do...I feel like we've learned a lot; we did a lot. I think it's been an asset to our school. Definitely a great asset to our school to have developed this curriculum and to have used it, and my own experiences helped me become a better teacher...

At the end of this second year, Lucy was not finished in her exploration of ways to develop the cultural competence of her students. She expressed understanding of the need for what Miller (1975) declared when he wrote, “The main task of cultivating an appreciation for what is good in Appalachian life will fall upon those teachers who have a knowledge and understanding of two worlds—of Appalachia and mainstream America—and who can walk like a plowman in spring, with one foot in the plowed ground, the other in the unbroken sod” (p. 448).

Lucy had made a step forward in implementing such practice. She recognized the need to demonstrate a respect and a validation of the Appalachian culture so that her students could build on strengths they brought to her classroom as they moved from what they knew to what they needed to know. In return, her students developed a greater sense of pride in their Appalachian culture, and saw a more meaningful connection among home, school and community. By the end of this experience, Lucy was searching for ways to help her students foster an understanding for cultural diversity and an appreciation for the contributions of all diverse groups to society. Reflecting upon her second year of the Appalachian curriculum initiative, Lucy stated:

I think we need to have a new direction...I don't necessarily mean not to do our Appalachian culture, but could we not also compare it to other cultures so that the children become aware that our culture is important and we're to feel very proud of it, but there are other things out there not seen yet. There's other ways of life, other things that other children have to deal with that they [her students] have not experienced and they need to be aware of this.

With this statement, Lucy echoed what Miller (1975) voiced, and she acknowledge that there is still much unbroken sod in both Appalachian schools and other marginalized community schools in America. For many students, schools fail to recognize, acknowledge and celebrate their home languages, cultures and practices. Lucy and the other teachers at Holbrook had broken the ground, but Lucy was in search of new territory on which to build her students' understanding of their place in Appalachia as well as the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

Banks (1991) asserted that if education is to empower marginalized groups, it must be transformative. Being transformative involves helping “students to develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action” (p. 131). For Shor (1992), empowering education is a student-centered, critical and democratic pedagogy for studying any subject matter and for self and social change. It takes shape as a dialogue in which teachers and students mutually investigate everyday themes, social issues, and academic knowledge. Through dialogue students become active agents of their learning, and develop as critical thinkers, inspired learners, and involved citizens. Central Elementary was a prime example of this.

In this chapter, I have examined the practices of Shirley Pritchard as she demonstrated a care and concern for her students as she worked to make Central Elementary a more culturally responsive school through her beliefs in student empowerment, parental involvement, and equality. I observed and interviewed Shirley, and came to know her through the stories of her teaching. I watched as she attempted to transform a failing school into one that addressed the needs of all children, particularly children marginalized by society because of their poverty and their minority status, whether racial or cultural. Through an examination of her practice and the stories she shared about her experiences, I have uncovered a pedagogy for culturally responsive teaching that promotes a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo for the southern Appalachian student. As a principal, she heeded the words of Ladson-Billings (1995) as she helped her students “develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the social norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (p. 162).

Having an Eye on the Prize

When Shirley became principal of Central Elementary there were many problems to overcome: a deteriorating facility, poor student performance on annual standardized tests which had labeled the school as seriously impaired, and most notably little or no parent involvement. Because the school had such a large percentage of African-American students, Shirley also saw the need to incorporate a multicultural presence into the curriculum as well as the staff. At the time there were twenty full time faculty members, 16 females and four males, with only one African-American teacher. Shirley commented on this situation.

This is a tough school and it requires everybody's attention. It certainly is a team effort here. I depend on females and males. I like to know that there is a presence of males on staff and we probably have as many or the greatest percentage of perhaps any other school...and we are very fortunate to be able to do that because we need male adult role models here. I would like to have more black adult role models...One of the reasons has been the scarcity of African-American teachers in the region.

During an interview with the one African-American teacher on the Central team, she praised Shirley's attempts at bringing the school together and for making it more responsive to the needs of the African-American students. "She has her eye on the prize," was her comment. Shirley credited her upbringing for this.

We come from humble backgrounds and my parents have always been self sufficient in that they had gardens and grew things and they took care of the needs of the community, of the people around them and I know I picked up on that. They were a moral, upright Christian family. When I started in school I was taught not to be a prejudiced person. I don't know that all the time it always sank in exactly, but I think it's part of my upbringing. I was brought up in an environment where everyone is important, and I was taught that you know we are all created equal and that's not the way society all the times looks at it, and I am sure at times I probably didn't think that way either. I was a sociology major and a psychology minor when I was in college and I did not aspire to be a teacher for quite some time until I actually had some contact in 1970 as a teacher's aide, teacher's assistant in North Carolina. And I was in a setting that was inner city... where I could see that there certainly was a need for persons that are Caucasian to be empathic to others. I didn't think too much about it of course the schools that I was in as a teacher and then as a principal my first five years was in mainly predominately white Caucasian schools... I truly believe that there are instances where there have been injustices done to persons of color and there is not a lot that I can do about it as far as on the community level necessarily or the family level. But within the school system I am sure I am an advocate for my kids and they are my kids here when they are here and most of the staff members here think the same way. They will, you know, we will fight tooth and nail for our kids. We know there are a lot of bad things that happen in the community.

Coupled with this preparation for Central was a determination that she could make a difference and that she was the one who could turn the school around. Before taking the job at Central, Shirley had been a teacher and a principal in the county for over 25 years. During her last years of teaching, she was in a situation where she knew the principal was ineffective. She recalled the setting.

I was probably in my sixteenth year [of teaching] and I had a very weak administrator. I decided that there was certainly a need for good administrators as well as there was a need for good teachers, and I felt and still feel like I am a good teacher. I still enjoy getting into the classroom...I decided that you know if there are some things going on that you really have no opportunity to change...the only way to remedy that situation is to be that person in charge. If you think you can do a better job, do it. That's why I decided to get into administration, and I vowed and declared that would never happen at a school where I was in charge. I don't think it has happened here because I have been able to make a difference.

Within four years after assuming the job of principal at Central, Shirley had been able to make a difference. Test scores had risen significantly and the school was no longer listed as seriously impaired. Families were involved and taking an active role not only in their children's

education, but in their own also. The school's reputation within the community had improved significantly because of Shirley's constant reaching out and the many ways she found for her students to become involved in their community. In addition to this, Shirley had been able to model effective ways to achieve social justice, equity and equality as she resolved racial tensions that had plagued the school for years. She was also able to promote a sense of pride in her students for their school and for themselves. All of this was a result of her persistence in keeping her "eye on the prize." Haberman (1995) explained persistence in this respect: "After listening to star teachers explain their work, I realize that this attribute does not reflect simple stubbornness. It reveals the deep and abiding beliefs that stars hold about the nature of children in poverty and their potential; the nature of stars' roles as teachers; and the reasons stars believe they and the children are in school" (p. 21).

Heading the Challenge

Shirley's beliefs in social justice, equity and equality were tested immediately when she began her first year at Central Elementary. When she arrived at Central, she came with an attitude that she was a "versatile person," who could "fit any setting." But there were discoveries to be made within the existing power structures of the school that in her words were "unnerving." As she reflected back on this time she stated that she had a goal "to make sure that people in the area considered Central to be a safe and secure place to be." Furthermore there were issues of inequity and racism that had to be addressed.

The coalfields of southern Appalachia have a unique history in regard to the influx of African-Americans within the area as told by Trotter (2001). As the coalfields of the southern Appalachian region began opening up, large numbers of African Americans were recruited as laborers to build coal mines as the industry expanded. These workers then created their own migration into the region using their network of family and friends. These families paved the way for the rise of a new Black middle class in the coal mining communities. By the 1970s, these jobs were no longer viable and large numbers immigrated to urban centers. For those remaining behind, unemployment and poverty became a way of life underpinned by years of oppression and discrimination (Jackson & Piovio, 1989). For Shirley, implementing a culturally responsive practice would mean addressing the needs of both poor, southern Appalachian White students and African-American students first by challenging the racism that kept African-American families from being involved in the school.

During this first year as principal, Shirley noticed that very few African-American parents were involved in the school activities. She recalled her observations:

When I first arrived, I was unaware that the goings on of the school were being handled by the white minority. Parent support was something I could not look to. The president of the PTO [Parent Teacher Organization] was the wife of the local grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan...I had run ins...I was threatened...My home was threatened...

Seeing that positions of power were being abused and used to deny African-American families access to the school, Shirley began to challenge the status quo. She continued her story:

One of the first things determined necessary...we needed a constitution and by-laws for the PTO and a slate of officers that was not Klan oriented...There had

never been a charter... This was the reason whites were in control... They had made rules themselves... That is how they could control.

Throughout this time Shirley met with African-American families and, together the one African-American teacher at Central, she able to enlist two women who would place their name on the ballot of officers. Shirley also knew that the night of the PTO election needed to have as many parents as possible in attendance. Her experience as a principal had taught her that when parents were needed at PTO meetings, the best way to get them there was to have students perform on the program. With the new guidelines, a ballot that included two African-American officers, and a program by the school choir, the stage was set. By the end of the night, the PTO had equal representation with two African-American officers. The most significant change was the renewal of parent participation within the school. This move literally opened the doors of the school for the African-American parents.

The most recent issue threatening Central was the talk of closing the school and consolidating it with several area schools. For Shirley, this was devastating because of her concern for her parents and for her students. She discussed her reasons for opposing the consolidation.

I am concerned. I am not an advocate of consolidation... Our kids would be lost in the shuffle... Here at Central I am concerned about social needs. We have a clothes closet that we take care of students' needs. We have a washer and a dryer that many times we wash the children's clothes when they come in in the morning, get them ready for them to put back on when they go home in the evenings. That's not going to be there at the new school. I am not sure how these students will be integrated into the population. I am concerned... But I think the main thing is the community and the parents will come here... they will not have the opportunity... the transportation to go on the other side of town... Here everything is very accessible. That why our GED program, that's why it is housed here and why it is successful because parents can walk here... I also think these parents will feel intimidated... given the fact that the majority of our population is Black and poor.

For these reasons, Shirley became active in encouraging her parents to attend meetings regarding consolidation plans. She was very proactive in recruiting parents, even though she knew that many of them would be reluctant because of their lack of education, their lack of success in school, their color and/or because they lacked certain grammatical skills for public speaking. Shirley organized meetings at her school for the purpose selecting a team to represent Central, but also because she recognized that the community had expressed concern over the consolidation. She stated, "Parents have voiced a real concern. They are really afraid of what's going to happen when they get into a new school and a new setting."

