

**Negotiating Uncertainty:
Making Sense of the Student Teaching Experience**

by

Elizabeth L. Strehle

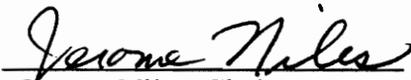
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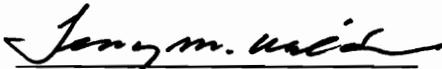
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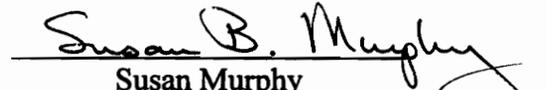
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(ABSTRACT)

This year long qualitative study unravels the student teacher's journey through student teaching as she gains entry into the classroom of her supervising teacher and begins to understand her own concept of teaching. The study describes how each student teacher gains entry and begins to think about her own understanding of the student teaching experience. Four case studies are constructed from the perspective of each student teacher's personal history and captures her experience of moving from the induction period of student teaching to full participation in teaching. As an observer in the classroom, the student teacher begins to understand her supervising teachers' classroom instruction. As a participant-observer, the student teacher begins to plan the classroom instruction and works with students in small groups. The student teacher, who is successful in developing a relationship with her supervising teacher during this period of induction, gains entry to full participation, and is given an opportunity to explore her own concept of teaching. The student teacher who experiences difficulty in developing a relationship with her supervising teacher is relegated to a participant-observer role and is unable to engage in the full range of teaching opportunities in the classroom.

During the student teaching experience, the student teacher operates in a remarkably uncertain environment as she engages in the two-sided challenge of learning to student teach and teach at the same time. To make sense of the experience, the student teacher acquires strategies such as observing, initiating instruction, engaging in conversation with others, learning to teach through trial and error, and being responsive to the needs of the students in the classroom. A successful student teaching experience is achieved when the student teacher negotiates entry into the supervising teacher's classroom and spends time exploring her own concept of teaching. This negotiation depends on a complex interaction of factors that are often not adequately addressed by the structure inherent in the field placement.

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The abyss and the light of the world
Time's need and the craving for eternity
Vision, event, and poetry;
Was and is dialogue with you
Martin Buber

Relationships have always been an important part of my life. As I look back over these past years, it has been the individuals in my life that have given meaning to this degree. I have spent many hours preparing what to say to them on this page, but after it was completed, it did not seem right to reveal so many memories that are such an important part of who I am today.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
List of Figures	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	9
Theoretical Perspective	9
Practical Knowledge	10
Teacher Stories	12
Social Construction	14
The Researcher's Journey	18
CHAPTER TWO	
Methodology	23
Design	23
Participants	24
Student Teachers	25
Model Director	29
Site	29
Westfield Elementary	29
Jefferson Elementary	30
Data Collection	31
Audio Tapes of Carpool Conversations	32
Interviews of Student Teachers	32
Field Notes from Classroom Visits	33
Dialogue Journal Between the Researcher and Model Director	33
Researcher's Position	34
Trustworthiness	37
Data Analysis Process	39
CHAPTER THREE	
Student Teachers' Stories	46
Mindy's First Assignment: Looking, Listening, Learning	46
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	50
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	53
Understanding Lessons	56
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	58
Transition	58

Mindy's Second Assignment: Student Teaching Becomes Teaching	59
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	63
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	64
Understanding Lessons	65
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	66
Alice's First Assignment: Finding a Good Match	69
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	72
Understanding Classroom Instruction	73
Understanding Lessons	75
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	77
Transition	83
Alice's Second Assignment: Making Adaptations	84
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	89
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	91
Understanding Lessons	93
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	95
Jessie's First Assignment: Making Connections	97
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	100
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	102
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	106
Understanding Lessons	109
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	111
Transition	113
Jessie's Second Assignment: Disconnections and Defeat	114
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	120
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	121
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	121
Understanding Lessons	124
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	126
Beth's First Assignment: Finding a Comfortable Viewing Place	128
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	132
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	132
Understanding Lessons	133
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	136
Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	137
Transition	137
Beth's Second Assignment: Learning "To Go With It"	138
Understanding Instruction in the Classroom	144
Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	145
Understanding Lessons	146
Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management	147

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching	149
CHAPTER FOUR	
Cross Case Analysis	153
Personal Histories of Student Teachers	153
Relationship with the Supervising Teacher	155
On-going Dialogues as Connections in Relationships	160
Relationships Encouraged Sharing About Students	161
Relationships Encouraged Student Teachers to Think about their own Teaching	163
The School Community and its Affect on Relationships	164
Flow	166
Mindy: A Classic Study	169
Alice: Consistent with Adaptations	169
Jessie: Student Teaching Stopped	170
Beth: Right on Time	171
Support During Student Teaching	171
Cohort Group	171
University Classes: Instructor, Supervisor	174
Support: School, Family Ties	174
Strategies	175
Observation Skills	175
Importance of Conversation	175
Trial and Error Problem Solving	176
Initiation	176
Replication	177
Responsiveness	177
Adaptation	178
CHAPTER FIVE	
Discussion and Summary	179
The Lived Experience of Student Teaching: A Model	179
Recommendations for Practice	190
Recommendations for Further Research	192
Epilogue	195
REFERENCES	197
VITA	206

List of Figures

Figure 1: Hours of Data Collection	33
Figure 2: Data Collection and Analysis Time Frame	40
Figure 3: Flow for Student Teaching Experience	43
Figure 4: Flow of Student Teachers Through Year Long Professional Experience . . .	168
Figure 5: The Lived Experience of Student Teaching	182

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

It was Christmas and Jennifer, my next door neighbor and I, had decided to take a break from our schedule of studying and writing. As we walked into the crowded room filled with students I headed toward the table filled with food. I carefully selected pieces of fruit and cheese from the tray. In the corner of the room I noticed a young man dressed in a yellow shirt, blue jeans and gym shoes. He seemed almost radiant. Not a state most students are in at the end of a semester. Curious about this young man, I ventured over and inquired about the events of his day. He was overjoyed at the question and began to discuss his plans of graduating as a physical education major from college on Saturday. At the end of our conversation I turned and entered the room now filling with people. I took a seat beside a friend on the sofa, glad to be quiet, listening to the people around me. Before long the young man with the yellow shirt and blue jeans approached me, bent down on one knee, leaned forward and said, "Interview me. I am a student teacher." Taken off guard I quickly replied, "I left my tape recorder at home." This did not seem to make an impression on the young man, who had already begun his story about his student teaching experience. Intrigued at his confidence and assertions about student teaching I began to listen intently to his story, told in anger.

"I didn't learn anything in college the first three years. All I ever learned about teaching I learned in the classroom from my supervising teacher. I had a university supervisor that I saw maybe once and he didn't know anything about me. All I learned in those classes didn't help me with what to teach in the classroom. I had three kids in high school and two in the elementary school that cursed at me; and there was nothing I could do. We don't learn about the different kind of kids. They don't teach you what to do with these kids. I didn't learn anything in those classes at the university. I was excited about having this one professor and he hardly ever showed up. He was so busy running around the country making speeches and opening other schools. I was only in the schools a semester. They should make us be in the schools observing our junior year since all we really need to know is in the classroom and how to work with the children. All that stuff we learned in classes was worthless. (Vignette written on December 5, about student teaching)

This story told about student teaching is not unusual. What happens during the student teaching experience that leaves many student teachers feeling all they need to know about teaching can be found in a field experience? It is obvious that this student teacher was not able to see a connection between his three years of taking university classes and his field experience. This student teacher felt he was left on his own to make sense of student teaching.

In this scenario the student teacher was overwhelmed with what he had to do in the field. The field placement did not afford him time or support to make connections with what he learned in his teacher education program with his field experience. When student teachers leave student teaching unable to articulate their understanding of teaching, they understandably conclude that their professional preparation has been worthless. During the student teaching experience, student teachers are expected to make a transition from being college students to professional educators. They are expected to move out of their university studies and into their field experiences, taking what they have learned and integrating it into their student teaching. This is a complex process which is idiosyncratic in nature and is difficult to understand without the support of an experienced learner (Dewey, 1938). The purpose of this study is to develop a rich description of four student teachers, to better understand how they make sense of this experience that lays the groundwork for their professional growth.

Teaching programs vary in their structure and what they offer student teachers during their student teaching experience. Currently, a number of programs are attempting to implement an inquiry-based program where the student teachers are given time to think and to make decisions about teaching (Bullough, 1991; Calderhead, 1991; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Korthagen, 1992; Schon, 1983). These programs are designed to have the student teacher begin thinking about the classroom. Additionally, efforts are being made to link the university

classroom experiences of student teaching with the learning experiences in the classroom. In these instances, the student teaching experience for elementary teachers in field placements and methods courses are intended to be integrated with the field experience. The university environment emphasizes learning what teaching should include. In the school learning environment, student teachers are expected to begin learning about teaching by imitating or replicating much of what their supervising teachers do. The student teachers observe their supervising teacher and how they teach. Student teachers begin to fit their understanding of teaching into the classroom as they make sense of their supervising teachers' classroom design. Kagan (1992) suggested that student teachers are more influenced by their supervising teachers than by their university supervisors.

On the negative side, Zeichner (1981) talks about the senior year experience as being a wash out in student teachers' learning. Lortie (1975) goes even further and says that teaching practices remain largely unchanged by experience or by formal university training. Other researchers and teacher educators make similar claims (Kagan, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1985; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Having been involved with student teachers during their professional senior year experiences, it is hard to believe that this could be true (Niles & Strehle, 1993). The content of the university work is so rich with new information and strategies for teaching and learning that a student teacher must be overwhelmed by the information

they are acquiring. The context of the field experience brings so many new experiences to be considered, how could the senior year experience be anything but a dynamic interactive opportunity to begin to think about teaching? Could it be that what Zeichner (1981) is measuring as a "wash out" is not what the student teachers are making sense of during the student teaching experience? What are the student teachers understanding in their field experiences? What makes a field experience successful? Is the context of their placement advantageous to understanding their own concepts about teaching? These are the types of questions that emerge as one begins to think about describing the student teaching experience from the perspective of the student teacher (Knowles & Cole with Presswood, 1994).

Student teachers find many problems to solve and barriers to overcome as they negotiate their learning about teaching, student teaching, and themselves. As they begin the student teaching experience, the student teacher is faced with writing lesson plans and classroom management (Britzman, 1991; Zeichner, 1981); things they had little understanding of from the university classroom. The student teacher must begin to understand the classroom routines. Faced with these overwhelming practical dilemmas, trying to make connections with the university classroom, is many times, not a priority. Progressive ideas fall by the wayside if the student teacher does not see them practiced by the supervising teacher or there is no conversation where the student teacher can try and make sense of how they might fit into the supervising teacher's

classroom (Hollingsworth, 1992). This happens when ^g understanding ⁷ concepts such as whole language which is a complex theory of teaching reading (Weaver, 1994).

Student teachers entering student teaching with little experience in working with students and unfamiliar with the classroom, need time to observe and discuss theories of learning they observe in the classroom. The student teachers look for how they can fit these new understandings of teaching into the lessons they teach. Often they are looking for suggestions on activities that will work. A theory of learning cannot easily be broken into lessons and taught in the classroom of another teacher who has implemented her own understanding of teaching. For the student teacher who has little time for reflection, there does not seem to be time to figure out how to teach these new ideas in the classroom (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1989).

Student teachers placed with a supervising teacher who does not practice the theoretical concepts of the university often have difficult experiences implementing the ideas they are taught in the classroom. When student teachers are not carefully assigned to supervising teachers with similar concepts of teaching, connections between thinking about teaching and the experience of teaching are hard for the student teacher to make on their own. In classrooms where there is difficulty in building a relationship with the supervising teacher, student teaching focuses on understanding the supervising teacher and her classroom instruction instead of focusing on their own concepts of teaching. Supervising teachers play an important part in beginning teacher

development (Kagan, 1992). Supervising teachers who are open and flexible appear to have a greater impact on how novices think about teaching than teachers who are less flexible and more extreme in their thinking (Bullough, 1992).

There is renewed interest in understanding how novices develop as teachers. A number of approaches have been developed to explain this phenomenon. One strand of research on student teachers examines the beliefs and practices of student teachers to indicate how change occurs during the professional experience (Calderhead, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; McDiarmid, 1990; Morine-Dershirmer, 1993; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Weinstein, 1989). Other research focuses on tracing the development of certain abilities of student teachers, such as reflection, as an indication of growth or change during the experience (Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991; LaBoskey, 1994; Schon, 1983; Shulman, 1987, Zeichner, 1992). A third approach is examining how the biography of the student teacher plays a more powerful role than the student teaching experience (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1992; Butt & Raymond, 1988; Butt, Raymond, & Yamagishi, 1988; Knowles & Cole with Presswood, 1994; Lortie, 1975). That is, student teachers have spent years internalizing views of what teaching is prior to their professional preparation. This unconscious perspective of being a student shapes the teaching role as well as influences the learning of the student teacher. This perspective of understanding the history of the student teacher, explores a dimension of how the

student teacher makes sense of student teaching. This suggests that the existing understanding of teaching influences the direction and the meaning that will come from the student teaching experience.

This study focuses on the experiences of four student teachers and how they came to understand teaching in the context of their supervising teacher's classroom. The previous experiences of these student teachers produced a lens for understanding this intensive, professional senior year experience. Each student teacher journey adds much to our understanding of how student teachers negotiate their learning during this experience and how it contributes to their development as teachers (Knowles & Cole with Presswood, 1994). What emerges are stories of four powerful and determined young women who struggled with complex personal and professional issues as they moved from student teacher to teacher in their own eyes as well as the eyes of their supervising teachers, their students, their peers, and their university supervisors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of how student teachers make sense of their professional senior year experience. The study will view this experience from the perspective of the student teacher in which student teaching and method course work are integrated in their field experience. Through listening to the conversations of four student teachers navigating their way through this complex professional experience, I heard the concerns, contradictions, compromises, and

successes voiced as each student teacher constructed a personal understanding of her student teaching experience, and her concept of teaching.

Research Questions

The following research questions helped initially in guiding this study:

1. How do student teachers make sense of their professional year experience?
 - a. What are the student teachers learning as they make sense of their professional senior year experience?
 - b. What primary strategies or approaches do they use to make sense of their professional experience?
 - c. Are there contradictions that exist within the student teaching experience?

Theoretical Perspective

In this section, I develop a framework for examining the practice of student teaching. The framework used was intended to establish the potential focus for entry into the field as well as to provide some general approaches for the use of the professional year experience as a window into understanding how student teachers make sense of their professional experience. The framework includes the ideas that practical knowledge is an initial building block for professional growth and that teacher narratives or stories are a way to access this knowledge. Further, in a student teaching setting, the construction of knowledge is heavily influenced by the social forces that exist in the learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, conversation is an important aspect of learning to follow a vital part of describing the student teaching experience (Hollingsworth, 1992).

Practical Knowledge

Bruner (1986) suggests there are two fundamental ways of knowing. One is the paradigmatic way, the search for universal truth. The other is narrative, which is knowing about the world and looking for particular connections between events. A narrative is individual events that are understood contextually, stories written in a subjective manner about the experiences of people.

As the concern for understanding teaching has shifted from the confines of the university to the context of the schools, there exists a personal way of knowing and of experiencing the classroom. Teachers' expertise has become valued as a way of understanding the classroom. The studies on expert teachers reveal a complex schema of information achieved through experience; even the way teachers learn about their practice is different (Calderhead, 1987). Practical knowledge is what teachers gain from being in the classroom. This knowledge is acquired from observing, solving problems, making decisions, reflecting, and talking about experiences in the classroom. The knowledge acquired is dynamic and open to change as new meaning and understanding is constructed in the classroom.

Student teachers enter their field experience and discover the world of practice and the wealth of knowledge available for understanding teaching. They see the value of using practical knowledge as a way of understanding the classroom. Elbaz (1981) in her study of Sarah, developed a model of teaching which reflected the structure of practical knowledge as it related to practice. She uses three levels to describe the development of the student

teachers practice: rule of practice, practical principle, and image. The **rule of practice** is applied when the student teacher uses a sentence that describes what to do in a certain situation; i.e., sharpen your pencil before class begins. **Practical principles** are applied when the student teacher is able to reflect after an incident. This occurs when the teacher brings past experiences to bear on present problems; i.e., everyone will have an opportunity to share during the week. The third level of understanding is **images**. On this level, the teacher integrates all her knowledge, beliefs, and values and expresses them in an abstract concept that serves as a guide to teacher thinking. Elbaz refers to the three levels of knowledge as teachers develop in their practice. The most powerful being the level of images. Images provide focal points and a means of summarizing practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1981). Student teachers are individuals and bring their framework for understanding teaching into the classroom. Each student teacher builds on their personal practical knowledge and expands on their understanding of teaching through their classroom experiences (Clandinin, & Connelly, 1992). The growth of student teachers is reflected in how they tell their classroom narratives. The collecting of stories told by student teachers will document the growth of understanding and complex thinking that occurs in the professional senior year experience.

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) refer to practical knowledge as a language to talk about educational experiences. An understanding of teaching is reflected in the way they talk about school. A close look at the language of the student teachers should indicate the nature of practical knowledge and how it is connected to experience. Shared stories help

to document the processes they are using to make sense of the professional experience, as well as the significant contextual factors with which they must contend.

Teacher Stories

"None of us are to be found in sets of tasks or lists of attributes; we can be known only in the unfolding of our own unique stories within the context of everyday events" (Paley, 1990, p. 12). Listening to the conversations of student teachers many times results in listening to an event of the day wrapped around a story. Often these stories are about students in the classroom and the on-going saga of what happened that day. Through these stories we have a window to look at the concerns of the student teachers and how they go about making sense of their classroom. Stories seem to be a way to talk about the events that go on during the day and make connections with one's own questions about teaching. Because teachers lack a technical language to express themselves and are not encouraged to be inquiring, often the medium of storytelling is used to capture a dilemma in the classroom. The knowledge that teachers acquire within their classrooms is in sharp contrast to the conceptual frameworks exemplified in the formal academic disciplines (Carter, 1992). A teacher's way of knowing is embedded within the classroom. Because of the uniqueness of this situation and understanding coming directly from their craft, many times professionals often lack an academic language and explicit knowledge to communicate their thoughts. To verbalize their understanding of teaching, often a teacher will tell stories of what happened during the day. Student teachers are no exception. In fact, their stories may be the single most important structure the student teacher has to

communicate about their experience.

Telling stories seems to accommodate the high levels of ambiguity that exists in the learning setting and the understanding of the classroom that the storyteller has. Stories are built from information provided by events experienced by the student teachers. The narratives these stories create become a structure that exhibits the student teachers' organization of events. Carter (1992) talks about the organization of novice teacher's concepts and the importance of remembered events or episodes that are observed in a school situation. As the novice struggles to make sense of classroom events, the uncertainties and complexities will likely be captured within their stories. Carter also notes that knowledge is organized into an explanatory framework, and in turn, serves as an interpretive lens in understanding one's experiences. The recording of these events makes it possible to see the construction of knowledge as well as to document change that occurs for the student teacher. By recording the stories exchanged by student teachers, one would hope to capture the essence of the student teaching experience and their development in understanding teaching. By listening to the student teacher, one will enter into the conversation that is used by these individuals, hear their concerns, and see how they go about making sense of their student teaching experience.

Lortie (1975) contends that there is a lack of use of a technical language and that teachers are forced to fall back on individual recollections for understanding. This construction of the dynamic classroom replaces new ideas learned at the university. Teachers do use storytelling as a means to convey the experiences of their practice.

Bruner (1986) talks about stories as ways people organize their views of themselves and others in the world they live. Teachers use storytelling to talk about the experiences of their practice. By looking at the stories told by the student teachers, one can observe their concerns and questions as they struggle with attempting to integrate theory into classroom practices.

Social Construction

Teaching is practical work carried out in a socially constructed, complex world of school (Ross, 1992). In the context of student teaching, the student teachers are involved in the dynamics of the daily task of understanding the classroom. Their experience is not one for which their university classroom can prepare them. They are discovering the contradiction of learning how university classes are taught and how to teach in the classroom. Knowledge for understanding the classroom is not understood as facts or information to be learned in books, but is relevant to the individual in the classroom within the context of the environment. The learning taking place is dependent on the individual within the context of the student teaching experience. The student teachers begin to make sense of their student teaching experience through engaging in extensive conversations with their co-workers. Active learning in this model is dependent on language and communication as seen in the context of social interactions. The student teachers use their language as a tool to make sense of events in the context of teaching. Their stories organize their own understanding of student teaching and teaching. These stories also document their experience as they begin to construct their understanding of teaching.

A linguist listens to words and gets a glimpse into the thinking of individuals. By listening to the social conversations of student teachers, the issues and conflicts they face should emerge along with notions about how they begin to construct meaning in their experience. Vygotsky (1978) approached concept development from the perspective of how it emerges in an institutionally situated activity. He was concerned with conversations in social settings and the concept of development that occurred. Specifically, Moll (1990) points out, Vygotsky was concerned with how the forms of discourse encountered in the social institution provide the underlying framework within which concept development occurs. Applied to the student teaching experience, student teachers are engaged in creating as well as reconstructing existing frameworks of teaching they bring with them to the student teaching experience.

The student teachers in this study, for example, had an hour and a half to engage in extensive conversations about their experience while they commuted to and from their student teaching assignment. During this time they began to identify themselves as a part of a community in which they shared common interests. The student teachers spent time making connections between their university experience and their school experience. In this study I felt the student teachers found that much of the sense they were making of their overall experience came through conversations they had in their carpool (Hollingsworth, 1992). The network of support that they built made the transfer of working by themselves as a college student to working collaboratively as a professional educator easy and almost necessary. This support helped them understand and make

sense of their responsibilities as student teachers. Many times, after a difficult day, the student teachers would relate incidents that happened in the classroom. In the carpool they would each talk about the incident and try to make sense of it. They found out that learning how to teach comes from teaching and then talking about it. In addition, the student teachers would seek each other out during the school day to talk or catch up on the day's events. They became dependent upon one another as a source of support and ideas. This was exhibited as they shared the lessons they taught, developed strategies for talking to the university faculty, or asked for clarification on class assignments. In these social settings, they had numerous opportunities to learn much about the essence of student teaching and teaching. As the student teachers moved through their experiences they naturally extended their network to include others, such as their supervising teachers. The four student teachers I followed, for example, agreed that they depended on each other for support. However, the supervising teacher was very influential in the success of the student teachers' experience and understanding of teaching. The relationship that each student teacher developed with her supervising teacher was unique. First semester, for example, Alice depended very heavily on Mrs. Strong and modeled her teaching many times without question. Mindy worked with Mrs. Walker in more of a peer capacity where they both were open to suggestions in their teaching from each other and openly shared feedback with one another. At first Jessie felt distanced from Mrs. June because she did not understand her. When she was able to understand Mrs. June's concept of teaching, she learned much and grew to understand and admire her. Beth felt distanced

from Mrs. Bath because they were not able to establish an on-going conversations during Beth's student teaching assignment.

School networks grew extremely complex and involved many school personnel including librarians, reading teachers, and the principal. Each school created its own intricate network of support through which problems were solved and support was found. Dialogue seemed to be the tool for communication for student teachers and teachers alike.

In summary, the student teachers were in an experience that was unfamiliar to them and for them to make sense of it often required the help of many individuals; such as the other student teachers, the supervising teachers, the university instructors, the university supervisor and other school personnel. The student teachers were novices in their profession but were expected to begin to take on teaching responsibilities. In their time of transition, the student teachers struggled with bridging the gap between what they understood teaching to be and what was expected of them. They used their resources at the university and at school to help them make sense of what they saw as contradictions in teaching. Vygotsky (1978) talks about the zone of proximal development, where there is a distance between a person's actual developmental level and their potential. Vygotsky says this zone is narrowed by forming collaborations with more capable peers to solve problems. The student teacher network provided them with resources to make sense of the professional student teaching year experience and to understand teaching. The support the student teachers received allowed them to broaden their understanding of their student teaching experience and teaching. It is important to ascertain what the

understandings are that were formed in these support networks as well as the process that facilitated or inhibited the formation of these understandings.

Student teaching is a complex learning event and limited studies emphasize the perspective of the student teacher (Knowles, & Cole with Presswood, 1994). My intentions were to listen to the conversations of the student teachers regarding their personal experiences to discover what they were learning about how to teach. As I listened to their conversations I embarked on my own struggle of letting go of my own concepts of teaching. I had to understand student teaching and teaching through the eyes of these four student teachers.

The Researcher's Journey

To come to understand the journey upon which the student teacher embarked from their perspective, I had to begin a journey of my own. This journey began by listening to the conversations that emanated from the carpool. The student teachers' stories emerged through conversations recorded as they drove to and from their student teaching experiences. To understand what it was like to be a student teacher, I began my day as a silent member of the carpool, listening to the conversations of the student teachers. Over time I became a part of the experience. I found the following thought written in my Researchers Journal on September 17; "Today I feel like a student teacher, I am really changing my thinking and perspective." I knew the only way for me to begin to understand the student teachers was to make sense of the experiences from their perspective. I kept my contact with them to a minimum, feeling my presence would

distract from the issues they needed to explore. My fear was, if they knew my research agenda, it might direct their concerns and they would not explore their own questions. As I listened to the conversations, common threads emerged that painted a picture of their experience, but for me I could not contextualize all this information. There was no meaning, it did not make sense. In one of my journal entries, I remember being frustrated by not being able to understand how all this went together. "I wonder what they are thinking" (Researchers Journal, September 5). As the study progressed, I understood that the conversations allowed the student teachers time to think about things that happened every day. Each student teacher had ideas she pursued through these conversations. It became my task to follow each student teacher's conversations and tell the story of her journey in understanding teaching.

My involvement first semester included visiting the student teachers in their classrooms. My first visit to Alice's classroom was shocking. I knew Ronnie was an important part of Alice's conversations because everyday she seemed to tell a story about Ronnie. Yet when I walked into this classroom there were no words that Alice could have used to describe what it was like to see Ronnie. I noted in my journal, "If Alice only knew the severity of the case she is dealing with...", yet as I talked to Alice her response was, "This is all I know" (Interview II with Alice and Beth, p. 2). Being in the classroom, I could see Alice practice student teaching and understand her experience. As I drove home after a long day of observation in the classroom, I dragged myself to the computer and began to work. At this point I experienced the stress of being in the classroom all day and

coming home to work on tasks assigned by the university. The two ways of understanding teaching: the physical experience of living it and then the mental task of thinking about it, were so different. I began to understand the struggle the student teachers had when they could not make their university assignments connect to their school experience. After being in the classrooms I began to make sense of the conversations as a student teacher. In my field notes on February 11, I note, "For the first time I read the conversations of each student teacher as they crafted their own story. Each student teacher had a unique classroom experience and they made sense of it through their own understanding of the students" (Field Notes, February 11, p. 2).

First semester Beth's decision to be an observer of the classroom made sense in the context of Beth's late entry into teaching and the minimal amount of experience she had about working with students. Through Beth's conversations she expressed her uncertainty in becoming a teacher. It was apparent as I struggled with writing Beth's case study that each story was to be written from the perspective of the student teacher. At this point the study took a turn and each student teacher became an individual with a framework for making sense of student teaching. In focusing on their voices (Gilligan, 1982), I began to let each student teacher show me what they were understanding about teaching. As the researcher I was pressed to re-examine my own perspective and was surprised to discover I was looking at how their beliefs about teaching would change during student teaching. After spending a year as a university supervisor, I became thoroughly convinced that when student teachers engaged in conversations with a mentor (Dewey, 1938; Hollingsworth,

1992) they could begin to think about their own teaching and even reconstruct previous understandings about teaching. When I recognized this, I gave up my pursuit of looking for conceptual changes in thinking and let their concerns craft their own story. When I recognized that I must make sense of teaching for each student teacher, I began to spend time in the field, trying to make sense of their words. The study took on meaning as I understood the experience of each student teacher. My presence as a researcher gave the student teachers an opportunity to talk about their ever-changing role as a student teacher. The voice the student teachers, acquired through being able to talk about their practice, gave them confidence to talk about the complexity of teaching. I was surprised one afternoon as I was transcribing a tape. Embedded in the conversations was a comment directly to me. "I feel like what I am saying is important and where is the tape recorder. Where are you, Liz?" (Transcripts, p. 224).

The letting go of my agenda opened a window to understand seemingly ordinary events as extraordinary in the eyes of preservice teachers. Through the student teachers, I could look at the classroom as a student teacher and was not bound by my understanding as a teacher, supervisor, or researcher. I was pressed to remove my own perspective so I could listen to the voice of the student teachers. To begin a journey of looking at others, the researcher must understand the process of coming to understand their own practice and be able to recognize it in others. One of the privileges of working with student teachers was the opportunity to develop relationships with learners. The excitement of their learning kept me asking questions until I could tell their stories as they unfolded.

The commitment to the relationship was the passion that the researcher had to continue to listen, turn the picture, and understand the experience from the perspective of the student teacher.

Through listening to the voices of the student teachers, I learned as much about teaching and how to teach lessons as the student teachers did. I was forced to put aside my framework for understanding student teaching and celebrate the diversity that existed in each student teaching experience. These four student teachers trusted me with their thoughts, their hopes, and their disappointments which were embedded in their stories. For them I have struggled to write the story as they came to understand teaching.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

In this section I will explain the design of the study, describe the primary participants in the study, and the procedures for the collection and analysis of data.