Such practice has not always found favor with Shirley's superiors. Her relationship with the superintendent has not always been smooth simply because Shirley has refused to overlook injustices. In this instance of consolidation Shirley commented, "You can see that this is the right thing to do and you can see that it's for the good of your community, or the good of the children ... That's what I was hired to do, and that's what [I] need to pursue... You can't take a back seat. You have to be the person that is sometimes aggressive. You have to be the one that

takes charge. That's what a principal is, the one that has to take charge." Although this view has not always won the favor of her supervisors, it has initiated more positive relationships among the school and the community.

Positive Perspectives on Parents, Families and Students

To keep school/community relationships verdant, Shirley sought ways to foster communication with her parents and families. During an online panel discussion (<http://knowledgeloom.org/crt/>) Sonia Nieto stated, "Whether it's an informal chat as the parent brings the child to school, or in phone conversation or home visits, or through newsletters sent home, teachers can begin a dialogue with family members that can result in learning about each of the families through genuine communication." Shirley Pritchard had recognized this need.

As she had done as principal at her former school, Shirley immediately began making home visits which has helped her tremendously in connecting to parents and families. An example of this occurred when a family arrived to enroll their daughters in the school, Shirley greeted them warmly and immediately began telling them what Central had to offer, the 4-H program, the Bible Class, and the PTO. As she took the two girls and introduced them to their teachers, she asked the parents where they would be living. Because Shirley has become so familiar with her community and her school's families, she was able to tell them about other families who would live near them.

As a white woman, Shirley at first approached entering the Black communities with some reserve. Soon though, both Shirley and her vehicle became familiar. Shirley described it this way: "When I first started and I would go over, everyone would come out on their porch, and it was like who is this White woman that is driving through this you know district right here. Now if they are outside they will throw up their hands or they will say, 'Hi Ms. Pritchard.'"

Throughout any given day, Shirley is in frequent contact with parents either via phone calls, home visits or as she chats with them when they volunteer in the school. On a larger scale, Shirley envisioned better ways to bring parents to the school. Knowing that many of her parents lacked formal education, she sought ways to help them, and in the long run, help her students. Shirley initiated a parent training component that exceeded her expectations. Shirley told of the program's beginnings:

We started some new programs here at the school that had never been done before. In fact one of them was completely new to this school and we just made it up and decided that it was something that was necessary. We have a program called FEET, which is Families Entering Education Together... We had a lady that had been over at the Kingston Learning Center and they needed a place to put their GED program. And so I offered to have it here at Central school... The parents could come in and get their GED and we decided, well why not kill two birds with one stone? If these parents are going to come in to work on their GEDs and they were expecting maybe that they would have three or four persons... maybe we can build their program up from this extension of the Kingston Learning Center and then we will be able to do something here as well. So we decided that we could combine that program kind of with another program called Starting Points... we would formulate this FEET program so that when these parents came over to get their education and to take these classes, that they could also be incorporated into a classroom. So that's what we have done, and we

have got so many people now... We have got parents coming out our ears that are over there in the program right now. The parents are trained how to help their children with homework. They are trained how to read to their children. Of course they are getting their GED. Their learning is extended into computers. They [parents] work cooperatively there with the [classroom] teacher. They talk about strategies on how to handle disruptive students and some of them have disruptive children, some of them are on medication, Ritalin, and whatever else medication they have. So that program then works cooperatively and we have to get the teachers involved in this as well because the teachers have to buy into this idea that you know a parent is going to come in their room and sit in there with their child and help their child out. So we have this cooperative relationship now that's abounded and you know I feel good about it.

With parents, both Black and White, now more involved in the school, Shirley reached for ways to be more responsive to the needs of her students. When efforts to hire more African-American teachers were hindered, she went to the community to bring in positive role models for her students. She stated, "I bring in guest speakers...those who would be good role models...I draw from the community." As she looked around her school, she noticed that most of the materials and books in the classrooms and library were representative of the White, middle-class, with very little diversity or even Appalachian settings. When new books that represented diverse cultures were purchased through grant monies, Shirley was pleased to hear one of her students say, "That looks just like me," as the young African-American girl examined the book's illustrations.

Prime examples of Shirley's philosophy of how to bring parents, families and children together are her many after school programs that involve all facets of her school. One program during a fall PTO meeting was by a fifth grade class and was on African culture and music. The teacher explained that the class had been studying picture books by well known African-American illustrators Leo and Diane Dillon. As a part of this fifth grade unit, students studied African musical instruments. A music director from a local Baptist church who had served as a missionary in Africa brought genuine African rhythm instruments to the class. As a part of the program, the students demonstrated how the instruments were played. The music director sang an African spiritual to demonstrate how the instruments were played. He invited the audience to participate by singing the song. Shirley stepped up and led the group in singing. Following this, students escorted audience members to the stage and taught them how to play the instrument. By the end of the program, a group of adults and children, Black, White and Biracial are playing, singing and laughing together, all under Shirley's direction.

In May, the school's Spring Carnival was held on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. Parents brought in food, the school provided hot dogs, and teachers were responsible for coming up with the games and manning the stations. The end result was a true carnival atmosphere with balloon, clowns, games, and children running all over the school grounds. Shirley exchanged her school attire for jeans and a tee shirt. Throughout the day she switched jobs as she fixed hot dogs, inflated balloons, painted children's faces and yelled out chants like a true carnival barker. She also made this a family affair, as her husband, dressed like a farmer, was in charge of driving the tractor for the hayride. For Shirley, this was an opportunity for students and parents to see her as their family member also.

Shirley has been very successful in involving parents and family members in her school. One parent has become the unofficial office assistant and often fills in for the secretary when she must be away from her desk. Many grandmothers volunteer on a regular basis, reading to classes and serving as reading tutors. During different times of the day, parents and family members will come to the school to assist in classrooms, help during lunch, and assist during special programs. Shirley has been very active in getting all parents involved, regardless of their education or their socioeconomic status. Shirley recalled one parent who, because of her work at the school, also became an advocate for the school.

I had a parent here last year who was an office worker who had very minimal educational background as far as formal education. She volunteered to work in the office and she did different things. Her child was here in special education... Education was very important to her. She wanted to make sure that her son was getting a good education and that he was behaving and doing what he was supposed to be doing. And so she volunteered to do many things here in the school, working in the office, doing the copy machines. She was a very good representative of Central school even though she was, really she had a good self-esteem but she was very, I guess, poor. She had very little, but she was willing to use herself and her talents... She had a lot of common sense. She spoke at the board meeting as a representative of Central as a proponent of the special education program at the school.

During her years as principal of Central Elementary, Shirley has developed a deep understanding of the needs of her parents. She understood from the beginning that the reason many parents were not involved in the school was because of the terrible experiences the parents had had as students at Central. She stated,

One of the problems of getting parents into schools at the beginning was because they didn't have a good feeling about the school. They were not successful in school. They didn't feel good about the school setting at all and that's the reason they didn't want to come even for PTO. They hated parent conferences. They just wouldn't show up. But now it's very rare that one makes an appointment and doesn't show up, and I think they feel better about the setting, and I think they feel like they can trust us.

The trust the parents felt was a product of Shirley's work to develop a rapport with the families and members of her school's community. This positive perspective has been a key element in her desire to be an effective role model as an individual.

Active Community Involvement

In addition to being a role model for positive interpersonal relationships, Shirley modeled the need for community involvement to her students and families. Community relationships have been very important to Shirley and when she arrived at Central she saw a need to incorporate the community into the total school environment. Herbert Kohl (2000) stated, "It is not enough to teach well and create a social justice classroom separate from the larger community. You have to be a community activist, a good parent, a decent citizen, and an active

community member as well” (p. 2). Shirley recalled how she initiated a plan to have her students become active community members:

When I first came here... I could see that there needed to be support of some kind from the community. We are not just an island by ourselves and we try to give back to the community because our kids are all from those parts.

One special way Central Elementary was able to give to the community was through the Learn and Serve Program, a program Shirley instituted. Through this program, each class in the school chose a project they wanted to participate in which would provide a service to local group or organization. One fifth grade class adopted 26 patients at a local nursing home within walking distance from the school. Students were able to visit with them twice a month. They took the patients cards or class art projects, or often they just talked with the elderly residents. When Shirley described the various projects that the classes had selected, she became very exuberant about her students and their willingness to give back to their community.

We have a Humane Society. We go and we clean ...the cages. It depends on how messy they are, but we have of course permission slips and go through the regular procedure... We paint their doghouses. We do a big community gathering with the City Park. We have what we call park day. And we will take one day near the end of school that we go over and we plant shrubs and flowers. We found that our students take better care of City Park than any of the others because they have an input. It's a hands on ownership type thing; 'I planted these flowers, you are not going to destroy them.' 'You put the trash in the trash barrels', and 'I picked up that trash, I don't want to have to do that much again'... So that's a real big school project. Everybody, every class, has something they are responsible for doing and so it's an all inclusive type of thing.

The effect of this involvement within the community has been a better representation of Central not only within the community, but also within the county. Shirley used public relations skills and the media to promote this positive image. Knowing that the media was a part of the negative perception of the school, Shirley became very protective of the kind of coverage she was willing to offer. She spoke of this concern.

The overall perception of Central has really improved, it's not, the school that is the school from hell, but once people thought it was... We have some friends within the Telegraph [the local newspaper] that we have asked not to publicize [events at Central]... So I asked the media you know whenever possible, especially when you call 911, it's always publicized... And I would say please don't put in there that you had to come to Central school because that is one of the things we are trying to overcome here and that's been my goal is to make sure that people in the area consider Central to be a safe and a secure place to be...I try to promote the school in a positive light every chance I get.

An idea of Shirley's that truly promoted the school's connection to the community was her annual appreciation banquet. Held in November, the week before Thanksgiving, Central

Elementary invited family and community members, Board of Education Members, business partners and the press to a traditional Thanksgiving feast in the school's cafeteria. The school's cooks prepared the meal. The children in first through fourth grade decorated the tables and walls. The kindergarten students provided the entertainment. Fifth grade students greeted guests, escorted them to tables and served the meal. On the program, Shirley had written this original poem: "Your willingness to give without asking in return, Your dependability and heartfelt concern, The many kind things you do and say to warm others' lives day after day, Make your gift of time beyond compare, Thank you for being a part of our Central family." Although Shirley worked diligently for the banquet to be a success, on the day of the banquet she took a back seat and let her students and the school be the center of attention because, as she stated, her students were "the school's greatest asset."

A Care and Concern for Students

In an ethnographic study of teacher behaviors, Annette Hemmings (1994) observed that culturally responsive teachers not only made genuine attempts to know their students, but also kept open communication channels with them. Hemmings observed that such teachers "listened to students and took careful note of their lifestyles, social identities and especially their expectations for teachers" (p. 21). Shirley knew that if she wanted to make Central a more responsive and more equitable school that attention must be paid to the child. She explained her first steps toward this goal.

When I arrived there was not a lot of attention to academic programs but in particular there was not a lot of attention to looking at the whole child...there needed to be a place, a caring environment where we would be looking at the whole child. I guess that's it in a nutshell right there. The students that we have here you just can't touch them when they get here in the morning time and expect them to learn. You have got to know where they came from. And you get a little insight just by looking at their surroundings... Our primary objective is to teach and to see that the students have access to knowledge. But in the same respect we need to do so in a manner that it's going to enhance or improve their self-esteem so that they are not constantly bombarded with negative things. Society does that to them enough, and we try the best we can here to look toward the positive.

Since coming to Central, Shirley has arrived each day before the first bus of students comes where she monitors the students in the gym before they go to the cafeteria for breakfast and the teachers arrive. Shirley described this as, "The routine is I arrive every morning at 10 before 7:00, the buses pull in at 7:00. I am there at the bus stop greeting them each and every morning and most of the students I know by name, and I think that's important that they have someone there that will recognize who they are and that they are supposed to be here."

During an observation of this early morning routine, Shirley moved from group to group, talking with them. She knew each student by name. She asked students about their basketball games the night before, about how they were doing in school and about what they would be doing that day. These were generic questions, but as Shirley stated, "It lets them know I care. Sometimes no one cares enough to ask these students anything." A student escorted a young

African-American girl who was crying to Shirley. She comforted her and bent to her level. Shirley commented on the importance of touch and closeness:

I am a real hugger and one of the things that I find really hard with today's society is the, with the harassment and these things that are going on. I have a hard time not hugging a child, and in our area in particular these kids don't get a lot of hugs, and they really need compassion, and they need someone to look after their needs because many times that person is not there for them, and so I feel like that that's something that is needed.

Throughout this time while Shirley and the students intermingled, children in orange "hard hats", safety patrol members, have come to escort the students to the cafeteria, part of the responsible schools program Shirley began at Central.

When the last group of students exited to the cafeteria, Shirley went there also. On this day, the students were eating apples, pop tarts, cereal and milk. There was a table in the back of the cafeteria where students placed nonperishable food they did not eat. Shirley encouraged students to take food from this table home with them. She has made it school policy that all nonperishable food served to students is allowed to go home. Shirley explained why this was needed. "We have children who the only meals that they get are the meals that they are getting here at the school. They don't get any at home from the time that they leave here maybe until the next morning...Near the end of the month, students need extra portions because money is running low. We try to give students more food at this time...But even beyond that, beyond the hungry there are a lot of needs that need to be addressed over and beyond the school day."

Before the students have left the cafeteria to report to their classrooms, Shirley tried to talk to each student. A student told her about his cousin who was recently arrested for drug trafficking. She talked to him about "being in the wrong place at the wrong time." She patted him on the shoulders and talked to him about how important it is to stay away from drugs. Throughout this time she never condemned the cousin's actions.

This observation of her morning routine reflected Shirley's deep care and concern for her students. However, when she first arrived, Shirley found that discipline took a lot of her time. Because of this, Shirley adopted her own discipline plan and found what worked best for her. Haberman (1995) in *Star Teachers of Children in Poverty* stated, "Star teachers are not very concerned with discipline. They have a few rules, usually less than four and usually established at the beginning of each year. They are not fixated with this issue as their highest priority or even as a major concern" (p. 3). According to Shirley, discipline at Central worked because

...if we can we try to do it in-house. Possibly sometimes you have to come down a little bit hard on students... We try to weigh, I guess, what the positives and the negatives are as to how hard we can come down on a child if something has happened. But we do keep in the forefront of our minds the fact that many times at home these children only hear the negative and they have been told in the community well because of your color, because of your low socioeconomic status, because of the environment you come from, because of who you are, your parents are... It's very important that they know they are a worthwhile human being and that they can make a contribution to society. And I believe that the whole staff here works toward that, but in the same respect we don't just glaze

over the fact... We have to tell them, 'You did this wrong and you need to look at doing something differently here.'

This philosophy of discipline was enacted when a distraught teacher brought a student to Shirley's office. The teacher reported that the student had hit her with a plastic toy that he had brought to school. Shirley kept the student in her office and asked him to tell her his story. "She starts running her mouth," the student said. Shirley began, "We've talked about bad choices before and this time you made a bad choice." Shirley and the young boy continued to talk and finally the student said, "I made a mistake." Shirley then asked him to come up with a solution to the problem. She reminded him, "Think about how we can do better next time." Before he left, Shirley complimented his grandmother for making sure that he got to school that day. Her last statement to him was, "Sometime today, when you have a smile on your face, why don't you apologize to her [the teacher]." The student left the office with the promise that he would do it.

Dealing with students who are physically and verbally aggressive has been an almost daily occurrence for Shirley. Still she has been able to see beyond the child's actions and look to where the problem rests. She reacted to this student's behavior as well as others with the following statement.

We have problems that are more prevalent... We have a lot of single parents. Many of our children live with grandparents. In the housing project it's not unusual for them to have contact with the police. In fact they have moved a police unit over into the housing project because there had been some difficulty there and it has much improved the area... But there are drug problems, not with our students necessarily but with their parents and with their siblings and there is a lot influence, outside influences that are here. We have had ongoing cases of a lot of child abuse... I spend a lot of time with the Department of Human Services. We have had a lot of child abuse, child neglect.

Because of this awareness of her student's home situations and that the majority of them have had few privileges; Shirley sought ways to expand her students' experiences. Shirley discovered that field trips were a means of generating good feeling among students and parents while also exposing her students to new things. When she first came to Central, Shirley determined that the former principal did not have a favorable attitude toward field trips.

Most of them [the students] had not gone on field trips because of behavior. And again that's when I came here... I asked teachers to pretend like that their students were blank slates and they didn't have any background at all... We had to adopt several policies to be able first of all to have our children self discipline. Once they became self disciplined we were able to take them on field trips and they have probably taken more field trips in the last two or three years than they have in their whole life I am sure. But I can trust them. I can trust them to go out and very seldom do I ever have any problems when I take these kids out because they are real appreciative and their parents are appreciative that they are getting to go and do things that they did not get to do.

Shirley encouraged all teachers to plan at least one field trip during the year and whenever possible, Shirley accompanied the class on the trip.

Even in small ways Shirley wanted her students to know that she cared for them. When a young boy came into her office crying and saying he was sick, Shirley quit what she was working on to comfort him. She asked him to wait outside her office while she phoned his home. Shirley commented, "I think his mother is having surgery today and there was a death in his family over the weekend, so I'm pretty sure he is reacting to that." Her call home confirmed what she thought. She called the young boy back into her office and told him that she has talked with someone at home and that his mother is doing fine. She gave him a piece of candy and told him that it would make his stomach feel better, but that if he got worse to let her know and that she would take him home. Later during the day, Shirley checked on him and found that he was fine.

According to Shirley, this ethic of care stemmed from her personal upbringing and her belief that she is an advocate for her students. Shirley described herself as a "mother hen" to her students. She stated, "We know there are a lot of bad things that happen in the community...within the past year there had been a lot of things that impact the students that are here, and you can't help but feel empathy for the students." A deeply religious woman, Shirley also believed that there was reason for her being at Central. She stated, "I think there is a purpose in my being here and only divine intervention probably will know what that purpose is, but I think there perhaps is this overriding purpose."

Discovering Purpose

Novick (1996) conjectured that "at the heart of argument about the means and ends of school is the question: What kind of society do we want?" (p. 62). For poor, African-American and White southern Appalachian students, Shirley modeled the kind of society she wanted. She wanted her students to come to a school that was safe and secure, and that was a positive reflection their lives. As a means of doing so she sought ways to incorporate the cultural backgrounds of her students into the school setting, primarily by drawing from the community. To make her school safer, she challenged values of White superiority held by a minority of community members. She promoted positive relationships between the school and families, while at the same time helping these families become stronger through education and training. She also modeled care and concern to her students and their families, instilling within them a sense of pride in themselves, their school and their community. Along the way, she was challenging the status quo that argued that poor Appalachian students, regardless of race, were destined to failure and to a lifetime of riding on the back of society's bus.

CHAPTER SIX

KNOWLEDGES, DISPOSITIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS

In his review of the literature on culturally responsive teaching, Phuntsog (1999) concluded, “There is a great need to identify effective ways to prepare teachers who will implement culturally responsive practices that will engage and motivate all children while allowing and encouraging those children to affirm their cultural identity in a positive manner.” My own review of the literature found that much research had been addressed regarding the need for teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers to provide exceptional education to children who are members of groups traditionally underserved and unserved. Zeichner (1996) found that reform efforts toward providing preservice teachers with knowledge, skills and dispositions required for multicultural teaching focused on developing cultural self knowledge, developing knowledge of cultural “others,” and developing cultural and subject-matter knowledge.

In my current position as a teacher educator at a southern Appalachian college, I had an opportunity to gain knowledge about my students own preparation for multicultural teaching. I used my content area literacy content classroom as an occasion to discover my students’ awareness of their own cultural identity, their cultural frames of reference and their appreciation of their own cultural heritage. At the same time, I sought ways to transform my own teaching so that I could present culturally responsive practice. In this chapter, I set forth my experiences as I discovered the knowledges, dispositions and understandings these preservice southern Appalachian teachers had about teaching southern Appalachian students, as well as my own beliefs about the characteristics of these preservice teachers of Appalachia College.

Connecting Through Story - Knowledge

One way I sought to discover the knowledges, dispositions and understandings of my preservice teachers was to build connections among all learners. I knew that as southern Appalachians, we had comparable histories, but until we had found a way to voice these, barriers to our cultural identities would exist. One characteristic of the southern Appalachian that I was sure would bond us was the importance of family. Beginning with the very first class meeting, I wanted us to learn from each other’s experiences and to be joined by a perceived common background. I was convinced that even though many of my students had had courses together and perhaps had known each other for several years, much was to be discovered about who we were.

On the very first day of class, I introduced myself to the class by reading *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant, a story of a family loading up their car and visiting relatives for an extended summer vacation. I had a twofold purpose in sharing this book. First, this children’s book recalled my own vivid memories of summers spent visiting my aunts, uncles and cousins, and was a great introduction to my own life story centered on family relationships. Second, I wanted to show my students the power of story and how it could connect evocatively to the reader or listener. Even though my family vacations were wonderful childhood memories, never had I considered them as a story worth telling until I had read this book. Seeing my life story celebrated in print assured me that a part of my life once thought of as insignificant and too commonplace to share was now extraordinary. Since that discovery, a part of my own cultural

identity, for I was to learn that visiting relatives for summer vacations is a facet of Appalachian culture, was validated.

I shared a second example of how my life story was substantiated by another work of literature. In 1998, Homer Hickam's *Rocket Boys*, his memoir of growing up in a small coal mining town in southern Appalachia became a national bestseller, and was later made into the motion picture, *October Sky*. His story centered on his respect for a high school math teacher who inspired him to achieve his goals and win a gold medal at the National Science Fair in 1960. I shared with my class that I attended that high school and knew the teacher eulogized in the book.