Design

Choosing a way to look at a study may restricts the observations resulting in a lack of development of new theories. Case studies provide observations over a period of time that allow for more complete explanations of events and understandings of processes that result in formulating new theoretical insights for looking at student teachers (Vaughn, 1992). Case studies are boundaries around places with time periods.

In this study the commonalties of the student teachers are bound in the themes of one student teaching experience. This community was fluid and ever-changing, reflecting the dynamics of the classroom and relationships that were developed by the student teachers. This study looks at the student teaching process in hopes of developing a better theory for understanding the practice of student teaching. One purpose of the case study is to expand or elaborate on theory. Theory elaboration leads to expanded explanation of the similarities and differences among cases and the processes that create, maintain, and change behavior (Vaughn, 1992). A look at the professional senior year experience as student teachers make sense of the complexity of student teaching and learning to teach will produce a model to view this experience

from the student teacher's perspective (see Figure 5). This model will give teacher educators an opportunity to rethink the development of student teaching and its impact on learning to be a student teacher and certain aspects of becoming a teacher.

The criticism in case studies lies in two areas: significance and lack of analysis. When case studies are done they focus on the experience of one person and do not provide generalizability to a larger population. Also there tends to be a lack of analysis in the study because it is short term and limited to a geographical space (Burawoy, 1991). This year-long study is unique in that there are four cases where the data were analyzed extensively.

Participants

The primary participants were Jessie, Alice, Mindy and Beth. These four undergraduate student teachers were members of an elementary education student teaching program at a large land grant institution. They shared similar background preparation in an early childhood education program and were completing their professional senior year experience. This experience combined a field experience in an elementary classroom and study in the university classroom during the first ten weeks of each semester. The students took a total of six, two-hour method courses in literacy, math, science, and social studies. This involvement required 40 percent of their time in the university classroom and the other 60 percent in the elementary school classroom. During the last five weeks of the student teaching experience, 90 percent of

their time was in the elementary school classroom and ten percent was devoted to the college classroom.

Student Teachers

I had the opportunity to work with four student teachers who became the focus of my look into the student teaching experience. In the spring of 1993, twenty-six student teachers were asked to make a choice between student teaching in a suburban or inner city teaching placement. Beth and Alice were roommates and paired up immediately. Jessie, who was sitting beside them, joined the group of Beth and Alice. Mindy, at this point, was in another group that wanted to teach in the suburbs. With too many student teachers electing to begin their assignment in the suburbs, the group was asked if there was anyone who would not mind switching placements. Mindy did not have a preference for where she would teach so she joined Beth, Alice, and Jessie and formed a cohort group of four that would work in the city schools.

Beth and Alice had an established relationship. They had known each other since eighth grade and became friends in high school. They had been roommates since their freshman year. They were so comfortable with each other that their language at times overlapped in their conversations in the carpool. Alice often would begin a sentence that Beth would finish. Jessie and Mindy did not know each other previously, but sat beside each other in the car and quickly became friends.

Jessie was a tall brunette who had a big smile, eyes that twinkled and a

wonderful laugh. Jessie was energetic, bubbly and inquisitive. She brought experiences of working with infants and toddlers to student teaching. Jessie used her close ties with her family for support during student teaching. Her extra curricular activities included involvement in a local church. Jessie was extremely dedicated to the academic aspect of student teaching as well as her field experience of student teaching. She continued to work hard in her classes even though so much of her energy was expended in her classroom. At no point did she ever give up trying to get it all done. As an inquirer she pursued all avenues and relationships to put in her words, "...to make sense of teaching" (Interview III with Jessie, p. 6).

Mindy was quiet and petite with long straight chestnut brown hair. This college senior seemed to be as comfortable with her hair in a ponytail, clad in a sweatshirt and tennis shoes as outfitted in her teacher dress directing a classroom of active fifth graders. Mindy's life was a tapestry of experience. At age eleven Mindy began to babysit and used the money to purchase her own clothes. She has supported herself since she was sixteen years old as one of several managers of a large theme park. During her college career Mindy participated actively in a service sorority and held many leadership positions in other service-oriented organizations. Mindy's confidence in herself was reflected in her goal of becoming a teacher, "I have always wanted to be a teacher." Mindy was aware of her personal strengths and weaknesses and incorporated them into her focus as a learner. "I am like my dad. I am stubborn if I

know I am right. That is a problem. But, I always listen to other people and what they say. When I know I am right, I know it is hard to back down" (Interview III with Mindy, p. 3). Mindy came to student teaching with the idea of learning all she could to be a teacher. Jessie and Mindy were both engaged to be married and shared similar personal interests. They discussed plans of getting married and the anxieties of getting a job after they graduated.

Alice and Beth were roommates and became best friends during their university education. Beth and Alice met in eighth grade. Beth sat in front of Alice in math. They both hated math. The two did not become close friends until twelfth grade when they took physics and English together. When they found out that they were both going to the same college, they decided to room together.

Alice was a bubbly, enthusiastic learner who always smiled. Her shoulder length brown hair was always in place when she talked to students and moved around the classroom. Alice spent the two summers before student teaching working in a summer program called SACKS that was set up for elementary students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Alice loved working with children. Her positive outlook was reflected in the way she viewed the classroom. "I didn't notice (when) other people would say, 'How can you stand it?' It is part of my day and I don't realize it" [talking about Ronnie in her classroom] (Interview with Alice and Beth, p. 3). As Alice reflected on how difficult it was to take classes at the university and student teach in the

schools she concluded,

I don't really feel like a senior in college. I feel like I have had my three years at the university and I am in transition. It is like I am a student and I am not a student. It is a nice little introduction into teaching." (Interview II with Alice, p. 4).

Beth was a shy reticent student teacher with thick shoulder-length curly jet black hair. When standing in a group with other student teachers, she often stood in the background. She described herself: "I need continuity to feel warmed up....I am making myself get involved. It is kind of hard for me" (Interview I with Beth, p. 1). Beth entered the university as a communications major at the advice of her father. "It was a practical thing [being a communications major] to do" (Interview I with Beth, p. 1). After a year she found herself looking into other majors. "I did not click with them [the communication majors]. I wanted to help [be in a helping profession]..." (Interview I with Beth, p. 1). After Beth was accepted into the teacher education program her sophomore year, she was able to get a job in a day care center where she worked with two-year-olds for the next two summers. Beth was apprehensive but looked forward to her student teaching journey, "I am a little nervous and excited about student teaching" (Interview I with Beth, p. 1).

Model Director

Sharon Murray was both model director and university instructor. Her responsibilities included coordinating field experiences for the student teacher placements and making all contacts with the city and county schools regarding the details of the placements. She was also responsible for teaching a methods class in the fall and spring. The student teachers depended on Sharon for support and for clarification of problems they were having in their student teaching experience. The student teachers felt free to contact the director if there were any problems in regard to their class assignments or field experience.

Site

The student teachers were placed at Westfield Elementary first semester and Jefferson Elementary second semester. Both schools are located in a city school district but the two schools represent different populations of students and different experiences for the student teachers. Westfield is located in an older side of town in an established neighborhood. Jefferson is located in the midst of an inner city housing project.

Westfield Elementary

Westfield is an inner city school which is located on top of a hill in an established section of town. This neighborhood school serves a diverse population of students. The front of the school faces the road and has a sidewalk that leads to the front door. The school buses stop here to let the students off in the morning and pick

them up in the afternoon. You can enter the school through the front door of this old brick building or through the side entrance. Walking through the school is like finding your way through an old home, with high ceilings, wooden floors and open staircases. The doors to the classrooms are wooden and are often left open to allow the air to circulate through this non-air-conditioned building. There are several rooms tucked away where small groups of students work. Students walk up and down the halls, moving in and out of the classrooms by themselves and in groups. The walls of the hallway outside the classrooms are lined with projects that reflect the work of students in the classroom. The principal's office is on the first floor. His door is open and he is usually not there. He can be found in any of the classrooms observing or talking to the students and teachers. The teachers' lounge is always a pleasant gathering place. On Tuesdays there is always something freshly baked on the table. In this comfortable retreat, people eat and tell stories of the classroom. On the bulletin board in this room are city news clippings, journal articles, and graduate school information.

Jefferson Elementary

Jefferson is located off a busy city street, in the midst of a federal housing project. To reach the elementary school you pass a recreational swimming pool and small community convenience store. Jefferson Elementary is located in several buildings and to locate a particular classroom you must locate the building first. The first building you enter from the parking lot houses the computer lab and the main

office. In this building the secretary is located behind a sliding glass window, and to the left is the small, inviting office of the principal. Outside the main building students walk up and down the sidewalk to get to their classrooms. Students are walking by themselves and students are walking in groups. One girl stops to fix the hair of a friend. The buildings are all different sizes and arranged uniquely, with no order to the roving eye. Each building contains a grade level and inside the building the students' work is displayed on the walls outside of their classrooms. Each classroom has its own personality yet maintains the philosophy of the school, a caring environment with a strong work ethic. "A place where the teachers are professional and are given a chance to flex their professional muscles" (Interview with the principal at Jefferson Elementary, March 10). When the principal enters a room he stands at the door and talks to the children; they are quiet and listen. When the students change classes and move from room to room they are expected to walk in a straight line and be quiet. The students follow the school rules in and out of the classroom. Jefferson provides many enrichment activities that supplement the existing curriculum of the students during school hours.

Data Collection

An array of data sources were used to document the findings for the study. A list of these procedures includes:

1. Audio tapes of carpool conversations

2. Interviews of student teachers and model director
3. Field notes from classroom visits
4. Dialogue journal between the researcher and model director
5. Researcher's journal.

Audio Tapes of Carpool Conversations

The four student teachers commuted to their student teaching placements which was about a 40-minute drive to and from their student teaching experience. The time spent commuting provided an important opportunity for the student teachers to talk about student teaching. The conversations of the student teachers in the carpool were recorded and the tapes from the conversations were transcribed and analyzed. Information from these tapes guided subsequent interviews with the student teachers and classroom observations.

Interviews of Student Teachers

Interviews were a primary source for getting to know the student teachers as individuals. The interviews provided important information on the thinking of each student teacher throughout their field experience. Three individual interviews were conducted with each student teacher and four group interviews were conducted. The group interviews were helpful in assessing how the field experiences were progressing. An interview was conducted in January with Sharon Murray, the model director. These interviews were audio taped and transcribed for further analysis.

Field Notes from Classroom Visits

Observations were made from my visits in the schools and were recorded in field notes. The field notes were used to understand the student teachers' conversations and to give a picture of the classroom the student teachers were teaching in.

Dialogue Journal Between the Researcher and Model Director

The model director and I recorded our reflections on events that seemed significant in the student teaching experience. These reflections helped in building a larger context for the student teachers' experiences from another important perspective. Writings from the journal were exchanged throughout the study. These reflections were one way of triangulating the data that were collected.

Figure 1 summarizes the time dedicated to each of the primary data sources.

Hours of Data Collection

	First Semester 1993				Second Semester 1994				
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total Hrs
<i>Conversations</i>	18	16	12	12	2	10	8	8	86
<i>Observations</i>		8	8	16			12	12	56
<i>Interviews</i>		4	2	2	2	2	1	4	17

Figure 1

Researcher's Position

The researcher in this study was used as a source of analysis and, therefore, an instrument in interpreting the data. An example of this was in the direction in which to collect and analyze data second semester. Phase two of data collection was altered to correspond to the interpretation of the data and preliminary analysis conducted first semester. My role as researcher changed from observer to participant-observer, suggesting that time in the field was important in understanding the study from the perspective of the student teacher.

The complete participant gets access to inside information and experiences the world in ways that may be quite close to the ways other participants experience it. In this way, greater access to participant perspectives may be achieved.

(Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983)

Gaining access in this study occurred in two phases. During the first phase I was more detached as I listened primarily to the carpool tapes. During this phase my connections with the student teachers were strengthened through interviews in which I revealed how much I was learning about their experiences from their conversations. From the interactions, I believe they concluded I cared and they began to make their world clearer to me. My goal during phase two was to see their practicum in the way the participants experienced it. However, the danger for the researcher, as

Hammersley and Atkinson discussed, was to be swept away in the joy of participation and not be able to analyze the data.

At the same time there is the danger of going native. Not only may the task of analysis be abandoned in favor of the joys of participation, but even where it is retained bias may arise from 'over-rapport'....More subtly, perhaps in the danger of 'identifying with' such members' perspectives...." (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983)

I have conducted extensive analysis and a recognizable audit trail to prevent my relationship with the student teachers from unnaturally affecting the analysis of the data. The direction of the analysis emerged as the data were understood and evidence in my thinking was noted to create validity to the study.

The collection of the field notes, reflections, and group interviews was a way of validating the data. The observations in the field recorded by field notes provided one perspective for me, independent of my relationship with the individual student teachers. The reflections written back and forth between the model director and the researcher added another perspective for conversations. Finally, the group interviews were a way of listening to the student teachers. The field notes, reflections, and group interviews allowed a comparison of the data derived from different participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

A researcher's journal was kept while transcribing audio tapes. Ideas and new understanding that came from the transcriptions were written down. As the study progressed, many of the ideas were written on the transcripts. As a rule, notes of all kinds were written beside the conversations of the student teachers in pen, pencil, and magic marker. Thoughts came during various stages of analysis. For example, I found an interesting insight made by the researcher on classroom management written after an interview with Beth. The writing was italicized and underlined.

These understandings [of classroom management] are a complex value system formed by the supervising teacher. If the supervising teacher and the student teacher are matched in a similar manner, the understandings become implicit. When there is not a good match, the supervising teacher's management becomes a conflict. For the student teacher to enter into full participation in the classroom, they must replicate the boundaries set by the supervising teacher and reinforce the consequences. If the student teacher is unable to do this, she cannot demonstrate to the supervising teacher that she can manage the classroom. When the student teacher is successful in achieving full participation into the classroom, many times she can incorporate her own concept of teaching into the parameters of her supervising teacher's classroom management. If the student teacher struggles with the supervising teachers' values (expressed by her classroom management), it becomes an impasse in gaining entry into the classroom. This can possibly be interpreted as a lack of ability to control the

classroom. Many times classroom management is difficult for the student teacher. Should the student teacher be penalized for a different belief system and not feeling right implementing the supervising teacher's classroom management?

The researcher's journal also integrated my readings. For example, while reading Stories Lives Tell by Witherall and Noddings (1991), the work seemed to provide words to articulate the concept of care that the students teachers exhibited in their relationship with the students. The ideas recorded in the journal became significant contributions in the development of the study.

Development of my ideas are recorded in various places throughout the data. As the study progressed, the ideas that were created many times were recorded in different types of print within the text. The themes of the student teachers were developed in an analysis book where extensive models and text were organized in an attempt to make sense of the data. (This process is elaborated further in a subsequent section.)

Trustworthiness

This study included observing student teachers in their classrooms. Thus, because the collections and analysis of the data involved a relationship with the participants, one must strive to be thorough and trustworthy (Ely, 1991). "...[T]he ethnographer in the field...attempts to maintain a self-conscious awareness of what is learned, how it has been learned" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 89).

Throughout the data collection and analysis, attention has been given to the trustworthiness of the study.

Before the study was in place I spent a year in the field supervising student teachers at one of the elementary schools the student teachers would be placed. My role as supervisor of student teachers helped me to build relationships with the supervising teachers that made my access to their classrooms possible.

Another aspect of being a researcher is to separate one's own feelings from those of the participants.

I also believe that greater self-knowledge can help us to separate our thoughts and feelings from those of our research participants, to be less judgmental, and to appreciate experiences that deviate greatly from our own. Confronting oneself and one's biases was one of the most difficult and thought-provoking aspects of being a qualitative researcher for many students. (Ely, 1991, p. 122)

Thus, in the fall semester of data collection, I wrote my teacher autobiography by gathering all the questions that had become cornerstones in my thinking during the past fifteen years as a classroom teacher. Out of this work I created several models of teaching that reflected the developmental aspect of becoming a classroom teacher. As a researcher I found the self analysis of developing ones' own developmental model

vital to explore before I wrote the student teachers' stories. There were threads of development I could now understand experientially and had worked at being able to articulate this seemingly intuitive aspect of teaching.

During my training as a researcher, my advisor and I also embarked on a qualitative study where I had the opportunity to participate in the process of analyzing data and work closely with another researcher. This process of learning how to analyze data by analyzing data helped in understanding the complexity in the analysis process.

Data Analysis Process

The analysis process was initiated early in the collection of the data. The conversations were transcribed daily while keeping a researcher's notebook documenting the changes in thinking that emerged. The data analysis resulted in an on-going process of attempting to tell the student teachers' stories. Figure 2 represents the steps of the overall data analysis process.

Three categories emerged from the data: the school, the university, and the supervising teacher. All the transcripts were coded according to these categories. After the data were coded the researcher transferred the coded conversations onto a manila folder where the text could be read in the context of the three categories. This manila folder was kept with the transcripts and organized by weeks.

The focus of the second reading of the data were to answer the research

Data Collection and Analysis Time Frame

First Semester 1993

Data Collection

Transcribe tapes and interviews, observations in the field. Start analysis and document researcher's journal

Second Semester 1994

Data Collection Preliminary Analysis

Data collection continued in the same manner with collection of conversations reduced and emphasis on observing the student teacher increase.

Data Analysis First Phase

First analysis: The data was first read and coded in the categories of school, university, and cooperating teacher.

Second analysis: The data was read and the research questions were addressed: How are the student teachers making sense of student teaching?

Third analysis: Data on each student teacher was placed in a notebook. From this information each student teacher's story was written as themes of what she was learning. Themes that emerged: induction into the school culture, relationships with cooperating teacher, teaching lesson, finding voice

Fourth analysis: The student teachers story was written this time from the perspective of their movement through the student teaching experience.

Data Analysis Second Phase

Transcribe tapes, document researchers journal, focus on emerging themes: schools, lesson, students, and self.

Summer Semester & Fall 1994

Data Collection/Analysis

Transcribe tapes, document researcher's journal, reading of reflections, find emerging themes, created from students.

The student teachers stories were rewritten to fit into a framework that emerged from the themes of student teaching.

Spring Semester 1995

Fifth analysis: The cross case analysis consisted of comparing the similarities and differences of the student teachers' experiences during their year long experience.

Figure 2

questions: "What are the student teachers making sense of during their student teaching experience?" The manila folder again was used to organize the text that addressed this question. As this text came together in the manila folder, it seemed that each student teacher was making sense of student teaching in her own way, in her own context, using their own concept of teaching. What the student teachers were making sense of seemed to emerge through understanding each student teacher. The next step was to categorize the data by student teachers. Four different notebooks were created to record the data collected on each student teacher.

The third analysis came from reorganizing all of the data into four different notebooks. A story was then written telling how each student teacher made sense of student teaching during their field experience. In each student teacher book small vignettes were included that reflected a classroom visit. These student teacher stories helped to frame questions or put together ideas about each student teacher. As their stories developed, themes emerged that were specific to each student teacher's experience. Some of the themes that emerged were reciprocity of learning, ethic of caring, and concept of teaching. Themes were unique to each student teacher and woven into the general categories selected to tell the student teacher story; e.g., understanding classroom instruction, building a relationship with the supervising teacher, understanding and conducting classroom management, understanding lessons, and understanding the complexity of student teaching.

After the themes were established for each student teacher, it appeared advantageous to organize a structure for talking about the movement of the student teacher through the year-long experience of student teaching. I decided to first use a sequential explanation of the student teacher's movement through their experience. I labeled this the flow of student teaching. Analyzing the flow for each student rendered four basic categories: observer, participant-observer, co-participant and teacher (see Figure 3).

Each student teacher began her new placement as an observer. When the student teachers entered their classrooms they were anxious to uncover the complexity of their supervising teachers' concept of teaching. They observed the interaction of the supervising teacher with the students during classroom instruction. This time of observation and reflection gave the student teacher time to figure out how she could fit her own concept of teaching into the classroom. As an observer she became familiar with the routines of the classroom and engaged in small clerical tasks such as grading papers and working with the students at their desks. As the student teacher moved from being an observer to becoming a participant-observer, she began to instruct students in small groups. These lessons were usually university assignments such as teaching a reading lesson or implementing a writing task. As the student teacher developed relationships with the students and understood the instructional needs of the learners, she gained confidence to teach to the whole class. During this time of

Developmental Flow of Student Teachers

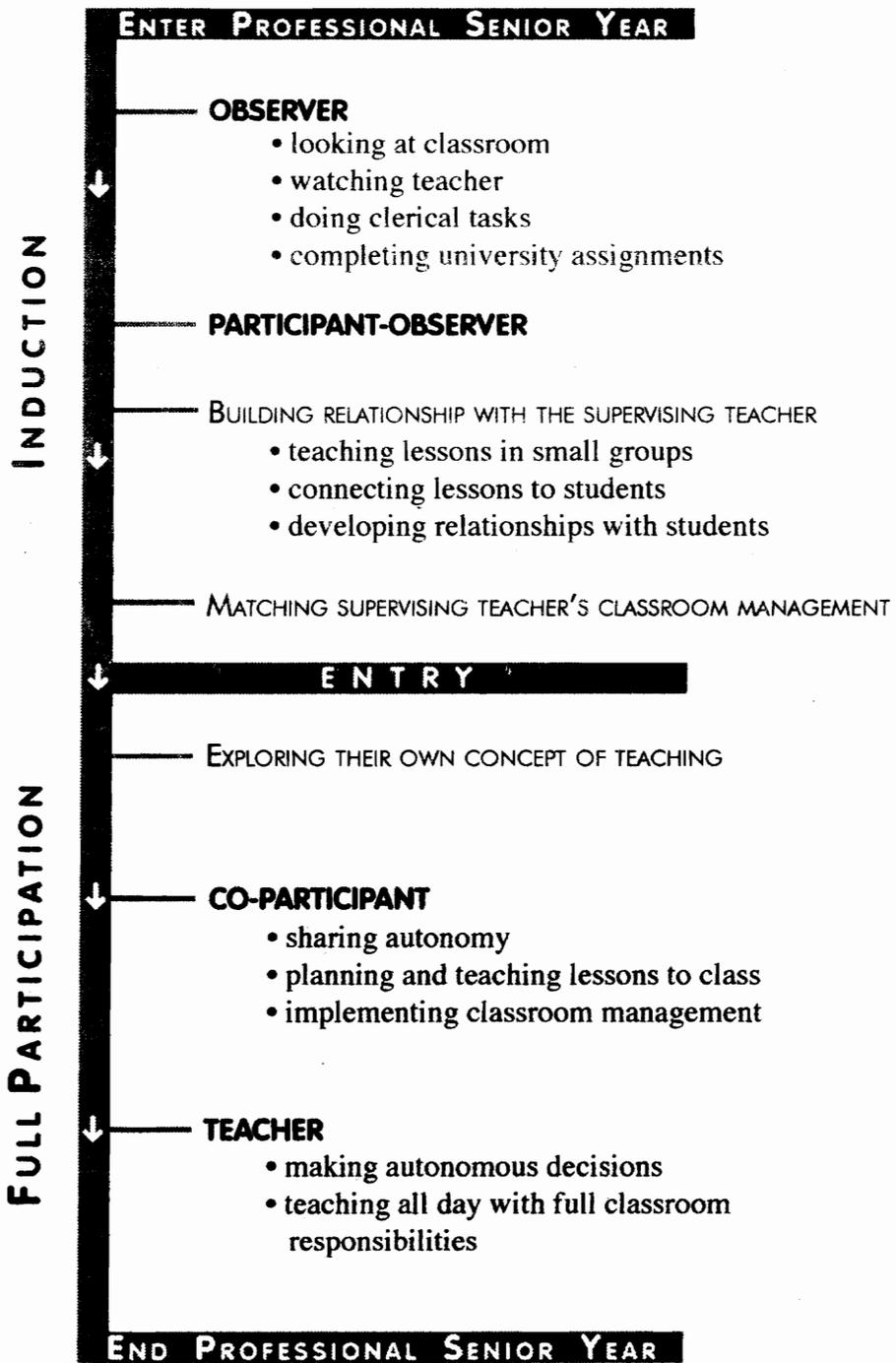


Figure 3

induction, the student teacher became familiar with the supervising teacher's classroom. If the supervising teacher felt confident that the student teacher could run her classroom, she was then allowed to enter into full participation of student teaching where she could identify herself as teacher and began to take over major instructional responsibilities such as teaching lessons to the entire class and being responsible for the students as they made transitions from activity to activity. As a co-participant the student teacher and supervising teacher shared the classroom responsibilities. During this time the supervising teacher felt confident in leaving the classroom, with the student teacher responsible for the activities of the classroom. The student teachers who had the opportunity to conduct the classroom instruction in collaboration with their supervising teachers shared the role of teacher. This allowed the student teacher to make sense of the classroom with a professional.

In classrooms where the student teacher became autonomous and taught by herself, she assumed the responsibilities of classroom instruction throughout the day and was responsible for the students' learning. The supervising teachers in these classrooms chose to allow the student teacher to teach by herself. Each student teacher moved through the stages of observer, participant-observer, co-participant, and teacher according to her own readiness to teach and in response to her supervising teacher and her classroom.

The student teachers' stories were written in a descriptive narrative that

presents tales of human triumph and failure in hopes of gaining an understanding about the craft of teaching (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1992). My intention was to present the case so that the reader could glean a general sense of how the student teachers' year unfolded and to highlight features of their experiences. My hopes were to capture in the stories the essence of student teaching. Thus, I constructed the cases first by the individual flow through their assignments (see Figure 4). A transition statement was intended to bridge the description of the two assignments by summarizing the previous experience with regard to the upcoming assignment. The second assignment was treated identically to the first. That is, to describe the flow of the experience and then elaborate on how themes were meaningful to each student teacher. The cross case analysis was used to compare the four student teachers and looked at the similarities and differences that existed in their experiences with regard to the first and second semester. Teaching placements for each student teacher were also compared. Finally, a model of the lived student teaching experience was developed from this cross case analysis that I believe represents the major aspects of student teaching.

CHAPTER THREE

Student Teachers' Stories

Mindy's First Assignment: Looking, Listening, Learning

Mindy went to her first student teaching assignment with an extensive history of working with adults and an ability to solve problems. Mindy's eagerness to begin teaching was reflected when she talked about the classroom,

I just know I want to learn. And when I get into it [student teaching], I don't want to sit in the back [of the classroom]. I know it is good to observe and stuff...[but] I'd like to get involved [with the students]. I think it would be easier to get involved at first. (Interview I with Mindy, p. 1)

In September, Mindy began her student teaching experience as an observer in Mrs. Walker's fifth grade classroom at Westfield Elementary. The first week of school Mindy reflected on student teaching, "I have my own feelings of how I want to do things" (Interview I with Mindy, p. 5). Mindy was confident in her ability to teach and was eager to begin working with the students. Her enthusiasm was evident as she began to initiate activities for the students during the first week of school. "I read this little activity about passing out cards to the kids" (Transcripts, p. 2). Mindy looked for activities she thought the students would enjoy. She talked about her feelings about getting involved in the classroom, "I don't like to sit behind the desk. I sit next to the kids in one of those reading chairs" (Transcripts, p. 3). Mrs. Walker's classroom was arranged in small groups so the

students could work together. "We [Mrs. Walker and I] don't really do lessons, we don't sit out in front and teach them ideas" (Transcripts, p. 58). Mindy quickly understood that the classroom unfolded a complex understanding of Mrs. Walker's concept of teaching. The classroom instruction was embedded in the arrangement of the desks where the students were asked to work in groups to complete assignments.

Mindy quickly became a participant-observer, not willing to sit back and observe. Mindy felt her university supervisor wanted her to move more slowly when she commented, "I had to fight to do anything. They [the university] don't want us to do much at first" (Interview II with Mindy, p. 3). Mindy's intensity in wanting to be involved was supported by her supervising teacher, Mrs. Walker. Mindy planned lessons that incorporated the students in activities like discussion and role playing. After teaching a lesson on atoms, Mindy related, "We role played and discussed [being an atom]. I asked the students, 'Do you remember what you did outside? What did you do? Now, write about it'" (Transcripts, p. 119). Mindy found her relationship with Mrs. Walker allowed her to participate as a co-teacher. When Mrs. Walker was not in the room, the students responded to Mindy as the teacher. One morning when a substitute was taking Mrs. Walker's class Mindy talked about the students' reaction. "There is a substitute. She does not know what she is doing. The kids think I am the teacher and she is the student teacher" (Transcripts, p. 131). Because Mrs. Walker set up a co-teaching relationship with Mindy, being the teacher was what the students expected, and in turn, they listened to her as the teacher. Because Mindy worked with the students every day, she felt

comfortable in making instructional decisions. For example, one afternoon Mindy decided to extend the time she had allotted reading that morning from 25 to 45 minutes. "It was only suppose to be 25 minutes but I made it 45. Then I talked about it [the lesson] the rest of the day" (Transcripts, p. 1). Mindy was comfortable making adjustments to her lessons to fit the needs of the students. Mindy's role as teacher in the classroom made rescheduling the morning reading lesson part of the unfolding of the day.

Through observing the way Mrs. Walker interacted with the students, Mindy understood that the classroom instruction was intricately woven into the behavioral management of the classroom. Mindy listened to the way Mrs. Walker responded to the students during instructional time. "You never tell a kid he is wrong. You accept every answer and try to work it in a different direction....She [Kiesha] threw me for a loop and I couldn't redirect that it [her answer] was totally off base" (Transcripts, p. 223). Through observing Mrs. Walker interact with the students, Mindy understood that accepting the students' answers was important in valuing them as members of the learning community. Mindy, through her observations and participation, saw the classroom design, classroom instruction, and behavioral management defined in Mrs. Walker's concept of teaching. Because Mindy and Mrs. Walker had on-going conversations, Mindy was confident in understanding her role in the classroom.

By the sixth week of student teaching, Mrs. Walker and Mindy planned the classroom activities together. When Mrs. Walker was abruptly called out of the room, Mindy had no problems taking over the classroom instruction where Mrs. Walker left off.

Even during instruction, there was continuous conversations going on between Mrs. Walker and Mindy. The focus of the classroom instruction became connecting the lessons with what the students knew. Mrs. Walker made learning in the classroom as comfortable for Mindy as she made it for the students.

Mrs. Walker invited Mindy to try out her ideas and allowed her to incorporate her own concept of teaching into the lessons. "She has told me I can do whatever!" (Interview I with Mindy, p. 4). Mrs. Walker willingly listened to Mindy and gave her feedback after she taught a lesson and suggestions to improve her instruction. Mindy recalled, "Whatever you want to do...I want to look at it first and talk about it....Don't be afraid to make mistakes" (Interview I with Mindy, p. 4). Mindy quickly understood that learning how to be a teacher takes lots of practice. The tone of acceptance that Mrs. Walker set allowed Mindy to explore her own teaching.

As a co-participant, Mindy became comfortable teaching throughout the day. Mindy reflected, "I taught three days already. The plans were already there. I came in and read the plans and did it that way" (Transcripts, p. 157). By November, Mrs. Walker was comfortable with walking in and out of the classroom and leaving Mindy to take over the classroom responsibilities. Mindy found she was able to reinforce the classroom management that was woven into the classroom instruction. When the students got too loud and their talking became disruptive, language was no longer a useful tool for learning. Mindy related an incident where she reinforced the classroom boundaries for learning. "I told everyone to sit in their seats. I didn't want a word" (Transcripts, p. 93).

At this point in Mindy's student teaching, she was able to make decisions without fear of not being their friend. She defined herself as the teacher in this classroom.

Several themes emerged that highlighted Mindy's year-long student teaching experience. These themes created a lens for Mindy to begin to understand her supervising teacher's concept of teaching as well as her own. The salient themes for Mindy were (1) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, (2) understanding and conducting classroom management, (3) understanding lessons; and, (4) understanding the complexity of student teaching.

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

Mindy and Mrs. Walker developed a professional relationship that allowed Mindy to understand Mrs. Walker's concept of teaching. Conversations in the classroom were tools to make connections with Mrs. Walker, Mindy, and the students. Understanding the classroom instruction emerged for Mindy through these on-going conversations. Mindy reflected,

I would ask Mrs. Walker, "Why did you do it this way?" After a lesson, she would ask me what I thought [about a lesson]. I did things on my own and she would tell me what she thought. (Interview II with Mindy, p. 3)

Mindy asked for feedback from Mrs. Walker after she had taught her lesson. After teaching a lesson on atoms, which consisted of the students becoming atoms, Mrs. Walker commented that the questions Mindy asked afterwards were too complicated. "Write out

separate questions. ..[You] can't have a two part question in one question" (Transcripts, p. 119). Conversations like this allowed Mindy to talk to Mrs. Walker about the classroom instruction she planned and taught. The feedback Mindy received from Mrs. Walker created a need for Mindy to begin to assess her own teaching. With the support of Mrs. Walker, Mindy felt free to try out her ideas. "I make mistakes. I am human" (Interview III with Mindy, p. 2). Even during classroom instruction Mindy felt comfortable asking Mrs. Walker to step in when she got stuck. When this happened Mindy recalled, "I was so nervous [when I was teaching] I just forgot. I asked Mrs. Walker for a word [I had forgotten]" (Transcripts, p. 200). The communication between the supervising teacher and the student teacher flowed throughout the day. This communication made the response to classroom routines clear for both teachers. Eventually, Mindy identified herself as the teacher as she recalled, "I was teaching. Mrs. Walker was helping" (Transcripts, p. 190).

The cooperative relationship established through sharing the role of teacher, allowed Mrs. Walker and Mindy to respond as learners, working together to understand the classroom. Through on-going conversations throughout the day, Mindy found she made connections to what Mrs. Walker was doing in her classroom and placed it into a larger context of understanding her own thinking about teaching.

Mrs. Walker provided opportunities for Mindy to meet the other teachers in the building by including her in the daily routine of lunch and grade level meetings. Mrs. Walker considered Mindy a colleague with whom she worked and planned. Through

interactions with other professionals, Mindy was able to see the role other professionals played in Mrs. Walker's teaching. Mindy recalled,

I think it is important to work with other teachers. I thought she had everything [teaching supplies] but she always went to Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Puppet and it is good to have that type of relationship....It is neat the way the grade levels talk and communicates. (Interview II with Mindy, p. 4)

Mrs. Walker modeled in and out of her classroom that she valued the conversation of her colleagues because of the understanding they brought to her concept of teaching. Mrs. Walker's collaborative concept of teaching was reflected in the way she worked with other teachers in her school as well as the way she constructed learning in her classroom. Her classroom was arranged as a community so the students could enjoy the same type of interaction with each other as she had with the other teachers in the school.

Because of Mrs. Walker's willingness to make learning meaningful to all the students, she listened to what the students said. One afternoon Mindy and Jessie were waiting in the car for Alice and Beth, when three students in Mindy's fifth grade class walked up to the car. The conversation started off on the topic of boys and ended up on the seating arrangement in the classroom. "We are always in the same group, working with the same kids, I wish we could change groups" (Transcripts, p. 216). Mindy told the girls that she would talk to Mrs. Walker about rearranging the groups. Mindy and Mrs. Walker had often arranged the students in the groups but were not aware some of the

students were not being changed. Through listening to the students, Mindy was able to consider changes that would make learning more enjoyable.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

Mrs. Walker's classroom instruction was woven into her classroom management. The students worked as a community of learners in a collaborative effort to make sense of the lessons. In this community each learner was responsible for the assignments made by Mrs. Walker. In the following case, Mrs. Walker was working with a student who was having difficulty keeping up with her assignments. To help the student, Mrs. Walker would write out the assignment in a notebook and give it to her.

Mrs. Walker writes everything out in a notebook [for this special needs student].

You say to her face "Did you hear me?" Today we [were] doing spelling and she was to do sentences for homework. Mrs. Walker was like, "Can I have your sentences?" And she [the student] said, "Okay," and she never brought them to her. Mrs. Walker asked again. Finally she [Mrs. Walker] went over to her and said, "I need your spelling words," and then she said she had left them at home.

(Transcripts, p. 222)

Mrs. Walker individualized her instruction so that each student could be successful. Mindy realized assignments needed to be appropriate for all learners. This fifth grade classroom valued the student's participation in the classroom and each lesson was designed to engage the individual in learning through the use of language and appropriate tasks.

Mrs. Walker and Mindy acted as facilitators of learning, helping each student to be successful. The manner in which Mrs. Walker facilitated the learning of this child reflected the importance of each student's connection to each assignment and how the teacher accomplished this task. Students were valued in this classroom and learned to value each other as well. Mindy talked about the class's response to this special needs student, "My kids help each other. The kids are very protective of her, if she is the only one that messes up the kids are like, 'that is okay'. They never ever yell at her" (Transcripts, p. 222). As the students worked in teams, they developed caring relationships for one another. "They never ever yell at her." Cooperative learning in this environment gave the students opportunities for relationships to be built as well as sharing each other's ideas. From the classroom emerged expectations of working together. It was easy to see that everyone was responsible for getting their work done and the teacher and students helped remind each other of their responsibilities. The class was designed so that learning and responsibility were practiced by the community of learners. Mindy understood the classroom management of establishing boundaries was woven into Mrs. Walker's cooperative learning design of classroom instruction.

A process of exploring, thinking, and working together was woven into this fifth grade classroom. Mindy found she was responsible for reinforcing these learning expectations. Mindy had to learn when the children were pushing the boundaries. When conversations turned into noise and learning turned into chaos, Mindy found that as she took over more classroom responsibilities the students tested these boundaries. She

seemed to have no difficulty responding as the teacher and reinforcing the classroom boundaries.

I turned off the lights. "I said put your heads down." Today I was being tough because they were not being cooperative. I had to be mean. I told everyone to sit in their seats. I didn't want a word. (Transcripts, p. 93)

Mindy found she was able to direct the students' behavior when she needed to. In this instance the students were moving beyond what was considered acceptable classroom behavior. Mindy demonstrated an understanding of how to reinforce the boundaries of the classroom when she turned out the lights and told the students to put their heads down. Even though she was able to direct the student's learning she indicated that she felt mean, "I had to be mean today." Taking over her supervising teacher's classroom management was not difficult but restating boundaries seemed to be harsh for Mindy, who had connected with the students and was now establishing herself as the classroom teacher. Mindy's understanding of classroom management was limited to the experience she has had in working with four- and five-year-olds in a developmentally appropriate university laboratory school. Mindy's understanding of classroom management included gently guiding students in the classroom and allowing them to make decisions about what they wanted to learn. Although Mindy was able to interweave the classroom management of Mrs. Walker into her own teaching style, when the students acted out she felt mean. Mindy struggled with the importance of connecting with the students and not controlling

their behavior. As she turned out the lights, she found there was a struggle in how to respond to the students in a manner different from her own understanding of classroom management. As the semester continued, Mindy felt comfortable moving from being the students' friend to the role of the classroom teacher, reinforcing the classroom boundaries.

Understanding Lessons

Much of Mindy's time during her first semester was spent with Alex, a special needs student, who had difficulty fitting into the established classroom boundaries. Mindy helped direct Alex's attention by working with him one-on-one. Mindy let Alex know she cared about him through developing their friendship. One afternoon while working together she playfully asked him, "Are you my buddy? Who told you that? I don't remember telling you, you were my buddy!" (Transcripts, p. 161). Her playful relationship with Alex helped her communicate her concern for him as a person.

Mindy helped Alex complete his classroom assignments as well as developed a caring relationship with him. She expected him to be responsible and learn as the other children did, and provided alternative strategies for him to succeed in the classroom.

During math class I had to take him out, he was so destructive. I said, 'You have to finish your work in 30 minutes. Alex what is $6+1$?' I was getting really mad. I would help him. I knew he could do his work. (Transcripts, p. 190)

Mindy worked with Alex on his assignments in the classroom and took him out of the room when his behavior seriously violated classroom boundaries. When Alex could not

concentrate on his assignment, Mindy took him outside to walk around the school building or had private conversations with him. She listened to Alex. She expected him to listen to her. The relationship Mindy developed with Alex helped her to understand the importance of listening. Listening was critical in making connections with the students. Mindy listened to the students and adjusted her teaching. Mindy expected Alex to listen to her also.

Mindy discovered that understanding how to teach a lesson came from listening to Mrs. Walker's feedback about her lessons. When trying to figure out how to teach a lesson on nouns, verbs, and adverbs; Mindy recalled what her supervising teacher told her to do, "Misty [Mrs. Walker] said...'Why don't you tell them what each one of them [noun, pronoun, adverb] are? Write this on the board....'" (Transcripts, p. 49). In becoming a learner in the classroom Mindy recognized she must listen to understand how to become a part of the community. Because Mindy was listening to the students and her supervising teacher, she was able to connect lessons with the students and fit her concept of teaching into this classroom. "I am always changing my lesson plans. When I was trying things I would say [to Mrs. Walker], 'What do you think about this?'" (Interview II with Mindy, p. 1). Mindy demonstrated her willingness to pursue how to connect her lessons with the students by listening to Mrs. Walker's feedback.

In this classroom listening and learning became an on-going process of making sense of the classroom instruction. Mrs. Walker and Mindy moved back and forth sharing the role of teacher. Mindy had the unique experience of working with a supervising

teacher who considered herself a learner. "Mrs. Walker said she learned [about teaching] from me" (Interview III with Mindy, p. 1). Learning in this environment came through listening and making changes for both Mrs. Walker and Mindy.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

Mindy seemed to have an ability to change her teaching through observing and participating as a member of this community. Mindy recalled what Mrs. Walker said about one of her lessons, "Some of my questions were like on the college level, even though they were simple, they were complex" (Transcripts, p. 119). Mindy had no problem listening to the comments of her supervising teacher and students. In fact, she responded positively to comments, whether they were personal or professional. There was a cycle of her listening and then reflecting to gain understanding of the classroom. Through this, Mindy came to understand herself as a learner who was willing to change her concept of teaching.

Transition

In her first placement Mindy was introduced to an understanding of the classroom through a rich and satisfying collaborative look at teaching. Mindy gained professional entry into the classroom by establishing a relationship with the supervising teacher where she began to co-teach with Mrs. Walker. Mindy and Mrs. Walker shared the responsibilities of teaching through daily conversations that resulted in a curriculum that emerged from the classroom. Mindy relied heavily on conversations with Mrs. Walker to plan her lessons and think about her own teaching. Mindy had an opportunity to co-

participate with Mrs. Walker and understand her role as a teacher in this classroom.

In working with the students, she recognized she must change how she teaches, "I have seen the guys [students in the first placement] and the guys in the second placement and you can't do things the same" (Transcripts, p. 322).

Mindy was excited about moving to another part of the city to student teach second semester. The change in her assignment meant understanding another supervising teacher's perspective of "what is a classroom?" (Interview II with Mindy, p. 8).

Everyday things are changing. You are always going to learn something and just teaching itself—that is me learning—that is me experiencing! It is, I guess, what I am excited about! That it is a different grade and different learning and different set of kids—I am not scared! (Interview II with Mindy, p. 9)

Mindy's Second Assignment: Student Teaching Becomes Teaching

Mindy began her second assignment teaching with Mrs. Baker in a third grade classroom. At Jefferson Elementary, Mindy observed Mrs. Baker use a teacher-directed instructional approach to teaching. During classroom instruction, the students were expected to sit at their seats quietly. To maintain a quiet classroom Mindy needed to learn to replicate the management techniques of her new supervising teacher and rethink the role of language and how it was used in Mrs. Baker's class. Classroom management was not a focus for Mindy first semester because the classroom boundaries were woven into the cooperative learning in her teacher's classroom instruction; learning and behavior were

woven into the expectations of the students by the teacher. In learning how to implement classroom management, apart from learning how to teach the students, Mindy found herself discussing techniques such as changing the tone of her voice. This topic was of interest to Alice, Beth, Jessie, and Mindy because they are all experiencing the same dilemma in their classrooms. The class organization and structure was one that took time for Mindy to understand. "It is a different set of kids....I teach skills. You can't do things the same [as they were done last semester]. I have learned to be flexible" (Transcripts, p. 310).

On her first visit to the classroom, Mindy began teaching right away. She did this by helping the students at their seats and teaching a lesson for the substitute teacher. She had no problem starting off in this classroom where she left off last semester in Mrs. Walker's classroom. Mindy found that there was resistance to her teaching right away second semester from the university. Mindy reflects, "I was teaching first semester and why can't I do it [teach] this semester. I was bored [with only observing], I was going to do it [student teach]" (Transcripts, p. 291). Mindy found her eagerness to teach gave her the confidence to make the necessary changes for the students to accept her in her role as the teacher in this classroom.

In Mrs. Baker's classroom, Mindy discovered that the classroom instruction incorporated the importance of structure in the classroom. When talking to Mrs. Baker she recalled, "She told me they still need their structure but they are allowed to do other things. I don't know what that means [now] but I am going to have to teach in a different

way" (Transcriptions p. 322). As a participant-observer Mindy had time to think about how she would incorporate structure in Mrs. Baker's classroom. Mindy understood that she had to fit her own concept of teaching into Mrs. Baker's classroom. She started this process by thinking about the classroom design. During reading instruction, Mindy arranged the students in a small group to make her lessons easier to carry out. She brought into the classroom a small table. When Mindy spoke to Mrs. Baker about this change, her supervising teacher replied, "I really don't want you to do that all of the time...we all have our own place" (Transcripts, p. 325). Mindy began to understand that Mrs. Baker's classroom arrangement was important in the way she taught her students. Mindy realized that when she left, the students would have to go back to large group instruction.

Mindy found that replicating Mrs. Baker's classroom management was necessary to teach in the classroom. In this teacher-directed classroom, Mrs. Baker directed the students' learning. Mindy responded to this by saying, "I am going to have to teach in a different way. It might not be in the way that I would teach, but that is what I am going to have to do. That is what is expected and that is what she told me" (Transcripts, p. 322). Mindy understood instruction in this new placement. The students had a place in the classroom and they followed classroom rules. Mindy needed to learn to accommodate this management style in her understanding of teaching.

In the mornings when Mindy arrived at Jefferson Elementary she found the students were beginning to arrive also. This made talking and planning with Mrs. Baker

difficult. Mindy found that her understanding of being a teacher needed to be rethought as she tried to figure out Mrs. Baker's classroom instruction. In response to this rethinking Mindy stated, "I can't figure her out, I am not with her long enough" (Transcripts, p. 326).

Even though the classroom instruction was unique to Jefferson Elementary, Mindy was able to replicate Mrs. Baker's classroom management and establish her role as a co-participant, sharing classroom responsibilities with Mrs. Baker. Mindy was given an opportunity to establish her supervising teacher's classroom management and yet implement her own understanding of learning in the lessons she taught. The relationship that Mindy established with Mrs. Baker and the students eventually allowed her to make connections between the students and the lessons she will taught.

In Mrs. Baker's teacher-directed heterogeneously grouped third-grade classroom, Mindy had the opportunity to teach the entire day and become autonomous. Understanding the classroom and establishing appropriate routines took time but presented few problem for Mindy as she gained entry and practiced teaching. Mindy implemented her supervising teacher's teacher-directed curriculum by using many of her own teaching techniques that included talking and exploring concepts by using manipulatives that promoted understanding.

There were several themes that emerged from Mindy's second assignment (1) understanding instruction in the classroom, (2) understanding and conducting classroom management, (3) understanding lessons; and, (4) understanding the complexity of student

teaching. These themes tell Mindy's story of student teaching as she explored her concept of teaching in a placement where she was required to understand and replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management before she could explore her own concept of teaching.

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

At the beginning of the semester, understanding the classroom design was difficult for Mindy to incorporate into her concept of teaching. The physical design in the classroom indicated a different type of instruction and a different way for the teacher and students to interact. Through observing and participating early in her second semester, Mindy came to understand this teacher-directed classroom and worked to maintain the established classroom management. She reflected, "The room is quiet. The desks are all in rows. 'Sit down.' 'Raise your hands.' The students know the classroom routine" (Transcripts, p. 280). First semester, Mindy struggled with feeling mean when she reinforced Mrs. Walker's classroom boundaries, but she found she must reinforce the boundaries that were established because learning took place within these parameters. Mindy was able to move from teaching in a cooperative learning setting to teaching in a teacher-directed classroom. Mindy found she was able to teach and at the same time help direct the attention of the students who were not listening.

As Mindy taught the lesson she wandered around the room, and tapped every desk to let the students know she was including them in the lesson. She had spotted a

student at the back of the room who was playing in his desk. By the time I [the researcher] had figured what was going on, Mindy had moved this student to another desk in the front of the room....Mindy had not missed a beat in teaching the lesson. None of the students seemed to be disturbed by this episode. (Field Notes, April 1)

There was no question in the students' minds, that Mindy was the teacher. They listened to her classroom instruction and responded to her when she asked them to do something. Mindy was able to implement her supervising teacher's classroom management and teach the curriculum as her supervising teacher did. The established curriculum was acquired from integrating Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL), the basal, and materials selected for the city-wide third grade curriculum. Mindy planned her lessons according to the established curriculum but connected her lessons with the students. Teaching became more of an on-going learning process and less like isolated lessons interspersed throughout the day. Dialogue and making connections between the lessons were important in helping Mindy connect the lessons with the students. Mindy was now beginning to be able to construct the daily lessons according to her own concept of teaching.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

Second semester Mindy's classroom management merged with her concept of teaching. Classroom management was not a focus but a skillful art of connecting the

students with their learning. This happened when she walked back and forth between the desks and put herself in close proximity to the students. Mindy wove classroom management into her lessons by making the lessons relevant to the students' lives and the students responded. Mindy used the lessons to help focus activities on things they were interested in. The students' behavior was not a focus of her attention and so she found she spent more time helping the students understand what she was teaching than correcting their behavior.

Mindy's lessons involved the developmental practices she observed in the university lab school. These included activities that encouraged the students to explore learning by making abstract concepts concrete. When teaching students the multiplication tables Mindy demonstrated how to use their fingers to get the answer.

OK, let's play a game. "What is 6 times 6? OK, 12 times 12?" Mindy shows her fingers and walks around the room helping students figure out the math problems. "OK, show me your fingers! That is right, during the quiz you can't be doing this. It will take you all day!" [Field Notes, April 29]

Mindy's developmental practices engaged the students in understanding their lessons. Because they were involved in the physical aspects of problem-solving, the students' energies were directed into the lessons.

Understanding Lessons

Mindy's classroom instruction encouraged the students to "think". Mindy

answered questions, redirected behavior, problem solved, and gave support to students as she taught her lessons. The lessons were filled with on-going conversations that made students become involved in understanding the lesson. The tasks Mindy assigned were clear and she offered her support to each student as they worked independently. Mindy narrated the experience of learning by making connections between the lesson and attempting to engage the students in understanding their lesson. She offered learning strategies such as visual representations of abstract concepts to help the students figure out answers. She checked for understanding by calling on the students one by one. Mindy's concept of a lesson developed into a complex understanding of how to connect what she was teaching to how the students learned. She developed this concept by listening to her students and modeling strategies that made it possible for them to make sense of their learning. Mindy gently guided class practice and set goals for the students. The class period was spent interacting with the students and giving them guidance in understanding their lessons.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

In both student teaching placements Mindy explored her concept of teaching through working with students. Second semester, her ability to initiate instruction gave her an opportunity to quickly enter the classroom and practice her concept of teaching in a teacher-directed classroom. Mindy taught successfully in this third grade classroom and did not have difficulty integrating her concept of learning. Mrs. Baker's classroom appeared different at first, but Mindy was able to replicate the management technique and

connect with the students in a manner that allowed her to explore her own understanding of teaching. She did not spend time thinking about Mrs. Baker's classroom instruction, but was able to focus on understanding the students and how to teach them. This placement allowed Mindy to be the teacher in the classroom of another teacher, and she successfully moved from practicing student teaching to teaching.

Yeah! I wrote my evaluation and I am fully confident of myself. I know that I will be a good teacher, that is what I want to do! I knew what I was going to be. I know I can do it. (Interview III with Mindy, p. 4)

The experience Mindy brought with her to student teaching gave her the confidence to look at teaching as a learning process. Her first assignment was in a classroom that was compatible with her own understanding of learning. Mrs. Walker allowed Mindy to take on the role of a teacher and together they constructed the classroom instruction. She thought about her own teaching through the feedback and on-going conversations she had with Mrs. Walker. Mindy's focus first semester was understanding teaching through a relationship with the supervising teacher and the students. The second semester of student teaching Mindy was placed in a structured classroom environment where she first learned to guide the students in their learning through direct instruction. Mindy understood teaching through establishing classroom management and designing lessons that connected to the students.

Although these two placements offered a very different way of designing

classroom instruction and establishing connections with the students, Mindy did not have any difficulty replicating Mrs. Baker's classroom management. With a strong understanding of students and her ability to initiate instruction, Mindy was able to understand how to move through the established routines of the classroom and teach. By establishing familiar boundaries for the students, Mindy found she was able to explore her concept of teaching within these parameters. Her successful professional year long student teaching experiences allowed her to make the transition from thinking of herself as a college student to thinking of herself as a professional educator. During her second assignment, Mindy focused on many aspects of her personal life including being engaged to be married, looking for a job and anxiously looking forward to the time she would have her own classroom. Student teaching became a journey that prepared Mindy to adjust to school curriculum and become comfortable working closely with professionals that implement classroom instruction differently. She experienced success teaching lessons in both placements by connecting her instruction with the students' learning, and at the same time exploring her own concept of teaching. Mindy's success as a student teacher was not determined by her placement. Her success was attributed to her ability to teach the students regardless of the circumstances. The experiences Mindy brought with her to student teaching helped her to easily make the transition.

From Mindy's year long journey of student teaching, it is evident that the learning environment is important, but the teacher is the one responsible for the learning that takes place in the environment.



Alice's First Assignment: Finding A Good Match

Alice student taught first semester in a heterogeneously grouped first grade classroom at Westfield Elementary. Mrs. Strong, Alice's supervising teacher, had a small classroom that was tucked away in the corner of the school. On entering the classroom through a heavy wooden door, there seemed to be children everywhere in this busy classroom. Adults that entered the room were not noticed. Desks were arranged in five rows starting at the front of the room. The students were seated at their desks talking to one another. Mrs. Strong and Alice were working with a group of students at their desks. Mrs. Strong's desk, piled high with papers and books, was located in the back of the room. A small student desk, with a book bag, papers and a small bottle of hand lotion, was pushed beside the teacher's desk for Alice. In the back of the room there were stacks of books with carpet squares piled next to them. Along one side of the wall there was a table set up for an art project. Beside the teacher's desk there was a long table used for reading groups with chairs pushed underneath. The children were working everywhere in the classroom. A small group of students were being called out of the room to work with a teacher. Everyone, including Alice and Mrs. Strong, seemed busy in this noisy, active classroom of twenty-three first graders.

Alice brought to the student teaching placement a wide range of experiences and a "...love for working with children" (Interview with Mindy and Alice, p. 5). The

relationship Alice developed with her supervising teacher invited her to think about the classroom and slowly get to know the students. "It was a good idea and I liked the way she split up the class. It helped me be in control..." (Transcripts, p. 15). These were comments Alice made in response to a suggestion Mrs. Strong had for how they would work with the students. Alice was receptive to the suggestions and eager to learn from her supervising teacher.

Alice began her work in the classroom primarily as an observer. The first few weeks Alice observed the students and got to know the classroom routine. Alice's entry into this first grade classroom allowed her to observe and begin to understand instruction in Mrs. Strong's classroom. Mrs. Strong and Alice were able to talk very easily and they developed a personal relationship that grew into a supportive professional relationship. Alice's confidence grew as she taught lessons and reflected on her first semester of student teaching. From the first day of school, Mrs. Strong announced there would be two teachers sharing the classroom responsibilities. Alice had her name on the door beside Mrs. Strong's as the teacher.

Alice very quickly moved from being an observer to a participant-observer as she began to write her own lesson plans and taught her own reading lessons. Mrs. Strong gave Alice the opportunity to plan a language arts unit for the class which demonstrated Alice's understanding of what the first graders in this classroom knew. Alice always seemed to be surprised in the things they knew and how they talked about their discoveries. In introducing process writing to her class, Alice was able to become familiar

with her students' reading and writing abilities. "I did not think he could do it, he wrote a huge capital 'G' for God. I was impressed" (Transcripts, p. 214). She was surprised at the information the students picked up that had not been formally taught. Mrs. Strong and Alice seemed to move in and out of the shared role of teacher, both working with the students and sharing the role of instruction. When Mrs. Strong taught, Alice helped students at their seats. Alice was able to write lessons to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities of children in this classroom. Alice had the opportunity to observe students and think how she could help them through her teaching.

As a co-participant, Alice shared the classroom responsibilities of teaching this first grade classroom with Mrs. Strong. Mrs. Strong never left Alice alone and was always there to offer assistance and work with the students while Alice taught. This co-participant relationship gave Alice ample opportunity to think and reflect on her lessons and engage in professional conversations with Mrs. Strong. The positive attitude and determination to try new ideas along with the support of her supervising teacher gave Alice the self confidence to "...try anything" (Interview I with Alice, p. 6). In moving into this role of full participation (see Figure 3), Alice taught and planned the daily lessons collaboratively with Mrs. Strong. Eventually she assumed responsibility for taking care of the students during the transition between lessons. Alice took over all the responsibilities of the classroom, ranging from taking the lunch count and picking up the students from the black top to planning and conducting complex instructional units. She found all these seemingly ordinary activities extraordinary. "With this classroom, you were never sure

what was going to happen or how long it would take" (Interview I with Alice, p. 4). Alice saw teaching in this first grade classroom as an adventure or mystery to be unraveled.

Several themes emerged that highlighted Alice's first semester of student teaching. These were (1) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, (2) understanding classroom instruction, (3) understanding lessons; and, (4) understanding the complexity of student teaching. Alice had a successful first semester, teaching as a co-participant with Mrs. Strong, who shared her role of teacher with Alice. The on-going conversations that these teachers shared made it possible for Alice to acquire an understanding of teaching from Mrs. Strong's perspective. Alice had opportunities to teach and time to think about her own teaching. Together Mrs. Strong and Alice unravelled the mysteries of the class as they discovered and reflected on how first graders learn.