Immediately this sharing of these books and my own life story sparked questions and similar stories from my students. I found that several students lived in the same county where I grew up. One student asked me if I knew her aunt who graduated from the same high school. A student began telling of his family's connection to Stonewall Jackson. By the end of this first class meeting, my students knew more about me, and I know more about them. We had connected through story, but I did not want it to end there. Their assignment for the next class meeting was to write their first entry in their dialogue journals: their family story.

During our second class meeting, we spend the time sharing our family stories. Our procedure was to pick a classmate who would be our dialogue journal partner. We were to read each other's story and then right a reaction to what we had read and then we could engage in dialogue about our stories. I asked students not to select anyone they knew or who was a close friend. All selections were to be as completely random as possible. My journal partner for this class was Jamie Briggs. I learned that Jamie was a senior seeking certification in art, grades K-12. He grew up in a small town a little over an hour away from the college. The following is his story.

I grew up living on a small farm, outside of Summersville. When I was six, my grandma died and my grandpa moved in with us. My grandpa loved me and my sister and he would spend evenings with us playing games, coloring and drawing. He loved the outdoors and taught me a lot about fishing and hunting. He would take me fishing all the time. He'd get my mother to fix us some food and we'd take it to the creek and spend the afternoon hoping for some luck. We always took paper and pencils with us cause the fish were slow at biting and we could pass the time by drawing. We drew mainly trees, mountain scenes, fish and animals. My grandpa could sketch horses the best. Lots of days the only catch we brought home was the fish we drew. For Christmas that year, he got me some colored pencils and a big tablet of drawing paper. It was the best gift I think I ever got. By the time spring came around, I had used all the paper and worn out most of the pencils. We had to get a new supply for fishing season.

When I started school my grandpa would take me. I brought home books from the school library and we would try and draw the illustrations in the books. I showed some of my pictures to my teacher and she thought I was pretty good and told me to be sure that I kept it up. We didn't have art class until I was in junior high, but I had been drawing all through school. In high school I took all the art classes I could. I entered some art contests and won. I came to Appalachia College as a graphic design and studio arts major. Then later, I decided to be an

art teacher. My grandpa still lives with my parents and when I go home, I show him some of my work. The main piece in my senior art show is a portrait of my grandpa fishing.

My immediate association to Jamie's story was my own relationship with my grandfather. I wrote this response.

Growing up I was always closer to my grandmother, in fact, of all of her grandchildren, I was her "pet," as my cousins used to tease me. When I was a freshman here at Appalachia College, my grandmother died. Only then did I begin to understand what a remarkable man my grandfather was. My grandfather was a very religious man and he loved to read his Bible. I found out that he had not finished school beyond the sixth grade and that he started working at a young age in the coal mines. He and my grandmother raised ten children. My mother was the first of his children to get a college degree. After my grandmother died, he was very sad, but soon this remarkable man recovered. After years of having his wife do just about everything for him, he began cooking his own meal, cleaning house and washing his own clothes. I learned many of the bits of wisdom from my grandfather, and he is a strong influence in my life as a Christian, a husband and a father.

Before the class was over, many of the students had shared their family stories. By the end of the class, we had revealed a part of who we were, and we were on the path to more discoveries. I continued this with the next assignment.

The biopoem is a creative writing strategy that Vacca and Vacca (2002) illustrated in the course I had adopted. The biopoem involves writing as a means of learning by having students synthesize information about a subject into a specific poetic format, with each line revealing specific information. As a further way to share their stories, I asked students to write a biopoem of their lives, adhering as closely to the outline as presented in the Vacca text.

During the third class, each student read their poem. This was Jamie's

Jamie

Creative, honest, hardworking and passionate about art.

Son of James and Barbara, brother of Julie, grandson of John, student of the arts.

Who needs art, time outdoors and the approval of my family.

Who anticipates his next piece of art, creative idea or instantaneous thought

Who gives his time, thoughts and energy to people or things he cares about

Who would like to see more people involved in art, creativity and original ideas.

Living in Summersville

Briggs

After reading and hearing Jamie's poem, I was impressed by his passion for art. It seemed to permeate all aspects of his life. This love of art and his desire to teach was again manifested in his personal response to a journal entry on why students had chosen teaching as a profession. Jamie wrote, "I have completely devoted my life to art and my time to improving myself as an artist. Art has always been my passion and I have always excelled in art classes as

long as I can remember. It is what I love to do. Teaching allows me to share what I do best with others. I could not imagine doing anything else. I have worked very hard to obtain my skills and it brings me a great deal of joy when I see my students obtaining the same skills."

I was glad that we had had this opportunity to learn more about each classmate's identity. Our relatives were coal miners and farmers. Many had family members who were teachers. Family indeed was an important part of our cultural self knowledge as we realized that all of us had generations of roots in southern Appalachia. I found, and so did the other students, that we had connections to each other beyond the physical locale of southern West Virginia. Still, roots and place held meaning for many classmates. A female student began a class discussion on the emigration of many Appalachians to more urban centers when she shared, "There is a contrast between my maternal and paternal sides of my family. The maternal side are largely coal miners with large families. The paternal side were generally mechanics and factory workers. The mining families tend to grow roots here, never leaving no matter how hard times may be. The mechanics and factory workers, for the most part, have all relocated."

A final life story that we wrote was what I termed a literacy autobiography. Carlsen & Sherrill (1988) related how he engaged his students to a better understanding of themselves and their literacy experiences by having them write such an autobiography. I wanted my students to examine their pasts by recalling their earliest experiences with literacy, both prior to school and during their school years. I focused on these various forms of personal narratives because I believe what Ayers (1993) said when he wrote, "Of all the knowledge teachers need to draw on, self knowledge is most important" (p. 129). Jamie's literacy autobiography included the following statements.

My earliest recollections of reading and writing involve my mother, a children's book and a pancake. My mom would always read to me while I ate my breakfast in the mornings. I loved to be read to and it was one of the only ways to get me to eat. I can remember my mom say, "Okay, now take a bite and I'll turn the page," and I would. That's all it took and I would devour my breakfast (and the books even more so).

I loved to draw when I was little, so if I had a pencil in my hand that's usually what I was doing. I did occasionally write short stories and illustrate them. I can remember writing a story about the adventures of my three favorite Pound Puppies, Chester, Petie and Friskey. When I was a little older, I loved to read the encyclopedias. I would usually start of trying to find something in particular, but I would end up just skimming and reading right through, especially articles on animals or art or something that I really like. My sister loved to make fun of me for that.

Like my mom, my sister also played a big role in literacy for me. Six years my elder, she would bring home her schoolwork and 'teach' it to me. She taught me how to do things like simple math and how to count to ten in French. I remember getting my first paper back in first grade and beside my name at the top it read, "print please." Apparently she also like to teach me cursive writing.

I remember being taught the letters of the alphabet in kindergarten and then the sounds that each letter made again in first grade. The teacher used a cassette tape and posters on the wall to teach us. Each day we would be introduced to a new sound through the story on the tape and she would show us the poster with the corresponding letter and sound on it. My favorite was the nutcracker that made the 'k' sound.

I also remember reading the "See Jane run" books in first grade. I didn't like those much. Those books were not my favorites. I looked forward to going home and reading my Ranger Rick kids' nature magazine that my cousin got me and other things that I chose to read.

Again, I was amazed at the analogous experiences shared by all of us in the class, particularly in this instance, the similarities Jamie and I shared. Even though more than twenty years separated us, we both remembered reading "Dick and Jane" books in school. Jamie and I also shared the memory of an older sister being influential in our literacy development. In our dialogue journal entry I wrote to him that I too played "student" to my older sister's role as "teacher." Following the class when we shared our literacy autobiographies, several students commented that they had never taken the time to reflect upon their reading as a child and that this activity had been revealing.

By the end of our first several weeks together, I learned that these preservice teachers had had little opportunity to explore their own stories during their college experience. Additionally, they seemed unaware of the importance of self-knowledge, much less, the importance of cultural self-knowledge. Having explored their school experiences, they began to realize that much of school is devoted to a standard curriculum that left them little time to explore and to share the knowledge and the personal stories they brought to the classroom. At this point I wanted to move further into our understanding of the Appalachian culture and then transition to a more multicultural perspective.

Appalachian Culture and Diversity - Dispositions

The next realm of the class's identity that I wanted to explore was their personal feeling of what it meant to be an Appalachian and what cultural traits they felt Appalachians possessed. To begin this examination, I read Cynthia Rylant's book, *Appalachia: Voices of Sleeping Birds*. In this book Ms. Rylant presented a colorful, yet realistic portrait of a land that she loved. Following this reading, I asked them to write about Appalachians and Appalachian culture. Jamie responded in his journal.

Appalachians are proud, value hard work and are dedicated to family and work. We are more sheltered than other cultures all of us living here in the mountains. Because the area is poor and more isolated than others, I believe we develop our own culture. I believe that is why some people have negative opinions about us. Most of the people I attended school with were from a similar background. I come from a small town where most men were miners. My family has a small farm where we raise most of the crops and animals for our own food. I guess you could say we are miners and farmers.

I was intrigued, after reading Jamie's entry and after listening to the other students' views, by how many of them commented on the negative stereotypes of Appalachians. For many this was a point of contention, but others seemed to see it more as a case of being misunderstood. One female student wrote, "The southern Appalachian culture seems backwards to many people, but, in fact, it is a culture made of many beautiful pieces. This culture was created mostly by immigrants who came here to be coal miners and farmers. This culture is made of hard working, and yes, even poor laborers. It is complete with Christian faith, loving families and old traditions. It is a rich and vibrant culture. It is no way backwards from American culture."

I detected that many of the students could not articulate a specific description of the Appalachian culture. They connected it to race, stating that most people in Appalachia were white, and that there were very few minorities living here. Several connected the Appalachian culture to religion, noting that Appalachians were Christians or Protestants. As with Jamie's description, many associated socioeconomic factors with the culture, specifically that people made their living as miners or farmers, or that a majority of the people living in Appalachia was poor.