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

In the first semester of student teaching Alice had time to work with Mrs. Strong during the teacher work days. It was during this time that Alice and Mrs. Strong had time to develop a personal as well as a professional relationship. "We could not have clicked any better" (Interview I with Alice, p. 6) was Alice's comment about her first days in the classroom. Mrs. Strong took a personal interest in Alice and her success as a student teacher. Alice stated, "She tells me everything. I like her a lot....I am so lucky" (Transcripts, p. 43). In sharing the classroom with Alice, Mrs. Strong provided a caring concern for Alice's success. "One of the first times I talked to her she took me aside and said, 'This is a wonderful student teacher. What can we do to see she gets a job!'" (Field

Notes, October 24, 1993). Mrs. Strong encouraged Alice to take part in the classroom. "She has let me come right on in, to watch her and get to know her and the children, and the dynamics of the classroom," (Interview I with Alice, p. 6) stated Alice. Mrs. Strong felt free to share the classroom responsibilities with Alice and encouraged her to take an active role in getting to know the students and plan her own lessons. The relationship that Alice and Mrs. Strong shared allowed Alice to gain entry into the mainstream of the classroom life. The connections, both personal and professional, allowed Alice and Mrs. Strong to engage in an on-going classroom conversations. Alice found Mrs. Strong shared with her important information about the students that gave her insights in looking at this first grade classroom.

Understanding Classroom Instruction

Alice laughed as she talked about the following letter Mrs. Strong composed in her mind one evening when she could not sleep. In this active first grade classroom, Mrs. Strong blended her enrichment activities with the school curriculum and found difficulty getting everything done.

Dear Parents,

I am so sorry but due to the fact of class participation in the Christmas program and enrichment [activities] we don't have time to do math and reading this year.

Hope you understand,

Mrs. Strong (Interview I with Alice, p. 3)

Enrichment activities were a natural part of the student's day. In the corner, there were a few students gluing cotton balls to a page and others were sitting on the rug reading to themselves. Mrs. Strong felt she did not have enough time in the day to teach all the first grade curriculum requirements.

The things she pulls out every single minute of the day. [With] five minutes left, "Let's go over spelling words one more time." It is amazing to me the day just flies by. Every single minute is used for those kids. (Interview I with Alice, p. 3)

Alice found that learning was an on-going process and she adjusted the schedule as necessary throughout the morning and again at lunch time. Alice and Mrs. Strong enjoyed creating learning activities for the students as a medium for their learning. The day was adjusted in response to the needs of the classroom whether it was to clean up unanticipated art activities or to incorporate a learning activity that would extend the understanding of a concept.

We had stuff everywhere, all over the classroom, and she [Mrs. Strong] laughed. I got the broom and Mr. Luster [the principal] walked into the classroom right in the middle of this [chaos]....In another classroom it may be considered irresponsible behavior....Mrs. Strong liked it and it is wonderful. (Transcripts, p. 180)

These enrichment activities were often in the form of an art project. After studying about clouds, the students made clouds out of cotton balls. "I was talking about the clouds and

Ronnie said, 'You missed one.' I was impressed he actually listened to what I had said" (Transcripts, p. 135). Alice was surprised Ronnie noticed that she had missed naming a cloud because Ronnie was never in his seat and could be found anywhere in the classroom. The type of activities that Alice and her supervising teacher planned got the attention of the most active member of the classroom.

Understanding Lessons

Alice's own lessons, whether they were large or small group gave the student an opportunity to talk and make connections with what they were learning and their own experiences. Alice remembered, "We started off the day talking about things that were funny. We went around the circle and they were telling us all the things they thought were funny....I told them what happened to me yesterday" (Transcripts, p. 181). As Alice constructed her lessons she found that she was getting to know the students and integrated that understanding into the things she chose to teach.

I had a child that didn't want to write. She just wanted to tell me she liked me, and she liked science, and she was happy to be in science. I had to address that to her in the note that I wrote back and forth to her. (Transcripts, p. 145)

These notes became a way for Alice to see what she needed to teach. This understanding of what the students knew helped Alice to plan lessons. "She [Mrs. Strong] gave me the teacher's edition, I can take any five lessons out of it" (Transcripts, p. 185). Alice's understanding of the students and the freedom to design the lesson allowed her to

develop lessons that were interesting and engaged the students in learning at their own level. With varying abilities in her first grade classroom, teaching every child was a challenge. "How are we going to get it across to Ted" (Transcripts, p. 186)? Ted was a little boy that did not speak English. Alice thought about the choices she had in the curriculum and selected a lesson on friendship. "The kids are mean. They go around and hit and smacked each other. If we studied friendship, I would plaster [friendship] on their head" (Transcripts, p. 185). As Alice was given opportunities to select what the first graders studied, she found that she knew pretty well what they could do. In deciding what to teach in Language Arts for example, she discovered that the first lesson on the alphabet was too simple. "I'm going to talk to her [Mrs. Strong] and see if that is what she really wants me to do" (Transcripts, p. 189). Alice found it was not difficult to be able to determine the lessons that first graders would benefit from. She was able to make curriculum decisions and felt comfortable in understanding what first graders did know. Alice looked closely at the students and their work. "I did not think he could do it, he wrote a huge capital 'G' for God. I was impressed" (Transcripts, p. 214). Alice was surprised with the student's individual accomplishments and delighted in the things she discovered they could write. As Alice worked in the classroom, she found that the experiences and understanding the children brought, many times, altered her thinking and helped develop her flexible framework for what she understood teaching to be.

Alice's lessons merged with her understanding of the students. Her lessons engaged the students in their tasks. "I was amazed they wanted to share....their ideas were

really good...." (Transcripts, p. 215). Alice explicitly demonstrated her appreciation for the student's responses through the enthusiasm in her voice and nonvisual actions. Alice's involvement with the students gave her the confidence to be flexible in determining the direction of the lesson. When teaching a writing lesson, if the students were not able to complete the task as she has originally planned, she was able to adjust her expectations of the assignment during the lesson. "We had to write the President. I started them along....Some of them were like, 'I can't write'...so I told them they could draw if they didn't want to write" (Transcripts, p. 46). Alice's direction in her lessons was often directed by the students. On the other hand, Alice did not always change her lessons to fit the children if she did not feel this was necessary. When working with Drew in a reading group one afternoon, she was not able to get him to cooperate and contribute to the lesson. She explained that she understood that "he is bright and he can read the whole book, but he pulls this attitude problem, he is not going to do it" (Field Notes, April 15, 1994). Alice understood each child well enough to decide whether the lesson was too difficult or the child was choosing not to participate.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

Alice found that the experience of working in Mrs. Strong's first grade classroom allowed her to rethink many of the ideas about classroom instruction she had previously formulated.

It is interesting to me the three years of education they teach all that stuff we learn.

All these things you kind of get brain washed and in Principles you learn all these ways of learning to deal with children and you get here. You can't learn any of this from the textbook. (Interview I with Alice, p. 3)

Observing Mrs. Strong as she taught the curriculum and administered standardized tests, gave Alice a way to understand what she did not get through reading a textbook. Alice's entry into full participation was a slow process of developing a relationship with the students, initiating instruction, and implementing classroom management. As Alice concentrated on the students, her teaching concepts were challenged.

I was resistant....I didn't think there was anything wrong with standardized tests.

Maybe they do show something about the kids, but once my kids started to do the performance test and my students took a standardized test the light did go on.

(Transcripts, p. 145)

Alice's understanding of standardized tests was challenged when she saw her first graders struggle with sitting in straight rows, filling in the bubbles and becoming frustrated. When this happened, what she was learning in her university classroom about alternative assessment began to make sense. Another area for Alice to rethink was how she felt about labeling students. In working with a student named Ronnie, Alice had to consider what was the best environment for Ronnie's learning as well as the students in the class. Was his disruptive behavior affecting the other children in the classroom? Alice felt very

strongly about wanting the best for Ronnie. She felt, "he was bright and knew he could read" (Transcripts, p. 191). Alice realized that he only contributed to the class when he wanted to, which was not very often. As she learned more about Ronnie, she began to consider alternatives for teaching him. One alternative was medication. This was not even in her realm of consideration before she met Ronnie. She stated, "I am not for putting kids on medication, but in this case it might help him, he is bright" (Transcripts, p. 191).

As Alice found out more about Ronnie, she began to wonder how he could fit into the classroom. Sometimes Alice questioned whether Ronnie belonged in the classroom when his behavior disturbed the children.

Like Ronnie being in that classroom. You can mainstream as much as possible but, I don't think he really belongs in that classroom. I think that if he is at a point that he disturbs the other children and [then] that is too far. He is disturbing the other children's learning. He doesn't belong here. Like in *Exceptional Learners*, I didn't think that I would ever say that you never take a child out [of the classroom] because it hurts a child's self esteem. (Interview I with Alice, p. 1)

This thought was turned around again when Alice was able to meet his mother and talk to her. "His mother is very informed and interested in him getting additional help but not on medication" (Transcripts, p. 191). There were many people who were involved in the conversation about Ronnie and how the school could best serve his needs. These resource

people included the school counselor, the principal, and his mother. Throughout the semester, pieces of Ronnie's life were pulled together and understood by Alice and Mrs. Strong through his interactions with other children, his performance in the classroom, and his own stories. Ronnie talked about what happened at home. At the end of the semester, Alice's concern developed into a worry about what should be done for him. His routine and welfare became a part of her day, and she began to predict what he would do. She remembered, "I wonder why he didn't say anything about being sick. He usually does...when something happens he tells everyone" (Transcripts, p. 221). In working with Ronnie, Alice had to question many of her previously held beliefs about teaching. When Ronnie's behavior started to affect the other children, she wondered about the issue of inclusion and mainstreaming. Would Ritalin help Ronnie learn in the classroom? Would sending him to another school help him? Mr. Luster suggested that if Ronnie was disturbing the other children that she call him or send Ronnie to the office. Yet, when Alice did send Ronnie to the office, a little boy came back to the room and reported that Ronnie was crying outside the office. Alice continued to struggle with how to deal with Ronnie's disruptive behavior because she was not comfortable with sending him to the office.

Alice's empathetic look at Ronnie, who did not fit within the normal boundaries of the classroom, helped her develop a complex concept of care for individual students. This interest began with observing the students and meeting their physical needs in the classroom by getting gloves or providing breakfast. Through conversations with Mrs.

Strong, Alice was able to make connections between the students' classroom performance and their personal history. This information helped Alice built another picture and extend her classroom responsibilities beyond their academic needs to include the physical and social needs of the students. "Two boys are in desperate need [of gloves]. One mom cares but does not have a lot of money. The other mom does not care and does not have any money" (Transcripts, p. 243). Alice was concerned about the physical needs of the students. In the carpool Jessie and Alice talked about getting gloves for the students through a service sorority. Alice made an effort to see that the students who needed gloves, got gloves. Her concern for these students did not end at the end of the school day. Alice wrestled with her students' needs by telling classroom stories to her friends. "Teaching is a part of my life. All my kids are a part of me. I wonder what they are doing [when they are not at school], especially the ones who have problems" (Transcripts, p. 235).

As Alice cared for the students she explored ways to help, from adjusting the reading lesson to helping them complete a homework assignment. Being the student teacher, Alice constructed for herself the role of facilitator. She worked at making the classroom as equitable as possible. "There were two little kids and I was going to help them with their homework....I am not quite sure anyone at home will help them" (Transcripts, p. 244). Alice observed that some of the students in her classroom did not have extra help at home, so Alice provided time during the teaching day for these students to read to her. Besides observing the students, Alice took action so they could be

successful in school. "The little boy [Chris] said, 'I can't read. No, I can't see it.' I put a piece of paper around the words [he was reading]. He was squinting so this didn't work, so I finally just read the passage to him" (Transcripts, p. 246). Through this reading exercise, Alice discovered that Chris needed glasses.

In the classroom, Alice was given an opportunity to explore her own understanding of teaching and develop the thread of concern and care for children. Alice's care for the students rested on a holistic look at the individual. Alice used ideas that she gleaned from her university classes along with her own personal concern for the care and nurturing of the students in understanding how to care for first graders.

The classes at the university have helped me see that there is not one way to teach. You always have to find another way if the kid is struggling. Maybe it is the way you are teaching. She [Alice's university instructor] really got that point across to me and I never thought "these stupid kids". I thought right away how can I explain it another way. They were not understanding. Let me go back on Monday and explain it another way and see if we can make better progress another way. Let's not label the child, but try another way. (Interview I with Alice, p. 4)

Alice felt she had a successful first semester of student teaching. During that time she gained entry into the classroom and became a co-participant, sharing the teaching with Mrs. Strong. The relationship she developed with her supervising teacher allowed her an opportunity to get to know the first graders and understand teaching as designing the

curriculum to meet the academic and social needs of the students. Alice was given the opportunity to practice student teaching and develop her own understanding of learning which was very well matched with her supervising teacher's concept of learning. The smoothness of the experience was due to the relationship, similar match in teaching styles, and concern for students that Alice and Mrs. Strong constructed. Alice's understanding of teaching was challenged and she was given many opportunities to rethink concepts that she brought into her first student teaching assignment.

Transition

After thinking about her first placement Alice volunteered, "I thought I would get attached to these kids but I didn't think I would be as nearly attached as I am. I can't fathom leaving here" (Interview I with Alice, p. 1). Her positive experience as a co-participant with Mrs. Strong during the first semester made it difficult to think about going to another classroom. Alice viewed her first placement as a good match with her supervising teacher because of the similarities in the way they perceived and conducted their teaching. Moving to a new student teaching assignment can require looking at teaching from a different perspective. The second semester brought with it a new schedule of university classes and a new school assignment. In addition, there was a new supervising teacher to establish a relationship with, a new grade level to adjust to, and new students to meet. Having to leave a very successful student teaching experience with Mrs. Strong was difficult. Jefferson Elementary offered Alice a new way to think about caring and nurturing students from another supervising teacher's perspective.

Alice's Second Assignment: Making Adaptations

Jefferson Elementary was where Alice student taught second semester. A quick glance indicated there were similarities in the teachers and students between Jefferson and Westfield. The students were smiling as they walked down the hall. Several students were in a group talking, others were by themselves walking to their room. Teachers were going in and out of the main building. The classrooms in this elementary school were located in detached buildings and to get to the classrooms the teachers had to walk from building to building. The teachers headed in the direction of their building according to grade level. The teachers were friendly and supportive of the school's commitment to educating students. There were teachers on staff that have been a part of Jefferson Elementary for as many as twenty years. These teachers and teacher's aides told wonderful stories of the students and the closeness of the faculty.

The third grade classroom, where Alice taught with Mrs. Marsh, was in the first building past the school office. There were overhangs that protected the students from rain as they walked down the sidewalk. As you entered the third grade building through the small hall, the first classroom on the right was Mrs. Marsh's.

The room was organized into areas to read, work puzzles, play games, and look at science projects. The students' desks were pushed together in groups of six. Mrs. Marsh's desk was in front of the classroom and beside her desk was Alice's desk. Behind the desks was a large chalkboard that took up the whole wall. On one side of the chalkboard was a list of all the students in the room. It appeared to be a behavior chart. Alice's immediate

impression was that this was a friendly classroom. The students were wandering around the classroom. Some were standing in groups at their desks others were playing games.

Alice spent a significant amount of her time observing the instruction in Mrs. Marsh's classroom. The role of teacher meant presenting lessons and at the same time reminding the students of the classroom rules and their consequences. When Alice took over more responsibility and moved into the role of participant-observer, she realized she did not know all of the daily routines of the students. "I didn't know what kind of ice cream to order. I had never done that before" (Transcripts, p. 333). Alice was in the classroom for five mornings a week for the first ten weeks before she entered the classroom all day long. This schedule limited what Alice could observe during the first ten weeks of student teaching and the things she could do with the students. Alice explained, "The schedule is such that kids are out of the room so often, at least an hour a day—I only have time to teach reading and then observe" (Transcripts, p. 333).

Increasing her instructional responsibilities helped Alice realize the incongruities in her understanding of instruction and her supervising teacher's understanding of teaching. In the reading group that Alice was assigned, she noticed that the students' conversations were too loud for her supervising teacher. From Alice's first student teaching assignment, she concluded that classroom instruction must be understood before she could replicate Mrs. Marsh's concept of teaching. In addition to understanding the classroom instruction, Alice needed to replicate her supervising teacher's technique of direct instruction.

When Alice focused on teaching her lessons to the whole class, she began to

experience difficulty enforcing the classroom management. The transfer of her understanding of classroom management from teaching in a small group to large group did not produce the same results that Mrs. Marsh got. The experience of working in a small group gave Alice the opportunity to think about her lesson and how to connect it to the students. In the large group, connecting lessons to the students and meeting their needs left other students on their own, and this new found freedom caused confusion. When Alice slowly took over lessons, she found dealing with the entire class was difficult and she had to rethink how she would handle classroom management. During this time Alice tried to replicate her supervising teacher's management style and struggled with the conflict this had with her own belief about how to handle students. The struggle of becoming the teacher was apparent to Alice when she recognized the students continued to turn to Mrs. Marsh to answer their questions when she was teaching. "Mrs. Marsh would say, 'Excuse me, do you see a teacher over there and do you see Miss Travis [Alice]. I am not your teacher right now. If you tell Miss Travis she will help you solve your problem'" (Transcripts, p. 334). Mrs. Marsh supported Alice's entry into full participation as she struggled to become the teacher.

Being in the classroom for the morning limited Alice's opportunities to teach lessons and interact with the students in various settings. This created a problem when it came to constructing a relationship with the students, which frustrated Alice, who valued these relationships and was a keen observer of the students. Understanding the whole child was a part of lesson planning and how Alice understood teaching. "I have to pull

things [about the students] out of her [Mrs. Marsh]" (Transcripts, p. 337).

In the classroom Alice began to understand that the students were not given choices, so she had to rethink how to teach them from more of a teacher-directed model. When thinking about how to do this, she said, "I try to tell them nicely to be quiet, and then I go over to them and tell them, 'You need to lower your voices.' Then they look at me like 'I don't get it....'" (Transcripts, p. 323). Teaching a large group using cooperative learning concepts was difficult for Alice because it did not fit into the students' understanding of learning. Alice laughed and said, "...they look at me like I don't get it." Because this presented itself as a classroom management problem, Alice decided to replicate Mrs. Marsh's behavioral management as much as possible. This was necessary for her to experience success in taking over the role as teacher.

Although Alice was able to establish the classroom boundaries for the two weeks that she student taught, she found it was not consistent with her personal understanding of children. Taking over as the teacher in this classroom did not allow Alice the opportunity to incorporate the needs of the students into her lessons.

As the teacher that directed the lessons, there seemed to be little time for interacting with the students. Alice describes her difficulty in trying to teach where the students worked collaboratively,

The day I did it [cooperative learning] it was chaos, it was horrible, it was chaos.

They were all over the place. I was totally frustrated....When I sat down to do my

lesson I decided to go and do it the way she does it and get control. (Transcripts, p. 343)

Alice found herself following the lessons in the textbook, making few changes except maybe adding a game as an enrichment activity. Alice tried to stay close to the plans and familiar routines of the classroom. Although Alice was teaching under a variety of constraints, she was not able to explore her own concepts of teaching.

Several themes that emerged from Alice's assignment second semester were (1) understanding instruction in the classroom, (2) understanding and conducting classroom management, (3) understanding lessons; and, (4) understanding the complexity of student teaching. In her efforts to understand the classroom, Alice attempted to replicate Mrs. Marsh's classroom design. In her struggle to develop effective management practices, Alice discovered that to get these third graders to respond to her as the teacher, she must replicate the way the lessons were taught as well as Mrs. Marsh's classroom management. Alice discovered that she had to develop an alternative concept of classroom instruction by following the text more closely. This strategy limited Alice's time to pursue student relationships and her personalization of lessons. Alice concluded she must conform closely to the norm of this classroom, to replicate Mrs. Marsh's teaching and classroom management. This was difficult for Alice, who viewed her role as teacher as a facilitator of learning.

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

In her first semester assignment Alice and Mrs. Strong were very well matched in their care for the students and the way they designed their lessons. Mrs. Strong's classroom was student-centered and the lessons emerged from an understanding of the students and their immediate needs. In Alice's second assignment, she learned about classroom instruction and classroom management through another supervising teacher's concept of teaching.

Alice is going to Mrs. Marsh's room. She [Mrs. Marsh] is very nurturing and she runs a pretty tight ship in the classroom. It is pretty structured and she will help Alice create a structured classroom. (Interview with Sharon Murray, January 30)

In Mrs. Marsh's third grade classroom Alice discovered the day was shaped around a predetermined schedule. There was a time for reading, math, spelling, lunch, social studies, and science. Entering into Mrs. Marsh's third grade classroom only during the mornings mid semester, when the classroom routine had already been set, made it difficult for Alice to become a part of the classroom in the same way she had with Mrs. Strong when she was there for the whole day. Being at school only in the morning for the first part of the semester limited Alice's opportunities to understand all the things the students were involved in as well as get to know the students on a personal level. Getting to know the students was an integral part of understanding the classroom and planning for Alice. Alice's on-going conversations with Mrs. Strong made a personal and professional

relationship possible. However, in the second assignment Alice was frustrated based on situational constraints and Mrs. Marsh's reticence in sharing information on students.

Alice explained,

I have to drag things out of my teacher, it is important [for me] to know these kids, I am curious to know and I have to pry it out of her. Some [kids] seem depressed and are having a hard time getting their work done. She [Mrs. Marsh] will let me know, he lives with his uncle or his mom, then she will tell me but I have to pry. (Transcripts, p. 337)

Mrs. Marsh and Alice's conversations did not include stories about the background of the students, and the schedule of the day did not promote on-going conversations of the events that occurred. Their conversations continued to be limited. First semester Alice focused on getting to know the students and understanding their personal lives. This perspective helped Alice to make connections between the students and the lessons she planned. Second semester circumstances did not allow Alice to be a part of the classroom as she was first semester. First semester, Alice was in the school more often and was available for more conversations and helping students. The extended time at school first semester provided Alice with an opportunity to establish relationships with the students. These opportunities were not available to her second semester and she found establishing relationships with the students, through being their friend, did not fit into her role as student teacher in Mrs. Marsh's classroom. Alice explained she could not be a friend to

the students during this assignment.

I used to play connect four [with the students]. I have to say, "Mrs. Marsh and I have to talk and why don't you go and play with Melanie." If I do it [play connect four] I am more like their friend. (Transcripts, p. 337)

While Alice immediately saw the need to make the distinction in being their friend and being their teacher, it was not easy for her to accomplish. Playing games and developing an on-going conversations with the students was not consistent with the role of teacher in this classroom. Alice learned that the teacher established the routine of the classroom, directed the lessons, and was responsible for the students progressing successfully on this schedule. Alice understood the importance of this classroom design. She commented that, "I can decide pretty much what to do, but I really don't think she would want me to go in there and do it any different....I think these kids need this structure" (Transcripts, p. 342). Through observing the classroom and the interaction Mrs. Marsh had with the students, Alice discovered that the way Alice understood teaching must be rethought and implemented to fit in this classroom.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

In understanding the classroom Alice discovered that it is not the relationship with the students that would make her successful, but in understanding the classroom management.

Anton said, "I am going to the pencil sharpener; I need to sharpen my pencil," and I said, "You need to ask before you get out of your seat while I am teaching a lesson." And he looked at me like, "who are you to tell me that?" and I said,... "Please take your seat. I am teaching spelling." You have to be consistent about it. (Field Notes, April 15, 1994)

As Alice took over teaching spelling to the students, she discovered she planned her lessons differently for this third grade classroom. Last semester, Alice accepted whatever the student contributed and helped redirect their thinking. She remembered a student (Drew) saying, "I don't want to read that page, I want to read that page. I want to read the next page." "Okay," Alice replied, "Keep your hand on the book till we get there" (Field Notes, April 15, 1994). This technique did not fit in the social aspect of how learning was constructed in this classroom. The students were not always encouraged to talk with one another during the lesson. To participate in this classroom it must be done in an orderly fashion. One example was not sharpening your pencil when the teacher was giving instructions. Alice emphasized her growing realization that, "The only way to survive here is to teach the way Mrs. Marsh teaches" (Transcripts, p. 339). It was apparent to Alice that she would have to learn how to manage the classroom before she could concentrate on her lessons. "It will be rewarding to work with them once you establish control" (Transcripts, p. 340).

Understanding Lessons

Alice remembered, "Last week when I did my spelling, I saw a lot of activities in the book. I did them. I do a lot more group things like games and activities out of the book" (Transcripts, p. 343). Alice followed Mrs. Marsh's plan of using the textbook, but included enrichment activities in her lesson plans. These enrichment activities were a way for Alice to incorporate the textbook into her own concept of what a lesson should be. Now when teaching a lesson, Alice teaches from her concept of teaching. One afternoon while Alice and Mrs. Marsh were working with students on a writing assignment, Alice noticed that when Mrs. Marsh graded a paper she highlighted all the spelling errors that were made. As Alice looked at the comments on the papers she was correcting, and she noted that her comments had to do with the content of the writing. Alice approached the writing lesson from a child-centered perspective. As the students worked at their desks, she found that they stopped working when they could not spell a word. Alice decided that it was more important for them to continue to write than to worry about spelling the word. She got out some post-it notes, and when the students asked for a word, she wrote the word on the post-it note and gave it to them. The students continued to work for the next forty minutes on the writing activity that usually took them ten minutes to finish. Alice built on her own understanding of how to teach in this classroom by incorporating personal contact with the students, meeting their needs academically, and changing her teaching to accommodate the needs of the students. As a participant-observer, Alice worked with the students when Mrs. Marsh taught.

Alice explored her concept of teaching by teaching reading. The reading group was taught much like she taught reading last semester to her first graders.

Alice is walking around the room answering questions. She is bending over whispering in a student's ear. Timothy is struggling with his assignment. "Oh, man. Do we have to write the page number?" Alice bends her head down and whispers to Timothy. "I don't want to," Timothy says. "Oh, here comes the book again." "Do you see it here?" Alice asks. Timothy does not understand what he is suppose to do. (Field Notes, April 15, 1994)

In this instance Timothy was working from a workbook. Alice read the text with Timothy. Timothy continued to struggle with what he was suppose to do. Alice continued to direct Timothy's attention so he could complete the exercise.

Mrs. Marsh allowed Alice to practice her student teaching in a small reading group. Alice slowly recognized the difference between the way she and Mrs. Marsh taught. The underlying dilemma was Alice's struggle when her teaching did not match her supervising teacher's concept of teaching. While Alice was talking, listening, and working with a student, she uncovered how she could help him. This type of teaching was difficult in a room where routines for learning were already established. When the students were reading, they knew what they were supposed to do. When Alice taught, they asked questions and worked in pairs to find the answers. These were new rules for the students.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

Alice recalled the dilemma the students were in when she taught, "I thought that it wouldn't be fair for the kids; for one moment it would be okay [to talk]....Now Mrs. Marsh said it is not okay [to talk]" (Transcripts, p. 342). Alice found that, to be successful in student teaching, she must recognize the difference in her own ideas about teaching and learning and that of her supervising teacher's. Alice found that she was able to practice student teaching and use her own ideas about learning with a small group of students. In this small group she was able to get to know the students and help them make connections with their work. In a small group Alice discovered she practiced her own concept of teaching and let the students explore learning without focusing her time on management of the group. This manner of small group instruction did not work for Alice when she taught the entire class. Alice recognized she must replicate Mrs. Marsh's concept of teaching. Alice explained,

The only way to survive is to go there and to teach the way Mrs. Marsh is teaching and that is what these kids need. When I go to class I do not even think about how I am going to incorporate it into this class. I do my own activities once a week. I do things a little bit different but not too outrageously different. I have them do pages in the textbook because I don't think it is the best to go in and do it too totally differently. (Transcripts, p. 339)

In the classroom, Mrs. Marsh gave Alice the freedom to teach her lessons. But

when Alice taught using cooperative learning strategies, classroom management became an issue. Large group instruction was usually loud and needed more direction than Alice was used to giving when she taught lessons in a small group. When the students did not know how to respond to Alice, they asked Mrs. Marsh questions. Mrs. Marsh redirected the students' questions, reminding them that Alice was the teacher, "Who is the teacher now" (Transcripts, p. 344)?

Mrs. Marsh and Alice became co-participants during Alice's student teaching experience. Mrs. Marsh was a visible part of the classroom supporting and sharing classroom responsibilities with Alice. During the two weeks that Alice taught, she was responsible for the classroom routines and instruction. Mrs. Marsh was confident that Alice could handle the classroom by herself. At this point Alice was able to replicate the classroom management of Mrs. Marsh. Alice stated, "She just sits in the back of the room and she watches and she does not interrupt. She does not say a word and she lets me handle it [classroom instruction]" (Transcripts, p. 344).

Alice was successful in becoming a co-participant with Mrs. Marsh in sharing the classroom instruction. Understanding this classroom presented a struggle for Alice because she had to nurture and care for the students in a manner different from the comfortable way she had developed the previous semester. Alice was also successful in gaining entry into Mrs. Marsh's classroom. She did this by incorporating her own concept of teaching into her supervising teacher's.



Jessie's First Assignment: Making Connections

Jessie's first student teaching assignment was with Mrs. June in a third grade classroom. As you entered the classroom through large wooden doors the arrangement of the room gave a feeling of order. The student's desks were in rows facing the blackboard and along the back walls there were tables and chairs which appeared to be places where the students could work. The students were sitting at their desks working quietly. Mrs. June was sitting on a desk talking to the students. Several students had their hands raised. Jessie was grading papers at a long table next to Mrs. June's desk.

High spirited and bubbly, Jessie entered student teaching at Westfield Elementary enthusiastic about teaching and excited about working with students. Jessie began her student teaching responsibilities fulfilling clerical jobs. As an observer Jessie thought about the role of the teacher in a traditional classroom. Jessie's field experience, up to this point, had been in a university laboratory school where the goal of the teacher was to facilitate the learning of the students. As a facilitator of learning, the teacher worked to acquire an understanding of what the students knew. Understanding the students was very important to Jessie and in this traditional third grade classroom she would have to figure out how she could get to know the students. Through on-going conversations with the other student teachers in the carpool, Jessie began to initiate a personal relationship with Mrs. June. Jessie planned an outing with Mrs. June where they could get to know each

other outside of the classroom. Jessie invited Mrs. June and her husband to a university football game. It was through this event Jessie was able to begin conversations that lead to a personal relationship with her supervising teacher. Something that was valuable for Jessie personally as well as professionally.

Jessie and Mrs. June developed a personal as well as professional relationship. For the first few months Jessie spent time observing the classroom design and the teacher-directed techniques of Mrs. June. By observing Mrs. June interact with the students and teach lessons, she realized the behavioral management system was interwoven in the classroom design.

...[I]mplementing the classroom rule system in this manner was quite a challenge for me at the beginning of the semester. Standing up for consistency of the rule system, I experienced the first tears that students shed out of frustration, I felt like I had caused them. (Transcripts, p. 109)

An on-going conversation with Mrs. June helped Jessie make sense of daily occurrences about teaching. As Jessie took over more classroom responsibilities, she found her relationship with Mrs. June very helpful in planning her lessons and working with students. As she moved into the role of participant-observer, Jessie found she taught lessons, and was able to develop relationships with the students. The ability to make these decisions gives her much confidence. After changing the focus of a lesson because of the conversation of the students, Jessie reflected, "I was making it relevant for them...How

much richer it [the lesson] gets when I get [teach] the kids" (Interview II with Jessie, p. 5).

As a co-participant, sharing the classroom responsibilities with Mrs. June, Jessie had opportunities to understand how to connect lessons with students.

Some of the things I have been very surprised by. I don't want you to think I wing it because I don't wing it at all. My plans are never what I do. I look at the kids and they are not connecting with me. Their eyes are looking and saying, "that does not make sense." (Interview II with Jessie, p. 4)

In this classroom Jessie had the freedom to be creative and implement her own concept of learning. For example, she had the opportunity to design units in science as well as teach them; researching and planning all the related activities herself. Jessie created contracts with the students where they monitored their own work habits. The contracts stated that when their work was completed they could participate in other activities set up in the room. Jessie was able to teach all subjects for two weeks at the end of her student teaching assignment. This gave her the opportunity to learn how to develop relationships with the students. After working with a student in the classroom, Jessie stated,

Now we are friends. He is starting to write a whole lot better. Today I took time with him. Today I took him aside and I just wanted, I just wanted him to see he had holes in his story. (Transcripts, p. 176)

The themes that emerged from Jessie's first student teaching placement were (1) understanding instruction in the classroom, (2) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, (3) understanding and conducting classroom management, (4) understanding lessons; and, (5) understanding the complexity of student teaching. To understand the classroom from her supervising teacher's perspective, Jessie established on-going conversations with Mrs. June. Through this relationship Jessie began to understand this teacher-directed classroom and think about how to connect the lessons she taught to the students. As she implemented the classroom management, she found her teaching changed. Jessie had a successful student teaching experience first semester which created confidence in her ability to teach.

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

As Jessie entered Mrs. June's teacher-directed classroom she found it took time to understand the classroom design. Jessie's experience, in working in the university laboratory pre-school, gave her opportunities to work with cooperative learning strategies and design developmentally appropriate lessons for the students. Entering into a classroom where the teacher directed the students' learning took time for Jessie to understand.

Jessie had the students talk to her and each other during her lessons. This presented a problem in a teacher-directed classroom. When lots of talking occurred, often it was interpreted as noise. Jessie recalled this dilemma saying, "The noise really bothers

her [Mrs. June], they were talking out of turn but we were really talking about some neat things" (Transcripts, p. 205). Jessie quickly found that she had to direct the students' conversations through establishing classroom boundaries for what constituted noise. She reflected on this by saying, "Noise is when it gets to the point it bothers me. Conversation is lots of neat things going on and lots of questions" (Transcripts, p. 251). Jessie realized in this teacher-directed classroom that she must begin to do things as her supervising teacher modeled to maintain the classroom boundaries but she found when she did replicate Mrs. June's classroom instruction, she felt uncomfortable.

Today I was the teacher. I was so ashamed of myself. We do vocabulary. I did it exactly the way she did. I don't know if her way is the best way. (Transcripts, p. 55) I am not sure if I am accepting what she is saying or if I am really seeing it. (Transcripts, p. 70)

Jessie's concept of teaching was to present a lesson in a holistic child-centered approach that integrated the curriculum in a hands-on experience. Teaching the way her supervising teacher did was different from her own concept of teaching and Jessie struggled with wondering if it was the best way to teach. In putting the pieces together in this classroom, Jessie was able to make sense of how Mrs. June taught a lesson, but when she taught as Mrs. June did she felt uncomfortable. Talking about how to teach a lesson promoted the relationship Jessie had with Mrs. June and clarified to Jessie Mrs. June's concept of teaching. Jessie soon found that after she was able to replicate her supervising

teacher's management style, she could integrate her own concept of teaching into Mrs. June's. Jessie was able to maintain the classroom boundaries of Mrs. June, yet have conversations with her students and create lessons that she felt reflected her own concepts of teaching.

I work to deliver instruction in a clear manner, representing the information accurately. There have been cases in my teaching this semester where I have taught a lesson and then asked if there are any questions, and the questions that they asked showed me that they did not understand what I had just taught. It is a welcome challenge to reteach the concept from a different approach that may connect better for the students that did not follow me. (Comments on Jessie's self evaluation, December, p. 2)

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

Jessie saw her relationship with her supervising teacher as the first step in gaining entry into this third grade classroom. Jessie recognized that when she had a conversation with her supervising teacher, Jessie thought out loud. Jessie used her talking as a tool to make sense of her student teaching experience. Jessie used the on-going conversations with Mrs. June as a tool to keep the communication lines open.

I talked through my developing ideas, using verbal linguistic reformation. I find as I look back, my verbalizations to discover and solidify my ideas was a pleasure that

most of the people in my circle got to experience. (Comments of Jessie's final self evaluation, December, p. 2)

Being able to have conversations with the members of her support group was an important aspect of Jessie's teaching. She used talking as a tool to discover and explore ideas. She valued the tool and felt confident the people in her circle enjoyed her conversations also.

It was important to Jessie that she understand why Mrs. June set up her classroom the way she did. As Jessie began to understand the classroom and why Mrs. June set it up as she did, Jessie changed her opinion of Mrs. June.

Mrs. June is not what I expected her to be. She is not the stereotype. It took me a long time to realize she was a good teacher. I was intimidated by her style. She is willing to let me try my wings. She is awesome. (Transcripts, p. 93)

It took time for Jessie to break down the stereotype of what she expected in a classroom teacher. As she got to know Mrs. June, she began to understand the classroom from Mrs. June's perspective. The conversations that Jessie and Mrs. June had helped to change Jessie's thinking about what constitutes a good teacher. "I have come full circle with Mrs. June. She trusts me....She just talks to me and that is really neat" (Interview II with Jessie, p. 1). Mrs. June offered opportunities for Jessie to look at the classroom in a manner she had not experienced before. Their relationship allowed Jessie to go beyond exchanging ideas with each other to creating understanding through teaching. Their relationship

allowed for differences to become a dimension of richness to their own concept of teaching. The classroom held opportunities for meaningful exchanges in taking care of this third grade classroom together. Jessie was surprised when her supervising teacher invited her to work on a project after school. "She asked me if I wanted to stay later and put something on the bulletin board....We laughed [while we were doing the project]" (Transcripts, p. 228).

The different approaches to teaching did not prevent the supervising teacher and the student teacher from entering into a relationship and working collaboratively. Their relationship allowed Jessie to gain entry into the classroom and initiate her own practice of teaching. As she taught, she found she understood the classroom design and incorporated it into her own concept of teaching. Because of the relationship Jessie developed with Mrs. June, this was possible. Within the boundaries of the classroom and the respect of the students, Jessie found she was able to teach comfortably, using cooperative learning techniques that she learned in her university classes. Their on-going conversations gave Mrs. June the freedom to talk about Jessie's lessons with her. After teaching a lesson, Jessie talked about how hard it was to get the students' attention before she started. "The hardest thing for me to do is to wait [for the students]. I felt I was wasting time. Mrs. June said I didn't wait long enough. They just weren't with me" (Transcripts, p. 86).

The support Jessie felt through working with Mrs. June gave her the confidence to continue to explore her teaching. Jessie began to share a little of her personal life with the students. "Something special happened to me this weekend. I got engaged" (Field Notes,

December 6, 1993). Jessie's personal life spilled over into her professional life as she created on-going conversations with the students through the lessons she taught. As Jessie shared her personal experiences with the students, she found the students began to ask her questions and became interested in her as a person. The relationships she established created close connections that allowed her to construct an understanding of the students. Jessie related this closeness with a student by saying, "He is starting to write a whole lot better. Today I took time with him. Today I took him aside and I just wanted, I just wanted him to see he had holes in his story" (Transcripts, p. 176). This theme of relationships in the classroom developed a community of sharing that opened doors for understanding the connection between conversation, learning and caring.

The confidence Jessie gained as a student teacher in this third grade classroom allowed her to forge her own practice of student teaching through initiating activities and planning units of study for the class. As Jessie slowly took over the classroom, she found that she and Mrs. June began to work collaboratively throughout the day. Jessie remembered, "I was teaching the lesson and she (Mrs. June) stepped in....I didn't feel threatened" (Transcripts, p. 227). The two developed a co-participant relationship where they shared the classroom.

Mrs. June and Jessie worked at making the best learning situation for their third graders. As other professionals looked on, sharing of the classroom instruction might be interpreted as the student teacher was not able to teach the class by herself. This question which came from the university supervisor after he observed a classroom lesson and

voiced, "How do the children behave when Mrs. June is out of the room?" (Transcripts, p. 228). The assumption was that the student teacher could not handle the class by herself. It was impossible to define the roles that Mrs. June and Jessie played when the classroom responsibilities were shared by both. Many of the decisions that were made in the classroom were made together. Jessie related one of these decisions, "She [Mrs. June] put me between two kids, 'The kid's won't learn anything [if I sit here].' Mrs. June was cool [when I told her]" (Transcripts, p. 39). Jessie's growing confidence allowed her the freedom to talk to Mrs. June about the classroom decisions Mrs. June made. These conversations opened opportunities for Jessie and Mrs. June to critically think about her place in the classroom and the impact it would have on the students.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

When Jessie observed Mrs. June's management style she realized it was different from her own. "...Take your right hand and stick it over your mouth and keep it that way until you leave my room" (Transcripts, p. 250). This management technique was not one that she would use in her own classroom. As she observed Mrs. June and her management decisions, Jessie realized that she must fit into this classroom with a similar management style. She respected her supervising teacher and worked to fit her teaching into the boundaries set by Mrs. June. Though Jessie did not use all the classroom management techniques of her supervising teacher, she found she was able to step into this classroom and maintain the established boundaries. When Jessie began to introduce a cooperative learning activity one afternoon she got angry. She remembers saying, "...I

need everyone's attention right now.' They [the students] were [working] in cooperative groups" (Transcripts, p. 139).

Jessie was able to teach using cooperative learning groups but discovered that the students must become familiar with how to use this new found freedom. Jessie found, as she implemented cooperative learning techniques, that if she gave the students more direction she could maintain Mrs. June's classroom boundaries.

I am going to make a set of rules for cooperative learning. Some people were not sharing; some people were talking loud. We are going to set up a way for me to get your attention...just so it is manageable. (Transcripts, p. 119)

In the newly established structures for learning, Jessie found that she was able to make connections with her students through cooperative learning that did not exist before.

As Jessie worked with the students and established routines, she found she was thinking about her lessons and how to connect them to what the students' knew. She reflected about the "...importance of students connecting. The world series pop[s] into my head and that is how we relate to it" (Transcripts, p. 135). Jessie's on-going conversations with the students allowed her to use cooperative learning throughout the day. The dynamics of the group brought up questions the students had. These questions strengthened Jessie's connection with the students. As Jessie explored cooperative learning more in the classroom, the problem came up of what the students should do when they finished their assignments. Jessie found the students were finishing their work one at

a time and were walking around with nothing to do. In one instance, to get the group back together, Jessie grabbed a book and started to read..."I started sitting down and reading,...the very lowest [reading level] and the highest all reading together; they were being supportive" (Transcripts, p. 139). After the students became comfortable with cooperative learning, Jessie found that they could direct their own learning and became responsible for assuming new tasks. The management of the classroom was woven into the classroom instruction. The students monitored their behavior by making decisions about the extent of their involvement in a project or game. "The kids can stay on one game forever. It is a classifying game" (Transcripts, p. 86). When the students began to monitor their own behavior Jessie was surprised and observed, "When we came back [from art,] they went right back to writing. They don't need me" (Transcripts, p. 179). As the students engaged in meaningful tasks, they began to initiate and direct their own learning.

As the students experienced success in working collaboratively, Jessie's confidence in her teaching grew. This confidence allowed her to feel more freedom in setting up her own way of teaching reading. "I think it is a waste of time for them to read silently and then go home and read it out loud, then read it to me [again]. I could spend the time in other ways" (Transcripts, p. 114). Jessie thought about the lesson she had just taught,

They were all over that story. They were able to talk to me very intelligently. I asked them questions. They talked. They connected with the story. They talked

technically about the difference in the balloon going up and down. They were connecting to the story. (Transcripts, p. 114)

Jessie felt more of her time in a reading lesson should be spent allowing the students to talk about what they had read. She invited the students into the reading lesson by asking questions and letting them discuss their understanding of the story. Jessie used language as a tool for the students to discover what they knew about the story. "They were able to talk to me very intelligently. I asked them questions. They talked, they connected with the story." Jessie integrated her concept of teaching into her supervising teacher's by adjusting the questions she asked the students. Jessie found that the conversations with the students allowed the lessons to move in many directions. The community of learners, established by Jessie, created reciprocity in learning for the student teacher and the students as they explored learning in the classroom.

Understanding Lessons

Jessie's university classes required that she teach lessons using progressive ideas that were introduced through her method classes. Being placed in a traditional classroom to do her student teaching, Jessie did not have the opportunity to see whole language strategies modeled by her supervising teacher. "I was lost in the beginning [of student teaching] because it [the classroom] was so skills-based. [I did not understand what a skills-driven class was]" (Transcripts, p. 228). As Jessie read her university texts she found that her student teaching placement did not give her the opportunity to make sense of

what she was learning in the classroom. "I kept saying this is not going to work, I could not finish a paragraph without arguing with it. How am I going to get through, [and understand whole language] if I had no model" (Transcripts, p. 232). The strong need for concrete experiences to understand theory was evident as Jessie tried over and over to put things in the context of a model or a picture. It was difficult for Jessie to visualize teaching in a way that she had not experienced before. To understand concepts presented in her texts she needed to make connections with what happened in her third grade classroom. This became a personal struggle that she expressed to the model director. The model director made it possible for Jessie to go and see a teacher who taught using a whole language approach. After she saw whole language in practice, this philosophy became more clear and allowed Jessie to make connections with her university readings.

When the student teachers did not have the experience of working in a whole language classroom, the material in the text they read did not make sense. For the student teachers to integrate a new concept of teaching, there needed to be opportunities to see these concepts modeled.

Jessie began to see the concept of whole language more clearly as she viewed the students in her classroom working collaboratively; integrating their reading and writing and directing their own learning. Jessie was almost surprised when she talked about what happened when the reading group returned from art,

My reading group came back...and finished their work....They were totally writing

by themselves—writing letters for International Friendship Week. It was just wild!

Why am I here? (Transcripts, p. 173)

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

Jessie's participation as a student teacher this semester allowed her to become a part of the daily routine in Mrs. June's third grade, working with students and teaching lessons. A combination of university coursework and classroom responsibilities placed Jessie in a situation where all of a sudden she felt overwhelmed. During reading methods one afternoon, Jessie began to talk to the model director about the events that had taken place in the classroom. This conversation caused Jessie to burst into tears. After reading class Jessie went to the model director's office where she blurted out that she felt overwhelmed and had too much responsibility at school. The interesting aspect of this development is that Jessie had no idea this was occurring. She kept accepting responsibilities and working hard to accomplish them. This was the first time Jessie had identified the obstacle that had been causing her stress. The intensity of student teaching overshadowed Jessie's ability to understand what she could handle. The daily classroom responsibilities had become too complex for her to sort out without becoming overwhelmed. Jessie found a network of support from her supervising teacher, close friends, and other student teachers as she voiced her concerns and gained perspective. Although this situation might have appeared as a dilemma, it was an opportunity to build connections between the model director, the supervising teacher, and the student teacher;

and it offered opportunities to promote understanding for Jessie. Jessie felt things were going better after the incident through talking to her supervising teacher. Jessie felt this was due to, "Mrs. June and I have built a strong cooperative working relationship" (Interview II with Jessie, p. 1).

Jessie felt strongly about the decisions she made when teaching. Earlier, her meeting with the model director helped unravel Jessie's over-involvement in the classroom. The strategy of connecting with people through conversations helped Jessie develop a more complex understanding of what makes a good teacher. Every part of student teaching was important for Jessie to understand. This was true in the classroom and in the time she put into her university classes. Talking about herself she said, " I struggle over the stupidest things" (Interview II with Jessie, p. 6). Jessie's strong ethical code was a motivating factor in her success as a student teacher. She reflected,

I didn't do this for them but because it was the right thing to do. I didn't do it because I wanted an 'A', I did it because it was the right thing to do. To teach the kids. I didn't bring the coat to the kids because I had empathy but because it was the right thing to do. (Interview II with Jessie, p. 3)

Jessie's sense of commitment to what is right and to the child produced a strong motivating factor for how she worked with students in the classroom. Her holistic look at a child meant she tried to meet his physical, emotional, and academic needs in the classroom.

Jessie's student teaching gave her the opportunity to "know what I believe" (Transcripts, p. 23). This experience gave her the confidence to understand teaching as a process in learning about her own concept of teaching.

Transition

It is not hard for me to move...it does not mean I am not emotional about it but that it is a fact and it has to happen, and it will happen and find something good in it. (Interview II with Jessie, p. 4)

First semester, Jessie had many opportunities to develop a relationship with her supervising teacher. She created connections that they made personally and professionally allowed a relationship of trust to emerge. That relationship opened doors for sharing that gave Jessie a way to understand Mrs. June and her classroom instruction. Jessie felt free to ask questions and the confidence to explore student teaching. The relationship with the third grade students gave her an understanding in how to adjust her teaching within the boundaries of the classroom. Second semester was different.

Because student teaching was limited to half a day, five days a week, from 8:30 until 12:00 at Jefferson Elementary school for the first ten weeks, this curtailed the time Jessie spent in the classroom. The last five weeks were full time. She was not able to establish a personal or professional relationship with Mrs. Webber. Mrs. Webber's routine did not include time to talk to Jessie about the classroom.

The students in this second semester kindergarten placement were from a low

socio-economic background. The school reflected a mission of integrating self-discipline and a strong sense of work ethic into the routine of the classroom. Rules were set by the school and reinforced by the classroom teacher. This kindergarten class reflected care for the students in yet a different way from the child-centered, developmentally appropriate practices that Jessie implemented in her classroom last semester.

Being able to establish the rhythm and flow of this kindergarten classroom was the focus of Jessie's second semester. When Jessie entered, the classroom the routines were set, and the supervising teacher's and teacher aide's roles were already defined. Second semester demanded that Jessie understand the classroom routines and model the classroom management of her supervising teacher.

Jessie's Second Assignment: Disconnections and Defeat

With a successful student teaching experience behind her, Jessie looked forward to her second placement, located in a different school. In this teacher-directed classroom Mrs. Webber, the supervising teacher, and Mrs. Deekin, the aide, established routines for these kindergarten children. Jessie found herself talking to the kindergarten children and fit into the morning schedule when she could.

Jessie's second placement was teaching kindergarten at Jefferson Elementary. The school was comprised of several small buildings, and to get to the kindergarten classroom you had to take the sidewalk past the library and turn left. Upon entering the building made up of four classrooms, each door was closed; and as you peeked in Mrs. Webber's classroom, the students appeared to be working quietly at their small desks. The room

was cheerful and spacious. Mrs. Webber and Mrs. Deekin were talking together at the teacher's desk located beside the door. Jessie was seated at a long table taking to students while she collected the morning work.

Second semester Jessie began her classroom responsibilities conducting the morning exercises. "I did lunch count, attendance, morning song and calendar" (Transcripts, p. 328). As she began to work with the students, Jessie found these kindergartners energetic and in need of more direct instruction in social skills than her third graders. Jessie spent five mornings a week for four and half hours in the classroom and had difficulty feeling part of the classroom. Jessie's supervisor noted that, "Jessie is not doing enough. Mrs. Webber was concerned she wasn't showing enough initiative" (Transcripts, p. 328). After meeting with her university supervisor and classroom teacher, Jessie recalled,

She thought that I was being lazy....I was going, "Well what am I going to teach...." [Mrs. Webber responded] "Oh, you are suppose to watch the kids here and the kids there, and in the classroom." I [Jessie] wasn't pushing because it was what she [Mrs. Webber] had been told by Sharon [the model director].

(Transcripts, p. 334)

Jessie found she was not able to communicate clearly with her university supervisor on how things were going in the classroom. The university supervisor felt Jessie was not showing enough initiative, but when she talked to Mrs. Webber about classroom

responsibilities, Jessie felt all she was suppose to do was observe the children. This placement was difficult because communication about her role as a student teacher was not clear.

Jessie was having difficulty establishing her role as the teacher in this kindergarten classroom. She reflected, "I am having trouble. I am too much of a friend to these kids. The problem is with what I am taught in the [lab] classes" (Transcripts, p. 328). There was a conflict in Jessie's own understanding of her role as a teacher and what was expected of her in this placement. In Mrs. Webber's class the teacher told the students what to do and the students did not have choices. As Jessie learned the classroom rules, she struggled with how a teacher is supposed to respond to five-year-olds. She asked, "At what point are five-year-olds being disrespectful or are they just being five-year-olds" (Transcripts, p. 328)?

In this kindergarten classroom, the instruction was teacher-directed. Jessie observed how Mrs. Webber taught the students. "You will erase that 'o' and put it behind this one, and not in front of that one..." (Transcripts, p. 328). Teaching was telling the students what to do. The lessons Jessie taught first semester were designed with an element of discovery for the students. The design of this classroom did not lend itself to much movement by the students. Lessons were taught to the whole group and did not give Jessie much time to develop relationships with the students. Jessie continued her role of observing the teacher and students.

I just watch her, [Mrs. Webber] and walk around the room. [She says], 'Get in your seat. Get your pencil in your hand. This is number seven. Would you count this for me? Your 'o' is on the wrong side. Please start your eight like an 's.'

(Transcripts, p. 324)

Because Jessie did not have many classroom responsibilities, she found she was not able to teach full time until spring. "I am not going to teach until after spring break.... Sharon told her [the model director] I am suppose to be doing things here and there. I teach them in the bathroom" (Transcripts, p. 324). By March, Jessie taught for only a short time in the morning. She lamented,

I am doing the same type of activities. I am so bored taking roll. I took attendance and charted and graphed it. I do not get up there [in front of the classroom] very often and I don't know what I am doing. I am having less confidence in front of the kids.

(Transcripts, p. 344)

As the semester progressed, the relationship with Mrs. Webber did not improve. Jessie tried to initiate conversations that give her understanding about the classroom.

She does not respect me and I don't know if that is because I ask her how she feels about this or how she feels about that. I ask her what do you want me to do? She does not need a relationship with me; she has Mrs. Deekin [the aide]. (Transcripts,

p. 344)

Jessie found that her inability to be successful in obtaining a relationship with Mrs. Webber made her feel less confident as a teacher. She lamented, "I have been put in this situation and I had an uphill battle" (Field Notes, May 2).

There was limited communication between Mrs. Webber and Jessie, which made it difficult for Jessie to feel a part of the classroom. Jessie had to figure out what Mrs. Webber was thinking from observing her supervising teacher. Jessie reflected,

She has so much inside her head and she won't tell me and that frustrates me.

Like, she has all this information and she is not telling me. When I want to know how my lesson went I really don't want to wait until next week. (Transcripts, p. 344)

Because Jessie did not have on-going conversations with Mrs. Webber, she spent her time trying to figure out what Mrs. Webber meant from her body language. Jessie took the lack of communication with Mrs. Webber very seriously. "I am not part of the classroom. During lunch she talks to Mrs. Deekin" (Transcripts, p. 344).

Second semester Jessie was a participant-observer in the classroom. Her work was limited to teaching and working with students in small groups. Jessie did get to teach for three days at the end of the semester. For the three days she taught, Jessie planned elaborate lessons that integrated her understanding of a teacher-directed classroom and developmentally appropriate lessons. Because Jessie did not replicate the classroom

management, she had difficulty introducing her activities to the class. The freedom the students experienced, many times, caused too much movement. This movement did not fit into Mrs. Webber's concept of an orderly classroom. Jessie did not gain entry into the kindergarten classroom second semester because she was not able to gain the confidence of the supervising teacher and explore her own concept of teaching. Second semester Jessie spent time thinking about her supervising teacher's classroom and how she could fit into the classroom.

The themes that emerged from Jessie's experiences second semester were (1) understanding instruction in the classroom, (2) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, (3) understanding and conducting classroom management, (4) understanding lessons; and, (5) understanding the complexity of student teaching. As Jessie entered the kindergarten classroom, it was clear the schedule of the day did not provide time for on-going conversations with the supervising teacher. Jessie struggled to make sense of how she could teach lessons in this classroom. Jessie's difficulty second semester was in finding how she could spend her time working with students and thinking about teaching.

As I look at this tall thin brunette focused on the kindergartner who is moving on the floor, there is a difference in the way she looks. Besides being twenty pounds lighter, there is a seriousness in her face that was not there last semester. Jessie is seated in a small chair with her arms and legs crossed. Her eyes are fixed on the Red Cross speaker who is demonstrating mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Several

kindergartners in the front row are sitting on their crossed legs. Jessie bends down and taps their shoulder. 'I want you to sit down.' Her eyes are moving back and forth observing the behavior of this kindergarten class while listening to a speaker talk about the importance of wearing a seat belt. Jessie's chair is pulled back from the students. She puts her hand up to her neck to feel her pulse. She bends down to help a student find his pulse. She is equally attentive to both the speaker in the room and the children under her care. The speaker is not quite finished, but after twenty minutes it is time to move to another classroom. Jessie stands up and goes to the front of the room where the children are beginning to line up. The students get in line and walk out of the room across the hall to where another speaker is waiting for them. (Vignette written from field notes, March 25)

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

As Jessie entered her second assignment she quickly surmised her experience would be different. The class was organized with established boundaries of expectations for the students. Jessie quickly learned to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management. After a short amount of time teaching in small groups, Jessie discovered that her concept of teaching did not fit in this classroom. There were no cooperative learning groups, student learning was directed by the teacher, and students raised their hands to talk. In the small reading groups Jessie could talk to the students and work on projects, but the students responded to established routines. Because Jessie was not able to engage in on-going conversations with Mrs. Webber and replicate the classroom

management, she did not spend time teaching lessons. Jessie's responsibilities consisted of completing clerical duties and directing the students in their morning routines. The morning exercises became a part of Jessie's responsibilities, and it was through these routine activities Jessie became a part of the classroom routines.

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

Last semester, understanding the classroom was achieved through developing on-going conversations with the supervising teacher. Without many opportunities to have a conversation with Mrs. Webber, Jessie carefully observed the interactions of her supervising teacher with the students. Mrs. Webber was kind to the students as she established routines for them to follow throughout the day. The students understood what they were expected to do. They hung up their coats when they came in, and then worked quietly at their table until the morning activities began. The flow of the day was established. The morning routine consisted of calendar activities, reading, and math. The students sat quietly at their seats and raised their hands if they had a question.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

Jessie's ideas about teaching were constructed from her own understanding and experiences of how to care for students. Jessie found that she needed to observe Mrs. Webber's classroom management and replicate it if she was to teach in this classroom. Jessie talked about a little boy who came over and sat on her lap, "Mrs. Webber told him to get off my lap" (Transcripts, p. 338). Jessie continually needed to remember that in this classroom she was the teacher and not their friend. "I started off too soft. I went in there

and just wanted to love the children. Mrs. Webber said we are not to love the children but we are going to teach them" (Transcripts, p. 310).

Jessie realized that the first thing she must do was to establish the routines of the classroom. "I spent the entire time trying to get the students to walk in line. But, how do you get the kindergarten students to walk in line" (Transcripts, p. 352)? On the way to the bathroom one of the girls would not stay in her place in line. Jessie explained what she had to do. "I talked to her about thirty minutes about what I expected and that I was the teacher, not to be cruel or nasty but she needed to know that I was the teacher" (Transcripts, p. 352). Because Jessie did not share the role of teacher with Mrs. Webber, the students did not respond to her as their teacher. Jessie talked to her own mother about how she could get the students to listen to her.