To introduce my students to multicultural approaches to teaching and to classrooms where there is greater student diversity, I asked them to look around the classroom and note any aspect of diversity that they observed. In this class there was no racial diversity. The students did point out the diversity of gender. Several students then recalled that although we were all from southern West Virginia, our ancestors are varied. One male student told of his Polish grandparents and how he remembered celebrating Christmas with them. This reminded me of the Christmas that my father's father spent with us, the year before he died. I told the class how my father wanted to make him feel at home so he asked my grandfather what would make our Christmas tree special to him. Grandpa told of the tradition of hanging money on the Christmas tree when he lived in Yugoslavia. The next evening, my father came home with twenty, one dollar bills for us to hang on our tree. My mother still has the photographs of our tree adorned with the dollars, and each time I see it I recall that special Christmas. We then realized that even though we did not physically show aspects of diversity, each of us had a distinct heritage, nationality or ethnicity all within our Appalachian culture

For our next class activity, we watched the video, *Off Track: Classroom Privilege for All* (Fine, et. al., 1998) which gave my students an inside look at a multicultural classroom adhering to a critical pedagogy of group work, collaboration and individualized attention. The video presented an urban public high school where students, poor, middle class and affluent of variety of racial, cultural and intellectual backgrounds came together in a "detracked" World Literatures classroom. Because many of my students will never teach in such multicultural surroundings, I was interested in their reactions to such diversity in student make-up as well as a curriculum that supported critical literacy and emancipatory practices. After viewing the video and without discussing it, I asked them to provide their immediate reactions to the video and to their understanding of multicultural education. Jamie wrote

I thought that this was an interesting video. Listening to how the different students felt about how their classes were set up was interesting. I'm glad that these two English classes decided to incorporate all kinds of students and literature. The teachers came into the classroom not knowing anything about the students, this way they could not prejudge anyone. The teachers set the same expectations for each student and expected them to be met. It had a democratic

environment. The curriculum reflected different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The main thing to keep in mind is to make sure that students from all cultures feel comfortable enough to speak in class. One way to make students feel more comfortable is to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to do so.

Jamie was one of the first to share his reaction to the video. I felt that he and the other students had formed a positive reaction to the video but had probably not yet internalized the intent of the video and could not yet apply transformative multicultural aspects to their own teaching philosophies. That is, I was not sure that these students had assimilated the multicultural aspect of teaching. When I questioned how they could create such a multicultural atmosphere in their classrooms, most suggested using multicultural literature and celebrating cultural events such as Black History Month. One student wrote, "I'll put pictures of different cultures and ethnic groups on the classroom walls." Some of them picked up on classroom practices such as group work and more student-centered discussions.

I ended this focus on multicultural teaching with the idea that practices such as the ones they had just described were merely starting points, challenging them to consider how the mainstream curriculum, particularly the subjects they were preparing to teach as classroom teachers, could be transformed to connect knowledge to the cultural backgrounds of their students. I was unsure how they would approach this since many of them did not have clear pictures of their own cultural identity. Ladson-Billings (1999) stated that culturally relevant teachers need to know their own culture and that even white, monolingual Anglo-Americans have a cultural identity. Still, my ultimate goal for the class by the end of the semester was to have them design a content lesson that incorporated literacy practices while at the same time being responsive to their students, which in their case would be southern Appalachian students. To assist the students in this task, I placed each student in a classroom setting where I instructed them to draw upon the knowledge of their students, and identify the resources and strengths that students' families possessed to enhance student involvement and achievement in the lesson plan.

The Culturally Responsive Lesson - Understandings

Our first discussion within the framework of our mini discussions on culturally responsive teaching focused on an essay by Jim Wayne Miller (1977) where he spoke of "culturally depriving schools," or, "schools that deprive students of the opportunity to see their lives reflected in the school, their experiences and knowledge legitimized in the school setting" (p. 13). Referring to Miller's essays, I asked the students in the class to reflect upon their own schooling in southern West Virginia and if they felt deprived of the opportunity to see their lives reflected in school. Jamie wrote

I guess I never thought about this part of my education much until we talked in class and read Mr. Miller's papers. All my life I remember my teachers trying to change the way I talked, especially trying to stop me from saying "ain't." Other than art, I enjoy fishing, hiking, biking and anything that relates to outdoor recreation. I never remember getting to talk about these things in school, not even in PE class where it kinda seems to fit in. I don't think I learned near as much about things that were a daily part of my life. A lot of what we learned in school always seemed to have happened somewhere else, never where I lived.

After reading this last statement in Jamie's journal entry, I was astounded by the affect such a school experience could have on a student, certainly disenfranchising them further from mainstream culture, by realizing that official school learning never occurs within your community.

After discussing this essay and other aspects of culturally responsive teaching, we discussed the final project for the course, a lesson designed on the tenets of culturally responsive instruction. As a part of the class, students were assigned a field practicum where they observed and taught within their content area. Jamie was working with an art teacher at a local elementary school. He came up with the idea of combining family interviews with an art project. Throughout the assignment, Jamie was keeping his journal of his progress.

My lesson evolved as I worked with the students and listened to them talk about themselves. The art teacher came up with the idea of making imprinted tiles out of paper by pressing paper pulp into a mold. I suggested having the students incorporate their own heritage into the works in some way. The idea of bringing the students' heritage into it is something I've done with my own work. If you look at one of my exhibits you see me, my life with my family, my grandpa, my dog...

I decided to have the students interview an adult, preferably a family member such as a parent or grandparent, and ask that person their age, where they grew up, a favorite childhood memory, the story of that memory, their career choice and how that choice has affected the person's life. Next the students wrote a few paragraphs about what they learned from that person. The students then chose an object to be a symbol of something they learned from the story and drew that symbol into a piece of clay which was fired to become a hard mold to make the paper tile. When the tile was dry each student had to do a show and tell. For instance, Erica H. used biscuits as a symbol for her art work because her grandmother told her how she always made homemade biscuits and Zach B. used a bridge as a symbol because his father told him about a bridge he used to walk across when he went to play ball as a child.

The fourth grade teachers helped their students with the writing. The media teacher helped them type their stories. I got some really nice responses from the parents saying it gave the students an opportunity to bond with their parents and learn things about them they may not have known. The students were able to develop skills that spanned the curriculum, including reading, writing, art, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

After reading Jamie's journal reflections, I wanted to see the tiles the students had made. I visited the school and found the art projects on display in the main hall of the school. As I looked at the display, I identified the tiles made by the students Jamie included in his journal entry. I recognized other shapes that emerged from the paper molds and read the stories that were connected to them: an antique radio that represented a grandfather's days as a young boy listening to radio shows such as "The Shadow" and "The Lone Ranger"; a fish and a fishing pole representing a father and son's summer spent fishing on a creek; a coal miner's hat symbolizing a grandfather's work in an underground coal mine. I was amazed at the artistic quality of the

students' work and how powerful the stories accompanying their artwork were. I was also pleased with the thought Jamie had given to the project and how he had bridged the school art project with his students' families.

Other students also seemed to have been able to connect their students' backgrounds to the lessons they planned. A social studies major created a webquest (a lesson plan using internet resources) on the controversial topic of mountain top removal, a form of coal mining that removes coal from seams high on the mountain. After gathering data from internet resources, this eighth grade history class interviewed members of their community concerning the controversial issue. Their task was to interview people who represented both sides of the argument, and then, form their own opinions. This social studies major stated that he actually felt as though he had made a difference in the classroom because after this lesson, he saw his students base their opinions on research. An English major planned a lesson on poetry using poems that she had taken from *Appalachia Inside Out*, an anthology of literary works on Appalachian culture and customs. Her tenth grade students then selected a particular cultural trait or custom that they felt was uniquely Appalachian. During one class meeting, she shared a poem written by one of her students entitled, "Baptized in the Creek."

These three examples of lesson plans, as well as several others, were what I considered to be first steps toward an understanding of culturally responsive practice. Others had not made those first steps. More was needed to help them strengthen their knowledge, explore their dispositions, and increase their understandings of the role they would play in helping their students achieve through culturally responsive teaching.

A Final Reflection

At the end of the semester, I was certain of the progress I had made in examining and transforming my own teaching. I was less certain about much I had accomplished in helping my students build a knowledge base useful in helping them create a more culturally responsive approach to their teaching. We had spent several weeks together exploring who we were as individuals and as Appalachians. We had formed connections by seeing how much we had in common living and growing up in southern Appalachia, and by acknowledging the differences not apparent by appearance. That is, we may all share "whiteness" but we have cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds that differ. In this regard, we approached culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education by only tipping the surface. I wanted to take these students beyond a superficial view of culturally responsive pedagogy as only a celebratory event to a place where they at least considered including cultural content into their teaching so that it would acknowledge, validate and affirm their students' backgrounds. I wanted them to recognize that by doing so, they would inspire their students to challenge the status quo by connecting home, community and cultural practices to a curriculum that did not illuminate deficit, but instead edified potential

As a final journal entry, I asked my students to reflect upon their experiences in the class and to reveal how their thoughts about teaching had changed or grown. Jamie's entry solidified my belief in the need to implement a culturally responsive curriculum for southern Appalachian students.

I always wondered how my life might have been different if I had been born somewhere else or had gone to school someplace else. I think I had a good education, but I thought that art might have been pushed more at a larger school.

But on the other hand, I wouldn't of wanted to be anywhere else no matter, and that's something that I didn't understand until this class. It seems like in school, not so much from the teachers, but just from the way it is, here in southern [Appalachia], it is kind of expected that we'll leave and go off somewhere to get a job. It seems that that is what school is all about, getting a job. My teachers would tell me I needed to work hard and get good grades so I could go off to college and get a job and move away, as if there wasn't any reason to stay around here. All of that school to work stuff made it real clear that getting a job was most important. Now I wonder, where were the teachers who placed value on the kind of life I wanted, to live in the mountains, on a small farm, have a family, hunt and enjoy life. The kind of teacher I want to be is the one that helps me see that where I am and who I am is ok, and that there is joy to be found in even the simple, ordinary daily life.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LESSONS LEARNED

Earlier I stated that I wanted to know what could be learned by studying the practices and perceptions of experienced educators who valued the Appalachian culture. I wanted to know how such practices and perspectives promoted academic achievement, sustained cultural competence and inspired critical action in students within the southern Appalachian context. At the same time, I wanted to know what could be learned to help teachers in their attempts to be culturally responsive by studying my own efforts as a teacher educator at such practice. Ladson-Billings (1994) and others (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner, 1996) maintained that the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy are the fundamentals of successful teaching. My findings support this. Yet, I would emphasize that even good teaching practices must be applied in different ways to meet the needs of culturally diverse students, in this case, the students of southern Appalachia.

I have completed my study and have identified what I considered to be salient insights into the successful teaching of students of Appalachia. I have concluded that the achievement and success of students in southern Appalachian must go beyond the development of a rigorous curriculum that leaves no child behind. Within the school settings I observed, the success of the students emerged from a philosophy that permeated the classroom, the curriculum, the school and the community. It was a philosophy built on the belief that children of southern Appalachia were learners, regardless of their backgrounds, their poverty or their isolation from a more metropolitan lifestyle. A philosophy reflected in culturally responsive practice that nourished roots by upholding and valuing the southern Appalachian heritage, language, history, culture and customs, and that inspired wings by helping students become questioning, informed, involved and empowered citizens to whom emancipation meant more than leaving their homes and communities (Stern, 1994).