I have tried [saying the names] naming all those who are being good. My mom [who is a teacher] said that I need to be in [close] proximity to a person. If you are going to praise someone it has to be in proximity to someone who is not behaving. (Transcripts, p. 352).

Understanding was implicit in the classroom, and Jessie tried to make sense of what she could do by talking to Sharon, the model director. Sharon, gave her some suggestions,

I had a really good talk with Sharon yesterday. One of the things she said was that the way you control the classroom is a mental construct. It is not real at all.

There is no way that a teacher can have control over twenty-four, five-year-olds. You have to believe it and they have to believe it. If you don't believe it. They won't believe it! (Transcripts, p. 353)

Jessie began to think about classroom management and her role with the kindergarten students. Routines were automatic for the third graders she worked with first semester, and she did not have to think through how to teach them to stand in line or raise their hands when they wanted to participate in a conversation. Now she was trying to figure out how to get these five-year-olds to listen to her. Jessie did not share classroom responsibilities with Mrs. Webber so the students rarely saw her in the role as teacher. She did not spend time working with students except during small group activities and when the students were getting in line. Jessie did not have many opportunities to be the teacher.

Jessie slowly learned techniques to help her maintain the classroom discipline established by Mrs. Webber. As Jessie worked with the students, she found she was not comfortable when she tried to tell the students exactly what to do. "I tried to shove them under and it wasn't working" (Transcripts, p. 352). Jessie found she was comfortable with directing the students' behavior by combining her positive reinforcement and telling them how she expected them to act in line. Jessie reinforced the students' behavior when they were acting appropriately. "You are doing a beautiful job. I am so proud of you" (Transcripts, p. 352). Jessie found the behavior management she was comfortable with

and worked to establish her understanding into her concept of teaching in the classroom.

Understanding Lessons

Jessie shared the responsibility of teaching certain lessons with Mrs. Webber. When Mrs. Webber decided Jessie's lesson was not going as it should, she interrupted. Jessie and Mrs. Webber did not share the classroom responsibilities. Mrs. Webber was always the teacher. Jessie reflected, "I followed Mrs. Webber's lead and we finished the activity [the students] had started" (Field Notes, April 1). She found that classroom decisions were not hers, even when she taught a lesson. Following Mrs. Webber's lead was a hard way to make sense of the classroom, and it put a strain on their relationship. Jessie talked about an uncomfortable moment when she felt she had to abandon her teaching to follow Mrs. Webber's schedule. The kindergarten students had just returned from music and it was almost time for lunch. When the students returned to the classroom, Mrs. Webber began to complete a dictating activity the students had been working on before music. Jessie followed her supervising teacher's decision to complete the activity and then wash hands, before they went to lunch. By completing the sentences and washing hands the kindergarten class ended up ten minutes late to lunch. Jessie understood her supervising teacher was angry by observing her body language in the cafeteria. Jessie felt that she was upset because the class was late for lunch.

Jessie found that in this classroom she experienced difficulty establishing a relationship with the supervising teacher, which made her role as teacher in this classroom difficult. Jessie did not take over many responsibilities in the classroom, which brought up

questions about her ability to work with kindergartners. During the last few days of student teaching Jessie was responsible for the morning lesson. As difficult as it was to establish herself as a teacher, Jessie enthusiastically prepared lessons that reflected her understanding of teaching.

Jessie passed out counters to the kindergartners seated at their tables. The lesson was missing addends. Jessie put the problem on the board. The students were to match their counters with what was written on the board. The children were at their desks. Some are moving the counters into a number sentence, some are building towers, and some are talking amongst themselves. The supervising teacher and student teacher are moving around the room helping each student move their counters to match the word problem in the picture. (Field Notes, April 8)

Jessie taught a math lesson on missing addends. Her concept of teaching involved the children figuring out what the answer to the problem was through discovery. The students had red counters at their desks to help them figure out the answer. The math workbook guided the activity. Some students were building towers, some were stacking them, everyone seemed to be enjoying the activity. This activity offered the students opportunity to experience learning in a different way. In Jessie's lesson there was a shift in noise level and the student's behavior. When this happened, Mrs. Webber interrupted the lesson and reminded the students what to do. The shift in noise was not acceptable, and

Jessie's lessons did not fit into Mrs. Webber's classroom management.

When given an opportunity to teach the whole class, Jessie was not able to establish the routines in a manner similar to Mrs. Webber; and as a result during the lessons, the students did not respond appropriately. Jessie's goal of individualizing the curriculum (using language as a tool for learning and using alternative mediums for instruction) were not familiar patterns of instruction for these kindergartners. As with any new routine with small children, it takes time to establish a level of comfort for the students to explore and learn what is acceptable behavior. Jessie began to feel unsuccessful when she could not get the students to respond to her lessons and gain the approval of her supervising teacher.

It took almost the entire second semester for Jessie to understand classroom instruction in her kindergarten assignment. Jessie experienced an inability to replicate the supervising teacher's teaching style and behavioral management techniques. Jessie felt unsuccessful because her journey to understand what was expected in this classroom took a semester. Jessie was put into a classroom and worked just as hard in all areas of professionalism, university class work, and dedication to the profession as she had done first semester. Jessie did not gain entry to teach in this kindergarten classroom due to her inability to replicate the classroom management routines and gain the confidence of her supervising teacher to practice teaching.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

As the semester progressed, this bubbly, enthusiastic, inquirer began to listen to

comments that indicated she was not successful. Jessie responded to the feedback she received about her performance in the classroom, "I have begun to believe what they say" (Field Notes, May 2, p. 1). As Jessie worked through each part of the student evaluation, she was pleased with the words she placed on the sheet; she had worked hard, been conscientious and professional. Yet when it came to assign herself a grade, she could not give herself an 'A'. She said, "I feel defeated. I feel there has been a hedge put before me" (Field Notes, May 2). She could not give herself an 'A' in student teaching. "I could not manage the classroom" (Field Notes, May 2). This semester Jessie struggled with being able to spend time teaching. "What have you learned [about student teaching] Jessie?" a question asked at the end of the semester. Jessie replied, "There are different models of teaching. I have struggled with becoming another person," she replied (Field Notes, May 3).

Jessie was placed in the classroom of a kindergarten teacher who had worked with student teachers before. The difference in the structure of the classroom and lack of communication between Jessie and her supervising teacher prevented Jessie from gaining entry to practice teaching. Jessie was required to spend time thinking about her supervising teacher's concept of teaching. When she taught lessons, she had to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom instruction. There was no formula to predict what would make a good student teaching experience, but a good match with the supervising teacher was important. This case study confirmed the importance of the role of the supervising teacher and the effect the lack of communication had on a student teacher's

classroom experience. Jessie had a negative experience, and if she had not had a strong network of support, this could have discouraged her from entering the teaching profession. In fact, Jessie talked about possibly student teaching another semester. Jessie did end up getting an 'A' in student teaching.



Beth's First Assignment: Finding a Comfortable Viewing Place

First semester of student teaching Beth found herself placed in a second grade classroom at Westfield Elementary. Mrs. Bath was a veteran teacher who had spent her first year teaching second grade for the first time in this ability-grouped classroom. Beth was tentative about entering her student teaching experience and talked about being reserved, "I am a reticent and reserved person and need continuity to feel warmed up. Some people make it easier for me to discuss things. I am making myself get involved. It is kind of hard for me" (Beth's Biography, p. 5). Since the onset of student teaching, Beth identified herself as reticent and said getting involved was difficult.

Beth changed her major to Elementary Education because she felt it would be an opportunity to express her creative side. She reflected,

I did not know what to do [about careers all the time] but did find I could be really creative and do really creative things. I am not good at finding solutions to problems, but as far as coming up with a lesson that relates to the children and is fun, I like to do that. (Beth's Biography, p. 9)

Beth had firm ideas about what she anticipated she would do in the classroom. "Good days are when I don't have to put names on the board and I can do creative stuff" (Beth's Biography, p. 9). Beth thought she would like to teach the upper grades when she had her own classroom.

...I think I would like reading in the upper grades like alliteration and hyperbole, and look up things in the dictionary....I'll try to see how I handle it but I think I will be more comfortable with a school like in a middle class [economic] because I came from the suburbs, and I will feel more comfortable. (Beth's Biography, p. 2)

Beth easily learned to read and write when in elementary school. Beth found she related to students who learned as she did. Because Beth did not experience difficulty in reading or writing as a student, her connections with the students in the lower reading group were therefore limited. "It is hard for me to teach writing. I was a good writer and I just did it!" (Beth's Biography, p. 2). Beth formed ideas about teaching that she brought with her to this second grade classroom. "They [the students] are on a different wave length than me when I was in second grade" (Beth's Biography, p. 3). During the conversations in the car pool Beth freely talked about her struggles with what she saw in the classroom and what she thought good teaching was. Beth's ideas for understanding teaching were established from her framework of being in the classroom. This lens was a tool for Beth to make sense of her student teaching experience.

Beth defined her place in this second grade classroom first semester as an observer. Because Beth was reticent, she did not initiate a relationship with Mrs. Bath. This left Beth on her own to make sense of the classroom instruction. The lack of communication with Mrs. Bath made Beth's role as student teacher unclear. "I am not sure what I am teaching....I think I am doing pronouns. I am not sure and she wants me to expand on nouns" (Transcripts, p. 147). Not being familiar with the curriculum made Beth feel unprepared. Because Beth did not feel prepared to teach, she was not sure what she should teach, and did not feel free to communicate with Mrs. Bath about her lessons. This awkward situation extended to misunderstandings between Beth and Mrs. Bath. After a student talked rudely to Beth, she informed Mrs. Bath about what happened. She recalled, "I made a mistake and I told her James made a smart aleck comment. She said, 'James come over here.' She talked to him in front of me about what I told her [in private]....I was embarrassed" (Transcripts, p. 185). Mrs. Bath brought the child to the back of the class and confronted him in front of Beth. Beth felt very uncomfortable. Beth did not want Mrs. Bath to confront the student. After this happened, Beth did not talk to Mrs. Bath about how she felt.

Beth did not have much contact with the students in her classroom. Mrs. Bath's classroom arrangement and schedule prevented Beth from engaging in conversations with the students. Beth did not even talk to the students while they worked at their seatwork. Beth lamented, "The teacher grades the daily work, so I don't help them at their seats." This limited Beth's attempts to develop relationships. The lack of communication between

Beth and the students limited Beth's knowledge of how to become a part of the classroom.

Not being a part of the classroom made Beth think about how she felt as a teacher. "I am not sure if teaching is what I am cut out for" (Transcripts, p. 90). Her voice was very hesitant and unsure because she did not have much confidence in her role as a student teacher.

As the semester progressed Beth began to implement her university reading projects. It was through these experiences Beth had an opportunity to think about her own concept of teaching.

About the sixth week of student teaching, Beth began to teach the entire class. During her first lesson she was so nervous she wrote notes on her hands. In teaching the entire class, she found she had difficulty with classroom management. "If the kids are misbehaving I don't see it" (Transcripts, p. 93). Teaching the lesson took all Beth's energy. She did not see what the students were doing.

Beth crafted her understanding of student teaching through observing and working with students. She became more confident in her role as teacher toward the end of the semester saying, "I see myself as a teacher. I am a teacher. That is how I will introduce myself" (Interview II with Beth, p. 4).

Several themes emerged from Beth's student teaching first semester 1) understanding instruction in the classroom, 2) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, 3) understanding lessons, 4) understanding and conducting classroom management; and, 5) understanding the complexity of student teaching.

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

Beth did not see herself as the teacher in the second grade class. Beth viewed Mrs. Bath as the teacher because she was able to manage the students during classroom instruction.

I just don't know how to control them. Mrs. Bath has control. She read a book. I sat in the back of the room the whole time. I just don't know about this. I don't think I am cut out for this! (Transcripts, p. 104)

First semester consisted of Beth observing Mrs. Bath and her interactions with the second graders. Beth taught reading lessons and worked with students in small groups. Within small groups Beth could comfortably focus on teaching the lessons she designed. It was during these small groups that Beth began to understand her own concept of teaching.

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

In her classroom Beth was unable to establish a relationship with her supervising teacher that allowed her entry into full participation in the classroom. Beth talked about being quiet and shy: "I am a reticent and reserved person and need continuity to feel warmed up. Some people make it easier for me to discuss things. I am making myself get involved. It is kind of hard for me." Beth's shyness created a barrier in making connections through conversation and developing the type of professional and personal relationship with her supervising teacher that helps promote a student teacher's growth. Without on-going conversations, Beth was not clear on what she was to teach. "I am not

sure what I am teaching. I think I am going to teach pronouns. I am not sure she wants me to expand on nouns. She says they don't know the different kind of nouns"

(Transcripts, p. 147).

The communication between Beth and Mrs. Bath was implicit. Beth had to figure out what she thought she should do and many times she was lost in figuring out where she fit in. Through observation and her own understanding of teaching, Beth made sense of the classroom on her own. With her classroom responsibilities unclear and with the lack of confidence to initiate teaching, figuring out her place in the classroom was difficult.

Understanding Lessons

Beth prepared for teaching by studying the teacher's manual. At this point she did not have any knowledge of the students. Because Beth did not have on-going conversations with Mrs. Bath and the students, she was not able to connect the students' experiences with her lessons. When she had difficulty preparing a lesson she asked for help. When Beth reflected on her dilemma of planning lessons, she thought she could have been more prepared by her university classes. Beth continued to feel teaching a lesson was transferring knowledge to the learner.

I want to know how to teach first graders how to read. Should we be giving them their letters to practice? The classes we had were philosophical and I need practical answers. I like to feel prepared for a situation. (Interview with Beth and Alice, p. 2).

The reading and language arts class that Beth took for the first ten weeks of student teaching presented concepts of whole language and reading as integrated into many subject areas in the curriculum. Beth had difficulty understanding how the concepts fit in her classroom, "I don't see how they are going to get the skills [if we teach whole language]" (Interview II with Beth, p. 1). Mrs. Bath taught skills through the basal, although she did use literature in her classroom as a means to integrate the curriculum. Beth found she was not able to make sense of whole language from her classroom experience. Beth tended to struggle with concepts that were abstract, which did not seem to fit into her student teaching experience. Subjects like math and science where the students had an opportunity to explore and engage in discovery were easier for Beth to fit into her classroom instruction. These subjects lent themselves to discovery.

At this point, Beth began working with students in small groups where she felt free to explore her own concept of teaching. The group Beth taught was challenging and she did not feel prepared to solve the problems of these young writers. She commented, "It is hard for me to teach writing. I was a good writer and I just did it. I get frustrated when there is a major problem with a kid" (Beth's Biography, p. 9). Beth viewed teaching from her past experiences of being a student. Because she did not experience problems in reading and writing, she did not feel she could help the children with their problems. Beth enjoyed teaching math because the concepts seemed more concrete.

When I had math this afternoon I had counters on the table so they could see it when

they came in. I said, 'I want you to estimate how many counters you had when you came in.' I saw heads looking up and they were trying to count. 'Don't count, just guess.' They still counted. (Transcripts, p. 219)

Beth enjoyed being creative and using manipulatives in her lessons. Her lessons included elements of play and learning, acquired from her developmentally-appropriate background. The lessons she designed wove the concept of play into their academic lessons. The students were given the opportunity to interact socially as they explored problems together. In developing her concept of teaching, Beth directed the activity of the students. "Don't count, just guess." Beth gave explicit directions to the students in how to approach the activity. "I saw...they were trying to count" (Transcripts, p. 219). Beth observed they were counting and not estimating. In teaching the large group, Beth told the class what she wanted them to do. When Beth taught the students in a small group, she allowed them to explore without direction. In teaching her lessons, Beth was discovering the tension between an discovery lesson and a teacher-directed lesson.

Teaching reading was not clearcut for Beth. She knew the students were supposed to read for meaning, but she had not developed any teaching strategies to help her students do that. In talking about her reading lesson Beth sighed,

The kids read and they don't get the meaning out of the story. You have to tell them every other word. [I] wish she [Mrs. Bath] would give me one group I was used to so it is not [such] a challenge.... (Transcripts, p. 85)

It was a challenge for Beth to teach comprehension strategies to these second graders. In the small reading group time Beth explored her concept of teaching and thought about her understanding of teaching reading. In this small group she became a skillful observer of individual student's needs and struggled with how to teach them.

When deciding on a lesson, Beth selected a complex topic that could be explored in many on-going activities throughout the day. Her lesson on clouds began with an introduction on evaporation and progressed to activities that included learning about clouds through talking about clouds, looking at clouds, and making clouds. The concept was easily integrated into the curriculum by discussing the theme of clouds throughout the day's learning experiences. During a lesson preparation on Japanese writing, Beth remarked, "I don't know if she will like this, she doesn't do anything like this" (Transcripts, p. 70). Beth was beginning to explore her concept of teaching through developing her own lessons and connecting her lessons to the students.

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

Beth moved from being an observer to a participant-observer as she assumed more responsibility in the classroom. Beth planned and taught lessons to the whole class and assessed them. "When things go right it seems I feel like a teacher. When kids respond positively there are no names on the board, the class is easier and I can do creative stuff" (Interview II with Beth, p. 1). Beth made sense of the classroom from her own concept of teaching. Beth spent a lot of time during her first semester thinking about how to teach a

lesson. As the semester continued, Beth became more confident in teaching her lessons. "Sometimes it is better to wing it, I don't cover all the things I plan or it changes" (Transcripts, p. 123). Beth made decisions regarding how to implement her lessons without the input of Mrs. Bath.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

Beth struggled this semester with planning her lessons alone. Many times she turned to her carpool for ideas and help in preparing a lesson. It was clear that planning lessons gave Beth an opportunity to explore her own concept of teaching and begin to integrate developmentally appropriate practices into her activities. This worked well in Mrs. Bath's classroom where she was given an opportunity to plan lessons for her small reading group. As a participant-observer Beth discovered her role in the classroom and gained confidence in teaching lessons.

Transition

Beth found that she became extremely attached to the students in her first placement at Westfield. While teaching the high ability second graders, she was able to provide enrichment activities to expand the lessons which matched her interest in working with the gifted. The students in the class were very well behaved, and she did not spend much time working out classroom management. During the time she was in the classroom, she established close ties with several of the children, and was able to do things that interested them. First semester was successful for Beth because she felt she could identify herself as a teacher. "There are days when I don't want to be any other place"

(Interview II with Beth, p. 1). As Beth entered her new placement at Jefferson, she observed many differences right away. From the boardwork Beth could tell that Mrs. Webber taught her first graders from a skills-based approach. The reading groups were red birds, yellow birds, and blue birds. The classroom seemed to be very chaotic from observing the students changing groups every twenty minutes. Mrs. Webber, Beth's new supervising teacher, had a different style of classroom management than Mrs. Bath. There was a lot more noise and movement. "She [Mrs. Webber] was trying to tell me. 'Don't get too discouraged.' But they were bad. 'They will be better in January. Two of them will be leaving because they have emotional problems'" (Interview II with Beth, p. 2). Beth was tentative about her new placement.

I think I have been on the same wave length as these kids [Westfield] and I am going to have to get on a different wave length because they are from a different back ground....I don't know anything about the kids from the projects. (Beth's Biography, p. 3)

Beth's Second Assignment: Learning "To Go With It"

Beth's second student teaching placement was at Jefferson Elementary. To enter this inner city kindergarten classroom you entered the first building which was the kindergarten/first grade unit. This building had a wide hall and on the far left is Mrs. Webber's first grade classroom. This was Mrs. Webber's first year teaching first grade. Beth was in front of the class talking to the students as they moved around the classroom.

Several students were working in small groups at several different places in the room. The reading teacher was instructing a small group in the back of the room. Mrs. Webber was sitting down at a small table next to the door teaching reading. There were several students doing board work and there were students in the back of the room working in the computer center. There was a lot of activity in this brightly colored classroom. The desks were arranged in rows facing the blackboard and the teacher's desk was located in the back of the room beside a sink. To any observer this looks like a typical first grade classroom.

Jefferson Elementary's commitment to self discipline was reflected in the school rules. The students were to be quiet and responded in an orderly fashion. Last semester Beth was in a class where children often worked in groups and were encouraged to talk. Beth responded to the change in her placement by saying, "There is such a structure [in the classroom] that I cannot interfere with her [Mrs. Webber's] plans. I can't do anything except what she has planned...." (Transcripts, p. 310). Beth, at first, fell into the role of an observer. After being able to design her own lessons and create enrichment exercises for the second graders, she found working from a workbook page a new challenge. She recalled,

I take these kids who are slow out for reading and then I do spelling or handwriting. She wants it all from the book. I asked if I could do whole language. [She said,] I could do it with one group but not with the other group because they

couldn't handle it. (Transcripts, p. 321)

First semester, Mrs. Bath allowed Beth to be creative in her lessons as she taught her university assignment to students in small groups. Second semester, however, Mrs. Webber asked Beth to replicate her teaching. Beth was beginning to teach reading lessons from the basal and the workbook. "I have to do everything from the basal. I don't like it. It is not me and I can't do anything creative so I just sit there" (Transcripts, p. 307). As Beth observed in the classroom she found Mrs. Webber asked her to do clerical jobs. Because the lines of communication were not yet open, she was unsure of what she should do in the classroom. "I sat there the whole day and sharpened pencils....Mrs. Webber got mad, she gave me a stack of papers and said to take them home and grade them" (Transcripts, p. 307).

As Beth took more initiative in trying to get involved, her role moved toward being a participant-observer, and she began thinking about the classroom instruction. The students did their work at their desks in the morning. Beth struggled with how much she could help them.

She does not want me to help them because their morning work is graded, if I help them, it is my work. She grades the morning work....To be less disruptive I was sitting back from the class and she didn't like that. (Transcripts, p. 308)

Getting involved with the students presented itself as a problem, but Beth was not

discouraged. Instead she focused on how she could teach lessons like Mrs. Webber.

Mrs. Webber wants me to do workbook pages, she wants me to do that, and that is what I do. I don't think that she would want me to change. They gave us the writing book for a reason and so we should use them because they gave them to us. (Transcripts, p. 310)

As a participant-observer, Beth began to fit into Mrs. Webber's concept of teaching. Beth realized this was important in gaining entry into the classroom. She realized her supervising teacher's concept of teaching was different from her own. "I think I would be doing her plans and that is not how I teach....How can I take over when our teaching and discipline style are so different from the teacher" (Transcripts, p. 322)? Beth decided that the only way to fit into the classroom was to replicate the classroom instruction and the classroom management of Mrs. Webber. Even though, as a participant-observer, Beth was teaching lessons and getting involved in the class activities, her confidence was very low. She felt she did not fit in. Beth felt she was expected to be able to manage the small group activities of this active first grade class, which was difficult for her. In a writing lesson one day Beth talked about the difficulty she had in deciding how much to let the students talk while teaching a lesson.

I was doing handwriting exercises and this one girl told me about a bug....It was so cute and they all wanted to tell me all these stories about bugs. Mrs. Webber was

like, "Work on the pages and be quiet!" (Field Notes, February 3)

Beth did not have the confidence to let the students tell their stories about bugs because they had to finish their workbook pages. Because Mrs. Webber was always present, it was difficult for Beth to feel she could teach according to her own concept of teaching. After experiencing success in teaching reading through literature last semester, Beth found lessons out of a basal series difficult to teach.

The directions in the basal are terrible! Sometimes they are repeated over and over. One kid said, 'How do I do this?' I didn't get it, so I read it over again and again. All I do is read over and over directions and repeat it again. (Transcripts, p. 333)

When working with the workbook pages, Beth found that when all she did was read the directions the activity was difficult for them to understand. "Kids are so acclimated to workbook pages that they don't write, but I am like...'Think of something in your family,' and they are like, 'I don't know,' and there is nothing" (Transcripts, p. 334). Beth tried to figure out the best way to teach writing through using the basal and workbook pages. Slowly Beth began to figure out how to use the basal and the workbook pages with techniques from their university classes. She found that to teach her lessons she had to first focus on the students' behavior. When the students were disruptive, Mrs. Webber interrupted the lesson and corrected the students. "If my kids are being rowdy she will pull up a chair or stand up and start counting" (Transcripts, p. 344). This group of first

graders were active when Mrs. Webber taught the lesson as well as when Beth taught the lesson. Mrs. Webber found she directed the behavior of the students throughout the day regardless of who was teaching. If the students were being too noisy, Mrs. Webber stood up and turned off the lights. The reading teacher had problems with this active first grade class also. "The reading teacher does not have any control over her group and they are screaming and hollering and climbing over tables" (Transcripts, p. 345). The activity of the class was a battle for Mrs. Webber. Beth talked about the activity level of the class,

There is not a moment when we are not on the kids about getting out of their seats, about not hitting each other, about going to the computer. There is not a second we are not telling them to be quiet. (Transcripts, p. 345)

The last two weeks of student teaching were very successful for Beth. During that time she was able to shift from being a participant-observer to co-participant with Mrs. Webber. Slowly Beth worked herself into the classroom by teaching lessons, making lesson plans and implementing her university projects. Mrs. Webber and Beth had on-going conversations about the class throughout the day. Up to this point Beth had practiced her student teaching primarily in small reading groups. The shift to full participation happened the last two weeks of the student teaching assignment. The change was smooth because of the supportive relationship that Mrs. Webber established with Beth.

There were several themes that emerged in the second semester of student

teaching that helped frame Beth's experience. They are 1) understanding instruction in the classroom, 2) building a relationship with the supervising teacher, 3) understanding lessons, 4) understanding and conducting classroom management; and, 5) understanding the complexity of student teaching. The success of Beth's student teaching was a slow progress and reached its climax in the last two weeks of student teaching.

As I approach the first grade classroom I receive the familiar greetings. Mrs. Webber looks up from her busy work to smile and as I pass Beth, she smiles too. Beth, talking to the class says, "How do you make a cylinder?" The students look at the student teacher and raise their hands. They follow her direction. What has happened to this student teacher in the last few weeks? I can hardly believe the lesson I just watched. There before me is a confident student teacher integrating her concept of teaching her lessons into her supervising teacher's classroom instruction. (Field Notes, May 10)

Understanding Instruction in the Classroom

Beth found Mrs. Webber's classroom instruction reflected how she felt students should be taught. In this teacher-directed classroom, there were firm boundaries for how the students were to behave during classroom instruction and how their assignments were to be completed. Even though the classroom was structured, Beth described the classroom as chaotic with lots of movement. The morning instruction was set aside for students to work in small groups. The students worked by themselves at centers with the

direction of a teacher. Adults in the classroom were viewed as facilitators of learning for these students.

Building a Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

Mrs. Webber, Beth's supervising teacher, allowed Beth to experience the complexity of the classroom. Mrs. Webber supported Beth and gave her an opportunity to enter the classroom and work with the students in a supportive environment.

Beth and Mrs. Webber developed a professional relationship where they established on-going conversations that helped her understand the classroom. In this relationship Beth found that she and Mrs. Webber had similar ways of caring for the students. "We both care how the child feels" (Interview III with Beth, p. 3). Beth began to understand her supervising teacher's manner of nurturing which became a basis for the decisions made in the classroom. This on-going conversation with Mrs. Webber allowed Beth to see feedback as helpful in the process of learning about herself as a teacher. In a conversation about Mrs. Webber, Beth recalled how their teaching styles were different. "I am the type of person who will lay something down and come back to it after the day is over....She worries that I am not organized" (Interview III with Beth, p. 4). The on-going conversation created connections of personal understanding between Beth and Mrs. Webber as Beth began to reflect on the comments of her supervising teacher.

The relationship that Mrs. Webber developed with Beth was very special. Despite the structure and routine of the classroom, Mrs. Webber kept an on-going conversation with Beth that always let Beth know what she was thinking.

Understanding Lessons

Beth began teaching lessons in a small reading group. In this group she explored her own concept of teaching into lessons. "Beth is quiet and soft spoken. The lesson is to reread the story that was written the day before. The children are excited and talking among themselves" (Field notes, March 19). In this small group Beth began to feel comfortable in allowing the students to talk as she helped direct the class in a Language Experience lesson. Slowly she had opportunities to explore her own concept of teaching as she connected lessons with the students. Beth captured the students' enthusiasm as they wrote a story together about a bear that gave fighting lessons to a horse. The class exploded into laughter as they read the story together and then ran off to their seats to write their own stories. Beth's university assignments became a means of making connections with the students as she implemented reading and writing lessons. "Last semester I didn't understand whole language yet. I was confused. I was not certain what teaching was. Then I went in and tried to teach" (Interview III with Beth, p. 4).

Beth did not have a clear understanding of how to implement the theory of whole language into the way she was expected to teach in this first grade classroom. It took Beth a semester to feel comfortable in working with students before she could let them write their own stories. This was different from assigning pages in a workbook to complete. Working with the class often allowed Beth to get to know the students. First semester, in Mrs. Bath's second grade class, she observed her supervising teacher use literature as a foundation for the second grade curriculum. As Beth gained experience in

this more traditional classroom, she used the workbook and basal. She saw that using workbooks was not wrong. "I do workbook pages. Now I see that worksheets are actually, okay. You can make the worksheets more [challenging] and maybe you can start changing one thing at a time" (Interview III with Beth, p. 4). Beth was wrestling with her concept of teaching that she was being taught at the university. By sharing the responsibility of teaching with Mrs. Webber, Beth was in a position to rethink her teaching practices. As Beth began to understand her supervising teacher's classroom instruction, she felt more comfortable teaching and using the materials her supervising teacher used. As Beth figured out this first grade classroom, she experienced little difficulty in incorporating her university projects as well as her own ideas of reading and writing as an integrated approach to learning. Beth became an inquirer, able to rethink her established ideas and yet influenced tremendously by her supervising teacher. "I have learned that the basal is okay, and it is not a huge sin to do workbook pages" (Interview III with Beth, p. 4).

Understanding and Conducting Classroom Management

Learning to teach meant Beth had to learn how to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management. Beth commented, "Teaching is the management thing" (Interview III with Beth, p. 4). First semester Beth spent time in small groups thinking about what she wanted to teach the students. Second semester Beth spent instructional time directing the students' behavior. Beth focused on giving directions. During classroom instruction Beth's attention was often focused on the children who were not

paying attention to the lesson. "Sit up...," she said frequently. The students were in a reading group where they had just written a story and were talking. Everyone seemed to be participating except a few. Beth stopped the lesson to remind them how to sit in reading group. "Pick your head up...." In this teacher-directed classroom Mrs. Webber told the students how to behave and Beth reinforced these rules during her lessons. Beth felt comfortable teaching a lesson and focusing on the students' behavior.

First semester Beth's second grade class did not have any major behavior problems. The students were well behaved and most of the classroom movement was orchestrated by Mrs. Bath. Second semester the first grade classroom had lots of movement during the day and behavior was often an issue. To make sense of this classroom, Beth focused on student behavior. Murry was a small boy who frequently walked around the classroom. Beth found when her supervising teacher left the room Murry made noises. On a visit made by several college students, he got up and yelled, "Oh, Baby!" (Field Notes, April 15). Sometimes speaking with Murry helped. The threat of taking him to the office worked for a while; this seemed to remind him there were consequences for inappropriate behavior. But, when Mrs. Webber left the room, Murry acted out! How to deal with Murry was a constant battle.

Beth and Mrs. Webber dealt with students in a similar manner so implementing her own value of care through her classroom management was not difficult for Beth. Being familiar with the behavior of her students allowed Beth to turn her attention to teaching lessons. As Beth became actively involved in teaching the students, she understood her

supervising teacher's classroom management.

Understanding the Complexity of Student Teaching

At the end of her year long student teaching experience, Beth decided to stop worrying. When she did this, she found she was able to explore her own concept of teaching. "This placement has been worse, the kids misbehaving, the discipline; but I just decided to stop worrying" (Interview III with Beth, p. 1). Because the students in the first grade class were more active, it did not seem possible to make this experience as successful as her first assignment where the children were, "...so good and smart and everything went very smoothly" (Interview III with Beth, p. 2). Placing herself on the outside of the classroom as an observer did not give her many opportunities to learn about the students throughout the day. "I did not know the children very well [first semester] and was passive in the classroom" (Interview III with Beth, p. 2). Beth did not take risks in getting to know the students or teaching lessons.

As a result, the lessons Beth taught first semester were mostly enrichment activities which connected with the abilities of the students. "The second placement [the students] was worse!" (Interview III with Beth, p. 3). The students in her first grade class at first glance appeared to be worse, possibly because they were younger and less experienced in understanding what was expected of them in the classroom. Mrs. Webber allowed the students to work in groups and engage in various activities throughout the room. The many activities appeared chaotic compared to the smooth, orderly movement of the high ability second grade Beth was accustomed to. The change in grade level from

second to first, entering into a heterogeneously grouped class of students from the projects, and getting to know another supervising teacher, made the second assignment difficult at first. It took time for Beth to observe and understand her new supervising teacher and how she fit in. As Beth began to work closely with the students in small and large groups she continued to develop her concept of teaching. Beth went through several changes in her thinking about teaching as she made connections with the students through her lessons. At first Beth taught as she did in Mrs. Bath's room. Lessons were activities to give the students more freedom to explore. She found that Mrs. Webber interrupted these lessons to help with the discipline of the students.

As Beth began to focus on the discipline of the students, many times the essence of her lesson got lost. Spending time making sure the students were listening and not being disruptive took her attention away from on-going conversations with the students. But finally the successful integration of her own style of teaching and management of the students came for Beth when she taught the entire class the last two weeks of student teaching. Her creative presentation engaged the students, and she was able to successfully teach while maintaining the classroom management. Beth handled the students who were notoriously not attentive, one by one, speaking to them quietly at their desks. Beth taught lessons combining her own concept of teaching, using the basal and workbook pages of her supervising teacher. Asked about her new confidence of teaching and classroom management she replied, "...I just decided to stop worrying!" (Interview III with Beth, p. 1). When this occurred she was able to let go of directing the students' learning and focus

on teaching her lessons. During her lessons the students were looking, listening, and participating by raising their hands and asking questions. During one of the last lessons Beth taught, she spent her time displaying the globe and pointing out places on the overhead. The activity with the globe and overhead engaged the students as they listened and followed her directions. This new confidence in her teaching and the involvement of the students in the lesson changed Beth's focus. The tension now existed between connecting what was being presented with the students. Asking questions and exploring the lesson together seemed to engage the students in the task and focus their attention on what was being taught. This eliminated many behavior problems. Beth felt comfortable fitting her teaching into Mrs. Webber's concept of teaching. With the management of the classroom more under control and feeling comfortable with following the teacher's classroom instruction, Beth was able to focus on her teaching.

Beth's success in student teaching rested in her gradual participation in the classroom. She was not able to put all the pieces of her supervising teacher's classroom together and understand how it all worked until she discovered what worked for her. Beth was persistent in making sense of her student teaching experience during this period. Spending time as an observer gave her time to think about the classroom. As a participant-observer she was involved in the classroom and began to work with the students, and as a co-participant, Beth successfully taught classes with her supervising teacher. Beth's entry into full participation was successful because of the support and on-going conversations with her supervising teacher. Beth discovered that conversation and

collaboration were as big a part of her understanding of teaching as it was a part of the students' way of understanding.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cross Case Analysis

In this section the similarities and the differences of the four case studies will be examined with respect to (1) personal histories of student teachers, (2) relationship with the supervising teacher, (3) flow, (4) support during student teaching and (5) strategies.

Personal Histories of Student Teachers

Mindy, Jessie, Alice, and Beth entered student teaching with a framework for understanding teaching formed from early experiences as students, opportunities to work with children, and beliefs about teaching. These experiences established, for each a set of personal concepts for generating meaning out of the student teaching experience (Lortie, 1985; Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992; Butt, Raymond, & Yamagishi, 1988). The personal experiences each student teacher had in school were translated into ideas of what teaching should be like in the classroom. Each student teacher's story of what it was like to be in the classroom and their reasons for entering into the teaching profession helped the researcher construct a framework for writing each student teacher's case study (LaBoskey, 1994). The information from their personal biographies was woven in their understandings of teaching and helped craft the story of their flow through the student teaching experience. Each student teacher's personal history added a dimension of understanding to their movement from being an observer to participant-observer to co-participant to teacher (see Figure 1). The opportunity to gain entry into full participation and teach during the student teaching experience ranged from being simple to complex,

depending on the student teacher's ability to use her experiences to be responsive and make adaptations in her student teaching placement.

The experiences and personal history that the student teachers brought with them to student teaching were different and resulted in a unique entry and flow through the student teaching experience (see Figure 4). Mindy's flow through student teaching was labeled "Classic" because of her ability to be consistent in making adaptations to her own concept of teaching. Working at an amusement park gave Mindy experiences in understanding how to interact with adults as well as understanding the importance of developing relationships with those she worked with. When it came time for Mindy to enter the classroom, she found establishing a relationship with her supervising teacher and taking an initiative in participating in classroom responsibilities, familiar ways of making sense of her working environment. Beth, on the other hand, whose experience was labeled "Just in Time," decided to go into early childhood development and then enter into education the second year she was at the university. She had two summers of working with children before she entered her teaching experience. This limited experience of working with students and uncertainty in identifying herself as a teacher, put her on the outside of the classroom looking in first semester. On the outside of the classroom, she was able to observe the classroom and think about teaching.

Alice's experience was labeled "Consistent: Great Adaptations." Her ease in developing relationships with her supervising teacher and connecting to the students were skills she brought with her to student teaching. She identified herself as the classroom

teacher and was confident in initiating instruction and replicating her supervising teacher's concept of teaching.

Jessie's experience was labeled "Student Teaching Stopped." She felt very strongly about developing relationships with her supervising teacher and the students in her classroom. Jessie valued relationships and initiated ways to make them happen. Her persistence made it possible for Jessie to teach in the classroom of Mrs. June first semester, who had a very different style of classroom instruction and manner of nurturing students from Jessie's. In fact, the two built a professional as well as personal relationship. Second semester, Jessie was matched with a supervising teacher who initiated classroom instruction and nurtured students in a different manner than Jessie, again. Yet, in the context of this experience, Jessie was unable to develop a relationship with her supervising teacher and gain entry into full participation to practice teaching.

Relationship with the Supervising Teacher

As the study unfolded, it was evident that entry into full participation of student teaching was made possible when the student teacher developed a relationship with her supervising teacher. In these placements, the student teacher did not have to be well matched with her supervising teacher in the manner of nurturing the students or implementing the classroom instruction. If the student teacher was able to make adaptations to overcome the differences in their own concept of teaching by replicating the classroom teacher's classroom instruction, she gained entry. In the first assignment the supervising teacher made it a point to introduce the student teacher to the school

community and to share the role of classroom teacher, as well as cultivate a supportive relationship with the student teacher. Mindy, Jessie and Alice, first semester, had supervising teachers that shared the role of classroom teacher, and as a result the supervising teacher and student teacher became co-participants in making instructional decisions. In a placement where the student teacher is able to talk to her supervising teacher, she does not spend time worrying about how she will fit in, but spends time building a more complex understand of her own concept of teaching (see Figure 4). In relationships where the communication between the supervising teacher and the student teacher is direct and open, the student teachers receive feedback on the lessons they teach and become comfortable with on-going assessment and how they can improve as classroom teachers (LaBoskey, 1994; Dewey, 1938). The supervising teacher is in essence the gatekeeper into full participation in the student teaching experience and the person the student teacher must develop a relationship with, to gain entry into the classroom to teach. A good match between the supervising teacher and the student teacher meant that there were similar beliefs in how to nurture students and classroom instruction. In these classrooms, the student teacher spent more time teaching and felt more confident in themselves as a teacher after the experience was over. The student teacher who was not able to understand the supervising teacher's concept of teaching spent most of her time figuring out the supervising teacher's concept of teaching.

In this year long study of student teachers, there were different types of relationships that were established between the student teacher and her supervising

teacher. These relationships ranged from being a good match where the supervising teacher and student teacher held the same beliefs about the classroom instruction and behavioral management to no match where the student teacher and supervising teacher could not establish a professional dialogue. In general, the teacher that was open to having a student teacher in her classroom had decided that this was a valuable experience and was very supportive of the student teacher during her classroom experience. Her support resulted in on-going conversations with the student teacher. A mismatch between the student teacher and the supervising teacher was not always predictable, but did have an affect on the student teacher's ability to teach and how she felt about herself as a teacher at the conclusion of her student teaching experience.

The relationship with the supervising teacher has the potential to affect how the student teacher feels about herself as a classroom teacher. The student teacher who is well matched with their supervising teacher has a better chance for a positive student teaching experience and develops confidence in herself. In the classrooms where a good match is not achieved because of differences in their classroom instruction and in the way they nurture the students, there exists a barrier for the student teacher to overcome. The supervising teacher who allows entry into full participation of student teaching does not always view the student teacher's different concept of teaching as an opportunity to think about teaching in another way. In these classrooms, there is often only one way to teach. The student teacher who is in a classroom where she is not able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom instruction tends to question her ability to teach.

Mindy experienced a good match with both of her supervising teachers, which resulted in two successful student teaching experiences. Alice was well matched in her first placement where she and her supervising teacher constructed their own interactive style of teaching. In this context, Alice gained confidence in her teaching and was able to explore her own concept of teaching. In her second placement, Alice was able to establish a relationship with her supervising teacher but the manner of classroom instruction and nurturing of the students was not the same as her first semester experience. So, in her second placement, Alice spent weeks thinking about the classroom management that was woven into her supervising teacher's classroom instruction. Alice worked at replicating the classroom management and responding to the students as her supervising teacher did. Alice was able to gain entry and to teach but the teaching experience did not allow her to explore her own concept of teaching.

First semester Beth made herself an observer in the classroom, unable to develop a relationship with her supervising teacher. Second semester Beth found she was able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management through using her own concepts of teaching with the students. Through the support and encouragement of her supervising teacher, Beth had the opportunity to become a co-participant with Mrs. Webber and gained confidence in her ability to be a teacher.

Jessie was unable to develop a relationship with her supervising teacher, Mrs. Webber, second semester. This teacher-directed classroom presented itself with a different concept of teaching and nurturing students. The difference in the classroom

instruction and implementing the classroom management eventually resulted in a barrier that Jessie could not overcome as she worked at gaining entry and participating fully in teaching in this kindergarten classroom. The mismatch of supervising teacher with student teacher was not predictable. Both Jessie and Mrs. Webber had been successful in establishing relationships in previous settings. Jessie with her supervising teacher Mrs. June, and Mrs. Webber with previous student teachers. In this context, the match of Mrs. Webber and Jessie was not successful. During the semester Jessie lost twenty pounds and the confidence she had gained in establishing herself as the classroom teacher in her first student teaching placement. The semester made her doubt herself as a teacher and question whether she deserved an "A" in student teaching because she could not replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management. Jessie felt she was viewed by others as not deserving of an "A" even though she could document her consistent efforts and contributions to the classroom. At this point Jessie lost confidence in herself as a teacher.

When the student teachers in this study were incompatible with their supervising teacher, it was because of the difficulty in implementing classroom management. This brought out the student teachers' question of nurturing students. In moving from being a friend of the student to being their teacher, the student teachers were forced to adjust their relationship with the students. On the journey to assume major teaching duties the student teachers found they had to reinforce classroom rules and remind the students of their responsibilities as members of the classroom community. This was a new and critical dimension to the role of teacher and often the student teacher found she needed to

replicate the supervising teacher's classroom management style. If the student teacher could replicate the supervising teacher's classroom management, the student teacher gained entry to full teaching participation as the teacher. If the supervising teacher and the student teacher did not share similar beliefs in how to nurture the student in the classroom, the student teacher experienced difficulty replicating the classroom management. When Jessie was unable to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management in her second placement, her supervising teacher did not give her the opportunity to teach in the classroom.

In Alice's placement second semester, she was able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management but was prevented from exploring her own concept of teaching because of the conflict she felt when she had to teach as her supervising teacher taught. Alice found herself not feeling comfortable when she had to be another teacher. She recognized she had to move from being a friend of the student to the teacher, but the strategies for getting the students to respond to her as the teacher, such as raising her voice, were not strategies Alice wanted use in her classroom.

On-going Dialogues as Connections in Relationships

Finding time to talk about the daily happenings in the classroom helped in establishing a professional relationship with the supervising teacher. Mindy established on-going conversations with her supervising teachers both semesters. First semester, in a cooperative learning environment, conversation was used to connect the teachers with the students as collaborative members of a community of learners. Second semester in a

teacher-directed classroom, Mindy used conversations with the students to connect their experiences to their lessons. Although their concept of teaching were different, there was no evidence that Mindy was not well matched with both supervising teachers. Mindy found herself at home as much in the classroom of the teacher directed classroom teaching confidently through her own concept of teaching, as she did co-teaching with Mrs. Walker in a co-operating learning environment first semester. The experience Mindy brought with her to student teaching make this possible.

Beth was not able to establish on-going conversations with her supervising teacher first semester so she was not able to explore aspects of being well matched with her supervising teacher. Beth was an observer and developed her own concept of teaching without the input of her supervising teacher. Second semester, through on-going conversations with her supervising teacher, Beth was able to understand Mrs. Webber's classroom and how she fit in, even though she had different a understanding of the classroom instruction and classroom management. Through on-going conversations, Beth found she began to understand the classroom through the eyes of Mrs. Marsh. With her support, Mindy eventually was able to explore her own concept of teaching.

Relationships Encouraged Sharing About Students

The close relationships between the student teachers and their supervising teachers tended to be characterized by sharing the personal histories of the students. Alice's supervising teacher encouraged on-going conversations about the students and their home experiences and Alice retold many of their discoveries in stories about the students first

semester. The conversations second semester did not always focus on understanding the individual student but on understanding the instruction the teacher had designed for the students. With the classroom routines already in place the supervising teacher did not find it necessary explain her classroom design. First semester the collaborative relationships the student teachers established with their supervising teacher resulted in the student teachers having opportunities to connect their lessons to the students. Second semester there existed a existed for the student teachers in understanding the classroom management before they could focus on teaching their lessons. This could possibly be attributed to the time of year in which the placement took place.

It took time for the student teachers to figure out the classroom design of their supervising teacher second semester and fit their understanding of teaching into this context. The experience of being in a more traditional classroom was an adjustment for Jessie, Alice, Beth and Mindy. It took them time to begin to understand classrooms they had not experienced previously. The student teacher's first reactions to the structure of the school and reinforcing their supervising teachers discipline was in conflict to what they understood as child appropriate practices, yet they recognized what it would take to student teach in this environment.

Mindy, Alice, and Beth were able to move from being an observer to participant-observer to co-participant to teacher in their classrooms. Mindy and Beth were able to teach in the traditional classrooms and incorporate their own concept of teaching in the lessons they taught. They were able to craft their teaching so they could maintain their

supervising teachers classroom design while exploring their own concept of teaching. Alice, for example, was able to teach in her classroom but struggled with maintaining her supervising teachers classroom management. Alice taught in small groups using her own understanding of learning but replicated her supervising teachers classroom style when she taught the whole class. Alice was not comfortable using her concept of teaching when she taught the whole class. It became necessary to implement her supervising teacher's classroom management. Alice struggled with being mean when she was firm with the students. Jessie, on the other hand, was not able to gain entry into the teacher directed kindergarten classroom because she was unable to replicate her supervising teacher's management style that was incorporated into her classroom instruction.

Placed in a school setting where the concept of nurturing students is different from the understandings the student teachers were taught at the university, the student teachers found themselves in conflict with how to handle the students. Mindy, skilled in working with adults and students seemed to be able to work this out intuitively. Alice struggled with replicating her supervising teachers management style because of the conflict she felt in what it meant to be mean. Beth was experiencing the conflict but it did not hinder her from replicating her supervising teacher's behavioral management style while using her own concept of teaching. Jessie struggled the entire semester with replicating her supervising teacher's classroom management style which were in conflict with her strong feeling of how to nurture students. Jessie's concept of teaching was not fine tuned enough to use her own understanding of teaching while maintaining her supervising teacher's

classroom management. Jessie was not able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to teach in this placement.

After discussing among themselves and their supervising teachers, the student teachers left the experience feeling that a teacher-directed approach to learning was appropriate for students coming from a lower socio economic background. This finding is consistent with the research on the influence of the supervising teacher and possibly even why student teaching could be a wash out (Zeichner, 1981).

Relationships Encouraged Student Teachers to Think About Their Own Teaching

A good match of the student teacher with the supervising teacher allowed the student teacher more time to teach to think about their concept of teaching and develop a positive identity of themselves as a teacher. In the classroom where the student teacher gained entry and fully participated as a classroom teacher, she is given the opportunity to think about classroom instruction and how to connect the lessons she teaches to the students. The student teacher is able to focus on her teaching through feedback from her supervising teacher.

Alice and Mrs. Strong, and Mindy and Mrs. Walker had the closest match of student teacher to supervising teacher. In these settings both Alice and Mindy were able to think and explore their teaching in an interactive context with their supervising teachers. The classroom setting allowed the student teacher to go beyond managing the classroom to thinking about connecting their lessons to the students. In these collaborative

classrooms, the supervising teacher supported the student teacher by giving her feedback on the lessons she taught.

Mindy gained entry into full participation quickly in her second assignment and initiated relationships with the students. Her teaching by the end of the semester became a reciprocity of learning where she was learning from the students and the students were learning from her. Mindy's lessons emerged as she engaged in on-going conversations with the students throughout the day. She was able to take the experiences of the students and incorporate them into the lessons and, in turn, gave the students a reason to be learning. A lesson in Mindy's classroom was not confined to a fifty-five minute block but was a connection between what the student knew and their daily experiences. Second semester, Mindy was autonomous in Mrs. Yeager's teacher-directed classroom. Her supervising teacher was supportive and allowed Mindy to be the sole decision maker in the classroom. Second semester Beth was given an opportunity to think about her own concept of teaching. First semester as co-participant in the classroom Jessie and Alice were able to explore their own teaching.

The School Community and Its Affect on Relationships

A large part of the role of becoming a student teacher takes place in a wider professional community which is in the school itself (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1992). First semester all four of the student teachers felt a part of the school community. They were invited to attend faculty meetings, participate in teacher conferences, and were kept informed on the students in their classrooms. Arriving in January put the student teachers

at a disadvantage in knowing the routines of the classroom second semester. Routines, rules, and a lack of time to talk to their classroom teachers prevented opportunities to establish relationships with their classroom teachers making an adjustment to a new school community was difficult. The rules and routine of the classroom were not conducive to establishing on-going conversations with the supervising teacher and the students. These rules became a barrier that prevented understanding for the student teachers. Without opportunities for conversations the student teachers were left on their own to create meaning of their classrooms by themselves. The student teachers did not gain insight into how the school was run because they were not included as a part of the faculty, nor were they included in parent teacher conferences. In this community, little time was available for the students and supervising teacher to talk about the classroom. Therefore, these placements were not collaborative efforts of understanding the classroom. This did not mean that the teachers were not friendly, but the lack of time to establish on-going conversations resulted in the student teachers constructing their understanding of the classroom without input from their supervising teacher. The student teachers did not have an opportunity to be challenged and think about teaching and how to fit their understanding of the classroom management into their own understanding of teaching. During their second placement, the student teachers resigned themselves to the fact that this particular population of students learned best in a structured school environment. This finding supports the research that student teachers' concept of teaching are affected tremendously by their field placement and the practices of their supervising teacher (Kagan 1992).

Flow

A look at the flow or movement of each student teacher through student teaching indicated that no two experiences were the same (Figure 4). Even though they were involved in the same cohort group, had the same university method classes and similar student teaching assignments, each student teacher constructed her own individual student teaching experience.

Each student teacher has a personal history that contributes significantly to her flow through student teaching. The student teacher who brings with her experience of working with children and is confident in dealing with idiosyncratic occurrences in the classroom easily adjusts to the goings on of a classroom. This is evident first semester in the cases of Alice, Jessie, and Mindy whose previous experiences gave them confidence to become apart of the classroom.

The support of family, friends, peers, and professional educators was an extended network the student teacher used to make sense of teaching. The conversations the student teachers had with their support group helped them to articulate their concerns.

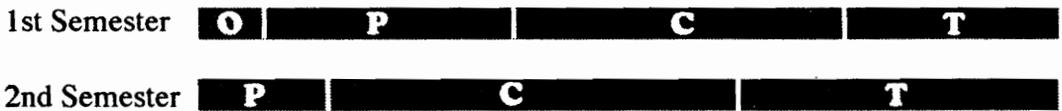
The professional student teaching experience helped the student teachers to acquire strategies necessary in becoming professional educator. These strategies of observing, initiating conversations, trial and error through problem-solving, replicating the supervising teacher's classroom instruction, responding to the students, and adapting their own concept of teaching to their classroom are valuable tools for understanding the classroom.

Individual Flow of Student Teaching
Through Year Long Professional Experience

NOTE: Good match with supervising teacher results in more time for the student teacher to spend time teaching.

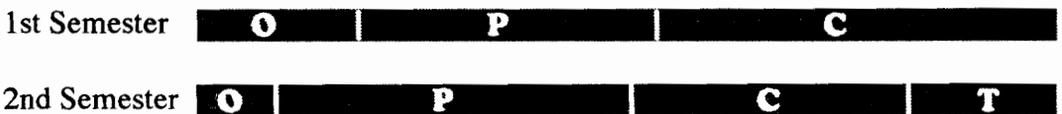
Classic/Consistent

Mindy



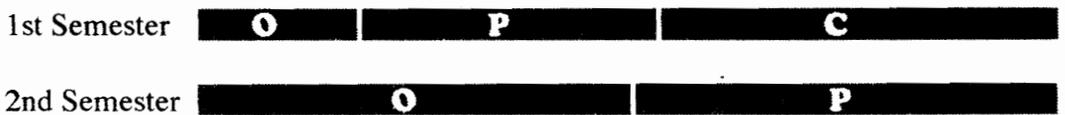
Consistent: Great Adaptations

Alice



Student Teaching Stopped

Jessie



Just in Time

Beth



O - OBSERVER **P** - PARTICIPANT-OBSERVER **C** - CO-PARTICIPANT **T** - TEACHER

Figure 4

Mindy: A Classic Study

In both student teaching placements Mindy was responsive to the needs of the classroom and was given the opportunity to become autonomous and teach. She was able to adapt the theories of teaching used by both supervising teachers through trial and error and incorporate what she learned into her own concept of teaching. In both placements Mindy became a keen observer, differentiating between the concepts of teaching of her supervising teachers and her own. By being able to replicate her supervising teachers' classroom management, she was able to explore her own concept of teaching in each placement. Mindy's classic study exemplifies the importance of establishing on-going conversations with the supervising teacher and the ability of the student teacher to make adaptations to have a successful student teaching experience.

Alice: Consistent With Adaptations

Alice was able to become a co-participant in the classroom during both student teaching placements through replicating her supervising teacher's classroom instruction. First semester, Alice was well matched with her supervising teacher and was able to become a co-participant, sharing the responsibility of making classroom decisions and initiating instruction with her supervising teacher. As a full participant in teaching, Alice constructed her understanding of the classroom through on-going dialogue with the students and her supervising teacher. Alice initiated instruction and learned through trial and error with consistent support from Mrs. Strong. Alice's responsiveness and ability to adopt her instruction to the need of the students resulted in a successful teaching

experience first semester. Second semester, Alice was able to replicate the supervising teacher's classroom management and teach. Alice was successful learning to teach in both placements, but in the second assignment she was not well matched in the classroom instruction and in how to nurture the students. It was necessary for Alice to make adaptations to her concept of teaching. Alice had to answer questions like, "When does conversation become noise for my supervising teacher? How much activity can go on in this classroom?" As Alice struggled with implementing the classroom management of her supervising teacher, she felt mean. Alice was able to adapt to this classroom as the teacher, but she did not like enforcing the classroom management in this classroom. Alice did not have an opportunity to explore her own concept of teaching in this placement.

Jessie: Student Teaching Stopped

In her first placement Jessie was able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management and become a co-participant in teaching with her supervising teacher. Jessie observed the importance of responding to her supervising teacher's classroom design and initiated a professional relationship that began a conversation about the classroom. Understanding emerged for Jessie as she replicated Mrs. June's concept of teaching. This ability to adapt to her supervising teacher's classroom allowed Jessie to become a co-participant and teach with Mrs. June. Second semester Jessie was unable to initiate an on-going conversation with Mrs. Webber, gain entry and begin to practice teaching. Jessie was prevented from student teaching because she could not replicate her supervising teacher's classroom management. This resulted in a difficult student teaching

experience where Jessie did not have time to think about her own teaching but spent time thinking about how to adapt the classroom instruction of her supervising teacher to her own concept of teaching.

Beth: Right On Time

In Beth's first placement she was not able to initiate an on-going conversation with her supervising teacher which placed her as an observer in the classroom, working with students in small groups. First semester, Beth did not gain entry into the classroom to teach. Second semester, through an on-going conversation with her supervising teacher, Beth began to implement lessons and learn through trial and error how to adapt lessons to these first graders. Beth gained confidence as she replicated her supervising teacher's classroom management and took over the classroom instruction the last two weeks of student teaching.

The student teachers used strategies such as observing conversation, teaching by trial and error, replication of instruction, responsiveness to students, initiating and adaptation to make sense of their student teaching placement. Each student teacher was able to be successful by understanding how to adapt to their supervising teacher's classroom.

Support During Student Teaching

Cohort group

One of the most interesting understandings that emerged through this year long study was the importance of the student teachers as a self selected cohort group

(Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992). The group became a community where the relationship between the student teachers helped in constructing their own concept of what it is like to be a teacher (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). As Mindy, Jessie, Alice, and Beth made the transition from being college students to professional educators, they began to dress and act like teachers. They talked about how different they felt now they were student teachers. They could not wake up just before class, put on a sweat shirt and show up at class. These student teachers were changing their life styles. Each student teacher indicated a change in how they spent their free time, "All I do is talk about school. When I walk down the isles of Kroger I start taking to Alice about what happened in school." (Interview I with Beth, pg. 2) The student teachers were taking time to think about their classrooms and build on their understanding of teaching. These conversations happened through the closeness of the cohort group and the sharing of their teaching experiences. Although they relied on their university instructors, supervisors, and supervising teachers for support, they, through their experience, relied on each other for teaching ideas and confirmation in making sense of their experience.