Nourishing Roots

My vision of a culturally responsive pedagogy for southern Appalachia begins with the notion of cultural competence. I asked, “How can teachers in a southern Appalachian context help their students develop and maintain their cultural competence?” To me this was an essential question given the pervasive negative stereotyping and belittling of the southern Appalachian within our society. Building cultural competence within the southern Appalachian students would seem a monumental task since very little validation of their culture exists within the standard school curriculum. Yet, I found that this task could be accomplished by providing nourishment to the cultural roots the students had formed in their homes and their communities. Both Lucy and Shirley nurtured their students’ roots by having strong cultural identities themselves. They encouraged their students to develop pride in themselves and in their cultural heritages. They also provided many opportunities for their students to explore their cultural identities in respectful, non-threatening school activities that encouraged home, family and community to be a branch of the school’s curriculum.

Lucy explored her own cultural self-knowledge when she initiated her Appalachian curriculum in her first grade class. She began by examining her own beliefs about cultural identity through self-reflection and by recalling her own education in the school where she now

taught. As a strong and proud Appalachian it was easy for her to promote this positive image to her students. Shirley also drew from her Appalachian heritage of hard work and strong values as she struggled to implement change at her school and bring the school together.

Both Lucy and Shirley sought ways for their students to know and extol their own cultural heritages. Lucy integrated cultural discovery into many aspects of her curriculum. Her students collected family stories and studied Appalachian customs; all as part of her language arts, reading, math, science and social studies lessons. She validated their home languages by choosing not to make grammatical corrections to the stories her students collected. Shirley brought the culture of her community to her school by inviting guest speakers and readers to classrooms and to school programs. She initiated meaningful home/school connections that literally empowered her families by giving them access to formal education.

Lucy and Shirley presented positive images of their students' cultural heritages by sharing children's literature. Philip Lee (1999), a publisher of children's books, told of his experience growing up in Hong Kong, where 98 percent of the population was Chinese. However, because Hong Kong was then ruled by the British, everything around him, books, television, movies, promoted an Anglo perspective. Because he understood how important it was for children to see themselves in the media, specifically in books, he established his own publishing company with a specific focus on multicultural themes. Lucy collected stories of Appalachians and Appalachian culture and customs. She frequently read these to her students, connecting many of the stories to particular units of study as she did with the story quilt. Shirley noticed a scarcity of books in her school that reflected the Appalachian culture as well as little or no books that presented African-American characters and culture.

Each of these practices and perspectives define culturally responsive teaching that promotes cultural competence within students by making learning more appropriate and effective for them. Nourishing roots strengthens roots. Lucy and Shirley recognized this as they nourished roots by teaching through the strengths of their students, that is, their experience, their language and their culture.

Inspiring Wings

The second question I explored was, "In what ways can teachers of southern Appalachian students help their students develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo?" Ladson-Billings (1994) compared this to teaching for social justice. In *Learning to Teach for Social Justice*, Darling-Hammond, French & Garcia-Lopez (2002) stated, "Learning to teach for social justice is a life long undertaking. It involves coming to understand oneself in relation to others; examining how society constructs privilege and inequality and how this effects one's own opportunities as well as those of different people; exploring the experiences of others and appreciating how those inform their world views, perspectives and opportunities..."(p. 201). For the southern Appalachian, privilege and equality are often denied. Writing of an Appalachian woman who could not read or write, Purcell-Gates (2002) declared, "...socially and politically marginalized people are held in disdain by those who hold power. While they may be pitied and while many well-meaning middle-class people may volunteer clothes and money to help stave off the most devastating effects of poverty, there is always a generalized belief that they cannot learn as well as those in power..." (p. 133). For many southern Appalachian students this is their status quo.

Lucy and Shirley recognized the challenges of teaching marginalized students, students who, because of their language, their isolation and their low socioeconomic status, have been

subjects of social injustice. For Herbert Kohl (2000) the challenge of good teaching for such students is a moral and hard fought effort “to root our struggles for social justice in the work we do every day, in a particular community, with a particular group of students” (p. 14). Lucy and Shirley modeled this struggle for social justice in the work they did by creating positive and safe learning environments; by including families and communities in their students’ learning, strengthening home, school and community relationships; by empowering their students to be responsible for self and others; by helping them commit to larger social and community concerns; and by demonstrating a care and compassion for others.

Lucy worked diligently at finding ways to bring her students’ backgrounds into the curriculum while at the same time edifying their own views of themselves as learners. Her students acknowledged themselves as readers, writers and creators of their own stories. She found ways to celebrate their linguistic skills, avoiding what Purcell-Gates (2002) identified as “linguicism,” a prejudicial stereotyping of nonstandard dialect such as the Appalachian dialect. Simultaneously, she prepared her students for their participation in standard dialect by infusing grammatical lessons into more relevant, personal activities. Shirley transformed a school that was neither physically nor emotionally safe for her students into one that was an inspiration within the community. Her attempts to restore racial equity and to promote diversity allowed her students to participate in learning and activities free from intolerance. Ladson-Billings (1994) found that at-risk students were less likely to fail when they felt positive about their own and mainstream culture.

Both Lucy and Shirley were masterful at fostering home, community and school relationships. Lucy invited family and community members into her school frequently. The culminating day of the story quilt was a celebration of the activity’s success because of the many contributions of home and community. Shirley organized educational programs at the school for families because they could easily walk to the school. She planned events that involved families and community members in a positive, non-threatening environment. Her frequent visits to homes made her recognizable in the school’s neighborhood. Her students felt very comfortable approaching her because she was seen frequently outside of her role as principal and disciplinarian.

Nieto (1999) acknowledged that educators were in essence “moral actors” whose job was to assist student growth and to sustain critique and hope. Lucy and Shirley promoted growth by encouraging their students to be responsible for their own learning and for developing their own cultural identity. Lucy had her students explore their roots by collecting stories, but she also wanted them to find their own place within these stories. Shirley encouraged her students to consider their actions and the impact these actions had on others as well as themselves.

Shirley was resolute in her desire to have her students give back to the community. She facilitated ways in which each class could commit to a project that would benefit the community and promote goodwill, assistance and compassion. The entire school participated in a Thanksgiving banquet given in honor of family and community members.

Perhaps the most effective way Lucy and Shirley sustained hope and inspired critique was by the genuine care and concern they displayed toward their students. They provided a scaffold for their students as they helped them learn the expectations of the mainstream culture while maintaining their identification and pride in their home culture. Through Lucy’s and Shirley’s encouragement, affection and attention to their students’ lives, their students could now challenge notions of society and of educational systems that had labeled them as deficit. Shirley had modeled for her students the power of the individual and the group in challenging inequity

and injustice when she fought for more involvement in the school for her African-American families. Such an example could motivate her students to become change agents and to implement their actions for social change regardless of existing hegemonies.

Barriers and Struggles

It should not be assumed that Lucy and Shirley had easy transitions into culturally responsive practice. They both were educated in traditional teacher education programs, that according to McWilliam (1995) are “highly resistant to new ways of conceiving knowledge,” and where “issues of race, class, culture, gender and ecology will continue to be marginalized while teacher education curriculum is located in Eurocentric and androcentric knowledges and practices” (p. 61). Breaking away from traditional curricular practices is difficult without support. If Lucy had not been encouraged by her colleagues and her principal in that the entire school was participating in the Appalachian Studies Curriculum, she may not have ventured solely into the endeavor. The fact that Lucy’s colleagues had been enrolled in a graduate teacher education program that promoted transformation of traditional learning practices which ignore the interrelationships between culture and the act of learning and knowing was significant. These teachers were encouraged to explore their own cultural identities and to seek opportunities for their students to do the same. If teacher education programs followed this example, culturally responsive instruction could become more widely practiced.

Barriers to implementing culturally responsive instruction also consist of external forces that have resulted in increasing accountability measures being imposed on schools. Lucy confronted the preoccupation with standardized test preparation which often consumes the school day with drilling students in basic skills and teaching them test-taking strategies. This focus on high-stakes testing robs students of time that could be spent engaging them activities that would increase their cultural competence and would give them the power to take control of their lives as self-constructed individuals.

Lucy and Shirley also faced the struggle that many White, middle-class educators face—that of making assumptions about children and their families who are poor. I noted that occasionally Shirley would add comments that could have been interpreted as stereotypical regarding the home lives of her students. Ladson-Billings (2001) believed these kinds of statements are made because:

Some teachers assume the ‘right’ way for students and their parents to respond to school is the way they (and their parents) responded to school. When parents fail to come to school and participate in school activities, teachers may assume that the parents don’t care about education. Teachers (like all of us) may attribute meanings to parents’ and students’ behaviors that are incorrect (p. 83).

As culturally responsive educators we must examine our assumptions regarding our students and their families with an understanding that even casual remarks can project sense of superiority. This challenge to examine hidden beliefs can open new ways of understanding diverse and economically deprived students and families.

Four Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Educators

From the beginning of my research, one goal I placed for myself was to expand the knowledge base of culturally responsive instruction. As I have examined culturally responsive

practice within a southern Appalachian setting, I have concluded, as did Ladson-Billings (1995), that culturally responsive instruction is “just good teaching.” In this respect, I have established characteristics of culturally responsive educators that I believe will add to the dialogue.

1. Culturally Responsive Teaching Takes Skill

Lucy and Shirley demonstrated a particular skill as they engaged their students in becoming culturally competent, successful and critical learners. They taught and led their students as experienced guides as they moved from a traditional curriculum to a more culturally responsive curriculum. As a part of this move, they became curriculum creators rather than dispensers as they generated their own learning agendas for their students. Lucy integrated learning experiences for her students within their story collecting. Shirley sought ways for the school and the curriculum to reflect and support the diversity of the community. Both modeled critical thinking as they made decisions regarding curriculum and the best method for delivering the curriculum. Skill, knowledge and experience played a key role in their ability to rely upon what they knew was good teaching and leading rather than adhering to prefabricated models of instruction.

They were cognizant that students’ strengths and successes at home and the community were often not reflected in the classroom. This knowledge helped them overcome a deficit approach to educating children from diverse and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

2. Culturally Responsive Teaching Takes Inquiry

Lucy and Shirley were continually involved in decision-making activities. Much of Lucy’s work was directed by the questions she asked. Many times she was tentative in her decision-making simply because she had a need to inquire and to explore. Much of her inquiry was also done outside the boundaries of traditional educational inquiry. Lucy relied upon family, community members and community resources to help her make curricular decisions. She also engaged in dialogue with fellow teachers, particularly Daniel and Ada. Shirley also inquired into her community and brought programs to her school to involve parents and to bring in diversity. Both had questions about their students, the classroom, the school and the community. Lucy wondered how she could integrate her required curriculum with her cultural activities. She found that such practices could be accomplished. Lucy also sought to know more about her students. She could provide histories and anecdotes on each one of her students because she talked to them and to their families. Shirley continually questioned why her families were not involved in the school until she found ways to bring them in. When their questions could not be answered within the confines of the school, it was common that both Shirley and Lucy spoke to parents and community members, and visited homes of their students.