Although the cohort group was a support system for the student teachers, the confidence they gained from the group allowed them to become independent decision makers in their own classrooms. Within this group the student teachers felt free to make individual choices as well as contribute to group decisions that would represent all their thinking. When it came to making decisions that would affect the entire group, the student teachers discussed the issues and then made a decision that reflected the opinion of

all the group members. Daily discussions established strong connections between themselves and helped build on their own concept of teaching. Their own issues were clear as they individually struggled and thought through classroom dilemmas. During this year long journey each student teacher began to construct their own concept of teaching and moved from being motivated by their university professors reinforcements to feeling confident in their own decisions based on their own concept of teaching. This transfer of valuing their own understanding of teaching, took place as the focus of the conversations moved from the topic of grades to how they felt their teaching was going. The student teachers were beginning to articulate their concept of teaching through conversations with each other which became tools to assessing their practice of teaching. Mindy, Jessie, Alice, and Beth were beginning to practice self assessment. They were moving from being motivated by a grade to value the learning each gained as they grew in understanding themselves as teachers.

First semester the student teachers felt they were not always understood. Their response was often, "Don't they believe what I say?" Second semester, as they became more confident in making sense of their practice, they were not dependent on the feedback of their university supervisor and instructors. They began to be able to make decisions based on their own understanding of teaching. Although they were not able to articulate at times explicitly why they disagreed with the feedback they received, Mindy responded in the last interview. "I listen to what they say and then I think about it." In Jessie's student teaching assignment second semester, she was the only student teacher who left

the practice not feeling positive about her student teaching experience. The feedback about her student teaching second semester took precedence over what else she had accomplished. The difficulties the placement presented made Jessie feel she could not assess herself for the progress she had made.

University classes: Instructor, supervisor. The student teachers found they benefited from being around a mature learner who talked to them about their experience. This dialogue encouraged each student teacher to explore her own concept of teaching and begin to identify themselves as a teacher. Their understanding became a means to begin to assess themselves. First semester was vital for the student teachers to have a connection to the university. The lack of experience in working with students in a setting other than the University Lab School gave the student teachers a feeling of uncertainty about working with older students. This brought anxiety in the first month of their field placement. The supervision of the student teachers was left up to a university supervisor who in this case did not provide consistent opportunities for on-going conversations. This made the student teachers feel they were not connected to the university.

Support: School, family ties. Alice, Jessie, and Beth had strong family ties. These ties were a thread of security for them. It seemed that if the student teacher was not faring well in the practicum, this support was needed. Jessie depended on her family for encouragement and as a source of strength both semesters. When second semester became a struggle, Jessie turned to her mom for advice.

Strategies

The student teachers developed a repertoire of understandings about teaching and learning to negotiate student teaching, as well as developed a set of practices that would be helpful as beginning practitioners.

Observation Skills

The student teachers entered student teaching unsure of the responsibilities they would have in the classroom. To understand how they would fit in, they spent time thinking about their supervising teacher's classroom and observing the lessons she taught and how she interacted with the students. Looking and listening were important for the student teacher to begin figuring out her supervising teacher's classroom.

Importance of Conversation

Conversation was used as a tool for making sense of student teaching, yet it was not a part of the student teacher's university education. The student teacher who did not have strong language skills and strategies of getting along with people had to acquire these skills during her field experience. Conversations with the supervising teacher were on-going dialogs that gave the student teacher an opportunity for making connections between her own understanding of teaching and those of the students. In classrooms where conversation was valued, language was an important part of the day. These conversations allowed the student teacher an opportunity to talk about the events of the day and receive feedback from the lessons she taught. Conversations were important for the student teacher to make sense of her placement.

Trial and Error Problem-Solving

Teaching a lesson offered the student teacher an opportunity to explore her own concept of teaching. In a classroom where the student teacher was supported by feedback from her supervising teacher, she was able to develop a plan of teaching, observing, and reflecting on her classroom instruction (LaBoskey, 1994).

The university methods class required that the student teacher teach lessons that reflected the philosophical approach such as whole language. It was in a small space in the classroom that the student teachers struggled with teaching these lessons and gained understanding from their teaching (Niles, & Strehle, 1993). The student teachers planned lessons from ideas they got through talking and observing. As they taught the lessons, they were able to make connections between the lessons and experiences of the students. Some of the student teachers had difficulty writing their lesson plans, knowing that it would change as they taught the students. Adjusting the lesson to the students became a part of the on-going learning in this classroom. Lesson plans became an opportunity to create a learning experience where the teacher acted as a problem solver and facilitator of the experience.

Initiation

The student teachers discovered their place in the classroom through taking an active role in getting to know the students and teaching lessons. In classrooms where the supervising teacher and the student teacher had a professional relationship, the student teacher received feedback. This feedback and encouragement gave the student teacher

confidence to try out ideas in the classroom. The student teacher who did not establish a relationship with the supervising teacher often did not take opportunities to get involved and felt excluded from the daily happenings of the classroom. This happened in classrooms where the supervising teacher was busy keeping the classroom instruction and meeting the needs of the students and often did not include the student teacher in these routines.

Replication

The student teachers often discovered that to enter and teach in the classroom of her supervising teacher, she must maintain the existing classroom management. To do this, it was necessary for her to understand her supervising teacher's concept of teaching classroom instruction and how she nurtured the students. When the student teacher was able to maintain her supervising teacher's rules and routines, she was able then to teach as her supervising teacher. This allowed her to gain entry and teach.

Responsiveness

The student teacher realized, as a part of the community of learners, that it was important to be aware of what was happening in all parts of the classroom. This meant being able to do more than one thing at a time in response to the activity of the classroom (Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). In these communities, the student teacher acted as a problem solver responding to the academic as well as social needs of the students. Learning became an on-going occurrence when the students talked as well as when they worked on their lessons.

Adaptation

When the student teacher taught in the classroom of her supervising teacher, she often had to replicate many existing rules and routines that emanated from her supervising teacher's classroom design. Adaptation occurred when the student teacher considered her supervising teacher's concept of teaching her own. When the student teachers adapted the supervising teacher's way of understanding the classroom, she many times did not feel she would do the same if it were her own classroom. This happened to Alice second semester. Alice was beginning to know how she felt about teaching lessons and nurturing students, but when she had to adapt another supervising teacher's concept of teaching to teach successfully, she was not happy. Many times the adaptation occurred when there was not a good match between the supervising teacher and the student teacher. The student teacher found she was teaching, but it did not give her an opportunity to explore her own questions about teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Summary

The analysis of these four case studies provides new insights into looking at student teachers. The study viewed the data collected from a year long experience in which the method course work was integrated with the field experience. The extensive analysis of the data on each student teacher allowed a comparison to be made among the cases in the similarities and differences that occurred in the student teaching experience. The conversations of the student teachers provided a way of understanding their movement from observer to teacher during the student teaching experience. Their concerns, contradictions, and compromises were recorded through the stories they told about the classroom as they began to construct for themselves their own concept of teaching. The research question that guided the study is: How do student teachers make sense of their professional senior year experience?

The Lived Experience of Student Teaching: A Model

The student teachers enter each placement with a personal history that shaped their understanding of being a classroom teacher. The transition from being a college student to a professional educator involved lots of time devoted to thinking about teaching. Throughout this year of transition, the student teacher is undergirded by a network of support which included family and friends as well as their school and university community. These individuals create a support system for the student teachers which allowed them an opportunity to make sense of their classroom experiences. As the

student teacher entered the induction period, she spent time observing the classroom instruction and classroom management of her supervising teacher. This time of observation is spent completing clerical tasks for the teacher, working with the students, and teaching lessons in small groups. As the student teacher took over more classroom responsibilities, she became a participant-observer. In the classroom the student teacher began to understand the classroom instruction and how to nurture students by initiating lessons and interacting with the students. If she was able to replicate her supervising teacher's classroom instruction and manner of nurturing students, she eventually moved into full participation of student teaching and had the opportunity to explore her own concept of teaching. As a co-participant, making sense of the classroom with another professional, the student teacher has the opportunity to articulate and explore her own concept of teaching. If the student teacher worked collaboratively with her supervising teacher, she had an opportunity to make connections between her university classwork and her field experience with a mature learner (Dewey, 1938). If the student teacher was in a classroom where the supervising teacher did not engage in on-going conversations about the classroom, she was left to construct her concept of teaching without a mature learner.

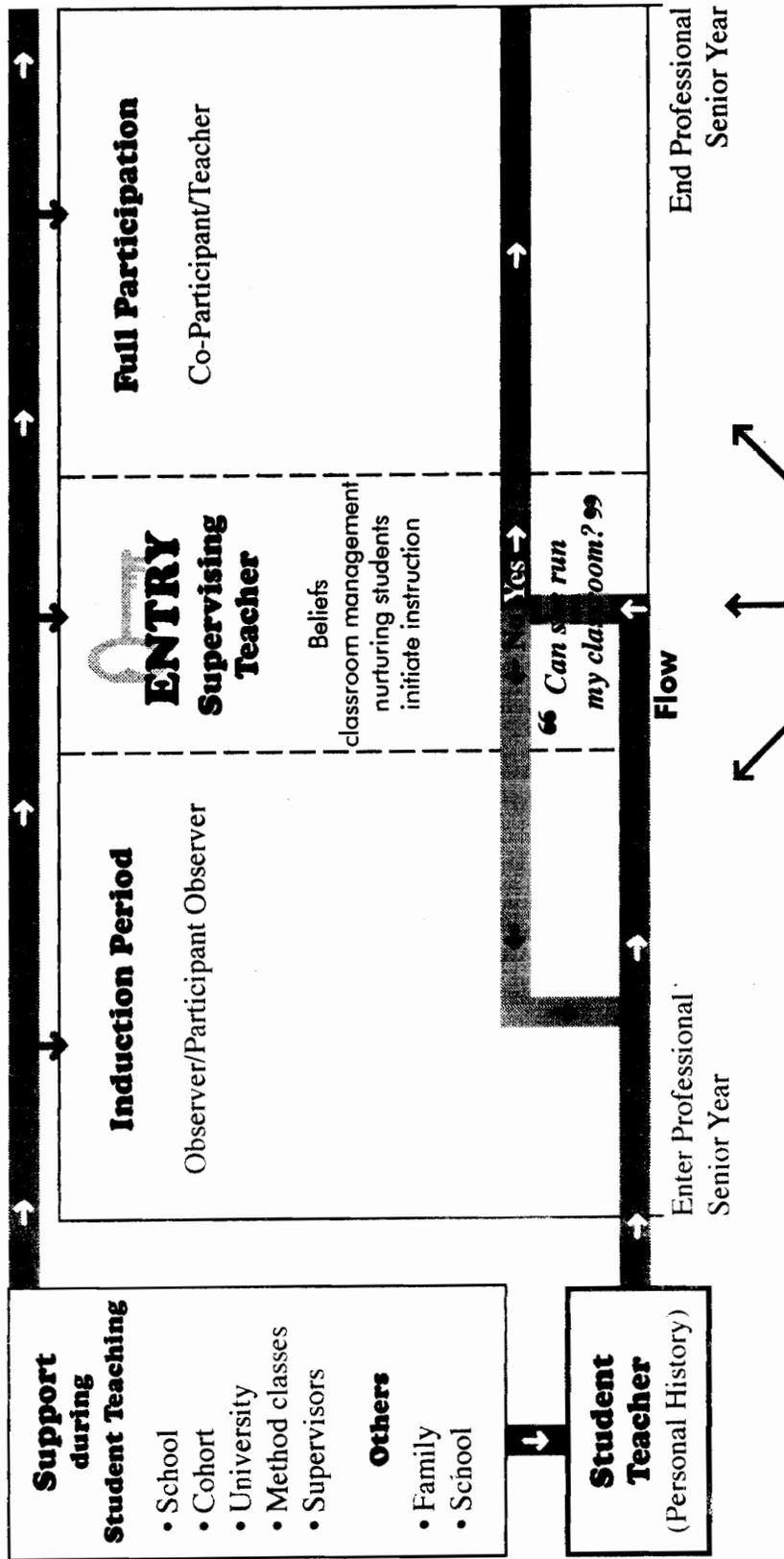
The movement of the student teacher from observer to teacher is called the flow of student teaching (see Figure 5). The student teacher constructed her own journey as she negotiated her role in the uncertainty of the classroom. The success of the student teacher's experience rested in her ability to adapt to her supervising teacher's concept of

teaching so that she had the opportunity to explore her own understanding of teaching.

The student teachers acquired many strategies of understanding teaching as they became actively involved as the classroom teachers. These strategies ranged from observing, engaging in conversations, teaching through trial and error and problem solving, replicating the supervising teacher's classroom instruction, being responsive to the students, and learning to initiate lessons. When the student teachers entered into full participation, they were able to focus on exploring their own concept of teaching. The student teachers who felt most successful during student teaching were those who were matched with a supervising teacher with a similar concept of teaching and manner of nurturing students. These student teachers had opportunities to spend time exploring their own teaching during their field experience.

Student teachers come to the student teaching experience with an understanding of teaching based on being students in the classroom. The understanding they acquire is the foundation for making sense of teaching. They can do this by stepping back and thinking about their supervising teachers' concept of teaching and how she nurtures the students. As the student teachers observe the classroom instruction, they depend on what they have seen or how their supervising teacher teaches. The amount of time they spend teaching determines the degree of understanding the student acquires during student teaching. If they are allowed to spend time thinking about teaching, they will begin to explore their own concept of teaching. This concept will be an integration of their experiences as students, the university classroom, and their supervising teachers' ideas of

The Lived Experience of Student Teaching



Strategies: (Observer, Conversation, Trial & Error, Replication, Responsiveness, Initiation)

Figure 5

teaching.

The university education the student teachers receive becomes one way of understanding teaching. All four of the student teachers came from an early childhood background and had experience in developmentally appropriate practices of working with young children. The student teachers understood that teaching must be appropriate to what the child can accomplish developmentally. When a supervising teacher taught a lesson in a manner other than the student teacher understood from her own practice of teaching, the student teacher often spend time attempting to understand how she could replicate the classroom instruction in her own teaching. If the classroom instruction was not a combination of instruction and behavioral management, the student teacher was then forced to adapt her supervising teacher's classroom management to successfully teach her own lesson. In classrooms such as these, the student teachers were not able to explore their own concept of teaching, because their time was spent replicating the classroom teacher's concept of teaching to gain the rights of full participation.

The relationship created through the conversations with the supervising teacher seemed to hold the key for the student teacher to understand the classroom. It was through the dialogue between the student teacher and supervising teacher that the student teacher was able to make sense of the classroom. If the student teacher did not share the same concept of teaching as her supervising teacher, she was left to make sense of the classroom without the input of her supervising teacher. The supervising teacher and the student teacher did not have to share the same views of teaching for the student teacher to

gain entry and teach but the student teaching experience tended to be more positive when the supervising teacher and student teacher were matched in their concept of teaching. When the student teaching experience was positive, the student teacher gained confidence and was able to explore her own understanding of teaching. Whether the experience was positive or not, the time in the classroom affected the confidence the student teacher felt in being a classroom teacher.

During student teaching the student teachers used conversations to make connections between their supervising teacher and the students and begin to make sense of the classroom. First semester, Jessie and her supervising teacher had different understandings about teaching. Through on-going conversations, Jessie began to understand her supervising teacher's concept of teaching as she implemented it in her classroom. The classrooms where the student teachers did not have on-going conversations with their supervising teacher, the student teachers had to guess what the supervising teacher meant. This created potential misunderstandings on the part of both the supervising teacher and the student teacher. The importance of creating an on-going dialogue reached beyond the relationship with the classroom teacher and extended to the students in the classroom, the other teachers in the school, the university supervisor, and the model director. This established a foundation for shared meaning among the community of teachers.

Through conversations with another professional educator the student teachers were allowed to explore their role as teacher. Through these well matched relationships,

the student teacher acquired an extensive understanding of the classroom.

The student teachers began to understand the complexity of teaching when they were given the opportunity to plan and implement their own lessons. The classrooms where the students were able to fully participate in student teaching lead to more opportunities to plan, teach, observe, and reflect on their own concept of teaching. Each student teacher found it necessary to connect the lessons they taught to the students. The relationship the student teacher had built with the students helped them to understand how to connect the lessons they taught with the needs of the students. This manner of caring was exhibited in attending to the academic, social and physical needs of the student (Noddings, 1984). This holistic manner of teaching was the goal of the student teacher in constructing their concept of teaching. When the student teacher perceived she was engaging the student in learning, she felt successful. In fact, this nurturing of the individual student tended to be the motivating factor for assessing how well the lesson went. In a cooperative learning classroom, the classroom instruction was woven into the classroom management and moved in response to the students' contributions to the lesson. In a teacher-directed classroom, the student teacher focused on managing the behavior of the class before she was able to teach a lesson and then meet their individual needs. How to maintain classroom management became an issue second semester in the student teachers' teacher-directed classrooms.

As the student teachers began to make sense of each placement, they found observation was a prerequisite for making sense of how they fit into the classroom. The

student teachers' observations were followed by conversations which they learned to use as a tool in making sense of their classroom. The student teachers discovered their experiences ranged from spending time thinking about their supervising teachers' classroom to exploring their own concept of teaching.

The confidence each student teacher gained was reflected in her ability to initiate instruction. The more confident the student teacher was in initiating instruction the more opportunities she had in working with students. It was through her teaching that the student teacher was able to encounter the idiosyncratic aspects of teaching a lesson. These opportunities gave her experience and confidence in identifying herself as the classroom teacher.

The assumption is that during student teaching the student teacher will learn how to teach. In these case studies, however, the student teacher's task became to understand how they could teach in the classrooms of their supervising teachers. The student teachers were not prepared with strategies for gaining entry nor were they clear on what they were to do once they were in the classroom. To think about the supervising teacher's classroom was to be able to understand one's own concept of teaching and then to critically think how to teach in the classroom of a teacher with a different concept of teaching. The student teacher's experience in the classroom was overwhelming and by and large, the student teacher accepted her supervising teacher's classroom design and taught in the classroom as her supervising teacher taught. Many university ideas were thrown by the wayside or not even considered because they did not fit into their field experience.

The skills the student teachers needed to gain entry to fully participate in student teaching were strategies they brought with them into the teacher education program. First, the student teacher must be able to articulate and understand her own concept of teaching. The experience of working with students and how to develop relationships with other professionals affected the flow of each student teacher, and yet how to do this was not addressed in the teacher education program. The care that each student teacher showed for the students (Noddings, 1992) and the importance of connecting to the students through an on-going dialogue (Holt-Reynolds, 1992) were valuable aspects of teaching for these student teachers. Similarly, having a dialogue with the supervising teacher and how this relates to becoming a professional educator proved valuable. The goal of each student teacher seemed to be the construction of her own concept of teaching, but in many cases each student teacher had to replicate or adapt to someone else's concept of teaching during their student teaching experience.

Finally, the student teachers' previous images of teaching changed slowly as they were involved in the experience of working with the students in the classroom. They began to understand that teaching occurs in many different classrooms using many different approaches. The student teacher was able to understand her supervising teacher's concept of teaching and how it made sense in their own classroom. The definition of what a good teacher was changed as the student teachers began to understand the classrooms of their supervising teacher's. Through on-going dialogue, the student teachers found how the classroom worked to create a dynamic learning environment, and even though their

supervising teacher might think about teaching differently, the students were learning.

The student teachers were challenged in how to teach students in their classroom. Many times they would try to implement approaches to learning they perceived as successful when they were in the classroom. Beth did not struggle with reading as a student, so she felt she could not help students who had difficulty in understanding how to read. For a student teacher to teach students with no previous experience, to guide her practice, made teaching students with different learning needs a challenge. Many times the student teachers based their understanding of how to teach a lesson on what worked in their lab school practicum. The student teachers discovered they were teaching lessons the way their supervising teacher taught in their classroom. If the supervising teacher was using a phonics program, the student teacher tended to understand how phonics could be taught in the classroom and felt favorable about its use. The supervising teacher has a tremendous impact on the practice of the student teacher. Without the help of a mentor to make connections between what the student learned in the university and how it could work in the classroom, the field experience could nullify what the student teacher learned during her first three years in a university classroom. If the student teachers are able to think critically about their practice and given conditions under which this can occur, the student teachers can begin to articulate their own concept of teaching as well as their reasoning process (LaBoskey, 1994). The student teachers need a mature learner, articulate in similar concepts of teaching, to discuss new ideas and reflect on new concepts they are trying to understand.

The two field placements allowed the student teachers to view classrooms constructed using different concepts of teaching. The first placement was an understanding of how teachers work in a collaborative manner with students and other educators. In these classrooms the students were encouraged to work in a community. The second placement introduced the students to teacher-directed classrooms where the teacher was autonomous and made classroom decisions based on her own understanding of the community.

The second placement brought about discussions of the manner in which these inner city school classroom teachers constructed their classrooms. The student teachers in these placements did not have experience in working with minority population, but as the student teachers observed these teacher-directed classrooms and began to understand their supervising teachers' rationale for implementing their concept of teaching with this population, the student teachers' beliefs about teaching were challenged.

The grounds for testing the student teachers' concept of teaching came when they worked in the classroom with the students. The more the student teachers were able to spend time teaching the more they were able to think critically about their teaching and how to connect it to the students' learning. When this happened, the student teacher moved from student teaching to becoming a teacher. The student teacher moved from an institutional perspective of teaching to acquiring a practitioners perspective of teaching and learning.

Recommendations for Practice

At the completion of this year long study of student teaching there seems to be several recommendations that can be made for teacher educators as well as for further research related to student teaching.

1. Continue the use of small student cohorts, and find ways to support their efforts.

The student teachers found discussing their practice with peers and other professionals valuable. They began to create a language for teaching; their questions were answered; their concerns were redirected; and their understanding of the culture of the school was challenged. The student teachers made sense of their experience in a community of inquirers who were interested in making learning work for the student. The support and on-going dialogue in a community of learners was necessary for the growth of beginner teachers. This perspective extends the more traditional notion of the student teacher and supervising teacher forming a professionally isolated pair. This notion is similar to how Lortie (1975) describes the life of the teacher.

2. Provide systematic help for student teachers in creating dynamic relationships with their supervising teachers.

The strength of the experience came from the school community where the student teachers were able to engage in on-going dialogue with each other and their supervising teachers at the school. The university model's influence here was uneven. It was not able to provide the extensive daily contact with a mature learner as Dewey (1938) suggested, to discuss their ideas about teaching. Dewey talks about the greater maturity of

experience which belongs to the adult as educator and how it puts him in a position to evaluate the experience of the young in a way which the one having the less experience can understand. It is the responsibility of the more mature to organize the conditions of the learner to help him make the connections or the more mature is in essence throwing away his insights (Dewey, 1938). The field experience gives teacher educators an opportunity to use their insights and help the student teachers make connections with their education and their experience and reflect on their teaching. If the student teachers do not see these people as available, they miss the opportunity of meaningful dialogue in understanding their practice. In the field these relationships often took place between the supervising teacher and the student teacher. Yet, they were not guaranteed. It seems logical to set up a student teaching program that enables the supervising teacher to be the mentor and be responsible for the student teachers induction into the profession of teaching. To accomplish this, it takes a program that includes careful development of the mentor role preparation for the student teacher on how to work with a mentor and on-going support from the university to nurture the relationship.

3. Specifically study the ways in which the university methods courses affect the student teaching experience.

Student teaching is an experience that cannot be paralleled to the experience provided in a university classroom. Student teaching presents an opportunity to develop an understanding of the teaching profession monitored and supported by a university professor and coached by a supervising teacher. During the field experience the student

teacher begins to articulate her beliefs about teaching and begins to learn through teaching lessons. Student teaching must be viewed as an experience in understanding what it means to be a classroom teacher, so if method classes the students are taking during their field experience they must be tied to their experience. The field must be a laboratory for the student teacher to explore what they are learning in the classroom. For the student teacher to understand the theories she is discussing in the classroom, she must see these implemented in the practice of the teachers she observes. When the student teachers in the study found spaces to test their personal theories and practices of teaching, good things happened. If these kinds of opportunities do not exist, the university must provide them. One way to do this, for example, is to create a university classroom that reflects the strategies through allowing the students to experience the strategies by modeling and demonstration, and providing action based inquiry projects that require the students to implement these projects in the classroom (Niles & Strehle, 1993).

Recommendations for further research related to student teaching

1. What type of relationship with the supervising teacher is necessary for the student teacher to become an inquirer of learning in the classroom?

The relationship that the student teacher had with her supervising teachers was vital to the success of her student teaching experience. The match of supervising teacher and student teacher determined entry and provided an opportunity for the student teacher to think about her own teaching. The conversations were important in constructing a professional on-going dialogue that led to the student teacher making connections

between their university work and their field experience. The research on the influence of the supervising teachers was reaffirmed as the student teacher left the student teaching experience sympathetic with the supervising teacher's concept of teaching. The match of the student teacher with the supervising teacher is vital. If we want to encourage a consistency in what is taught in the university and what is learned in the classroom, we must match the student teacher with the supervising teacher who at least understands practice from the perspective of the university. However, the nature of this relationship needs to be carefully studied to avoid the practice of student teachers replicating their supervising teachers' practice without considering their university education.

2. How can the student teaching model incorporate the supervising teacher as a mentor for the student teacher?

The influence of the supervising teacher on the practice of the student teacher means that the university must take on the task of sharing the responsibility of educating the student teacher with the help of the supervising teacher. As questions about teaching are entertained, the supervising teacher is responsible for creating a dialogue with the student teacher to give her opportunities to talk about the classroom. We must explore new ways to engage the supervising teacher as a partner in the teacher education process. Similarly, university personnel must find new roles for themselves in the field.

3. How can method classes contribute to building a strong connection between the university and the schools participating in the field experience?

The methods class presents a way of linking the understanding of theory with the

practice of teaching. Yet, we do not have a clear understanding of how the field can influence the method classes. Continued study is needed to find ways to bridge this wide gap. Simply offering field experience and the method course together is not enough. Conceptual linkages of understanding how theory transfers into practice needs extensive elaboration. Teachers during their practice need to begin to articulate their own theories of learning. This understanding of being a teacher will ground them in constructing their own understanding, integrating who they are as a professional with what they have learned at the university, and how it is contextualized in their placement.

4. What impact does on-going conversations have on learning in the classroom?

The type of conversations that the supervising teacher established with her students determined the construction of learning that took place in the classroom. In classrooms where conversations were established as a part of the day and used as a tool for learning, the student teachers had little difficulty implementing their own concept of teaching. In classrooms where conversations directed the students' learning as well as the students' behavior, the student teachers experienced difficulty implementing their developmentally appropriate practices. Conversations were used as ways of engaging each student in the lesson and guided by an on-going dialogue with the teacher and student learning from each other. Examining the content of their conversations may help us understand the differences student teachers are learning in teacher-directed and student-directed conversations.

Epilogue

As I come to the end of my first year as a college professor, I find the concerns of Mindy, Beth, Alice, and Jessie are the same as the students here at my college.

The pre-service teachers do not always see what they are being taught in the college classroom can be implemented in the classroom of their supervising teacher. There exists a gap between what they are taught and what they see in the classrooms. Their classroom experience have more impact on their understanding of teaching than the experience of their college classes.

As an educator concerned with educating student teachers as agents of change, I struggle with the same issues I had as a researcher: How can the student teaching experience become a way of understanding teaching and not result in a wash out? Student teachers construct their own understanding of teaching and move at their own pace through the student teaching experience. Learning to replicate the college theories and practices would not accomplish the goal of valuing the process of the individual's journey of learning. Learning moves an individual to a place of uncertainty as they move from established routines to try new ideas and implement important changes in their own concept of teaching.

Student teaching is indeed navigating uncertainty. Educators can invite their students to participate in learning but cannot control the outcome of what is learned. During student teaching, the student teacher constructs her own concept of learning, the journey becomes understanding her role as a classroom teacher. The college professor is

the facilitator of learning offering the student opportunities to explore their own concept of teaching with the support of an experienced educator.

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EXPERIENCE*Higher Education:***Assistant Professor, 1994-Present**

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Teach Elementary Curriculum, Elementary Methods, Middle School Reading and Writing Block, Children's Literature, Reading Methods and Materials, Advanced Language Arts, and Research.

Graduate Teaching Assistant, 1993-1994

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Designed/taught course: Teaching Problem Readers and Writers. Coordinated/set up Reading Clinic. Conference/assessed students teaching literacy. Coordinated tutoring of elementary school children in local schools with university students

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Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia

Supervised 14 elementary education students in field based student teaching program. Attended and participated in student teacher reading methods class. Evaluated/conferenced/assessed teaching of student teachers. Coordinated cooperating teacher understanding of field based student teaching

*Public School:***Classroom Teacher, 1974-1992**

Perrymont Elementary, Lynchburg, Virginia; (grades 1 & 2 and coordinated school wide gifted program). Featherstone Elementary, Woodbridge, Virginia; (1 & 2nd grade and was trained for working with gifted). Hutchins Elementary, Hutchins,

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Teacher Achievements

- Grade level chairman, (1984-1985), Woodbridge, Virginia
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- Served on language arts, social studies, science and social committee, (1984-1992), Woodbridge, Virginia and Lynchburg, Virginia

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University Micro Teaching Workshop	
Virginia Tech	1993
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Vice President-Elect	1992-1993
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Central Virginia Association of the Gifted	
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AWARDS AND HONORS

- Excellence in Education Award,
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia (1991)
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PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

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Strehle, L. Differentiating the curriculum for the gifted. Paper presented at Perrymont Elementary, Lynchburg, Virginia, May, 1992.

Strehle, L. What is whole language? Paper presented at the Secondary English Association, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg Virginia, April, 1991.

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