A major aspect of their inquiry was their attempts to locate themselves within their own histories. Lucy and Shirley inquired into their pasts. They examined their cultural heritages. They reflected upon their teaching experiences. They took what they learned and applied it to their framework for teaching. Eventually this developed into their entry into culturally responsive teaching.

3. Culturally responsive teaching is a moral craft.

Clark (1990) emphasized that “teaching is a moral craft as much as it is a technical and procedural endeavor” (p.252). After studying the teaching of Lucy and Shirley I would state that culturally responsive teaching is entirely a moral craft. It requires a moral obligation to engage

learners while respecting their cultural integrity. In essence culturally responsive teaching asks that the teacher will assume habits of both heart and mind in an effort to understand and value the cultures of all students. Simply put, there is no one method or strategy that can be taught by teacher educators, learned by preservice teachers and/or practiced by inservice teachers that would address the wide spectrum in classrooms and contexts for multicultural teaching.

Culturally responsive teachers also recognize the political character of education and all of its inherent ramifications. If culturally responsive teaching is empowering, emancipatory and transformative, then it must be done with conviction. It must, as Shirley modeled, promote social justice, equity and equality. Shirley enacted the thoughts of Theobald and Howley (1998) who stated, "It is particularly important for rural teachers to possess a facility for connecting traditional school subjects to questions concerning social justice because, once again, rural areas continue to define the results of injustice" (p. 160). There are results of injustice everywhere, and where there is injustice, a culturally responsive teacher is needed to help "students to develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action" (Banks, 1991; p. 131).

4. Culturally responsive teaching is a way of life, not just a job.

Neither Lucy nor Shirley viewed teaching as just a job. This view was upheld primarily because their passion for learning and their passion for teaching were intertwined. They were excited about being in the school. They became excited when their students came to them with their eyes gleaming because of the discoveries they had made. Lucy recognized that learning was much more than just acquiring knowledge, and she wanted to make her students' memories of school as fulfilling as hers were. Shirley, as a principal, felt a need to know what learning her students were experiencing in their classrooms and in their homes, and she sought ways she could extend their learning.

Additionally, teaching was so connected to their personal lives that it extended into their homes. Lucy spoke of her family's acceptance of and pleasure in becoming involved in her student's projects. Lucy's husband taught in the same school and they often worked together on projects for their students. Lucy even planned a summer vacation around a trip to an Appalachian museum to do research for the Appalachian curriculum. Shirley included her family in many after-school events. She and her husband provided transportation when one of her students' families could not get to a doctor's appointment. For Lucy and Shirley, their profession extended far beyond the walls of the school building and was grounded in the needs of their students.

Perhaps what best described their commitment to teaching as way of life was their desire always to improve their teaching. As Lucy began and planned her first year of the Appalachian curriculum, and as she finished her second year of the Appalachian curriculum, she searched for ways to expand and incorporate a multicultural perspective into her teaching. Shirley succeeded in finding ways to increase parental involvement and to add diversity to a school judged by many to have been a lost cause. She became an exemplar for others as she fought to overcome racial discrimination and prejudice within her school and community.

Lessons Learned from Preservice Teachers - Transformation

According to Au and Blake (2003), "Exploring issues of cultural identity with preservice teachers is a valuable process." I too found that exploring the knowledge, the nature and the understandings of the cultural identification of southern Appalachian preservice teachers was

illuminating. Jamie and the other preservice teachers in my content literacy class had truly never engaged in an examination of their own cultural heritage as southern Appalachians. They had difficulty identifying the southern Appalachian culture as a distinct, viable culture, although they all were aware of the stereotypical image of the southern Appalachian. In defining the southern Appalachian, they relied on aspects of race (such as “mainly white”) or religion (“Protestant”). Ladson-Billings discussed this nature of Euro-Americans to choose whiteness over a distinct cultural, ethnic or national heritage. Additionally they frequently included socioeconomic aspects within the cultural description, such as “poor” or “mainly miners or farmers.” Rarely did they acknowledge cultural traditions or patterns of speech or dialect as an aspect of the southern Appalachian culture.

Multicultural education also seemed to be somewhat misunderstood by these preservice teachers. Most could identify the celebratory aspects of multicultural education, such as their studies of Black History during February or studying the many traditions of Christmas around the world. However, they did not express a true understanding of the need for multicultural education within a critical theorist framework. Since we lacked any true diversity in the class, it was not possible to explore how an African-American, Latino or Asian-American had experienced schooling in southern Appalachia. This suggested to me that there was a need for these preservice teachers to experience more diversity within their field experiences, although such placements would more than likely require leaving the area. Also, I realized that the teacher education program at Appalachia College needed to provide more opportunities for students to examine their own cultural identities, as well as opportunities to engage in discussions of multicultural education for social change (Banks, 2001).

Finally I assumed that, although every student was capable of planning lessons within their content areas, few had been instructed in culturally responsive pedagogy. This was evident in the lessons the students planned for classes taught during the course field experience. However, after I had presented the tenets of culturally responsive teaching, after we had several class discussions, and after we had examined culturally responsive lessons, several of the students were able to develop and implement diversified and culturally responsive lessons for their southern Appalachian students. Jamie’s lesson plan involving art, language and students’ family stories was an example of how a teacher can use children’s background knowledge, experience, language and culture to scaffold what is learned in school and to motivate children to be active participants in their learning. It was also a positive example of how school, home and community can work together to motivate and engage students to succeed. This confirmed my belief that when preservice teachers of southern Appalachia learn to use culturally responsive pedagogy, they have stronger efficacy in their own cultural identities and can transmit this efficacy to their students.

A Problem for Teacher Education

As I reflected upon what I discovered about the preservice teachers in my content literacy course and about the characteristics I envisioned for the culturally responsive teacher, I began to question current teacher education program curriculum and pedagogy. Zeichner, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli and Villegas (1998) found from their research that significant reform was needed regarding issues of curriculum and instruction in multicultural preservice teacher education programs. My own findings would suggest that preservice teachers at Appalachia College have very little instruction in multicultural education and/or culturally responsive pedagogy. It seems

that our teacher education program has followed a somewhat universal curriculum and pedagogy intended to be universally appropriate for all (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

The problem then for teacher education lies in these questions, “How do we prepare preservice teachers effectively to teach all students?”, and “When most preservice teachers seek specific instructional strategies and formulas, how do we prepare them for culturally responsive teaching that requires skill and inquiry, requires a moral dimension and requires a view teaching as a way of life?” I leave these questions for further research, but I believe that teacher educators who uphold the principles of culturally responsive instruction are obliged to seek the answers. I am inclined to believe that a beginning point is for teacher education programs to model how teachers can learn from their own students and communities, and how that knowledge can then be used to engage students in their own learning and in positive social change.

A Work in Progress

In my research, I discovered that neither Lucy nor Shirley felt that their work was done. Lucy wanted to find ways in which she might include a world view into her curriculum. She had strengthened her students’ understanding and appreciation of their Appalachian culture, and would continue to do so. Yet, because their school and their community lacked diversity, she wanted her students to have a respect, an understanding and an appreciation of the cultures of various groups. Shirley accomplished much in regard to making her school more equitable and more responsive to students and families. In her search for her purpose at the school, she still struggled with the affect poverty had on her students. In the educational arena, poverty is perhaps the greatest divide, not only in Appalachia, but the entire United States.

At the end of this work, in addition to the problem I discussed for teacher education, I uncovered concerns for schooling in southern Appalachia. First, I am concerned that the proliferation of small community schools in southern Appalachia being closed in favor of consolidation will have a negative effect on any movement to provide culturally relevant instruction to these students. Since the writing of this research text, both Holbrook Elementary and Central Elementary have been closed. The students and teachers were displaced from their community schools. Shirley knew that such an event would be devastating to the connections she had made to her families. Her fears that they would not have access to the new school were realized when the school was built more than five miles away from their homes. I have seen the negative affects within my own son’s education. His elementary school was closed. He moved from a K-5 school with two kindergarten classes to a K-2 with nine kindergartens and an approximate doubling of the student population. With the change, much was lost in regard to school/home connections. William Ayers (2001) wrote, “For years now I have worked to restructure big failing schools into more intimate communities of learners... While all kids are different, in big schools those differences make no difference; youngsters and teachers are treated as if they are interchangeable parts. Big, comprehensive, competitive schools worked for some and failed for many others. Too many students, alienated from schools, disconnected from education” (xiii-xiv). This disconnection from education can no longer be the status quo in southern Appalachia.

I learned at Central Elementary that many schools in southern Appalachia are disproportionate in regard to race. However, this is not echoed in regard to the teacher ratio. Minority students, specifically African-Americans, are rarely taught by African- American teachers. Also noteworthy is the fact that less than five percent of the teacher education majors at Appalachia College were African-American. Minority recruitment in southern Appalachian

schools and teacher education colleges is essential if we want this trend to reverse, and if we want to see significant achievement of African-American students in southern Appalachian schools. Although much research of this nature has been available, the majority of the research again is within the context of the urban school.

Finally, in my research I have proposed that if preservice teachers in southern Appalachia are instructed in culturally relevant pedagogy, they will be able to use children's background knowledge, experience, language and culture to scaffold what is learned in school and to motivate children to be active participants in their learning. I see a need though for research on the effectiveness of professional development on culturally responsive pedagogy for inservice teachers.

My Quilt

In several places throughout this study I have discussed quilts and quilting. In my discussion of Lucy Vicker's classroom, I told of how her students worked on and sewed a "story quilt." In the alphabet book, *A is for Appalachia* (Peck, 2002), the letter "Q" is for quilts. The author stated, "Quilts were made for the practical purpose of keeping the early settlers warm, but mountain women had a talent for taking scraps of fabric, and turning them into beautiful works of art" (p. 32). I have always admired the many quilts that I have seen in southern Appalachia.

Reflecting upon the quilt that Lucy, her students and their families made, I consider now the possibilities for my own story quilt. What would it consist of? What pieces of fabric from the story of my life would I add to this quilt? First I think of family. I would have one square that would represent those many summers of traveling to visit relatives with my mother, my sister and my grandparents. Family holiday memories would also have to be given space on my quilt, as well as images from my time spent growing up in the small, mining community—the Christmas lights strung from light poles, crisscrossing the main street—the trains, full of coal, that I watched daily from my school window—Friday night high school football games. Each of these holds a special place in the memories of my youth.

When I think of my time as a teacher in southern Appalachia, I am drawn to the memory of Eddie, a student in my twelfth grade English literature class. As I stated earlier, my first years of teaching were not what I would now refer to as successful, if I measured success by how culturally responsive I was. During my first years of teaching, I failed to recognize the uniqueness of my students and the rich, cultural backgrounds they brought to the classroom. I taught the traditional curriculum; with the intent to have each of my students fit the identity of who I thought they should be—a speaker and writer of Standard English. Eddie was my first realization that teaching students was more than teaching a set curriculum. If I were to identify a point when I first began to have an understanding of culturally responsive instruction, long before I would ever be introduced to the concept, my experience with this twelfth grade class would be it.

It was my final year of teaching at Sandy River High School after having taught there four years. I was transferring to a new school the following year. This was the first time I had taught the twelfth grade class. These students were enrolled in the general curriculum which meant that most of the students had no intention of going to college. The majority of the class was boys who would more than likely begin work in the mines following graduation. It was February. We had just struggled through grammar and composition and were now in the second semester studying English literature. Now we were struggling through Chaucer and Shakespeare. I just couldn't get these students to appreciate literature as I thought they should. I

expected them to get as excited about *Macbeth* as I was. It didn't happen. So, here we were, the middle of February, three more months to go, and I was ready to quit. After all, I would be leaving, and what did it matter. We were reading Christopher Marlowe's love poem, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, and I thought I would try something different as far as responding to the poem. We listened to several popular love songs of the day and compared them to the poem. Since it was near Valentine's Day, I also suggested that they may want to interview their parents and ask them how they met and what their first date was like. The response was better than usual, but it was Eddie's paper that caught my attention.

Eddie wrote about his parents' first date. They had met when his mother had moved away from home for a short time after graduating from high school. His mother had found a job working in a grocery store, and this is where she met his father. He worked at the same store in the produce section. Their first date was to a drive in movie. They continued dating and eventually married. Soon they had their first child, a daughter, followed by a second daughter one year later. Two years after that, Eddie was born, but after years of fighting, Eddie's mother left with him and his two sisters and returned to her home town. They were divorced. In his paper, Eddie said that until this assignment, he had never really had the courage to talk to his mother about his father, and that he had never met or seen his father. I was touched by Eddie's sincerity and by the natural writing style he had displayed. I sought other ways to get my students involved in writing that was relevant and that reflected more of their interests, their backgrounds and their feelings. For the remaining months, I was renewed, and we all made it to graduation.

Later that summer, I saw Eddie for one last time, and he told me something that I have never forgotten. He thanked me for being his teacher, and he told me that because of the assignment I had given him to talk to his mother about her first date with his father, he had finally had the courage to ask her more questions regarding his father. Earlier that summer, he met his father for the first time. Eddie gave me credit for what he described as one of the best things that happened to him. I take no credit for this, but I began at that point to see what teaching was really about. It was about giving students what would make them all that they could be by using all that made them who they were. Teaching should help students discover "self." For at least one student, I did that simply because I took time to find ways for him and the other students to use what they brought with them as a means of learning. For this reason, Eddie must have a square in my quilt

In Chapter Three I compared my research methodology to that of a quilter. I want to complete that comparison now at the end of this research text. My goal was for my research to emerge from me, much as the quilt emerges from the quilter. I envisioned a pattern, gathered the material and stitched the pieces together and created a work.

This work I have created is as much a part of me as anything else that I have labored over. When I began my work I had no idea that so much of who I am would be revealed, and, in the process, I have also made personal discoveries that I now see have guided my current roles as teacher, parent and community member. I recognize now that identity is a continuous process of construction and reconstruction of self. We begin this process very early, and throughout our lives, education, that is schooling in its most formal sense, is a mighty force that attempts to shape us into a particular version of self, an individual who possesses the characteristics of the masses, the mainstream. It happened to me as a student in southern Appalachia. It happens today, not just in southern Appalachia, but in classrooms across our nation. Classrooms filled with diverse students whose background knowledge, whose life experiences, whose home

languages, and whose cultural heritages are not being recognized, celebrated and used to allow these students to construct their own identities and to affirm and to preserve “self.”

My contribution to the research adds another layer to the need for change within teaching and teacher education, the need for culturally responsive instruction. I have come to view myself as a radical teacher-educator who encourages preservice teachers to rethink the nature and purpose of education around the structure and outcomes of their own educational experiences. My research has convinced me of the need for reform in teacher education programs to set forth goals to nurture socially responsible, culturally sensitive, and equity-conscious teachers. The challenge for teacher educators is how to conceptualize and structure learning for preservice teachers in such a manner whereby to assist them in their development and critical thinking as they question practices and curricula in schools that continue to perpetuate an inequitable status quo.

The use then of this quilt I have crafted is a starting place for transformation-- transformation as a means of piecing together the practices that will help teachers become culturally responsive. Ladson-Billings (2001) identified these practices as understanding culture and its role in education; taking responsibility for learning about students' culture and community; using student culture as a basis for learning; and connecting students to a socio-political consciousness. My study has focused on culturally responsive teaching in a southern Appalachian setting. It is important that my research be viewed from as many different perspectives as possible. Only then will it be possible for educators, both veteran and preservice, to gain a new critique of culturally responsive instruction for all students, not just the southern Appalachian student.

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Education

2003	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA	Ph. D. Curriculum and Instruction Literacy Education
1986	University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN	M.S.L.S. Concentration in library administration and children's and young adult literature
1979	Concord College Athens, WV	B.S. in Education Fields in English (7-12) and school library media (K-12)

Professional Work Experience

1998-Present	Concord College Athens, WV	Assistant Professor Coordinator of Clinical Experiences
1988-1998	Concord College Athens, WV	Assistant Professor
1994-1996	V.P.I. & S.U. Blacksburg, VA	Graduate Teaching Assistant
1986-1987/ 1985-1979	McDowell County Public Schools, Welch, WV	School Library Media Specialist High School English Teacher

Professional Memberships

American Library Association
American Association of School Librarians
West Virginia Reading Association
Mercer County Reading Council
National Council of Teachers of English
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
Phi Delta Kappa
Kappa Delta Pi
Phi Kappa Phi

Professional Presentations

West Virginia Educational Media Association Spring Conference, Pipestem State Park, WV,
“Cataloging Updates for Media Material and Software,” April 20, 1990.

International Reading Conference and WV State Reading Council Regional Institute, White Sulphur Springs, WV, “The Reading-Literature Connection,” November 1990.

15th Annual Southeastern International Reading Association Conference, Winston-Salem, NC,
“The Language-Literature Link,” November 13, 1991.

West Virginia State Reading Council 36th Annual Conference, White Sulphur Springs, WV,
“Parental Involvement: The Essential Ingredient for Education,” November 22, 1991.

West Virginia State Reading Council 37th Annual Conference, White Sulphur Springs, WV,
“Promoting Literacy Through Poetry,” November 1992.

National Reading Conference, New Orleans, LA, “Using Appalachian Literacies as a Basis for
Literacy Learning at School,” November 1995.

American Educational Research Association 1996 Annual Conference, New York, NY,
“Literacies as Cultural Connections: Case Studies of Four Appalachian Children,” April 1996.

National Reading Conference, Charleston, SC, “Literacies as School-Home Collaborations: Case
Studies of Four Appalachian Families,” December 1996.

American Educational Research Association 1997 Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, “Local
Culture in the Curriculum: Stories of a Teacher Drawing Upon the Strengths of Her Mountain
Culture and Her Mountain Traits,” March 1997.

West Virginia Reading Association 42nd Annual Conference, White Sulphur Springs, WV,
“Culturally Responsive Instruction Through Story: Relevant, Realistic and Resourceful
Experiences,” November 21, 1997.

NCTE Annual Convention, Nashville, TN, "Teacher, Student and Parent: Three Voices Emerging Within a Culturally Responsive Classroom," November 19-24, 1998

West Virginia Reading Association 45th Annual Conference, White Sulphur Springs, WV, "Content Area Reading: Successful Strategies," December 14-16, 2000

West Virginia Association for Young Children Regional Conference, Concord College, Athens, WV, "Children's Books Worth Singing About," September 28, 2002

Conferences Attended

West Virginia Children's Literature Institute, Beckley, WV, Spring 1991.

West Virginia Library Association Annual Conferences, 1989-1992

West Virginia Educational Media Association Annual Conferences, 1990-1992

American Association of School Librarians 6th National Conference and Exhibition, Baltimore, MD, October 1992

9th Annual Whole Language Umbrella Conference and Preconference Institute, Charlotte, NC, August 5-9, 1998

"School Violence: A National Crisis" Criminal Justice Information Services, FBI Center, Clarksburg, WV, September 28, 1998

Read Aloud West Virginia Annual Conference, 2000, 2001 and 2002, Charleston, WV

WV Reading Association Saturday Seminar, Concord College, Athens, WV, October 26, 2002

Professional Publications

Lalik, R., Dellinger, L. & Druggish, R. (1996). Appalachian Literacies at School. In D.J. Leu, C.K. Kinzer & K. A. Henckman (Eds.), *Literacies for the 21st Century: Research and Practice* (pp 345-359). Chicago: National Reading Conference

Lalik, R., Dellinger, L. & Druggish, R. (2003). Fostering Collaboration Between Home and School Through Curriculum Development: Perspectives of Three Appalachian Children. In A. I. Willis, G. E Garcia, R. Barrera & V. J. Harris (Eds.), *Multicultural Issues in Literacy Research and Practice* (pp 69-100). Mahwah, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

College and Community Services and Memberships

- ◆ Division representative on the Library Committee
- ◆ Counselor for Kappa Delta Pi, 1989-present
- ◆ Division Scholarship Committee 1989-2000
- ◆ Academic Policy Committee, 1993-1995
- ◆ Teacher Education Advisory Council, 1989-present ; Chair 1998-present

- ◆ Chair, Department of Education Clinical Committee, 1998-present
- ◆ Educational Personnel Preparation Advisory Committee. 1998-present
- ◆ Division Personnel Committee, 1999-present
- ◆ IMPACT Action Team 2000-present
- ◆ Concord's Beginning Educators Assistance Program Coordinator, 1996-1998
- ◆ Member, WV State Reading Council's Student Membership Committee, 1993-present
- ◆ Member, Professional Development Committee and Chairperson of the Regional Workshop Committee of the WV Library Association, 1990-1992
- ◆ Secretary of the WV Educational Media Association, 1992
- ◆ Visited and presented programming activities in local elementary classrooms (Glenwood Elementary, Oakvale Elementary, Princeton Primary School, Kindergarten through 4th grades)
- ◆ Participated in Seniorfest and Mountain Lion Festival for the Teacher Education Program
- ◆ Assisted in sponsoring "Poetry Alive" workshop for Concord education majors, April 1992
- ◆ Presented at the Mercer County Chapter One "A Day in the Park" by providing storytelling for elementary school children, teachers and parents, September 1993.
- ◆ Assisted Princeton Public Library with National Library Week promotions and the 1994 Summer Reading Program.
- ◆ Presented "The Library Card: Doorway to Adventure" during Mercer County Title One "Pagemaster" showing, December 1994
- ◆ Member of First Baptist Church of Princeton, adult sanctuary choir member, assistant organist, children's choir director
- ◆ Judge for Mercer County Social Studies Fair 2000, 2002 and 2003
- ◆ Read Aloud Parent Volunteer, Princeton Primary School